# Targeting Kwajalein: U.S. Empire, Militarization and Suburbanization and the Marshall Islands, 1944-1986

By

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To my parents Joan & Fred Hirshberg

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#### **Note on Terminology**

In several instances throughout the dissertation my referencing of individuals residing on Ebeye and working on Kwajalein shifts between "Micronesians" and "Marshallese." These shifts are not intended to suggest a conflation of the two descriptive categories. While Marshallese have been historically identified as belonging to the regional identification as Micronesians, not all identifying as Micronesians are Marshallese. Rather my shift in language throughout the dissertation reflects how Trust Territory government and military documents described these populations at different times. When referencing these documents I have kept my language mirroring these shifts as they appeared in my evidence. While this may cause some ambiguity, that ambiguity reflects that which is found in the archives and potentially suggests how various U.S. civilian and military colonial administrators may have perceived Micronesians as one seemingly homogenous population. In my own analysis, when I refer to the population living on Ebeye and working on Kwajalein during the army missile installation era, I use Marshallese. This is because the majority of the population on Ebeye and working on Kwajalein during this period comprised Marshallese individuals. However, it should also be noted that Ebeye has historically housed a smaller population of individuals from other parts of Micronesia as well as the Philippines, and some of these individuals also worked on Kwajalein over the years.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Nor should either of these two categories be presumed to address the variety of ways that individuals self-identify in this region. Specific island and atoll identifications have also come into play as have historic rejections of the category "Micronesian" as an artificial colonial imposition upon a vast geographic and culturally diverse region.

#### Introduction

# Welcome to Kwajalein: U.S. Suburban Domesticity and Military Empire During and Beyond the Cold War

"Our little piece of the Pacific," "similar to any small American town; a tight knit community." These phrases appeared in military documents describing the Marshallese island Kwajalein between the 1960s and 1990s. More recently, oral history accounts with American civilians working on Kwajalein characterized the island as comparable to small American suburban towns of the 1950s. One American described Kwajalein as a "hyper America," as "more American than America."

Emphasizing the small town suburban community feel infusing this Marshallese island, these sources all narrated a space that also housed a U.S. army missile installation. Since the early 1960s this suburban setting layered atop the coral foundations of Kwajalein Island has been home to army personnel and American civilian contractors. Since this time, scientists and engineers recruited to operate the army's intercontinental missile testing program have come to Kwajalein, many with families, to live and work. In any given year, the island's American residential population ranged from approximately 20 military personnel and between 1,500 and 5,000 civilian contractors. For more than five decades these contractors have monitored incoming ballistic missiles launched at Kwajalein's lagoon from 5,000 miles away at California's Vandenberg Airforce base.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> United States Army Kwajalein Atoll, published by U.S. Army Space and Strategic Defense Command, 1994. Located at the Government Documents Collection at the University of Hawaii, Manoa [Gov. Docs, UH Manoa hereafter].

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Oral history interview with civilian contractor wishing to remain anonymous on November 13, 2010. Kwajalein, Marshall Islands.

Americans arriving to Kwajalein settled on an island cleared of indigenous inhabitants by the U.S. military. They came to a place in the middle of the Pacific narrated as a safe, secure and segregated American suburb.

How did an island in the middle of Micronesia come to be understood as an American suburb during the 1960s? My project examines how the colonial spatial and cultural transformation of this island, the manifestation of U.S. national domesticity through Kwajalein's suburbia impacted Marshallese and Micronesian political leaders, Marshallese landowners and workers and their families. I interrogate U.S. colonialism in the Marshall Islands by reading Kwajalein's suburban history as it historically emerged alongside urbanization on Ebeye, the nearby island housing those Marshallese displaced by the military to enable missile testing during the 1960s and others migrating in search of employment on Kwajalein. My dissertation further uncovers Kwajalein's significance to the U.S. military and a cadre of civilian personnel comprising a new U.S. colonial bureaucracy called the Trust Territory administration that would be created under U.N. sanction in 1947. Finally, my project probes the island's meaning to the hundreds of thousands of American civilian contractors making their way through the Kwajalein missile installation's virtual rotating door of contract employment over several decades.

Kwajalein came to be naturalized as part of the post-World War II narrative of suburban U.S.A, amidst a Cold War context of unprecedented U.S. imperial expansion. To lure America's top scientists and engineers and their families to the Marshall Islands to operate the missile range at Kwajalein, the army transformed the island into a space of suburban domesticity. My project explores the relational spatial transformations of

suburban Kwajalein and urban Ebeye as Ebeye's growing Marshallese population came to constitute a racialized labor force serving Kwajalein's American families.

On a global level, my dissertation argues that following World War II, U.S. strategies for ensuring national security came at the expense of increased insecurity for Marshallese who struggled to adjust to life under the new U.S. colonial administration. In addition to intervening in broader Cold War historiography, my dissertation explores local implications of this history through analysis of cultural and spatial transformations on Kwajalein and Ebeye. I argue that suburbanization enabled U.S. military acquisition and control of Kwajalein to be framed within a national narrative of American exceptionalism, erasing Marshallese history from the island's domestic suburbia while narrating Marshallese continuity in the region through discourses of racialized segregation and foreign otherness.

The U.S. military transformed Kwajalein into an American suburb amidst the context of a broader imperial expansion throughout Micronesia sanctioned by the United Nations. Under the 1947 U.N. Trusteeship Agreement, the United States gained strategic control over Japan's former Micronesian colonies and became charged with a mission to support the region's inhabitants towards eventual self-determination. As revealed through the Solomon Report, the U.S. neglected this latter directive and instead proceeded with a policy of economic neglect in Micronesia. The 1963 report, commissioned by the Kennedy Administration, highlighted the benefits of Micronesian economic dependency upon the U.S. that could secure a continued relationship and guarantee the U.S. indefinite strategic access to the region.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Donald F. McHenry, *Micronesia: Trust Betrayed, Altruism vs. Self Interest in American Foreign Policy*, (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1975), 14.

Kwajalein's localized colonial transformation occurred amidst the backdrop of this broader U.S. imperial moment in Micronesia and unprecedented U.S. military expansion around the globe. My dissertation qualifies President Eisenhower's 1961 cautionary about a U.S. military industrial complex to expand his categorization to reflect the historic reality of a military *imperial* industrial complex expanding across Micronesia and the world. U.S. nuclear testing in the Northern Marshall Islands and subsequent missile testing on Kwajalein proved among the most destructive and deadly examples of this military imperial expansion during the Cold War.

The 1947 Trusteeship Agreement legitimized U.S. military imperial expansion across Micronesia by narrating this expansion as a special national relationship. The Trusteeship Agreement married the U.S. postwar mission of national security to that of international security, creating an open-ended directive to use the Trust Territory region as a space for military armament and strategic denial. The agreement further sanctioned U.S. entitlement to Micronesia to carry out a mission to achieve national and international security that had no endpoint. No area of the agreement identified the point at which U.N. administrators would determine that indeed U.S. national and international security had been achieved that could signal an end to U.S. control over islands that had been home to Micronesians for thousands of years. Instead, the Trusteeship Agreement gave the United States a blank check of approval to take whatever means necessary-meaning whatever land and resources necessary-within the Trust Territory to carry out an indeterminate mission of national security and global peace.

U.S. ratification of the Trusteeship Agreement in July 1947 came on the heels of the Truman Doctrine announced four months earlier. The timing of these two major

policies marked a shift in U.S. international politics, economics and military expansion foundational to the origins of the Cold War. Truman's global policy of containment aimed to create a protective shield around nations and territories perceived as vulnerable to becoming dominos in a global Soviet takeover and informed U.S. efforts to silo off Micronesia, containing Communist penetration into the region. The Truman Doctrine informed U.S. nation-building activities aimed at erecting an impermeable shield around non-aligned countries from Soviet incursion, ultimately justifying violent and destructive wars in Vietnam and Korea. Amidst this broader policy of containment, the Trusteeship Agreement positioned the Central Pacific as a space of U.S. control, a strategic region in need of protection from Soviet and Chinese incursion.

Global and local articulations of U.S. national security on Kwajalein were framed through this discourse of Cold War containment. On Kwajalein, suburban containment narrated an atmosphere of security through protection of the nuclear family from both a foreign Communist threat and racialized foreign labor. But American civilians arriving to work on Kwajalein's missile range entered a space of unstable suburban containment. The narrative of secure American domesticity on Kwajalein would be interrupted by Marshallese protests against U.S. colonialism and media interrogations of U.S. discrimination and segregation policies in the region.

Under the American colonial administration, Kwajalein's history exemplified both continuities and distinctions as a space of military settler colonial suburbia. Kwajalein's story is both continuous and discontinuous with other U.S. and Pacific histories of American settler colonialism. Americans settling on Kwajalein arrived to a space in which their colonial privilege entitled them to residency, rent-free housing, tax-

subsidized foods and goods and greater freedom to move within space than the racialized colonial Marshallese subjects residing on Ebeye. Colonialism is largely defined by people being out of place. Suburbanization on Kwajalein effectively achieved a spatial and cultural narrative that took Americans, who might otherwise seem "out of place" on a Marshallese island and naturalized their presence on the island, normalizing their entitlement to that space. Likewise, U.S. military and Trust Territory discourse and policies regulating Marshallese movement on Kwajalein worked to criminalize any unregulated presence on the island, marking Marshallese as "out of place" on Kwajalein. These policies and narratives positioned Marshallese as foreign to Kwajalein's space of American suburban domesticity and military security.

Like American settlers in the continental U.S. and those moving through U.S. colonial and imperial spaces of the Pacific, Americans on Kwajalein enjoyed the service labor of those marked as foreign in their own lands. Marshallese subjects served American families on Kwajalein as domestics, gardeners and food servers. In relation to Marshallese workers on Kwajalein, Americans enjoyed the privilege of living on the island where they worked. Marshallese workers could not live on Kwajalein and remained subject to curfews for leaving the island each day. Unlike American settlers in the continental U.S. and Hawai'i however, Americans on Kwajalein could not acquire indigenous land for their own wealth accumulation to pass down as property through generations. But given the tremendous subsidies American workers enjoyed on Kwajalein, many could save a substantive amount of capital to invest in properties elsewhere. Thus, the settler experience on Kwajalein marks a distinctive shift in historic

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> This idea was expressed by Dr. Damon Salesa during his Comparative Colonialisms class at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor during the winter semester 2007.

trajectory to a military settler colonial structure fitting within a broader context of American military and civilian employees moving throughout the emerging expansive realm of U.S. base communities around the world during and following the Cold War.

While Kwajalein's military settler colonialism signals both a historic shift in global politics and U.S. imperial expansion following World War II, the island's suburban transformation also converses with the historic emergence of U.S. suburbanization during this period. My project's analysis brings into sharp relief the overlapping histories of U.S. suburbanization and American Empire during the Cold War. I interrogate Kwajalein's suburban transformation by offering a cultural, social and political history of the island in relation to Ebeye, centering the interdependent transformations of both spaces over time. In doing so, my dissertation reveals how Kwajalein's suburban transformation proved both historically continuous with American culture during this period but also quite distinct in many respects. Likewise, my project examines how Ebeye's relational transformation alongside Kwajalein signals moments of historic change in the Marshall Islands but also resonates deeply with continuities in Marshallese culture over time.

Kwajalein's suburbia remained distinctively informed by both military discipline and the island's spatial confinement. Oral histories with civilians who lived on Kwajalein for several years and annual reunions and online networking communities reveal a nostalgia for Kwajalein that seems rooted in a perception of the island as both a place and a time. Many civilians recall Kwajalein fondly as reflecting a 1950s small town feel, an almost "Leave it to Beaver" kind of setting where everyone knows each other. The island's unique bicycle culture that accompanied a military ban on automobiles also seemed to engender a greater sense of community. Kwajalein's small and contained

island spatiality distinguishes its suburban setting from that which partly defined continental suburbanization: the frontier style movement of white flight and an automobile culture characterizing a sense of free mobility, sprawl and anonymity. Kwajalein's suburbia is profoundly rooted in place. The island is not a space of expansive white flight and movement, but rather a suburban military base that emerged because of the island's strategic location and U.S. colonial imposition.

While contrasting certain aspects foundational to continental suburbanization during this period, Kwajalein's island containment also made the space more conducive to achieving a level of racial segregation and gendered ordering of movement never fully achieved in continental spaces of suburban segregation and discipline. Kwajalein's suburbia perfected what other U.S. suburban spaces could only aspire to in the realm of domestic containment and security. Military surveillance on Kwajalein proved incredibly effective in policing boundaries. If an individual deviated from military rules and regulations they could be, and in many cases were, banned from the island.

Army rules disciplining movement on Kwajalein through racializing, gendering, and sexualizing categories could be explained as security measures. The lagoon barrier separating Kwajalein and Ebeye proved an effective natural boundary enhancing the army's ability to regulate movement between the islands. The army's decision to avoid building a bridge between Kwajalein and Ebeye, a choice that cost the military significant money over time subsidizing ferry service, enabled greater control over the island's boundaries. Segregation between Kwajalein and Ebeye more closely reflected U.S. suburbanization during the 1960s that became increasingly defined through distance from and in counter-distinction to racialized urban spaces. Kwajalein's suburbia was positioned

in contrast to Ebeye's perceived urbanity and slum-like conditions. The island's setting offered a dual picture of Cold War containment and security amidst the insecurity of missiles landing nearby and racialized Marshallese workers whose labor the island depended upon, but whose potential boundary transgressions needed constant surveillance and discipline.

Further distinguishing Kwajalein's suburbia from continental models, Kwajalein's security remained threatened not only by Soviet attack and racialized urban others, but also by the presence of American bachelor men living in close proximity to the island's families. The military administration on Kwajalein narrated these men as potential predators threatening the security and purity of Kwajalein's American family community. Their movement and behavior on Kwajalein also required surveillance and regulation.

If Kwajalein's suburbanization remained historically distinctive in some respects while simultaneously a near perfection of U.S. suburban culture in others, Ebeye's identification as an urban space also proved to be a site of historic change alongside cultural continuities in the Marshall Islands. Under U.S. colonial rule, the historic physical transformation of Ebeye into an island identified by Americans through its density and impoverishment also reflected deep historic patterns of Marshallese mobility. American journalists and social scientists who began identifying Ebeye as an urban space, a big city, as the island's density increased during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s did so voicing alarm over the potential loss of Marshallese culture on the island. Ebeye's cement physical structure and predominant wage economy distinguished daily life from that of the rural outer islands, within which Marshallese historically and continually employed sustainable agriculture and fishing practices for their livelihood.

These logistical changes on Ebeve certainly marked the island's spatial and cultural setting as historically distinct and particularly in how these developed under U.S. colonial administration. However, my archival and oral history research that built upon insights from Pacific Studies Scholar Monica LaBriola's research on Ebeye, reveals how the island also remained a space of Marshallese cultural continuities through the central role communal and familial support continued to play in relationships on the island.<sup>5</sup> In addition, Ebeye's growing density over time can be attributed to both U.S. displacements of Marshallese but also to deeper seafaring traditions and histories of Marshallese mobility informing the migrations of other Marshallese individuals to Ebeye to find work. 6 U.S. colonial imposition into Marshallese land tenure structures through leasing negotiations and eminent domain threats enabled greater migration to Ebeye by unsettling Marshallese political control over their lands. Marshallese migrations towards Ebeye thus sat within a longer history of Marshallese mobility that converged in this colonial moment with a shift in Marshallese chiefly authority and control over settlement on Kwajalein and Ebeye.

While my project's analysis of Kwajalein's suburban transformation reflects commonalities with American cultural norms of suburbanization, my discussion of urbanity on Ebeye remains entangled within and complicated by what the urban signifies in a Marshallese cultural and historic context. While many Americans may have understood Kwajalein's suburbanization in counter-distinction to Ebeye's perceived racialized urbanity, the suburban comparison did not necessarily constitute a relevant

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Monica LaBriola, "Iien Ippan Doon"(This Time Together): Celebrating Survival in an 'Atypical Marshallese Community," Thesis for Master of Arts in Pacific Islands Studies (University of Hawaii, Manoa. 2006).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> For more on the history of Marshallese seafaring and mobility in the Ralik chain see Gerald Knight's *Man This Reef* (Majuro: Micronitor News and Printing, 1982).

spatial or cultural category for Marshallese on Ebeye. In contrast, many living on Ebeye read the island's historic transformations in relation to Marshallese culture on the outer islands, the space from which most living on Ebeye migrated. And thus, analysis of Ebeye's perceived urban culture and history must be contextualized amidst a broader and deeper history of outer island life and inter-island and intra-atoll politics. In that respect, my employment of suburban and urban historiography and analysis to understand the local colonial manifestations on Kwajalein and Ebeye is enhanced and complicated by both American and Marshallese cultural histories that shaped each island's transformations over time.

Kwajalein's story resides at a conjuncture of many different histories and developments. As a consequence, this dissertation sits at a confluence of historiographies, bears their imprint, and speaks to their concerns. Because the concerns of each of these intersecting major fields--U.S. militarism and base history, Pacific History, U.S. Settler Colonialism and Empire, Suburban and Urban Studies and Pacific spatial theory--are not always clear to other audiences, their relevance for this dissertation needs to be briefly introduced. These fields offer greater context for interrogating where Kwajalein's history hovers both spatially and temporally. They help examine the ways in which Kwajalein's story illuminates broader changes and continuities in Marshallese, Micronesian, Pacific, U.S. and global histories.

#### Kwajalein Amidst U.S. Cold War Military Expansion

Kwajalein's story of colonial suburban transformation, racialized segregation and eventual Marshallese anti-colonial protest shares similarities and differences with other

documented U.S. base histories following World War II. The context for how and why the U.S. military transformed this Marshallese island into a space of U.S. suburban domesticity remains part of a much larger story of U.S. military empire emerging throughout and beyond Micronesia following World War II. Anthropologist David Vine revealed in his 2009 work on Diego Garcia how this postwar moment of U.S. military expansion led to an unprecedented increase in military bases around the world. Vine noted that today, the United States possesses some 1,000 military bases outside the fifty states and Washington D.C., with troops positioned in some 150 foreign nations. Vine also noted that recent Defense Department reports estimated its more than 577,519 separate buildings, utilities and base structures emerging since World War II as conservatively valuing more than \$712 billion.

Kwajalein's history resides amidst the rise of a U.S. military industrial complex that included both continental colonial and overseas imperial impacts tied to the growth of U.S. Cold War weapons development activities. Scholars interrogating local spatial and cultural transformations linked to the growing Cold War defense industry have also revealed critical relationships to the emergence of suburban segregation in the continental U.S. U.S. Historian Margaret O'Mara has argued that Silicon Valley's "city of knowledge" defined in part by racial homogeneity and suburbanization proved comparatively idyllic to Georgia Tech and the University of Pennsylvania's urban settings for Cold War scientists and their families. Her examination of Palo Alto offers an interesting lens of comparison with Kwajalein's suburban history. Conversing with broader Sunbelt studies examining the relationship between postwar defense spending

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> David Vine, *Island of Shame: The Secret History of the U.S. Military Base on Diego Garcia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 16.

and spatial transformations, O'Mara reveals how Cold War military spending shaped the emergence of Silicon Valley to accommodate incoming scientists and engineers whose labor contributed to the growing defense industry. Read alongside O'Mara's findings, Kwajalein's suburban transformation to house white collar engineers and their families compares in some ways with Palo Alto's spatial transformation emerging in response to the political, military and technological shifts accompanying and fueling the Cold War.

But O'Mara's examination of Palo Alto's suburban transformation excludes interrogation of how the racially homogenous suburb historically emerged in relation to East Palo Alto's racialized urban community who provided service labor to Palo Alto's white American families. Palo Alto's segregated residency and labor environment remained divided by a freeway instead of a lagoon. The histories of East Palo Alto's racialized service workers in Palo Alto's emerging Cold War scientist community and those of the racialized service workers of Ebeye serving Kwajalein resonate with each other. My analysis of Kwajalein's suburban segregation takes up these resonances, exploring the relationships between the urban and suburban amidst communities transformed to house Cold War scientists and engineers and their families and the racializing impacts of these changes over time.

Where O'Mara's analysis offers a useful context for situating Kwajalein's suburban transformation amidst a broader moment of continental suburban growth to house elite communities of Cold War scientists, Joseph Masco offers another context for thinking comparatively about local colonial impacts of Cold War weapons development. Masco's work examines the impact of nuclear testing at Los Alamos and particularly

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Margaret Pugh O'Mara, *Cities of Knowledge: Cold War Science and the Search for the Next Silicon Valley* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

explores the largely white community of scientists living amidst the Pueblo nations and Nuevomexicanos. His study reveals a comparative example of how Cold War weapons development in the continental U.S. creates new areas of spatial segregation, and similarly to Kwajalein, amidst colonized populations. Helping further frame my analysis of Kwajalein, O'Mara and Masco's studies consider the localized place-making transformations caused by the growth of the Cold War defense industry. Kwajalein's story and those of Palo Alto and Los Alamos converse amidst a broader historiography on the Sunbelt's regional transformations, that similarly interrogate how post-World War II defense spending reshaped the spatial, economic, political and cultural contours of the continental U.S. 11

Beyond comparative examples of spatial transformation amidst continental Cold War weapons development activities, Kwajalein's story of spatial and cultural transformation can also be productively read alongside other U.S. base histories contributing to a broader narrative of an expanding U.S. military empire. Kwajalein and Ebeye's relational histories share commonalities with histories of other island spaces coming under U.S. military colonial rule, like Guam and Puerto Rico. But the history of U.S. military colonialism in the Marshall Islands also reveals distinctions. The region's strategic position enabling U.S. weapons development practices through supporting nuclear testing and subsequent missile tests has marked Kwajalein's history as separate from other spaces of U.S. militarism in the Trust Territory region. Kwajalein's

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Joseph Masco, *The Nuclear Borderlands: The Manhattan Project in Post-Cold War New Mexico* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

A variety of works emerging from Sunbelt studies offer comparative and case specific analysis of the relationship between postwar defense spending and suburban growth. For more on that topic see Richard M. Bernard and Bradley R. Rice (eds) *Sunbelt Cities: Politics and Growth since World War II* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983) and for a local case study see Roger W. Lotchin's analysis of defense spending and urban growth in San Diego in his *Fortress California*, 1910-1961 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

predominately civilian contractor population also sets the base apart from many U.S. bases around the world. Further marking Kwajalein and Ebeye's relational development as somewhat exceptional compared with examples of segregation on other U.S. military bases is the spatial confinement of these two islands. Their separation by three miles of reef creates a natural barrier ensuring that segregation remains more starkly visible and island boundaries more effective policed.

Despite these colonial, strategic and spatial distinctions, reading Kwajalein's history of segregation and suburbanization alongside other spaces of U.S. military imperial expansion proves quite fruitful to enabling comparative modes of analysis.

Recent U.S. base histories that emerged out of Cynthia Enloe's 1989 field-inspiring 
Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics, offer important case studies conversing with defining characteristics of Kwajalein's history. 

Jana Lipman's study of Guantanamo Bay centers militarism in Cuba with a focus on labor. She interrogates discrimination against Cuban workers on the base, including racially discriminatory base regulations and wage discrimination. 

Lipman also reveals a history of unjust search and seizure practices against Cuban workers at GTMO that overlap with examples of search and seizure policies against Marshallese workers on 

Kwajalein. Like my dissertation, Lipman's project draws upon a combination of archival

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> An array of base histories grew out of Enloe's examination of U.S. military base histories and U.S. military colonialism more broadly centering the lens of gender and sexuality in their analysis. These studies include Teresia Teaiwa's "bikinis and other s/pacific n/oceans," (*The Contemporary Pacific*, Spring 1994), Kathy E. Ferguson and Phyllis Turnbull's *Oh Say Can You See? The Semiotics of the Military in Hawai'i*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), Greg Dvorak's "The 'Martial Islands': Making Marshallese Masculinities between American and Japanese Militarism," (*The Contemporary Pacific*, Spring 2008) and Setsu Shigematsu and Keith L. Camacho's (eds), *Militarized Currents: Toward a Decolonized Future in Asia and the Pacific* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).
<sup>13</sup> Jana Lipman, *Guantanamo: A Working Class History between Empire and Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

materials and oral histories to uncover the experiences of Cuban workers discriminated against on this U.S. base.

Sharing a concern with the local colonial impact of U.S. military base histories, David Vine's examination of U.S. colonial acquisition of Diego Garcia Island centers experiences of displaced Chagossians whose native lands were taken over by the U.S. to build a secret military installation in the Indian Ocean. The story of Chagossian displacement contrasts with that of Marshallese on Kwajalein and even Cubans at Guantanamo, because the U.S. completely removed them from the island region.

Contrasting U.S. military labor needs on Kwajalein and Cuba, the military had no interest in employing Chagossians as service workers on Diego Garcia. Thus, they deported the entire residential population of Diego Garcia to Mauritius and the Seychelles where Chagossians suffered impoverishment in exile thereafter.

Shared themes of displacement, discrimination and segregation have arisen in several other studies examining the local impact of U.S. bases around the world. Wesley Iwao Ueunten's recent chapter in the collection *Militarized Currents: Towards a Decolonized Future in Asian and the Pacific* centers consideration of segregation and discrimination at the U.S. Kadena Airforce Base in Okinawa. Ueunten focuses attention less on residential displacement and segregation and instead on issues of racialization in the base's surrounding entertainment district of Koza. Ueunten examines a 1970 uprising in Koza, analyzing Okinawan perceptions of U.S. racial discrimination against both black soldiers and Okinawans through the creation of segregated entertainment spaces around

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Vine, Island of Shame

the base situating black soldiers and Okinawans in shared social spaces, while keeping separate white entertainment districts.<sup>15</sup>

Ueunten's case study offers an additional example of how American cultural patterns of racialized segregation informed social discipline and order amidst U.S. bases around the world. But the example of racial hierarchies on Okinawa also contrasts with the picture of how race seemed to operate on Kwajalein. As my dissertation closely examines, the island's colonial racial hierarchies created a much more stark picture of racializing colonial segregation between Americans and Marshallese than amidst the majority white but still racially diverse American community residing on the island. While my investigation of race on Kwajalein challenges civilian oral history narratives of Kwajalein as a seemingly exceptional space of racial harmony, Kwajalein's mode of reproducing American racial hierarchies amidst American base residents appears to be more subtle than Ueunten's example of racial segregation at the base in Okinawa. <sup>16</sup>

While the distinctive containment of suburbia on this U.S. military base marks Kwajalein as exceptional, the pattern of suburbanization and U.S. bases around the world is not. Mark Gillem's 2007 *American Town: Building the Outposts of Empire* examines this historic trend through comparative analysis of U.S. base suburbanization in Japan, Okinawa, South Korea, Italy and Germany. Some of Gillem's conclusions mirror my findings of how Kwajalein's suburbanization worked as a colonial technology for marking the island as a familiar domestic national space. Gillem emphasizes how

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Ueunten, Wesley Iwao. "Rising Up from a Sea of Discontent: The 1970 Koza Uprising in U.S.-Occupied Okinawa, in Shigematsu and Camacho (eds), *Militarized Currents* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Another study of Jim Crowe style segregation amidst spaces of U.S. Empire that this project considers Kwajalein's history alongside is Robert Vitalis' *America's Kingdom: Mythmaking on the Saudi Oil Frontier* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2006). While not centered on U.S. military base history, Vitalis examines the creation of a Jim Crow system of labor in the Dhahran oil camps in the 1930s and subsequent challenge to these racial hierarchies by workers in the 1950s and 1960s. The entanglements of oil and the military presence in the Middle East accord with this project.

suburban spatial planning mapped U.S. bases around the world as familiar spaces for soldiers residing within unfamiliar foreign land. Gillem's base studies also reveal similarities in suburban luxuries enjoyed on Kwajalein, like golf courses, baseball fields and franchise stores. But unlike Kwajalein's bicycle community, Gillem's suburban bases are largely defined by their automobile cultures, uncontrolled consumption and expansive territorial sprawl. But similar to Kwajalein's suburbia, Gillem also identifies racial segregation as central to defining U.S. suburban bases in Asia and Europe and particularly in regard to residency. Echoing Ueunten's study of racial segregation in Koza, Gillem analyzes residential segregation among the American soldiers in these suburban communities that is less reflective of Kwajalein's history.

Situating Kwajalein's history amidst a broader examination of U.S. military expansion through localized base studies illuminates the historic shift following World War II that positioned the U.S. towards a perpetual state of defense buildup and wartime preparation. Kwajalein's continued use for missile testing through today reveals how this distinctive moment in U.S. imperial expansion converged with unprecedented military growth that has persisted past the conclusion of the Cold War. The post-World War II period did not mark the beginning of a U.S. militaristic culture, just as Kwajalein's racialized suburban segregation does not signal a new American cultural pattern of structuring inequality through racial hierarchies or controlling mobility through those hierarchies. Rather, the postwar era constituted a moment when an existing culture built in part on militarism and racialized segregation met certain historic changes-technologically, economically and politically--which provided an opportunity for the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Mark L. Gillem, *American Town: Building the Outposts of Empire* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 77.

consequent U.S. military empire to emerge across Micronesia, and Kwajalein's suburban segregation to become a central localized structure of order and discipline within that expansion.

#### **Kwajalein within broader Pacific History**

In addition to U.S. Cold War military expansion offering an important comparative lens for situating Kwajalein's history, Pacific historiography and specifically recent studies on U.S. militarism in the Pacific provide another crucial context. To understand how Kwajalein's cultural and spatial transformation distinctively emerged in relation to Marshallese history, this project drew upon a growing array of literature on U.S. militarism across the Pacific. Recent studies have documented U.S. militarism on Guam, coinciding with a contemporary marine troop buildup and consequent Chamorro protests challenging military colonialism on the island. Analysis of Guam's historic relationship to the U.S. by Pacific Scholars Anne Perez Hattori, Keith L. Camacho and Vicente M. Diaz has offered a comparative lens for examining Kwajalein in relation to another space of U.S. military colonialism in Micronesia. Specifically, Diaz's interrogation of postwar "liberation" discourse on Guam and how U.S. nationalist narratives obscured the colonial nature of continued U.S. military presence in the region provided a productive point of comparison for considering how similar U.S. narratives of

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> See Vicente M. Diaz's "Deliberating Liberation Day: Memory, Culture and History in Guam" in *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s)*, editors T. Fujitani, Geoffrey M. White, and Lisa Yoneyama (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), Anne Perez Hattori's *Colonial Dis-Ease: U.S. Navy Health Policies and the Chamorros of Guam, 1898-1941* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), and Keith Camacho's *Cultures of Commemoration: The Politics of War, Memory and History in the Mariana Islands* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011). Also Vanessa Warheit's 2010 documentary film, *Insular Empire: America in the Marianas* has proved tremendously useful for thinking about U.S. imperialism in the Marshall Islands.

wartime sacrifice, patriotism and national security worked to narrate U.S. entitlement on Kwajalein.<sup>19</sup>

Likewise, analysis of U.S. militarism in Hawai'i has remained an important space of analytic comparison with Kwajalein in thinking about how this extensive U.S. military presence historically became naturalized in the islands. Kathy E. Ferguson and Phyllis Turnbull's 1999 *Oh Say Can You See? The Semiotics of the Military in Hawai'i* has offered an important framework for considering how "muted practices of naturalization and reassurance produce processes of militarization that are hidden in plain sight," on Hawai'i. Pead alongside Kyle Kajihiro's "The Militarizing of Hawai'i: Occupation, Accommodation, and Resistance" in Candace Fujikane and Jonathan Y. Okamura's 2008 edited collection on Asian settler colonialism in Hawai'i these works provided a broader Pacific context for considering how U.S. militarism on Kwajalein became normalized over time. These studies also offered a framework for considering the Marshallese anticolonial protests on Kwajalein in relation to other anti-military and anti-colonial movements historically rippling across the Pacific between Hawai'i, the Marshall Islands and Guam.<sup>21</sup>

The history of U.S. weapons testing in the Marshall Islands and the relationship between Marshallese displacement and U.S. military encounter is deeply tied to the foundational history of U.S. Christian missions in the region and across the Pacific. As

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Diaz, "Deliberating Liberation Day," in *Perilous Memories* T. Fujitani et al., 155-180.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Ferguson and Turnbull, *Oh Say Can You See*?, xv.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Kyle Kajihiro, "The Militarizing of Hawai'i: Occupation, Accommodation and Resistance," in Candace Fujikane and Jonathan Y. Okamura (eds) *Asian Settler Colonialism: From Local Governance to the Habits of Everyday Life in Hawai'i* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008). For more on U.S. militarism in Hawai'i also see Anne Keala Kelly's 2008 documentary film *Noho Hewa: The Wrongful Occupation of Hawai'i* and Shigematsu and Camacho (eds), *Militarized Currents*. This work offers a comparative framework for considering connections between U.S. and Japanese Empires in the Pacific through a focus on historic militarization.

my dissertation details, at discreet moments during the U.S. nuclear testing in the Northern Marshall Islands and during attempts to control Marshallese migrations to Ebeye, U. S. military officials and colonial administrators employed biblical discourse to encourage Marshallese compliance with U.S. military needs. Jack Niedenthal's 2001 examination of nuclear testing on Bikini Atoll detailed how U.S. removal of Bikinians in 1946 to enable nuclear testing on their homelands drew upon this deeply rooted U.S. missionary history in the Marshall Islands. During these tests, the military described to the Bikinians--and to the world through video footage--that their sacrifice would be made "for the good of mankind."<sup>22</sup>

The centrality of Christianity in defining the history of American and Marshallese relations not only illuminates U.S. attempts to sanitize colonial policies of displacement and control mobility in the Marshall Islands, but also explains a Marshallese affinity towards Americans that was revealed further in oral history interviews on Ebeye. I was reminded on a few occasions by Marshallese individuals that the U.S. brought both Christianity and nuclear weapons to the region; a reality that seemed to result in a complicated ambivalence concerning U.S. intentions in the region among this predominately Christian population. Pacific Scholar Vicente M. Diaz most recently examined the complicated history of Christianity in Micronesia, through a specific focus on Guam. His work offers one comparative context for further considering the influence of religion on Marshallese responses to the American colonial presence on Kwajalein.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Jack Niedenthal, For the Good of Mankind: A History of the People of Bikini and their Islands (Majuro: Bravo Publishers, 2001).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> For the most recent work on religion in Micronesia, see Vicente M. Diaz's *Repositioning the Missionary: Rewriting the Histories of Colonialism, Native Catholicism, and Indigeneity in Guam.* Pacific Islands Monograph Series 24. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010). Diaz works is situated amidst historic analysis of early missionary history in the Pacific that also includes Niel Gunson's *Messengers of Grace: Evangelical Missionaries in the South Seas, 1797-1860* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).

Ambivalence towards U.S. intentions in the Marshall Islands has built upon the deeply destructive history of weapons development that Kwajalein's story remains just one part of. Honing in on how this destruction and broader U.S. military colonialism has been historically obscured in the Marshall Islands, Pacific Studies scholar Teresia Teaiwa's analysis of U.S. nuclear testing on Bikini Atoll proved tremendously influential and inspirational to this dissertation. Teaiwa employed feminist theory to trace how French designer Louis Reard's naming of his new two-piece swimsuit, the "bikini," during the U.S. nuclear testing campaign on Bikini gendered and domesticated the tests by commodifying Bikinians' destroyed and contaminated homeland into a sexualized adornment for women.<sup>24</sup> Teaiwa's 1994 article not only constituted a compelling interrogation of U.S. nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands informing my broader analysis of Kwajalein's support role in these tests, her analysis of Marshallese dehumanization through commodification contributed to a vast literature on colonial representations of the Pacific this project has heavily drawn upon. Alongside Teaiwa's and Vicente M. Diaz's consideration of colonial dehumanizing discourse in Micronesia, Hawaiian Studies scholar Haunani-Kay Trask has written extensively and about colonial dehumanization of Native Hawaiians through the sexualization and commodification of Hawaiian culture fueling tourism in the islands. U.S. and Western dehumanizing discourse categorizing Pacific Islanders through racializing stereotypes informed the dehumanizing practices towards Marshallese following World War II that Kwajalein's spatial and cultural transformations built upon.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Teaiwa, "bikinis and other s/pacific n/oceans"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Haunani-Kay Trask, *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawai'i* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993). Also heavily informing my approach to this topic see Vicente Diaz's "Fight Boys, 'til the Last...': Islandstyle Football and the Remasculinization of Indigeneity in the

Dehumanization of Marshallese following World War II informed the navy's identification of Marshallese islands as prime real estate to become the nation's weapons testing laboratory. Kwajalein's missile testing history emerged following the island's 1944 U.S. "capture" from the Japanese and the island's subsequent role as a naval support base for U.S. nuclear testing in the Northern Marshall Islands between 1946 and 1958. Kwajalein and the Marshall Islands broadly played one of the most significant roles in contributing to the rise of U.S. military power during the Cold War. The Northern Marshall Islands, and Kwajalein's support role in the nuclear testing campaign there, constituted the space where the U.S. most overtly flexed its weaponry muscles before the Soviet Union and the world. During the 12-year nuclear testing campaign, the U.S. detonated 67 atmospheric nuclear tests in the Northern Marshall Islands. These tests included the 1954 hydrogen bomb's detonation at Bikini Atoll, equivalent to 1,000 Hiroshima bombs. In addition to this 15-megaton Bravo Shot in 1954 that rained radiation over nearby inhabited Marshallese islands, American weather station servicemen and Japanese fishermen, the U.S. conducted 17 other tests in the Marshall Islands in the megaton range. The total 67 nuclear tests comprised 108 megatons, the equivalent of 7,000 Hiroshima bombs.<sup>26</sup> According to the Republic of the Marshall Islands Nuclear Tribunal, while the U.S. broadly conducted 930 known nuclear tests between 1945 and 1988, yielding 137 megatons detonated in the atmosphere, the yield in

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Militarized American Pacific Islands," in *Pacific Diaspora: Island Peoples in the United States and Across the Pacific*, (eds) Paul Spickard, Joanne L. Rondilla, and Debbie Hippolite Wright (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), Teaiwa, "bikinis and other s/pacific n/oceans," Catherine A. Lutz and Jane L. Collins, *Reading National Geographic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), and Nicolas Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Taken from the Nuclear Claims Tribunal, Republic of the Marshall Islands website at http://www.nuclearclaimstribunal.com/testing.htm

the Marshall Islands tests comprised 80% of all U.S. atmospheric detonations.<sup>27</sup>

Kwajalein was the support site for the U.S. nuclear testing campaign and the island where irradiated Marshallese came for medical examination. Within a year of the nuclear testing campaign's conclusion, the U.S. military designated Kwajalein the site for testing the vehicles upon which to deliver those nuclear warheads. The military transformed Kwajalein into a range for developing intercontinental ballistic missiles during the early 1960s. Kwajalein has remained central to the growth of U.S. military power following World War II through today, and thus central to the rise of the U.S. Empire more broadly. Informed by the growing range of literature devoted to postwar U.S. militarism, this dissertation argues the centrality of military expansion to the broader rise of a U.S. Empire during the past six decades. Buttressing this expansive empire, Kwajalein and the Marshall Islands have not only been central spaces of influence on U.S., Marshallese, Micronesian and broader Pacific history, but ultimately central to global history since World War II.

## Kwajalein and U.S. Empire

Kwajalein's history is that of one colonial space situated amidst an array of territories whose colonized subjects felt the "hot" consequences of U.S. military imperial expansion during the Cold War. Bruce Cumings' analysis of the deeper comparative histories of U.S. imperial expansion into the Atlantic and Pacific worlds over time

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Ibid. As detailed by International History and Politics Scholar Stewart Firth in *Nuclear Playground* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1987), the United States was not alone in using the Pacific as a Cold War testing ground. Firth's study examines U.S. nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands within a comparative context alongside British nuclear testing in Australia and Christmas Island and French nuclear testing in French Polynesia. At the time of Firth's writing, the French were continuing nuclear detonations in the Mururoa and Faungataufa atolls, which did not cease until 1996.

illuminates varied colonial impacts on local populations coming under what he identified as an emerging U.S. "archipelago of empire." My dissertation considers Kwajalein's history within that archipelagic empire and does so by further calling into question the minomered "Cold" war label. I have analyzed the island's history alongside scholarship detailing the array of U.S. "proxy wars" arising in decolonizing spaces in Southeast Asia, Central America, Africa and the Middle East among other regions that illuminates the many "hot" repercussions accompanying U.S. "interventions" around the world during this period. The Northern Marshall Islands and Kwajalein remained central sites where Marshallese suffered these consequences while fueling the "cold" imperial stalemate between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Kwajalein's story and broader Trusteeship Agreement discourse reveals the extent to which the Cold War was in part waged on a public relations front showcased through U.S. efforts to align decolonizing nations with the nation's political, economic and military agendas. The Trusteeship Agreement's reproduction of a U.S. exceptionalist story of national benevolence in Micronesia remains rooted in a deeper context of U.S. settler colonialism, Empire and American culture. U.S. disavowal of empire on Kwajalein can be framed comparatively alongside lateral examples of Cold War U.S. imperial interventions around the world. The erasure of empire on Kwajalein can also be read as a continuity of deeply rooted myths about U.S. continental settler colonial

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Bruce Cumings, "Archipelago of Empire: An American Grid for the Global Garden," in *Dominion from Sea to Sea: Pacific Ascendancy and American Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).
<sup>29</sup> I am thinking here with the collection of essays on these regional imperial interventions detailed in Christian Appy's edited collection *Cold War Constructions: The Political Culture of United States Imperialism*, 1945-1966 (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), as well as the focus on these interventions in the Middle East illuminated in Mahmood Mamdani's *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2004). In addition for additional insights on U.S. imperial interventions in Latin America, see Greg Grandin's *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006).

expansion more recently interrogated within Native American historiography.

Continuities from continental settler colonial histories through imperial expansion into the Pacific reside on one level through the colonial and imperial circuits within which historic actors move between these spaces. For example, Felix M. Keesing whose 1930s ethnographic research on the Menominee tribe in Wisconsin would later participate in training U.S. Trust Territory colonial administrators through involvement in Stanford University's School of Naval Administration during the 1940s.

But continuities of settler colonial and imperial expansion framing Kwajalein's story existed beyond the level of American individuals moving through colonial circuits. These continuities also persisted on a discursive level that further contextualizes how U.S. imperial expansion into Micronesia and Kwajalein became narrated as part of a national project rather than an imperial one. Scholars of U.S. Empire and American culture have illuminated how the U.S. projected an image of liberty and equality overseas during the Cold War while struggling to erase historic and continuous contradictions to this narrative evident in domestic and foreign relations. These scholars have revealed how the Cold War was waged economically, politically and militarily but also in the public relations arena with two imperial powers vying for alliances in the global decolonizing world. Historian Penny Von Eschen, for example, examined U.S. efforts to spin global attention to U.S. racializing and imperial policies during the Cold War by sending a cohort of Jazz Ambassadors around the world to sing (literally and metaphorically) the nation's praises to global audiences.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Penny Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

Von Eschen's work resides within a vast literature analyzing increasing U.S. imperial power amidst the simultaneous disavowal of that power during the Cold War. This literature helps explain why upholding the narrative of a benevolent national project in the Trust Territory and specifically on Kwajalein remained important to the U.S. during this period. Cultural historic analysis of American disavowal of empire builds upon William Appleman Williams' 1980 *Empire as a Way of Life*, which offers an important context for analyzing narratives of U.S. national benevolence on Kwajalein and across Micronesian following World War II. Williams argued the contradictions of empire to American mythological narratives of national character necessitated the continued reproduction of narratives of American benevolence. Given the rise of the U.S. military industrial imperial complex during the Cold War emerging at a moment of international decolonization, the importance of disavowing the imperial nature of U.S. expansive power proved key to U.S. Cold War propaganda.

The Trusteeship Agreement narrated the U.S. presence in Micronesia as a necessary good to both ensure U.S. national security and broader global peace. The Agreement offered a legitimating discursive terrain framing U.S. entitlement to use Micronesia as a laboratory to expand military power and technology following World

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Empire as a Way of Life: An Essay on the Causes and Character of America's Present Predicament, Along With a Few Thoughts About an Alternative (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980) complicated Appleman Williams's earlier work, The Tragedy of American Diplomacy. (Cleveland: World Pub. Co., 1959), which offered an economic determinist history of American Empire in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Scholars who have built upon Williams' work and whose analysis of American culture and Empire have proved theoretically important to my approach to Kwajalein also include Amy Kaplan, Laura Briggs, Mary Renda, Laura Wexler.

See also Appy, Cold War Constructions, Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease (eds) Cultures of United States Imperialism (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), Von Eschen's Satchmo Blows Up the World, Laura Wexler's Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of U.S. Imperialism (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), and Laura Briggs' Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002) as one entry point into this literature.

War II. U.N. sanction and promotion of the United States as a global defender married a narrative of U.S. national security to that of the world. In doing so, the agreement supported an unprecedented scale of technological advancement enabling an ever increasingly destructive range of nuclear and missile weaponry. The violent repercussions of U.S. weapons development campaigns have come through in the displacement and irradiation of hundreds of Marshallese individuals over the years.

U.S. colonial history on Kwajalein illuminates the persistence of the American narrative of a nation in a perpetual state of insecurity necessitating continued wartime preparation unhindered by changes in globally defined enemies. While the Cold War came to a close in 1989, Kwajalein's missile testing mission has continued uninterrupted since the early 1960s through today. This continuity exemplifies the power of deeper cultural narratives of a nation defined in a perpetual state of threat that further contextualize President Eisenhower's 1961 cautionary about the military industrial complex. The growing complex would comprise a multi-billion dollar colonial industry over time. This industry would remain in place following the Soviet Union's demise to foster continued weapons development projects to prepare the nation for an everexpanding array of international enemy threats. As African Historian Mahmood

Mamdani argued in his 2004 *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War and the Roots of Terror,* this industrial war machine paired alongside Cold War politics produced

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> For further analysis of the American war story myth, see Richard Slotkin's *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), and Tom Englehardt's *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998).

another set of enemies to perform in the U.S. war story's newest iteration, the War on Terror.<sup>34</sup>

### Kwajalein and the Discipline of Space, Place and Mobility

My analysis of Kwajalein's history centers the island's transformations as reflective of a particular Cold War moment of military and suburban containment, security and discipline. The story I tell reveals the centrality of U.S. efforts to create order within a space of colonial instability; to discipline people into relational roles within that space over time through both military and suburban modes of surveillance. Military officials have continually struggled to regulate distance between Kwajalein and Ebeye, between Americans and Marshallese and between American bachelors and American families on Kwajalein. While never fully successful in controlling these distinct populations, the importance of this goal to the military came through in the army's violent responses to Marshallese challenges to this order in their sail-in protests on Kwajalein during the 1980s. Marshallese protestors disrupted both the army's policies of segregation on Kwajalein and the military's narration of the island as a space of American entitlement. The cultural imagining of Kwajalein as a space of American suburban domesticity historically relied upon the dehumanization of Marshallese and the positioning of their presence in the region as both foreign and existing to serve Americans. Thus, when Marshallese challenged these narratives and asserted their existence beyond such categories, military officials responded aggressively and violently.

Military reaction to Marshallese sail-ins to Kwajalein revealed their attempt to reassert control over both their missile-testing mission, which the protests delayed, but

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Mamdani. *Good Muslim*. *Bad Muslim* 

also over the narration of the island as space of U.S. entitlement. Army design and investments transformed Kwajalein into a space of suburban domesticity and narrated the island as residing with the national domestic separated from a Marshallese foreign landscape. On one level, Kwajalein's transformation into a space of domesticity through the spatial and cultural structures of suburbia layered the island with a Cold War narrative of home and family protection. On another level, suburbanization transformed Kwajalein into a domestic space by marking the island as interior to the United States. As scholars like Elaine Tyler May have alluded to, Cold War suburbanization captured both of these narratives as the suburbs became a familiar and familial manifestation of the domestic through the home, the family and the nation.<sup>35</sup>

As Kwajalein became marked as a space of domesticity, Ebeye became narrated as a space of foreign labor. Similar to spaces historically narrated as urban in the United States, Ebeye was perceived as a home to workers not families; a space foreign to the domestic of American suburbia. As urban history scholars have shown, during the Cold War, the urban constituted a space of racialized threat from which suburbia provided a protective domestic refuge.<sup>36</sup> Thus, during the Marshallese protests when these racialized foreign others claimed Kwajalein to be part of their domestic, their home, the army quickly worked to silence that narrative. They did so while also successfully containing the protest's impact on the island's American civilian community. While local and international media reported the Marshallese protests around the world, the military

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1988).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> For more on this topic, see Thomas Sugrue's *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), Matthew D. Lassiter's *The Suburban Crisis: The Pursuit and Defense of the American Dream* (forthcoming), and Mike Davis' *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992).

effectively kept Kwajalein's civilian community in the dark by creating a media blackout on the island and regulating civilian proximity to the Marshallese protestors.

During these moments of protests and periods of relative calm, colonial hierarchies between Americans and Marshallese on Kwajalein and Ebeye were largely produced, reinforced and negotiated in reference to Kwajalein's militarized structures of suburban surveillance. On Kwajalein, the narrative of dual Cold War threats of Soviet attack alongside fears of a racialized urban other residing nearby historically counterposed simultaneous narratives of suburban security marking American domesticity. While narratives of threat to Kwajalein's domestic security came through the form of foreign penetration from a Soviet enemy and a foreign Marshallese racialized laborer, the island's suburban domesticity also remained jeopardized by presumed risks imposed by a resident bachelor population. Military policies attempting to regulate the movement of this potentially predatory population also characterized the island's structure of military surveillance.

The convergence of disciplining movement and ordering people through militarism and suburbanization on Kwajalein can be comparatively linked to other analyses of military suburban surveillance in the continental U.S. In his chapter, "Fortress L.A.," appearing in his 1992 *City of Quartz: Excavating Los Angeles,* Mike Davis explores the relationship between militarism and suburbanization by analyzing surveillance practices in Los Angeles and its surrounding suburbs. Davis' Foucauldian analysis of panopticon-like surveillance devices adorning public buildings and private suburban lawns offers an essential comparative lens for considering the continuity of these practices and structures into Kwajalein's disciplinary setting. Both Davis' L.A.

fortress and Kwajalein's military regulations ordering movement attempt to evoke a sense of security amidst a perpetual state of insecurity of the suburbs.<sup>37</sup> Building upon Davis' insights on L.A.'s suburban militarized surveillance structure, this project brings into sharper relief areas of overlap in U.S. suburbanization and militarism during the Cold War. Like suburbanization in the U.S., Kwajalein became a space of surveillance and protection, a refuge for the nation's most prized and cherished assets: white heteronormative nuclear families. Suburbanization served as an effective technology for ordering residency and labor in a space perceived as perpetually insecure.

Kwajalein's history of suburban segregation mirrored postwar U.S. residential patterns in certain respects. In some ways, Kwajalein and Ebeye's relational spatial and cultural development compared with other U.S. continental narratives of suburban protection from urban ghettoization. Thomas Sugrue's study of urban and suburban segregation in Detroit revealed how the motor city's spatial and cultural production as a ghetto emerged alongside white flight to Detroit's suburbs and a history of violent exclusion against the city's racialized residents.<sup>38</sup> Sugrue's model reveals Detroit's suburbs as an almost frontier space welcoming inward migration structured through white flight. But as already noted, Kwajalein's suburbia reflected a space of containment rooted in place, not movement. Ebeye's construction as an urban ghetto, however, reflected discourse partially mirroring that which Sugrue traces in narrations of Detroit. But contrasting Sugrue's portrait of how the mobility of Detroit's racialized residents was contained by suburban exclusion, American narratives decrying Ebeye's urban density linked ghetto discourse to a perception of the population's uncontrolled and seemingly

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Davis, City of Quartz, 224-228.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Sugrue, The Origins of the Urban Crisis

uncontrollable mobility. If Kwajalein proved a space of suburban containment, U.S. colonial administrators, military officials and journalists often scapegoated Ebeye's urban impoverishment with an inability to contain the mobility of the population.

Sugrue's analysis offers a comparative lens that reveals how histories of containment and mobility distinctively informed Detroit and Ebeye's spatial and cultural transformations over time. Furthermore, his theoretical model for broadly interrogating the relationality and interdependence of suburban and urban spatial and cultural history has proved an essential framework for my interrogation of Kwajalein's history under U.S. colonial rule. Employing this approach to investigating Kwajalein and Ebeye's historic transformations I hope to expand the field of Urban and Suburban Studies by considering these processes within the realm of U.S. Empire.<sup>39</sup> My approach also purposefully intervenes in previous studies of Kwajalein and Ebeye by Pacific Scholars whose analytic focus has kept the islands histories narratively separate. 40 Pacific Historian David Hanlon and Pacific Studies scholars Gregory Dvorak and Monica LaBriola have each closely considered the histories of Kwajalein and Ebeye and their work has individually and collectively proved essential and inspiring to this project. But each of their studies have also centered one of the island's histories over the other. My project hopes to push this work further by considering the analytic possibilities embedded in researching and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Another recent work expanding urban history beyond the boundaries of nation-state frameworks has been Historian Coll Thrush's *Native Seattle: Histories from the Crossing Over Place* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008). My project also remains informed by Thrush's pathbreaking exploration of how members from the Duwamish, Suquamish and other native tribes influenced the evolution of Seattle, and the city's relational impact on the way native peoples in the region interacted with their spatial environment. <sup>40</sup> See David Hanlon's chapter "Dumping on Ebeye," in his *Remaking Micronesia: Discourse over Development in a Pacific Territory, 1944-1982* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), Gregory Dvorak's *Remapping Home: Touring the Betweenness of Kwajalein.* Master's Thesis, Center for Pacific Islands Studies (University of Hawai'i at Manoa, 2004) and LaBriola, "Iien Ippan Doon"

analyzing the two islands' deeply entangled histories and consequential dependencies under U.S. colonial administration.

My decision to further narrate Kwajalein and Ebeye's histories together in the majority of this project's chapters also attempts to rupture the naturalization of their segregation over time. By narrating these histories together, I highlight and mark the *structure* and continuity of segregation between the two islands that in many respects has become unmarked historically and historiographically. Segregation between the two islands has been commonly identified as a historic event, a naval decision in 1951 to displace all Micronesians from Kwajalein. The continuity of U.S. military decisions over time to maintain that structure of segregation has historically remained unmarked and in some respects has become seemingly unremarkable. It is just the way it is. This unmarking of the two island's structural segregation over time as the result of continual military choices mirrors American cultural patterns defining historic urban and suburban segregation in the continental United States. My attempt to deconstruct this naturalized process is deeply inspired and modeled upon urban and suburban historiographic efforts to deconstruct the history of postwar segregation in the United States.

This project's consideration of the role Kwajalein and Ebeye's relational history has played in wider spatial and cultural transformations in the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, the Pacific, the U.S. and the world alongside their central influence in each others histories is also deeply inspired by Pacific cultural and spatial studies. To productively analyze these island histories, I have drawn upon considerations of space,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> In addition to Sugrue's *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, see Matthew Lassiter's *Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), and David Freund's *Colored Property: State Policy and White Racial Politics in Suburban America*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

place and mobility emerging from U.S. Urban and Suburban Studies in conversation with the distinctive considerations of space in Pacific Studies. In so doing, I have situated Kwajalein's story within pathbreaking spatial insights articulated by the late Pacific Scholar Epeli Hau'ofa, alongside recent studies in Pacific seafaring and navigation. In his paradigm-shifting 1994 essay, "Our Sea of Islands," Hau'ofa argued the Pacific remained "a sea of islands" rather than "islands in a far sea. It has challenged the academic colonizing patterns that historically positioned Pacific Islands as tiny, isolated and disconnected. Hau'ofa's vision provided "a more holistic perspective in which things are seen in the totality of their relationships. It has theoretic spatial approach enabled an broader historic lens for analyzing space through the sea of intersecting communities with relationships of continual interaction and interdependence. Hau'ofa's vision infused my approach to interrogating Kwajalein's enlarged role within global history as well as the island's relational and interdependent historic connection to Ebeye.

# **Methodology and Project Constraints**

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> My consideration of movement through space on Kwajalein takes into account Pacific Studies Scholar Vicente M. Diaz's work centering mobility in the Pacific, employing indigenous epistemologies emerging from seafaring practices. In an introductory essay to his 1997 film *Sacred Vessels*, Diaz employs the navigational technology of *etak* as a framework for understanding islands as moving. *Etak* allowed the navigator to reckon his position at sea by marking a third mobile island point in relation to the island one departs from and the island of destination. Diaz employs the concept of *etak* as not solely metaphoric but as a way of seeing islands as literally in movement—tectonically, culturally and historically. Also see David Lewis' *We, the Navigators: The Ancient Art of Landfinding in the Pacific.* Second edition (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994), and Ben Finney's *Sailing in the Wake of Ancestors: Reviving Polynesian Voyaging* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 2003).

Epeli Hau'ofa, "Our Sea of Islands" (*The Contemporary Pacific*, Vol. 6, No. 1, Spring 1994), 148-161.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Ibid, 155.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> In addition to considering Pacific spatial theory, my project also is informed by Western theory on space, place and mobility and particularly the work of Henri Lefebrve, Edward Soja and Michel de Certeau and their consideration of the creation of human geographies and space as practiced place.

Amidst this expansive array of secondary and theoretical literature informing a broadly conceived approach to Kwajalein's history resides the nuts and bolts of evidentiary texts comprising each of this dissertation's ten chapters. This section examines my methodological approaches to this study while also highlighting the resulting project limitations. My chapters are bookended by a 1944 to 1986 periodization based around U.S. colonial administration on the island. While President Truman did not sign the Trusteeship Agreement until 1947, the project's timeline begins a few years earlier with the 1944 battle of Kwajalein marking the initial U.S. wartime role in the region. Also examined is the immediate postwar naval administration on Kwajalein that laid the foundation for later approaches to regional governance under the Trust administration. Chapter ten also pushes beyond 1986 to offer analysis of the presumed "post-colonial" moment in the Marshall Islands. The chapter considers how continued U.S. military policies on Kwajalein shaped the historic relationship between the island and Ebeye.

To analyze how Kwajalein became naturalized as a U.S. space during this period on a global U.N. level down through the island's physical and cultural transformations, this project drew upon a wide range of archival sources and oral history interviews. The materials informing the ten chapters included U.S. and international governmental documents like United Nations declarations, Trust Territory directives and correspondence, Department of Interior correspondence, presidential speeches and U.S. senate hearings. Offering a lens into military governance over the region, this project also employed early naval reports and correspondence and later army directives, telegrams, reports and introductory manuals detailing rules and regulations on Kwajalein. The media

played a significant role in shaping Kwajalein and Ebeye's history and has also remained a central source in this project. My dissertation draws upon articles investigating U.S. military and Trust Territory policies on Kwajalein and Ebeye, the Marshall Islands and throughout Micronesia surfacing in local Marshall Islands publications, alongside broader Micronesian, Pacific, U.S. and international news outlets.

To gain a better sense of how this history played out on the ground among civilians living and working on Kwajalein, this project also investigated Kwajalein's civilian contractor manuals, the island newspaper and Kwajalein's high school yearbooks. Because civilian voices remained sparse in archival collections, this project also drew upon oral history interviews with former and current Kwajalein civilian residents. My dissertation does not include oral history interviews with military personnel. I was warned by two individuals who grew up on Kwajalein and have most recently researched and written about the island that requesting military interviews would prove a fruitless effort and possibly jeopardize my ability to obtain my sponsorship to visit the island. Luckily, the archives proved rife with military voices detailing army and navy perceptions of Kwajalein and Ebeye, through a diverse array of correspondence, reports, directives and speeches. The 2009 Australian short documentary film investigating the island's history, *Rocket Island*, also included interviews with military officials this project drew upon.

While offering a greater lens into military voices on Kwajalein, *Rocket Island* seemed to have hindered my ability to interview civilians connected to Kwajalein's history. One civilian, who wished to remain anonymous, informed me that an overall negative response to *Rocket Island* from civilians uncomfortable with the film's portrayal

of racialized segregation on Kwajalein made many civilians suspicious thereafter of anyone conducting research on the island. I conducted two research trips to Kwajalein with only the second trip affording me sponsorship to stay on island long enough to interview civilians there. The first trip enabled me to stay on Ebeye and conduct three evening research visits to Kwajalein under the guidance of my sponsor. This sponsor, who also sponsored my second extended visit, escorted me around the island during that visit ensuring I did not stray from the army's approved area of visitation. My first trip afforded an opportunity to observe the island's spatial layout and an extended period to conduct oral history interviews on Ebeye, discussed in further detail below. My second research trip came with a ten-day military approved sponsorship to stay on Kwajalein.

Prior to my second arrival to Kwajalein in November 2010, I arranged several interviews via email with civilians on island. The bulk of civilian contacts came from suggestions by other civilians I spoke with during my first trip to Kwajalein and during a research trip to Hawai'i (the 'Big Island'), and others who grew upon Kwajalein and have researched and written about the island. During both research trips, an increasing list of Marshallese and American contacts grew out of each interview I conducted. Two weeks prior to my second trip to Kwajalein, I received an email from one of the civilians on island who had agreed to be interviewed. The civilian explained he had googled me and found that my dissertation title included the word imperialism to define U.S. history in the region. He categorized my word choice as "quite provocative," and continued on to note that upon reading an abstract for one of my conference papers, he found that I referred to the "US 'Colonial' period at Kwajalein." This civilian noted, "A negatively

focused conclusion to your work appears to be established."<sup>47</sup> He added he would no longer be speaking with me.

I detail this story for a couple reasons. First, this civilian's and consequent other civilians' response to my use of the terms imperial and colonial to describe Kwajalein's history seemed quite telling. Following this civilian's email, I quickly received notice that two more individuals would not be speaking with me and my island sponsor wrote panicked about my research intentions. After explaining to my sponsor that indeed, while I would love to take credit for the suggestion, I was not the first individual to identify the historic U.S. military presence across Micronesia as colonial. I further reassured her of my intentions in visiting the island as an effort to thicken my analysis on that history, particularly given the absence of civilian voices in the archives. Fortunately, my sponsor remained open to critical engagement with the island's history and continued to sponsor my visit. During that visit to Kwajalein, I further learned what a brave move this was given the degree to which concerns about my visit had rippled through the entire island community placing my sponsor under much scrutiny. This experience revealed the extent of the military's success in having produced an environment whose narrative as an American space of suburban domesticity existing outside the realm of colonialism would henceforth be taken up by the civilian community and vehemently guarded.

This story also explains my subsequent limitations on conducting as many oral history interviews with civilians on Kwajalein as I would have liked. I was, however, able to interview three civilians during this visit. I had interviewed three other civilians on Hawai'i (the 'Big Island') the prior month and one on O'ahu after the Kwajalein trip.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> I chose to keep this individuals name anonymous here, since given the fact that he refused to speak with me further on the island despite my follow-up explanations, he clearly has not given consent to be included in this dissertation.

This project retains my sponsor's anonymity as well as a few additional interviewees requesting to remain anonymous (identified accordingly throughout the dissertation). Some of these individuals who spoke candidly about their impressions of the island's history expressed concern that their remarks could jeopardize their job security on the island. In addition to these requests for anonymity, I have also kept anonymous one researcher who shared observations after gaining access to an array of photographs documenting U.S. violence against Marshallese protestors during the 1980s. In order to protect this source's continued research, that individual too remains anonymous in this project. Lastly, one source on the outer island of Namdrik requested she remain anonymous, expressing a personal preference for discretion. In conducting all of my audio recorded oral history interviews, I had interviewees sign waver forms (translated in English and Marshallese) describing my research, how their interviews would be used in this research and offering them the freedom to chose whether or not they remained anonymous. Of my 33 oral history interviews, only two interviewees chose to remain anonymous.

My oral interviews covered a broad range of individuals participating in Kwajalein and Ebeye's relational histories under the U.S. colonial period. These interviews took place on Kwajalein, Ebeye, South Loi (an island just north of Ebeye), the Marshallese capital Majuro, the outer island Namdrik, Hawai'i (the 'Big Island') and O'ahu in Hawai'i. The range of interviewees included Marshallese political leaders and landowners, Marshallese workers, American workers, Americans who had grown up as children on Kwajalein and Marshallese young adults who had participated as children in Kwajalein's school quasi-integration program. I also interviewed the American journalist

Giff Johnson who proved most prolific in writing about the history of Kwajalein and Ebeye. Of these 33 oral history interviews and three additional email interviews, nine interviews included Marshallese individuals who did not speak English requiring the assistance of my American interpreter, Rachel Miller. Miller's personal connection to the islands having worked on Majuro for three years and volunteering as a teacher on the outer island Namdrik from 2005-2006 afforded me the opportunity to travel with her to Namdrik during my first visit to the region in May 2010. My weeklong stay on Namdrik gave me a brief glimpse at outer island living, which provided an important comparative lens for framing Kwajalein and Ebeye's spatial and cultural transformations amidst broader Marshall Islands spatial and cultural history. The visit also afforded the opportunity to interview two individuals on Namdrik who had spent time visiting Kwajalein and Ebeye during the 1990s to get their impressions of the island's spatial and cultural transformations from an outer island perspective.

My opportunities during both research trips to the Marshall Islands to interview more than twenty Marshallese individuals on Ebeye who had worked on Kwajalein over the years came through a friend's connection to Marshallese educator Deo Keju. During my first visit to the region, I stayed on Ebeye for eight days. Keju arranged my accommodations and set up interviews with an array of Marshallese individuals across age ranges and occupational variations on Kwajalein. While staying on Kwajalein during the second trip to the region, Keju further assisted in setting up additional interviews for me during my briefer visits to Ebeye. During my first visit, I had asked Keju to make sure these interviews included Marshallese women who had worked on Kwajalein over the years and particularly those who could speak to army regulations disciplining domestics

during the 1960s and 1970s. These interviews with older Marshallese women who did not speak English comprised the largest portion of interpreted interviews. I asked Keju to arrange this so that I could better understand, from the perspective of those employed as domestics coming under increased regulation, how they negotiated these new rules. But I also asked for these interviews and included a spotlight on domestics in my project to help expand documentation of Marshallese women's roles in this history.

More than any other group participating in Kwajalein and Ebeye's historic transformations, Marshallese women have remained absent from the archives. Not until Pacific Studies scholar Monica LaBriola's pathbreaking 2006 Master's Thesis centering Marshallese women on Ebeye in studying the island's culture had any significant documentation of Marshallese women involved in this history appeared. My efforts at greater documentation of Marshallese women's voices resides within a broad array of oral history interviews documenting Marshallese men's roles in this history through work, protest and political leadership. But to further consider Marshallese women's participation on a par with that of Marshallese men in this historic investigation proves a significant intervention building upon LaBriola's inspiration. To gain a better sense of Marshallese men's experiences, negotiations and participation in the historic transformations occurring throughout the Trust Territory and specifically on Kwajalein, this project also examined a range of archival materials documenting these experiences. My dissertation drew largely upon the University of Hawai'i at Manoa's Pacific Collection and Trust Territory Archives alongside the National Archives and Library of Congress to obtain sources on Marshallese political leaders' proclamations before the United Nations, the Congress of Micronesia and U.S. Senate Hearings.

Finally, this dissertation remains inspired by the creative writing of American civilian Robert Barclay who grew up on Kwajalein and wrote the only novel about Kwajalein and Ebeye and whose oral history also heavily informed this project. Alongside Barclay's novel, this project took seriously innovative methodological ideas emerging out of both spatial and cultural turns and employed close analysis of photographs and other illustrative images, maps and documentary films. The range of voices this project has incorporated presumes that Kwajalein's history has been shaped in equally significant ways by a wide array of historic actors and actresses.

Unlike most scholars who have written about Kwajalein, the Marshall Islands, and Micronesia more broadly I have not lived in the region. I also do not speak Marshallese and thus, as noted above, employed a interpreter for interviews with those Marshallese individuals who did not speak English. This project relies heavily upon scholarship produced by individuals who have lived in Micronesia and the Marshall Islands and specifically on Kwajalein and Ebeye. Pacific Historian David Hanlon's 1998 *Remaking Micronesia: Discourse over Development in a Pacific Territory, 1944-1982*, offered a comparative approach to examining development discourse across Micronesia and laid out the Trust Territory history on Ebeye that proved essential to this project. Hanlon's broad historic analysis is the most frequently referenced secondary source in this project, which could not exist without his foundational insights.

While Hanlon's path to analysis of Ebeye came through his earliest introduction to Micronesia as a Peace Corps volunteer in Pohnpei, Greg Dvorak and Monica LaBriola's research and writing remained specifically framed through their experiences in living on Kwajalein and Ebeye respectively. Both of their works also proved to be essential

building blocks upon which this dissertation emerged. Each wrote from a position of having experienced the islands in ways infused with the nuanced specificities of knowing a place that residency brings, which this dissertation does not presume to capture. On many levels, their work illuminates what this dissertation does not do. Most recently, Dvorak's work has included close analysis of the Japanese influence on Kwajalein's cultural and spatial transformations. While my periodization begins with the moment of repatriation of Japanese and some Korean laborers on Kwajalein back to their home countries, I neglect to include any substantial discussion of Japanese influence on the region, aside from brief mentions of wartime history in chapter one. Dvorak 2007's dissertation, "Seeds from Afar Flowers from the Reef: Re-Membering the Coral and Concrete of Kwajalein Atoll," analyzes the Japanese influence. He does so by also examining Japanese sources through his fluency in Japanese language, and also his position of both having grown up on Kwajalein and having spent more than twenty years in Japan. Dvorak's work probes how Kwajalein's landscape is multiply layered by the histories of Marshallese, American and Japanese influences capturing discursive textures neglected by this dissertation.<sup>48</sup>

Likewise, Monica LaBriola's 2006 Master's Thesis, *lien Ippan Doon (This Time Together): Celebrating Survival in an 'Atypical Marshallese Community*,' considered Marshallese cultural continuities on Ebeye from LaBriola's unique perspective of having lived on the island for several years. LaBriola's work with Jesuit volunteers brought her

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Dvorak's *Remapping Home*, which examined the island's cultural landscape from a personal vantage point of childhood memories framed alongside theoretical considerations of gender and sexuality also significantly informed my project.

to Ebeye. 49 LaBriola's scholarship provided an important cultural template for understanding Ebeye's history and also throws into relief the limitations of this dissertation's discussions of Marshallese culture. Those discussions relied heavily upon LaBriola's work alongside anthropological studies of the region, in addition to individual Marshallese narrations of culture that arose during my oral history interviews. While my study of Kwajalein brings to light further details of Marshall Islands history and in some areas Micronesian history more broadly, this project is not a cultural study of the Marshall Islands. I specify this because, in contrast, I see this project as narrating both American history and American culture. My background having grown up in the United States as a U.S. citizen and my linguistic limitations in only speaking English combine with multiple years of formal study in U.S. history and American culture that began much earlier than my education in Pacific, Micronesian and Marshallese history. Thus, I stand on firmer ground from a cultural, linguistic and formal training position to offer a story analyzing U.S. and Marshallese histories while gesturing to broader statements about American culture rather than Marshallese culture.

In addition to these cultural limitations, I acknowledge my subjectivity, and the limitations in writing this project from a position of settler privilege, with its lack of any personal insight into the experience of colonial subjectivity. I write from having grown up with settler privilege in the U.S. continental settler colonial space as well as my recent settler privilege living on another Pacific colony, Hawai'i. While I have lacked the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> In addition to these core works that this dissertation has built upon in specifically analyzing Kwajalein and Ebeye's relational histories, Sandra Crimson's *Negotiating the Borders of Empire: An Ethnography of Access on Kwajalein Atoll* (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Georgia, 2005) offers an important companion for chapter five of this project in consideration of controlled mobility on Kwajalein, as does Julie Walsh Kroeker's *Imagining the Marshalls: Chiefs, Tradition, and the State on the Fringes of U.S. Empire* (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, 2003) better understanding both chapter four's discussion on U.S. leasing practices and chapter nine's discussion of politics in the Marshall Islands.

opportunity to live on Kwajalein or Ebeye, researching and writing this project in Hawai'i has offered an opportunity to consider historic distinctions and spaces of overlap in these shared histories of U.S. military colonialism.

Reading U.S. military expansion across Micronesia while studying and observing the military presence on O'ahu alongside the contemporary Native Hawaiian sovereignty movement has inspired my comparative thinking about U.S. military colonialisms across the Pacific. When writing about Marshallese protests against army missile testing and colonial encroachment on Kwajalein, I have thought about historic Native Hawaiian protests against U.S. weapons testing on Kaho'olawe and live fire training in O'ahu's Makua Valley. It would be hard not to reflect on these shared histories of U.S. military colonialisms in Hawai'i and Kwajalein when living on O'ahu where the military controls 85,718 of the 382,148 island acres, or 22.4 percent of the island. 50 Kathy E. Ferguson and Phyllis Turnbull have brilliantly illuminated how this military presence became naturalized over time in Hawai'i through discursive strategies making militarization "hidden in plain sight." 51 While the U.S. military's history of colonial control in Hawai'i remains distinct from that history on Kwajalein and the broader Marshall Islands, there does seem space for productive comparisons, as does Guam's recent history. I see particularly interesting sites for comparisons around the centrality of anti-military protests fueling sovereignty movements across these diverse Pacific spaces.

#### **Dissertation Outline**

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Kajihiro, Kyle. "The Militarizing of Hawai'i," in Fujikane and Okamura's (eds) *Asian Settler Colonialism*, 174.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Ferguson and Turnbull, *Oh Say Can You See?*, xiii.

This dissertation is written in ten chapters divided into four sections. Part I consists of two chapters that offer foundational readings on U.S. wartime and immediate postwar history in Micronesia, the Marshall Islands and Kwajalein specifically. This first dissertation section provides an introduction to the global context framing the U.S. presence in the region and how military governance operated under the early naval administration. Both chapters examine how discourse about the wartime battle, the Trusteeship Agreement and naval administration on Kwajalein all worked to begin naturalizing the island as a U.S. space.

Chapter one explores the origins of the U.S. relationship with Kwajalein by examining postwar narratives of the Kwajalein battle and the 1947 U.N. Trusteeship Agreement. The chapter examines how the narrative reproduction of the Kwajalein battle story over more than five decades naturalized U.S. entitlement to the region by narrating the island's inevitable transition from wartime capture to postwar possession. This narrative pattern simultaneously worked to discursively erase Marshallese historic and continued connections to the island. Chapter one further examines the 1947 U.N. Trusteeship Agreement giving the U.S. administrative responsibilities throughout Micronesia to support Micronesians towards self-government alongside a contradictory directive to use the islands to build up U.S. military defense. This chapter interrogates the agreement's discursive work in obscuring the imperial nature of the expansive U.S. control over Micronesia amidst an unprecedented global climate of international decolonization.

Chapter two explores colonial policies under the naval administration that began marking Kwajalein as an American space. The chapter investigates how naval policies

disciplined the island's residents and workers through normalizing U.S. cultural ideas about gender, sexuality and labor on island. I first examine how U.S. hetero-normative notions of gendered and sexualized behavior were mapped onto Kwajalein through naval regulations policing deviant sexuality among naval officers, and by attempts to control predatory bachelors. Central to this spatial discipline were racializing labor segregation policies on Kwajalein seen in the segregated Micronesian labor camp. The chapter examines how narratives about protecting Micronesian culture were used by the navy to justify this segregation. This policy was taken to an ultimate extreme when, in 1951, all Micronesian laborers were removed to Ebeye, the island that would henceforth house Kwaialein's commuting service sector.

Part II diverges from the wartime and immediate postwar period to examine

Kwajalein's production as a space of U.S. domesticity in the 1960s. Here, attention turns
to Ebeye, which became home to displaced Marshallese and those employed in

Kwajalein's service sector and began emerging as a racialized urban counterpart to

Kwajalein segregated suburb. Part II consists of three chapters, which taken together
reveal how Kwajalein and Ebeye's suburban and urban transformations represented local
manifestations of U.S. practices naturalizing the Trust Territory on a broader level within

U.S. national discourse. By contracting each island's space and physically transforming
the islands to fit U.S. labor and residential spatial patterns, army and Trust Territory
officials helped further obscure the imperial nature of the U.S. presence in the Marshall
Islands. Methodologically, the three chapters comprising part II approach the two islands'
relational spatial and cultural production by focusing on how people became narrated into

place, how administrators legalized land control and planned built environments and how U.S. officials regulated mobility within these spaces.

Chapter three focuses on how people were narrated into space on Kwajalein and Ebeye. The chapter explores how army and civilian contractor manuals instructed Americans into relational and hierarchical roles on suburban Kwajalein and in relation to racialized Marshallese laborers on Ebeye. Army and civilian contractor manuals marked Kwajalein a space of Cold War insecurity alongside segregated suburban domesticity. Chapter three also examines contrasting narratives positioning Ebeye as a slum and repository for racialized labor in contrast to Kwajalein's suburban family setting. Chapter three analyzes this characterization of Ebeye as it appears throughout media publications, Trust Territory and military reports and assessments. I examine how the range of U.S. discourse on Ebeye worked to mark the island as a space of labor not families; a place foreign to both Marshallese culture and to Kwajalein's American suburban domesticity. Challenging this discourse marking Ebeye a foreign space, chapter three examines Marshallese narratives of Ebeye that positioned the island's culture as continuous with that of the outer islands.

Chapter four examines how the U.S. controlled and developed land on Kwajalein and Ebeye through contract and construction. The chapter examines U.S. leasing practices and divergent histories of investment and planning of each island's built environments. U.S. officials used leasing and eminent domain policies on Kwajalein and Ebeye, obscuring the colonial nature of U.S. land acquisition by employing discourse narrating Marshallese land loss through a framework of mutually agreed upon contracts. Chapter four also investigates how the history of construction layered infrastructure upon

these newly "leased" lands in dramatically divergent ways. The chapter examines discourse informing the extreme investment and planning disparities between Kwajalein and Ebeye's built environments that resulted in a multi-billion dollar suburban military suburb on Kwajalein residing three miles from Ebeye's crumbling infrastructure. The divergent history in planning and investment between the two islands arose largely due to Kwajalein's segregation policies and Trusteeship directives designating the Trust Territory responsible for Ebeye, despite the island's historic relationship to Kwajalein.

Chapter five examines U.S. control of movement through space by focusing on policies regulating access to and mobility within Kwajalein and Ebeye. The chapter explores how Trust Territory administrators attempted to regulate migration to an increasingly crowded Ebeye through Operation Exodus, a program that created new categories of legitimate residency on the island. The program marked those employed or employable on Kwajalein as lawful while others became identified as "illegal." This attempt to control movement by criminalizing Marshallese who deviated from U.S. categories of legitimacy also informed policies on Kwajalein under military regulations that increasingly restricted access and movement. Chapter five explores Kwajalein's criminalizing segregation policies restricting where Marshallese workers could shop, eat, and even do their laundry. In addition to examining policies restricting Marshallese movement, chapter five also analyzes military policies regulating American movement on Kwajalein through gendering disciplinary structures. Army regulations aimed to protect a model of hetero-normative nuclear family structure by controlling bachelors' and racialized Marshallese workers' proximity to suburban family housing.

While Parts I and II examine processes naturalizing Kwajalein as a U.S. space of domesticity in periods of relative calm, Part III begins exploring how U.S. exceptionalist narratives held up in moments of crisis and rupture. Chapters six, seven and eight examine how military and Trust Territory officials worked to maintain exceptionalist national narratives when these narratives came under extreme duress. Examining three distinctive moments of rupture and violence in the region through their overlapping connections, part III offers an important window into Marshallese, American and international counter-narratives to discourses of U.S. benevolence in the region. U.S. violences in the region helped ignite these challenges and also worked to quell and silence some of the most direct rejections of U.S. entitlement to Kwajalein that emerged during the 1970s and 1980s protests. These events mark moments in which the process of producing Kwajalein as a U.S. space became most directly challenged and thus narratives normalizing U.S. Empire in the Marshalls seemed most open to reproduction or change. Part III highlights these instances of rupture and examines how certain narratives and policies changed while others became further concretized. All three chapters meditate on the broader implications of these changes and continuities for U.S. colonialism in the Marshall Islands.

Chapter six identifies ruptures in the American narratives of Kwajalein as a space of U.S. entitlement instigated by a variety of Marshallese leaders and workers as they marked discriminatory policies on Kwajalein and challenged living conditions on Ebeye. This chapter explores how these ruptures arose primarily through testimonies at the 1976 U.S. senate hearings on Ebeye and accompanying media coverage of those hearings and broader conditions characterizing Kwajalein and Ebeye's segregation. Chapter six

theorizes varied forms of violence taking place on Kwajalein, thinking deeply about the implications of health care denial as a form of structural violence sitting along a continuum of the violences of irradiation detailed in chapter seven and physical beatings against Marshallese protestors examined in chapter eight.

Chapter seven examines new evidence surfacing in Atomic Energy Commission reports, victim testimonies and medical reports attesting to the long-term impact of the U.S. nuclear testing campaign in the Marshalls. These findings arose during the 1970s and 1980s and appeared alongside articles decrying segregation on Kwajalein and deteriorating conditions on Ebeye. Many Marshallese residing on Ebeye have remained deeply connected to the history of U.S. nuclear testing and the violence of displacement and irradiation foundational to that testing. Chapter seven argues the violent nuclear testing legacy in the Marshalls should inform broader analysis of U.S. violence in the region and Marshallese responses to that violence rupturing exceptionalist narratives of U.S. benevolence in the region.

Chapter eight considers U.S. violence against Marshallese protestors sailing to Kwajalein to reoccupy their islands in 1982. Through Operation Homecoming, a large group of unarmed Marshallese men, women and children arrived to Kwajalein to reclaim their home island and in so doing challenged U.S. entitlement to the island. I argue that the military's disproportionately violent response to these protests revealed concerns about the protests' ruptures to this U.S. narrative of entitlement in the region. Operation Homecoming interrupted U.S. missile testing on Kwajalein and incurred unexpected expenses for the military accompanying testing delays. Chapter eight examines how national and international media covered the protests and particularly how Kwajalein

came to be framed within a broader narrative of the global campaign against nuclear arms development.

Part IV traces continued changes on Kwajalein and Ebeye during the political transition to Marshallese decolonization. Chapter nine returns to historic moments less characterized by overt crisis and marked instead by a longer process of political negotiation. Chapter nine examines the political counterpart history leading up to the 1982 sail-in protests and the resultant 1986 Compact of Free Association. Kwajalein's transformed value to Marshallese landowners, Micronesian political leaders and the U.S. military over time placed the island in a distinct position to act as a political pawn through the process of decolonization in the Marshall Islands and throughout Micronesia during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Kwajalein most significantly impacted the process of Marshallese decolonization through the island's influence on U.S. removal of independence from the Marshallese ballot and the Marshallese decision to negotiate a Compact with the U.S. as a separate entity from the rest of the Trust Territory region. Chapter nine also interrogates U.S. political intimidation alongside ongoing economic dependency infusing negotiations with Marshallese political leaders prior to decolonization and thereafter, raising questions about the nature of sovereignty in the presumed "post-colonial" moment.

Chapter ten picks up in this presumed "postcolonial" moment to examine how relations changed between Kwajalein and Ebeye under the new Republic of the Marshall Islands. While chapter nine traces the army's role on Kwajalein as influencing and constraining the political process of Marshallese decolonization, chapter ten examines how the newly decolonized nation in turn influenced life on Kwajalein and Ebeye. Taken

together, both chapters analyze the long-term impact of U.S. colonial control on Kwajalein as shaping the contours of the emerging nation's sovereignty. Chapter ten explores the continued influence of the U.S. presence on Kwajalein through post-Compact changes on Ebeye including Kwajalein's school integration program. The chapter explores how educational integration remained a flagship example for many Americans pointing to the positive relationship between Kwajalein and Ebeye and the righteousness of U.S. presence in the region, further upholding a narrative American exceptionalism in this neocolonial space.

# Part I Naturalizing Kwajalein as an American Space Following World War II

Part I of this dissertation explores the foundational U.S. relationship to Kwajalein by examining early narrative patterns naturalizing the island within a U.S. national framework. Chapter one considers two separate narratives working to naturalize U.S. entitlement to the region and obscure the colonial and imperial nature of U.S. administration. The first narrative centers the production and reproduction of Kwajalein battle stories over time, which marked the island through U.S. wartime sacrifice and subsequent U.S. entitlement and possession. This narrative worked to erase any Marshallese historic presence on the island during the battle and marginalized Marshallese continuity in the region thereafter. The second narrative explored in chapter one is the Trusteeship Agreement. Under U.N. approval, the agreement sanctioned U.S. administration of Micronesia as a special national relationship, rather than an imperial endeavor. Chapter two, continues analysis of U.S. wartime and postwar narratives naturalizing the nation's presence on Kwajalein by examining discourse and policies under the naval administration that specifically mapped the island through U.S. cultural norms. These norms included marking Kwajalein a space of hetero-normative sexuality and racializing labor segregation. Taken together, these two chapters comprising part I provide analytic foundations for interrogating the subsequent history of Kwajalein's

naturalization as an American space that would continue under the army administration in the 1960s.

# Chapter One Narratives of Wartime Sacrifice and Postwar Governance

Chapter one explores the earliest relationship between the United States and Kwajalein through the context of narratives explaining the U.S. role in the region during and following World War II. The chapter begins by tracing the origins of the Kwajalein battle narrative starting with the period directly following the war through more than 50 years of narrative reproduction. By exploring continuities in the battle story's narrative reproduction to multiple U.S. audiences over time I argue that Kwajalein's remembrance as a captured prize and wartime acquisition significantly contributed to the narrative erasure of Marshallese history and presence from the island. Furthermore, the battle story worked to narrate the U.S. relationship to the Marshall Islands as one of wartime national sacrifice rather than postwar imperialism.

Following examination of the Kwajalein battle story, chapter one explores how narratives of the United Nations 1947 Trusteeship Agreement, which established U.S. administration of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, additionally buttressed U.S. disavowal of empire. This latter section also examines how U.N. discourse on this special international relationship accommodated Marshallese challenges during the 1960s identifying the Trust administration as colonial. Like analysis of the Kwajalein battle story, this section employs a discursive origins approach to understanding the Trust Territory narrative from its inception in the 1940s through the 1960s. During this later

period, U.S. and U.N. efforts to uphold narrative continuity in marking this special Trust relationship became complicated by U.N. proclamations on decolonization and the rights of indigenous peoples.

Broadly, chapter one examines these post-World War II narrative patterns in the Pacific, those of U.S. wartime sacrifice alongside a broader U.S. mission to support global security, to argue the importance of thickening analysis of the Cold War period. By centering this history in Micronesia, post-World War II scholarship can push beyond the confinement created by the descriptor "Cold" War, a limitation framing this period as "cold" because neither of the two competing imperial powers destroyed one another. When the lens is placed over Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, and honed in further on Kwajalein, the "hot" consequences for those coming under this expanding postwar U.S. military empire across the Pacific become illuminated.

## Contextualizing the Kwajalein Battle

In order to better analyze how the Kwajalein battle story has been commemorated over time, this section begins with a brief examination of the battle's historic context. The U.S. invasion of Kwajalein in late January and early February 1944, constituted one of the more difficult amphibious invasions and most extreme bombing missions in the Pacific war. Following the costly battle at Tarawa where the U.S. faced formidable Japanese defense and suffered significant casualties, the strategy informing the Kwajalein attack became one of complete destruction. The Kwajalein invasion lasted one week, during which time the U.S. dropped 36,000 shells making Kwajalein the most

concentrated bombing site of the entire Pacific war.<sup>1</sup> The amphibious invasion concluded with American victory on February 5, 1944, a mission that involved more than 41,000 American troops.<sup>2</sup> Cited by World War II Naval Historian Samuel Eliot Morison as "one of the most complicated amphibious campaigns in history [with] landings on thirty islets, fights on ten, lengthy battles on four," the invasion of Kwajalein would be recounted through a host of commemorative narratives for years to come.<sup>3</sup>

The U.S. invasion left Kwajalein Island in a state of complete devastation. In its commemorative narrative of the Kwajalein invasion, Bell Laboratories described the ordnance dropped on the island as "roughly equivalent to the destructive power of a 20-kilton atomic bomb. At the time, some believed the island would sink before the invasion itself got started...it was estimated that 100 pounds of bombs and shells had plowed into every square foot of the island." During the attack on Kwajalein Atoll, nearly 200 Marshallese died, the U.S. suffered 372 casualties with the Japanese losing 7,870. The U.S. leveled the entire island. Only one tree remained standing. The island appeared to one American troop as if it had been "picked up to 20,000 feet and then dropped."

During the past two decades scholars of the Pacific, primarily anthropologists, have begun collecting and publishing Micronesian experiences of World War II that include recollections in the Marshalls Islands and memories of the Kwajalein invasion.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Hanlon, Remaking Micronesia, 23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Lin Poyer, Suzanne Falgout and Laurence Marshall Carucci, *The Typhoon of War: Micronesian Experiences of the Pacific War* (University of Hawai'i Press: Honolulu, 2001), 121.
<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> "The Battles of Kwajalein and Roi-Namur," published by Bell Laboratories in 1974 as special edition to the company newsletter *The Interceptor*. Republished by the Kwajalein Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 10268. Located in the Pacific Collection of the Hamilton Library at the University of Hawai'i, Manoa. [Hereafter referenced as Pacific Collection, UH Manoa]

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Poyer, Falgout and Carucci, *The Typhoon of War*, 121.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> "The Battles of Kwajalein and Roi-Namur" published by Bell Telephone Laboratories, 1974, republished by the Kwajalein Veterans of Foreign Wars in 1981. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa. Pp.11.

One of the most recent collections by anthropologists Suzanne Falgout, Lin Poyer and Laurence M. Carucci, the 2008 *Memories of War: Micronesians in the Pacific War*, included excerpts from Ato Lankio describing his experience on Kwajalein. Lankio recounted how when Kwajalein became a major Japanese base in late 1939, the Japanese forced many Kwajalein people to relocate to Namu Island. He recalled,

"This was a decision that brought a great deal of sadness, and it was also fairly difficult in terms of the life that we Marshallese led and our own customs. This is because Kwajalein was a location that was extremely important to us...there was no negotiation about it, and no one discussed it with us. No one discussed it with the high chiefs...In the way that [we] now recall it, the Japanese took Kwajalein in terms of their own power. They did not take it with a feeling of goodness."

In an earlier 1991 collection edited by anthropologist Geoffrey M. White, *Remembering the Pacific War*, John Heine, who was eight years old when the war came to his home island of Jabwot in the Marshalls, noted how the war began for him through sounds. The sound of gunfire followed by "American planes all over the place dropping bombs everywhere" infused these early memories.<sup>8</sup> Heine survived the war after being separated from his family by the Japanese, and hiding out on different islands until combat ceased. He ended up on Kwajalein following the war working for the navy and learning English. Heine's recollection of what the war looked like to a child captured the uncertainty and fear that undoubtedly impacted thousands of Marshallese and Micronesians. Heine noted he could not speak for the entire Marshall Islands population but that many his age remained byproducts of the war, a conflict he emphasized "we were not a part of." He

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Suazanne Falgout, Lin Poyer and Laurence Marshall Carucci, *Memories of War: Micronesians in the Pacific War* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), 82.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Geoffrey M. White, *Remembering the Pacific War*. Occasional Paper 36, Center for Pacific Islands Studies, School of Hawaiian, Asian and Pacific Studies (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, 1991), 116. <sup>9</sup> Ibid.

continued, "We had no business in it; but we were drawn into it. As a result it is not easy for any of us in the islands to predict our futures."<sup>10</sup>

For countless other Marshallese like Heine and Lankio, World War II proved a life-altering experience, colored for many by suffering, loss, displacement and chaos. That their stories are finally being collected and shared more broadly within the past two decades is a significant recognition of Marshallese wartime experiences and an important starting point for further understanding the war's impact in the region. These stories have covered the traumatic experience of wartime bombardments, violence and family separations, as well as memories of postwar gift giving, food surplus and medical treatment for the malnourished and sick. The accounts also captured the struggles among Marshallese and other Micronesians whose lives had become intertwined in social and familial ways with pre-war Japanese settlers after the U.S. repatriated those settlers home following the war. Kwajalein landowner and World War II survivor Handel Dribo described the Kwajalein battle and consequent difficulty for Marshallese losing their Japanese friends in Adam Horowitz's 1991 documentary film *Home on the range*. Dribo recalled his relationship with the Japanese explaining that prior to the war the Japanese treated the Marshallese very well. He said they sent him to school, taught him Japanese language and writing, mathematics and music. He recalled having many dear Japanese friends and noted life only got stricter when the Japanese military arrived. 11

Dribo's interview continued on to recount the Marshallese shock accompanying the immediate wartime transition to U.S. power. He explained that he and 32 other Marshallese survived the Kwajalein battle by hiding in a bunker he had built on the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Handel Dribo interview appearing in the 1991 documentary film *Home on the range*. Produced and directed by Adam Horowitz.

island. He noted that when his wife emerged from the bunker following the battle, she felt petrified because she had never seen a white man before. Handel recalled how nobody knew what the white men would do, but these men immediately gave the Marshallese women water and the Marshallese men cigarettes. Dribo lamented the loss of the Japanese in the Marshall Islands explaining how the Japanese had given him many gifts and he felt sad for them. He recalled them saying in their final moments they would return, and he waited but they never came back. 12 Dribo explained how initially the Marshallese had total confidence in the Japanese soldiers and had no idea Japanese losses would be so bad. He described the moment America's destructive capabilities hit him. He said after the U.S. invasion he emerged from his bunker and "all [he] could see was fire and destruction all over Kwajalein Atoll. [He] couldn't see a single coconut, breadfruit or pandanus tree left standing, there was not even a single house; everything was burnt." <sup>13</sup> Dribo added he did not know how he would survive and believed the site before him to be a nightmare. He concluded, "That's how bad it was and that's how powerful the Americans were."<sup>14</sup>

Dribo's account alongside those of others detailed in the collections noted above illuminated varied Marshallese experiences during World War II and specifically at the Kwajalein battle. These narratives detailed the trauma involved in witnessing such destruction on Kwajalein but also the anxiety accompanying the fear of not knowing what would come next given the U.S. presence in the region. These accounts revealed the lived experiences of Marshallese during the Kwajalein battle. The next part of this

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

chapter examines how these experiences and any trace of Marshallese presence became erased from U.S. accounts of the Kwajalein battle narrative over time.

## The Kwajalein Battle Story: Erasing Marshallese from the War

Keeping in mind the recent documentation of Marshallese and Micronesian wartime accounts, this chapter turns now to explore how Kwajalein battle narratives emerging in U.S. sources over five decades erased these complex experiences. This analysis focuses on what these erasures signify in the larger story of U.S. imperialism in the Marshall Islands. By tracing how U.S. narratives of the Kwajalein battle abstracted the story from its setting and from the indigenous peoples of this setting, this chapter reveals how the story's reproduction over time helped naturalize the U.S. presence in the Marshall Islands. Kwajalein battle narratives have continued to be a way of remembering Kwajalein as a place of U.S. capture and entitlement. The erasure of Marshallese experiences from these stories has worked to simultaneously erase the colonial nature of the U.S. presence on Kwajalein following the war. Over time, the Kwajalein battle narrative moved from abstraction to overt discourse of possession, contextualizing the battle as a starting point that inevitably led to the creation of the U.S. missile installation in the 1960s.

My analysis of the Kwajalein battle narrative builds upon recent scholarship by Pacific Cultural Studies Scholar Gregory Dvorak who deconstructed American imaginings of the battle by focusing on invasion and post-invasion photographs. In his chapter, "Capturing Liberation," which is part of his larger 2007 dissertation project on memory and cultural mapping on Kwajalein, Dvorak identified five areas under which

Kwajalein battle photographs could be categorized. The categories included island capture alongside Japanese and Korean prisoner dehumanization. Dvorak also categorized the photographs by themes of battleground clean-up and sanitation as well as Marshallese expressions of gratitude towards their new American heroes and celebrations of their freedom. Finally, Dvorak identified the photographs portraying Marshallese as exotic and erotic while also documenting, primarily through captions, ridicule expressed by Americans towards those who failed to live up to these caricatured personas.<sup>15</sup>

Dvorak's chapter built upon the work of Pacific Scholar Vicente M. Diaz by unpacking the discourse of "liberation" as Diaz has done in his scholarship on post-World War II Guam. Diaz traced how narratives of "liberation" had worked to disavow U.S. imperialism in Guam and silence Chamoru voices supporting self-determination during the past few decades. <sup>16</sup> Building upon Dvorak's productive insights on how the visual worked to narrate the Kwajalein battle as a U.S. "mission of liberation," this next section pushes that analysis further by thinking about patterns in how the war story has been told over time through different mediums. First examining the narratives produced during and immediately following the battle, this section then traces longer-term patterns of narrative reproduction over time. In the end, this chapter argues that the Kwajalein battle story's reproduction over more than five decades worked as a colonial tool for naturalizing the indefinite U.S. presence on the island as one of national entitlement.

The Kwajalein battle story's essence as one of abstraction has remained core to its retelling in a variety mediums over time. For more than fifty years, accounts of the Kwajalein invasion have been narrated as an experience of American capture and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Gregory Dvorak, Seeds from Afar Flowers from the Reef: Re-Membering the Coral and Concrete of Kwajalein Atoll (Ph.D. Dissertation at Australia National University, Canberra, 2007), 182.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Diaz, "Deliberating Liberation Day," in *Perilous Memories*, T. Fujitani et al., 155-180.

Japanese defeat, abstracted from the battle's atoll setting as home to Marshallese inhabitants for thousands of years. Notable in the great majority of these accounts has also been the absence of any reference to the war's impact on Marshallese. In fact, U.S. recollections of the war gave more discursive attention to the destruction of foliage throughout the atoll than to Marshallese dispossession, suffering or casualties. This narrative erasure of Marshallese from the war occurring in their islands worked to naturalize Kwajalein as an American space. The stories painted Kwajalein as an island "won" during a battle whose inhabitants thereafter reacted with gratitude towards their new "administrator."

Among the earliest references to wartime Kwajalein contextualizing the island as a people-less space for combat appeared at the U.S. executive level in the speeches of President Roosevelt and President Truman. In his January 6, 1945 State of the Union Address, President Roosevelt situated Kwajalein as the site of invasion during the past year, "the second of our great strides across the Central Pacific to the Philippines." Locating Kwajalein as among several invasion spaces marking the campaign across the Pacific, Roosevelt's speech also referenced the imperialistic nature of Japan during the war. He noted that hopefully 1945 would "see the closing in of the forces of retribution

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> It is important to note here this section does not investigate Japanese or Korean narratives of the battle. This is not because I consider these stories insignificant but primarily because I am interested in tracing the connection between the battle story and the postwar retention of U.S. power on Kwajalein and how this power was naturalized over time. Following the war, Japanese and Koreans were repatriated and thus had less influence on the development of power relations on Kwajalein thereafter. But analysis of Japanese experiences of the war in Micronesia and specifically the battle of Kwajalein can be found, respectively, in Mark R. Peattie's *Nan'yo: The Rise and Fall of the Japanese in Micronesia*, *1885-1945*. Pacific Islands Monograph Series. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1988) and Dvorak *Seeds from Afar* <sup>18</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, State of the Union Address on January 6, 1945. Located at The American Presidency Project, John T.Woolley & Gerhard Peters, University of California at Santa Barbara: www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/.

about the center of the malignant power of imperialistic Japan."<sup>19</sup> Roosevelt's references to imperialistic Japan foreshadowed how the United States would come to define itself in Micronesia following the war in counter distinction to this imperialistic, "malignant" power. As U.S. wartime discourse defined Japan's presence in Micronesia as imperialistic, the postwar discourse would come to identify U.S. continued presence in the region as something "other than" imperialistic. Analysis of this "other than" relationship will be taken up later in this chapter. Roosevelt's early reference to Kwajalein revealed the island's identification as within a vast oceanic stride across the Pacific towards imperial Japan's headquarters in Tokyo.

Five months after Roosevelt's speech, President Truman referenced Kwajalein in a special message to Congress on winning the war with Japan on June 1, 1945. In this address, Truman narrated the Central Pacific Islands of Tarawa, Kwajalein, Saipan, Guam and Iwo Jima as having been the "stepping stones" in Marine and Army successes pushing Japanese forces back four thousand miles. This executive level discourse positioned the Pacific, and Kwajalein's role within it, as a space in which a heroic nation and a malignant empire met. The discourse presumed the nation and the empire as populated by people (whether noble peoples or malignant peoples) who came from homes with territories. Some of these people played out epic battles on "stepping stones," which presumably did not share the common definition of territories populated by heroic or malignant peoples, or really any peoples, as none would go accounted for in descriptions of the war over time. As these early statements suggested, the Pacific would

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Harry S. Truman, Special Message to the Congress on Winning the War with Japan, June 1, 1945. Located at The American Presidency Project, John T.Woolley & Gerhard Peters, University of California at Santa Barbara: www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/.

continue to be understood thereafter as a "people-less" space upon which strategic campaigns in a heroic war occurred.

Moving from executive level discourse to narratives detailing American soldier experiences on the ground, one of the earliest accounts of the Kwajalein invasion appeared in Lt. Col. S.L.A Marshall's Island Victory: The Battle of Kwajalein Atoll. Originally published in the Washington D.C. Infantry Journal in 1944, Lt. Col. Marshall, who served as a military historian for World War II, compiled the book largely through oral history accounts. He solicited stories from soldiers immediately following their tour on Kwajalein Atoll to produce a collective memory from the front line. The book, first published in 1944 and again in 2001, consisted of 118 pages of descriptions of killing "Japs," with play-by play narratives of wartime destruction. 21 Nowhere in the text mentioned the battle taking place in a Marshallese homeland or having any impact on Marshallese people. This absence remained through to the 2001 updated version. This immediate post-battle erasure of Marshallese experiences from the narrative may not simply reflect a discursive move, but rather the actual framing-- already evident in Presidential speeches--of the battle itself. These narratives reflected a military understanding of the Pacific as a wartime, people-less space upon which the United States attacked an imperialistic foe. Noteworthy, however, is how consistent this narrative has remained for more than fifty years. The updated version of *Island Victory* retained this pattern of abstraction, despite the fact that by 2001 Kwajalein had been part of the independent Republic of the Marshall Islands for 15 years.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> S.L.A. Marshall, *Island Victory: The Battle of Kwajalein Atoll* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1944).

Four years after Lt. Col. Marshall's publication of soldier oral histories, the Kwajalein invasion story appeared again, this time aimed at Kwajalein's military residential population in their daily newspaper the *Hour Glass*. The February 5, 1948 Hour Glass' six-page commemorative souvenir issue detailed a play-by-play battle narrative, informed largely by the research of Marines Barrack's Commanding Officer Capt. P.W. Stark.<sup>22</sup> The 1948 souvenir issue began by describing a contemporary dedication ceremony taking place on the island to honor the ground forces that enabled Kwajalein's capture. The *Hour Glass* issue concluded by listing Japanese and American casualties also noting the number of Korean prisoners taken. Similar to the 1944 narrative, the souvenir Hour Glass excluded any mention of Marshallese impacted by the battle. 23 The *Hour Glass* revisited the battle story nearly two decades later when Kwajalein's residents at this point comprised primarily U.S. civilian contractors and their families working at the island's newly established missile range. The January 6, 1966 special issue of the *Hour Glass* focused on the Marshall Islands amidst a broader Pacific context. Author E.H. Bryan Jr. narrated "The Battle for the Marshall Islands" through a play-by-play description that concluded with details of the number of American, Japanese and Korean casualties. Again, more than 20 years after the first narratives, this Kwajalein battle story contained no mention of Marshallese experiences. Echoing President

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup>It is worthwhile to note here that the pattern of play-by-play structure to the battle descriptions appearing in all commemorative narratives may have been *partly* informed by an early military directive regarding command histories. In 1945 the Commander in Chief of the U.S. Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas issued a directive that any battle story documentation include significant detail and description in order to provide information to future military strategists. I stress partly because given the range of audiences the Kwajalein battle narrative reproductions reached, one can hardly imagine all authors intended their reception to be one of strategic interest. 1945 Military Directive can be found in: Correspondence on Preparation of Command Histories from Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas, June 25, 1945. Located in RG 313, Records of Naval Operating Forces, Box: Naval Air Base, Ebeye, Kwajalein, Marshalls Islands, General Correspondence 1944-1946 at the National Archives Pacific Region, San Bruno, CA [Hereafter referenced as Pacific Archives, San Bruno]

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> The *Hour Glass*, Souvenir Issue, vol. II, no.5, February 5, 1948. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

Truman's earlier statements, the article concluded by emphasizing Kwajalein's role as among the sites used as "a stepping stone in the island hopping advance across the Pacific."<sup>24</sup>

This early pattern of dismissing Marshallese wartime experiences from battle narratives likely reflected a lack of attention to documenting the war's impact on Marshallese during and immediately following the war. The existing printed information covering Micronesian wartime experiences has come from years of anthropological recovery efforts to piece these stories together. <sup>25</sup> Information about Marshallese casualties reaching nearly 200 during the Kwajalein battle likely emerged from these efforts rather than any accounting for this during the invasion by those documenting U.S., Japanese and Korean casualties. That Japanese and Korean casualties have remained accounted for in the battle's retellings seemed to reflect more an effort to prove American soldiers' heroic achievements than to capture these "enemy" experiences. Most narratives, in fact, mentioned the resiliency and valiance of Japanese soldiers. But the story telling always marked this point by then identifying Japanese bravery as a "lost cause." The pattern seemed to discursively boost the degree of achievement mastered by U.S. soldiers. In the Kwajalein battle story, Marshallese presumably remained non-entities, neither allies nor enemies. These erasures of Marshallese wartime experiences over time worked to further reproduce the Pacific as a people-less space existing to accommodate other peoples' wars.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup>" Life in Micronesia: *Hour Glass* Special, The Marshalls and the Pacific," no. 1-23, June 4, 1965-January 21, 1966. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> I note "printed" and "textual" here because clearly there is an abundance of Micronesian stories of the war that are recounted throughout the region through oral tradition. So here, I am speaking more to the issue of broadly, shared print publications that discuss wartime experiences.

In addition to the 1966 Hour Glass, other sources emerged during the 1960s and 1970s on Kwajalein to communicate the battle story to the island's missile installation personnel. The battle story appeared in several personnel manuals introducing civilian contractors to life on the island. Bell Telephone Laboratories, one of Kwajalein's major contractors since the island's early 1960s transformation to a missile installation, highlighted the wartime history most prominently in its manuals. Bell produced introductory manuals and retrospective materials documenting Kwajalein during the 1960s and 1970s. Situating discourse on Kwajalein's battle alongside deeply rooted stereotypes caricaturing the Pacific as a space outside of history prior to Western contact, Bell romanticized the island in the introduction to its 1970s retrospective guide. The manual introduced Kwajalein as one "among the thousands of Pacific islands that slumbered undisturbed for centuries in the tropical sun," whose inhabitants lived "contentedly by the sea," until historical change came with the "probing" of the island by Western "explorers" in the 16th century. <sup>26</sup> In the 1961 and 1972 versions of its Kwajalein introductory guides, Bell included "Highlights of the Invasion and Capture of Kwajalein" compiled by U.S. Navy Commander G.R. Mills. Mills' battle descriptions concluded like earlier Kwajalein invasion narratives by listing American, Japanese and Korean casualties and prisoners, with no mention of Marshallese casualties. <sup>27</sup> The 1961 guide did, however, briefly mention natives present during the war. The manual claimed that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Bell Laboratories retrospective circa 1975 included in the Kwajalein Battlefield National Historic Landmarks Application Materials, located at the Archive Repository National Register, National Historic Landmarks, folder on Kwajalein Island Battlefield, Kwajalein Island in Washington D.C.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> A Guide to the Kwajalein Pacific Missile Range Facility, Bell Telephone Laboratories, January 1961 and A Guide to the Marshall Islands, Bell Laboratories, 1972. Both located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

due to Japanese brutality and their looming defeat, native loyalties shifted away from those who had governed the island for thirty years.<sup>28</sup>

The 1961 Bell manual also narrated the immediate postwar period, applauding navy achievements in addressing malnutrition and disease suffered by the natives. The manual asserted "Full stomachs and healthy bodies soon laid the foundation on which our administration of the islands was to be successfully built." The Bell discourse seamlessly moved from Kwajalein battle through postwar U.S. administration naturalizing the transition as fated. The manual continued on to frame Marshallese postwar experiences as the story of underdogs helped by the kindness and generosity of a benevolent nation, rather than a people whose lands had been destroyed and lives uprooted by the actions of that same nation. According to the Bell manual, U.S. postwar policy in the islands fit within a context of long-term generosity emerging from American cultural values geared at helping those in need. As detailed in the manual, the navy indeed began rebuilding the atoll's structures with the help of Marshallese and other Micronesian laborers and Japanese and Korean war prisoners (prior to repatriation) following U.S. obliteration of those structures during the war.

The 1961 Bell guide emphasized the demands accompanying navy efforts to boost morale for islanders devastated by the war. The guide explained how this task proved especially difficult for the navy given their lack of experience in military government.<sup>30</sup> The 1961 Bell guide stated,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> A Guide to the Kwajalein Pacific Missile Range Facility, Bell Telephone Laboratories, January 1961 located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa. Pp.65.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Ibid. 66

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> As chapter two details, many naval officials actually did undergo formal training in military governance prior to the war's conclusion and thereafter to prepare for American takeover of the region.

"This lack of formal training was in large part compensated for in the prevailing attitude of Americans, and especially service personnel, that the underdog is the one who will get our help no matter how demanding the job. Flushed with victory as we were, we spared no effort, no money, no personal sacrifice to restore the confidence and well-being of the islanders. Surplus goods were distributed to all natives, with the almost disastrous results in some localities that every man became a king of the island because of his newly acquired wealth."<sup>31</sup>

The guide continued on to note that given 13 years experience in Kwajalein, Americans could easily look back and see mistakes made in the immediate postwar period. The guide added that the biggest mistake proved to be U.S. excessive generosity towards the natives. The Bell guide noted, "We gave so much to the islanders that we nearly killed them with kindness!" The guide continued on to highlight how "the islander," unaccustomed to America's forty-hour work weeks, began to assume that American luxuries like housing, food, medical care, transportation, cigarettes and candy would be easily accessible indefinitely. The guide concluded, "It was no mean task to disabuse him of that idea in the years that followed Military Government." And "disabuse" the U.S. military certainly did.

To better understand the historic amnesia infusing the Bell guide's lamentation on excessive generosity as a primary descriptor for the U.S. postwar approach to the Marshall Islands, it is useful to briefly contextualize some noteworthy U.S. policies in the region during this period. The guide appeared closely following the conclusion of twelve years of nuclear testing in the Northern Marshall Islands in 1958. By the time the manual came out in 1961, Bikini Islanders initially displaced from their home island to enable atomic testing had nearly starved to death on Rongerik, the island where the navy resettled them. These same displaced Marshallese faced food shortages again through the

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 66-67.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> A Guide to the Kwajalein Pacific Missile Range Facility, Bell Telephone Laboratories, January 1961 located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa. Pp.66.

1960s on Kili Island, their second site of relocation. Bikinians came to Kwajalein for a brief stay and recovery during the 1950s following their near starvation on Rongerik, a history that will be further explored in chapter two. While displaced Bikinians faced starvation during the 1950s and 1960s, Marshallese living on Ebeye and working for Bell's contractor families on Kwajalein also struggled with food and water shortages and deteriorating medical facilities. Many of these islanders had been displaced from Kwajalein in 1951 when the navy removed their labor camp, turning Kwajalein into a space of exclusive American residency, also a history to be explored further in chapter two. Helping contextualize the Bell guide further, these events also showed how in many ways Bell's 1961 narrative could not be more accurate in identifying U.S. efforts to "disabuse" Marshallese from any sense of postwar entitlement to U.S. assistance.

The 1961 Bell guide framed the postwar transition to U.S. administration as a given, foreclosing any narrative contingency in this moment of colonial shift. Bemoaning the inevitability of this "nonself-governing people [of Micronesia]" who became "the wards of Uncle Sam" due to "a fateful day in December 1941," the guide concluded the narrative of the postwar period on a hopeful note, detailing the remarkable transformation of the island. The 1961 guide stated, "When World War II ended, Kwajalein was completely barren of all tropical growth, except for three palm trees. Today, through the efforts of the United States Navy, the island has been replanted and is now well on its way to becoming the island paradise it was before invasion." This passage's circular logic basically commended the U.S. military for rebuilding the same space the U.S. military completely destroyed. Since by 1961, the military had already displaced all

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Ibid, 1, 68.

Marshallese from Kwajalein, one can only assume that praise for the island's ongoing path to "paradise" applauded what the island now offered its American settlers.

An alternative narrative of the immediate postwar period in the Marshall Islands came through the testimony of Kwajalein landowner Ataji Balos to the United Nations Trusteeship Council in May 21, 1982. Balos recalled this period stating, "During the Second World War, devastating battles were fought between United States and Japan on the atoll. The effect of that was to leave the atoll and its people destitute. The United States took no action whatever, other than the ad hoc dispensing of surplus military goods, to help the people recover from their desolation." Balos' voice would continue to emerge during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s offering counter narratives to U.S. discourse on benevolence in the region and national entitlement to Kwajalein. This section has attempted to reveal one discursive pattern among U.S. narratives of the Kwajalein battle that worked to abstract the island from its Marshall Islands setting and Marshallese inhabitants. The next section continues on to analyze the battle discourse by examining how this narrative pattern moved from abstraction to possession.

#### Kwajalein Battle Story Continued: From U.S. Victory to U.S. Possession

The 1961 Bell Labs manual offered insights into how the Kwajalein battle story's retelling highlighted continued themes of abstraction while postwar narratives broadened to include a picture of Marshallese as U.S. "wards." This next section explores how the battle became marked over time as the starting point in a narrative trajectory of inevitable U.S. possession. Within the context of increasing U.S. security interests in Micronesia

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Testimony from Ataji Balos at the Forty-ninth Session of the United Nations Trusteeship Council, May 21, 1982. Located in the Library of Congress's papers on U.N. resolutions and documents in Washington D.C.

and specific investments in Kwajalein for long-term missile testing, the Kwajalein battle story began contextualizing a fateful path towards U.S. acquisition of the island. The following section identifies the relationship between increasing U.S. investment in Kwajalein for U.S. defense plans and Kwajalein battle story reproductions that minimized or erased Marshallese experiences from the war. These narratives traced a natural progression of Kwajalein from wartime prize to indefinite U.S. missile installation.

Bell Laboratories proved quite prolific in documenting the Kwajalein battle story, and in addition to featuring the story in introductory manuals the contractor published a commemorative booklet in 1974 showcasing the invasion history. The commemorative booklet drew upon articles appearing in Bell's company newsletter *The Interceptor*. Bell gave the Kwajalein Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 10268 permission to republish the booklet for sale in 1981, with this newer version containing a brief update on the island. Bell's commemorative booklet narrated the experiences of soldiers in combat during the invasions of Kwajalein and Roi Namur. Roi Namur was another major wartime battle site in Kwajalein Atoll. Bell Laboratories first published the articles to commemorate the thirty-year anniversary of these battles.

Bell's commemorative booklet contained a preface explaining the company's intention to offer the first extensive history of the battles published on island.<sup>35</sup> The opening page featured a narrative by Bill Bacon, who had been a Marine landing on Roi Namur during the war. The booklet editors identified Bacon as a veteran representative of any of the 40,000 G.I.s who served in Kwajalein Atoll. Bacon's recollection of his

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> "The Battles of Kwajalein and Roi-Namur," published by Bell Laboratories in 1974 as special edition to the company newsletter *The Interceptor*. Republished by the Kwajalein Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 10268. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa. Pp. 1.

experience landing on Roi thirty years earlier detailed how he saw the battle as consisting of many "firsts." One of these "firsts" included the first "contest for real estate involving land which had been under Japanese control prior to the war." Bacon's identification of Kwajalein Atoll as "real estate" exemplified how, over time, the battle story became tied directly to continued U.S. presence on the island and a continued sense of U.S. entitlement. His concluding thoughts reflected upon how much the Marshalls had changed since the war and how beautiful Roi Namur looked to him now. He wrote, "My compliments to all who have made those two dots on the map the beauties they should be." Bacon's recollection reiterated a theme presented thirty years earlier by Presidents Roosevelt and Truman in their identification of Kwajalein as a mere "stepping stone" on route to defeating the Japanese. Here Bacon identified the atoll islands as "dots" that's worth came through their reconstruction into beautiful places to house American contractors.

A Kwajalein invasion narrative followed Bacon's recollections emphasizing the trajectory from island victory to possession. The section subtitled "Island Hopping across the Pacific" detailed the daily events of the battle and included a listing of American and Japanese casualties, while excluding any reference to Marshallese victims. Written by Robert J. O'Brien of the Bell Labs' Public Relations Office, the story further framed the Kwajalein battle as a fight for a prized possession. O'Brien noted that on the eve of the final day of fighting "resistance finally ceased and the world's largest atoll was now in American hands--almost." A collection of letters from troops in the U.S. Armed Forces followed O'Brien's story. These letters, commissioned by Bell Laboratories for the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Ibid, 17.

anniversary issue, reflected on soldier recollections of their time on Kwajalein. The letter section constituted the first space in the booklet that mentioned any indigenous people present during the war. A letter from Chester Merritt of Ventura, California recounted his time on Kwajalein noting, "There wasn't much to do there; we played a lot of ping pong at the Red Cross, and as I remember there were a couple of natives that were good ping pong players."<sup>39</sup> W.B. Hood of Bell Laboratories in Madison, New Jersey recalled that, "All the native Marshallese people lived across the lagoon, on Carlos or Carlson, [U.S. wartime names for Ennylabegan and Enubuj islands respectively] I believe. Our only contact with the natives occurred when some of them worked on Kwajalein or Ebeye during the day."40 Hood concluded his letter adding "Having been there during World War II, of course, made it interesting to return, and the contrast from 1946 to 1966 was striking. Needless to say, Kwajalein today is a more beautiful and comfortable place to live than in 1946."41 Both letters recalled the native presence on Kwajalein as part of the background to military daily life, with Hood's letter remembering Marshallese as those who labored on the island. Framing Marshallese as laborers rather than indigenous inhabitants and island landowners also emerged as a postwar U.S. discursive pattern, a pattern to be continually explored throughout this dissertation.

That Hood viewed Kwajalein as a more comfortable place to live during the 1960s exemplified the contrast between wartime and missile installation lifestyle on Kwajalein. His words also helped naturalize the transformation of the island and the ongoing and indefinite American residency as a seemingly self-evident and inevitable process over time. The contrast between the two time periods and varied experiences on

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Ibid. 25.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Ibid.

Kwajalein came through as well in the testimonial of Bob Flynn, who served as an anti-aircraft gunner on the island when he was 17 years old. At the time of the booklet's publication, Flynn had been working on Kwajalein again, this time as an employee of Global Security. Flynn recounted that after invading Kwajalein in 1944 he was certain he remembered seeing, "what we now know as the 'lone palm' standing alone along the ocean shore. Everything else was rubble...It looked like a burnt out forest. I never dreamed that I'd come back here some day." He added, "Now I play golf all the time by that same tree." The imagery detailed in Flynn's account layering meaning and memory onto the "lone tree" during wartime and missile installation periods suggested how the perception of U.S. indefinite control on Kwajalein remained in part marked by the physicality of the island itself. For Flynn, the lone tree retained the story of U.S. conquest through to American suburban residency and recreation on the missile range.

Bell's commemorative booklet returned to the theme of inevitable possession in a concluding section highlighting the editor's final reflections on the Kwajalein battle. The editor recalled that by February 5th, the last day of fighting, "the Stars and Stripes were up on Kwaj...Today, 30 years later, Kwaj and such places as Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Saipan, Guam, Peleliu, and Iwo Jima are remembered as bitterly contested bits of land where half a world war was won." After marking these islands as spatially insignificant "bits of land" where history unfolded with the presence of significant historical actors, the editor continued on to recount again Americans' valiant and brave efforts against formidable Japanese defenses. The editor suggested that many Americans who fought at Kwajalein would likely rather forget the island, given the pain and suffering they endured

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Ibid, 29.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 30.

there. The editor added, "But the heat, the rains, the death and devastation everywhere on Kwaj are still stamped indelibly in their minds. Nor can we forget that Kwaj was the first and last trip to the fabled South Pacific for the several hundred Marines and GI's who fell here." In this passage the editor caricatured the South Pacific as a romanticized space of "fable," an unreal, ahistorical space where American soldiers disappeared. Repeating an understanding of why those who suffered on Kwajalein may prefer to forget, the editor concluded "Certainly that is easier. But perhaps we owe it to ourselves, to *our* island, and to those who fought here to remember the price that was paid for *our* little piece of the Pacific." In these final words, the editor packaged the story of wartime pain, suffering and loss in a triumphal narrative moving from island victory to island possession.

Following the letters, testimonials and editorial narratives infusing the Bell Laboratories booklet, the final page provided a brief 1981 update on Kwajalein. The update listed Kwajalein, Roi-Namur and several smaller islands within the atoll as centers for the U.S. missile testing system, highlighting Kwajalein's status as the only missile installation of its kind in the world. The update also enumerated the various U.S. contractors employed on the island and briefly noted that 3,000 Marshallese lived on the nearby island of Ebeye, of which 500 worked on Kwajalein. The update finally concluded with details of the numerous amenities housed on Kwajalein Missile Range, making the island comparable to any "typical small town in the U.S." The booklet

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 30 (my emphasis added).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Ibid, 65.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Ibid.

highlighted the top-rated school system, grocery and retail stores amidst a variety of other conveniences. 48

As Bell Laboratories narrated the Kwajalein battle story to those living and working on Kwajalein during the 1960s and 1970s, the *Micronesian Reporter* reproduced the story for a broader Trust Territory readership during this period. In the 1971 issue of this quarterly publication aimed at informing Trust Territory employees on events, news and policies throughout the region, World War II researcher Grant T. Doe offered a detailed account of the battle. Doe's narrative mirrored those that came before through his play-by-play format and emphasis on describing bombardment statistics. He also marked Japanese efforts as valiant but ultimately "a hopeless cause." Likewise, Doe enumerated American casualties and Japanese and Korean casualties and prisoners of war, and excluded any mention of Marshallese casualties. One exception to this narrative pattern came, however, when Doe mentioned that the U.S. found some Marshallese during and after the invasion in other areas of the atoll. 50

Another major exception to the pattern of how U.S. sources retold the Kwajalein battle story appeared in 1980 when the island came up for inclusion within the National Register of Historic places as a national landmark. National Park Service consideration of Kwajalein Battlefield as a national landmark positioned the island as a site of historic federal government recognition. Under National Park Service criteria, the government identified Kwajalein as a place, "that possess[es] exceptional value in illustrating or

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> "The Battle of Kwajalein," by Grant. T. Doe, appearing in the *Micronesian Reporter*, first quarter, vol. XIX, no.1 1971. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa. Pp. 25.

interpreting the Nation's history, architecture, archaeology, and culture."<sup>51</sup> The National Park Service designation of Kwajalein as a historic landmark constituted the culmination of Kwajalein's narrative reproduction as a place central to the U.S. war story and this story's cultural resonance for Americans.

In order for Kwajalein to be approved as a national landmark, a lengthy application had to be submitted to the National Park Service that included Kwajalein battle details. The National Park Service version of the Kwajalein battle story served as the only example I encountered among U.S. sources that actually mentioned Marshallese casualties alongside those of Americans, Japanese and Koreans. The description did so by noting that while 1980s Kwajalein did not resemble its 1944 appearance, "beneath the bustling community, beneath the lawns and asphalt, is the sacred soil of the battle where Japanese, Korean, Marshallese, and American men died."<sup>52</sup> The application's narrative estimated Marshallese casualties alongside those of Japanese, Americans and Koreans. It is not entirely clear whether these figures reflected those documented in the recent anthropology collections noted earlier. The application stated, "In the Southern Sector, 140 Marshallese were collected during the course of the fighting and in the whole atoll 55 Marshallese were killed."53 Presumably, unless this statement equated "collected" with "killed" these numbers would be inaccurate, as the estimates listed in Lin Poyer's recent collection documented nearly 200 Marshallese casualties. Despite this potential

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Correspondence from Associate Director of Cultural Resources Management, Erwin N. Thompson of the National Park Service regarding consideration of Kwajalein Island Battlefield as a National Landmark, 1983. Located in the Kwajalein Battlefield National Historic Landmarks Application Materials, located at the Archive Repository National Register, National Historic Landmarks, folder on Kwajalein Island Battlefield, Kwajalein Island in Washington D.C.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Application for Kwajalein Island Battlefield to be considered for designation as a National Historic Landmark, 1980. Located in the Kwajalein Battlefield National Historic Landmarks Application Materials, located at the Archive Repository National Register, National Historic Landmarks, folder on Kwajalein Island Battlefield, Kwajalein Island in Washington D.C.
<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

inaccuracy, the application proved noteworthy in the mere mention of any casualties, a detail absent from every other narrative of the Kwajalein invasion during the preceding four decades.

The National Park Service application framed the Kwajalein battle as a collective experience that included Marshallese victims; a radical departure from previous narratives. The application, produced one year earlier than the Bell Laboratories' updated booklet, even referenced the contemporary existence of Marshallese people governing their own islands. The application stated, "The Marshallese people who survived the war have forged a new nation, now on the eve of its independence."<sup>54</sup> While the majority of the application's battle narrative remained devoted to documenting American and Japanese experiences, this minor inclusion of Marshallese experiences stood out amidst the sea of narratives obscuring these stories for over four decades. The National Park Service's narrative distinction made these previous absences and erasures strikingly more evident. Clearly, one explanation for the National Park Service inclusions resides within the nature of the source as the institution's relationship to preserving the story of Kwajalein came from a different place than that of Bell Laboratories. But both sources attempted to recount the battle story through a seemingly shared framework in identifying what Kwajalein meant for U.S. history in the region and continued to mean for Americans.

The National Park Service's unprecedented acknowledgment of Marshallese existence on Kwajalein during World War II and consequent suffering did not seem to have marked a historic shift towards this recognition in later battle narratives. The most recent battle narrative I found appeared in a November 2000 article for *Soldiers* 

<sup>54</sup> Ihid

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magazine, the official magazine of the U.S. Army. Written by Jim Tennant, the article captured similar patterns marking the 1940s accounts: the play-by-play combat story, bombardment statistics listing shelling tonnage and the recurring casualty breakdown for Americans and Japanese. Not only did this 2000 article exclude mention of Marshallese casualties or experiences, the entire article proceeded without even a geographic reference to Kwajalein's location within the Marshall Islands. In fact the only point at which the word Marshallese or any reference to the Marshall Islands appeared came through a photograph caption detailing a soldier standing on a pier surveying the battle damage. The caption identified the soldier as wearing on his back a "Marshallese-woven bag."

Appearing 56 years after the first published Kwajalein battle narrative, the *Soldiers* magazine article marked Kwajalein a U.S. place by abstracting the island from any reference to its geographic location or its indigenous peoples. The article's narrative instead traced the history of the island from wartime battle through to its inevitable transformation into a U.S. missile range. The article described this fated trajectory through place markers that Americans living and working on the island in recent years could have recognized. The article noted,

"A few battle markers and worn-down bunkers are about the only physical reminders that, before it was a world-class missile range with the global mission and all the comforts of small-town America, Kwajalein was a World War II Japanese base with a strategic mission...Today, the island little resembles its war days. The United States has added entire sections of land along Lagoon Road and north of Bunker Hill, for example. Trees have grown where the terrain once appeared as a moonscape from the battle damage. And entire complexes of buildings and huge sensors have been built." <sup>57</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> "The Battle for Kwajalein," written by Jim Bennett and published in *Soldiers* magazine, November 2000, vol. 55, issue no. 11, Pp.21.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Ibid.

Similar to Flynn's recollection of the "lone palm" in the Bell 1974 booklet, Tennant recounted Kwajalein's spatial transformation while marking the island's historic periodization. Like Flynn, Tennant book-ended Kwajalein's story as beginning with the island's position in the U.S. war mission and concluding with Kwajalein's ongoing role as a U.S. missile installation. Tennant's narrative moved seamlessly from one period of U.S. control through to another, discursively erasing any trace of Marshallese history or continued existence and engagement with the island. Tennant cemented this narrative erasure in his conclusion when stating, "The victory at Kwajalein Atoll could hardly have been more complete. It marked the first time U.S. troops had taken prewar Japanese territory, and it established another key American base in the Central Pacific." Echoing the many narrative reproductions preceding his, Tennant repeated a story that moved from capture and conquest to U.S. possession and indefinite control.

Tennant's abstraction of the Kwajalein battle story from any Marshallese context or even Marshall Islands geographic reference fit within a pattern of narrative erasure constituting the great majority of the story's reproductions for more than five decades. These erasures remained linked to U.S. strategic interests in Kwajalein and the transformation of the island into one of the nation's most important missile installations during the 1960s. The narrative erasure of Marshallese through the retelling of the Kwajalein battle story over time connected to larger Cold War strategic interests in the Marshall Islands and Micronesia more broadly. The Kwajalein battle story's reproduction over time played one significant role in framing the U.S. presence on the island as outside the realm of postwar military imperialism. Equally significant in disavowing U.S. Empire

58 Ibid.

in the Marshall Islands and Micronesia more broadly remained the narrative of the Trust Territory agreement. This 1947 United Nations sanctioned agreement gave the United States administrative authority over Micronesia following World War II. Taken together, these two narratives worked to naturalize the U.S. presence on Kwajalein and frame the nation's administrative role as one "other" than imperial.

The next section explores how the story of the U.N. Trusteeship Agreement helped frame the U.S. imperial presence in Micronesia as part of the nation's postwar mission to ensure international security and global peace. Both narratives, the Kwajalein battle story and the Trusteeship Agreement, worked to obscure the imperial nature of U.S. power on Kwajalein, in the Marshall Islands and throughout Micronesia. By closely analyzing the origins of these stories and tracing their discursive work over time, this chapter illustrates how wartime stories and postwar administration narratives worked together to naturalize the U.S. presence in the region and disavow the imperial nature of that presence. United Nations discourse disavowing U.S. empire in Micronesia proved particularly interesting given the U.N.'s role in articulating the rights of indigenous peoples and decolonization within two decades of its sanctioning the Trusteeship Agreement.

#### Trusteeship Stories: Marrying U.S. National Security to Global Peace in Micronesia

The production and reproduction of stories about the Trusteeship Agreement obscured the nature of U.S. imperialism in Micronesia by marking the relationship as "special," framed within a narrative of international support. While this chapter's concluding pages focus specifically on Trust Territory narrative connections to Kwajalein

policies, this section begins with an examination of Trust Territory discourse tied to the wider Micronesian region. Analysis of this broader context will enable a better understanding of how Trust Territory and military officials on Kwajalein framed policies and regulations in conversation with Trusteeship Agreement discourse over time.

Following a brief period of military rule in Micronesia in the immediate postwar era, the United States entered into the Trusteeship Agreement for the Pacific Islands through the United Nations Security Council. The agreement sanctioned the United States to take over the role of administration, legislation and jurisdiction on those islands formerly under the Japanese League of Nations mandate. On July 18, 1947, President Truman signed the Trusteeship Agreement. The newly designated Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands constituted one trust among a trusteeship system set up through the United Nations Charter following World War II. This larger trusteeship system placed eleven former colonies and territories of the Axis powers under new administration.<sup>59</sup> Out of these eleven territories, the United Nations categorized the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands as the only "strategic trust." This distinction placed the Trust Territory under United Nations Security Council supervision rather than that of the U.N. Trusteeship Council. Designating the Security Council the overseeing authority gave the United States significant control over the islands because the U.S. had veto power in the Security Council on any matters the nation identified as threatening national security or

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Of the eleven original trusts, nine were no longer trusts by 1975, either having gained independence or integrating with a neighboring territory. New Guinea, the tenth, under Australian administration, gained independence in union with Papua in 1975, leaving the U.S. the only remaining administrator of a U.N. Trust Territory by 1975. McHenry, *Micronesia, Trust Betrayed*, 34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> For the rest of this chapter and the dissertation, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands will be most often referred to as the abbreviated Trust Territory, as is common practice in most primary and secondary sources describing the region during this period. This discourse should not cause confusion as further references to any other territories under the broader trusteeship system will be minimal.

international peace.<sup>61</sup> The strategic trust status also allowed the United States to close off any or all parts of the Trust Territory to U.N. inspection or supervision for security reasons as the U.S. deemed necessary. This provision enabled the United States to conduct nuclear tests in the Northern Marshall Islands between 1946 and 1958 and for decades thereafter to close off Kwajalein to outside supervision during missile tests.<sup>62</sup>

Former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Donald F. McHenry traced the history of the Trusteeship Agreement for the Pacific Islands in his 1975 Micronesia Trust Betrayed: Altruism vs. Self Interest. McHenry's extensive analysis of the Trusteeship Agreement highlighted the foundational tensions between language asserting U.S. responsibility to promote development towards self-government in the region alongside the simultaneous mission to use the Trust Territory to ensure international peace and security. 63 Building upon McHenry's historical analysis of the agreement and the contradictory goals foundational to its structure, the next section examines how the agreement and these tensions have been addressed within the Trust Territory over time. Broadly, this dissertation will continue to reference the United Nations role and the Trusteeship Agreement throughout as these pertain to Kwajalein. Chapter nine will specifically focus on the undoing of the Trust Territory administration. But this chapter remains selectively attentive to discourse that marked how individuals across the Trust Territory understood the agreement's explanations for U.S. presence in Micronesia and the Marshall Islands.

Before examining how individuals connected to the Trust Territory reconciled the contradictions foundational to the Trusteeship Agreement, this section first explores more

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> McHenry, *Micronesia*, *Trust Betrayed*, 33-34.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 34

<sup>63</sup> Ihid.

closely those contradictions. As noted above, McHenry's book detailed the tensions underlying U.S. stated goals to support eventual self-government or independence in the region alongside its mission to ensure international peace and security. Specifically, the Trusteeship Agreement's articles five and six detailed these two directives. Article five committed the U.S. to ensuring the "trust territory shall play its part, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, in the maintenance of international peace and security." Article five also listed the methods through which the U.S. could carry out this mission. These methods included the right to establish naval military and air bases and fortifications in the Trust Territory, station armed forces there and make use of volunteer forces and facilities. The Trusteeship Agreement charged the U.S. with carrying out these obligations for international security as well as local defense and the maintenance of law and order in the Trust Territory.

This discourse contained in article five foreshadowed the emerging transformation of the U.S. role in the world that would continue in the postwar period through the Cold War. Article five's directive married the postwar mission of United States national security to that of international security. This open-ended directive to use the Trust Territory as a space to ensure both national and international peace and security constituted a mission with no endpoint. The directive contained no particular date when the U.S. or the U.N. would determine that international peace and security had indeed been successfully achieved. Within less than two decades, President Eisenhower would deliver his 1961 address on the risks of a U.S. military industrial complex. Thinking with the language of the Trusteeship Agreement to contextualize Eisenhower's forthcoming

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65 Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> Trusteeship Agreement for the Former Japanese Mandated Islands, signed by Harry S. Truman, July 18, 1947. TTA, reel no. 106. Pp.4

speech further uncovers the foundations for this early military *imperial* industrial complex.<sup>66</sup> In 1947, the United Nations gave the United States a blank check of approval to take whatever means necessary--meaning whatever land and resources necessary--within the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands to carry out this indeterminate mission.

Scholars of U.S. History and American Culture have revealed in the past few decades that American identity has been historically rooted in narratives of a nation in a perpetual state of threat and conflict. Building upon that scholarship, this chapter argues that the creation of the Trusteeship Agreement marked a particular moment when this exceptionalist narrative became tied to the international community and grounded in Micronesia. Scholars like Phil Deloria, Tom Englehardt and Richard Slotkin have each illustrated how the myth of a nation constantly defined in relation to enemies and war has characterized American culture since the nation's settler colonial foundations. They have also brilliantly shown how a faith in superior technology has long defined the story of U.S. manifest destiny across the continent explaining successes against Indian enemies along the way.<sup>67</sup>

These foundational U.S. cultural narratives justifying a perpetual state of wartime preparation expanded in the post-World War II period through the nation's growing imperial presence in Micronesia. In the Marshall Islands, the ultimate expression of this blind faith in technology to ward off potential enemies most concretely and tragically surfaced during the U.S. twelve-year nuclear testing campaign. The nation's unyielding commitment to mastering war technology continued after the nuclear testing campaign ceased through Kwajalein's missile range program. The Trusteeship Agreement language

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> This idea came through written feedback from Pacific historian Damon Salesa, February 2010.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> For more on the cultural history of the U.S. war narrative, see Slotkin's *Gunfighter Nation*, Englehardt's *The End of Victory Culture*, and Deloria, *Playing Indian* 

offered a legitimating discursive terrain upon which to frame U.S. entitlement to use Micronesia as a laboratory to expand military power and technology following World War II. In this period, the U.S. narrative of a nation constantly under threat defined in opposition to an enemy would continue. But through the U.N. sanction and promotion of the United States as a global defender, the Trusteeship Agreement would marry this narrative of U.S. defense and national security to that of the world. In doing so, the Trusteeship Agreement supported an unprecedented scale of technological advancement enabling an ever increasingly destructive range of nuclear and missile weaponry.

While article five's directive tied U.S. security to that of global peace, article six obligated the United States to a mission of supporting the region's inhabitants towards eventual self-governance or independence. Article six detailed a variety of support measures that included education in political governance, health care, support for economic sustainability, protection against discrimination, protection of native culture and customs, and protection against native loss of land. Clearly, the component of article five directing the U.S. to use whatever lands necessary to build bases and defense capabilities contradicted article six's order to protect the region's inhabitants from land loss. Again, the repercussions of this directive came through most tragically in the Northern Marshall Islands where Marshallese lost their homelands to enable U.S. nuclear testing. As will be explored further in this dissertation, the U.S. also displaced Marshallese throughout Kwajalein Atoll to make way for its naval base and missile testing operation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> Trusteeship Agreement for the Former Japanese Mandated Islands, signed by Harry S. Truman, July 18, 1947, TTA, reel no. 106, Pp.4

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> Today, Micronesian displacement and loss of land continues with most recent urgent threats to Chamoru people Guam who have been bracing for an unprecedented U.S. military troop buildup on their island.

Article six's directive obligating the U.S. to support the region's inhabitants towards eventual self-government or independence initially proved to be a contentious inclusion in the Trusteeship Agreement. 70 The Soviet delegate to the United Nations proposed the latter part of this section regarding independence and the United States rejected this language. The original article language directed the administering authority to support the region's inhabitants towards self-government. The Soviet representative proposed the additional text, "or independence as may be appropriate to the particular circumstances of the trust territory and its peoples and the freely expressed wishes of the people concerned."<sup>71</sup> U.S. Ambassador Warren Austin initially rejected this language at the United Nations but eventually offered a "qualified acceptance of the language' of the amendment and accepted the principle involved."<sup>72</sup> He offered the following explanation for this hesitancy. Austin stated, "The United States feels that it must record its opposition not to the principle of independence, to which no people could be more consecrated than the people of the United States, but to the thought that it could possibly be achieved within any foreseeable future in this case."<sup>73</sup>

Ambassador Austin's early presumption regarding Micronesian incapacity to achieve independence would prove to be a U.S. self-fulfilling prophecy for the Trust Territory, but not an accidental one. Through the 1960s, U.S. policies in Micronesia became characterized by neglect and an overarching agenda to create significant dependency to ensure the U.S. could always maintain strategic control over the region. While discourse governing this broader policy will be analyzed later in this chapter,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> "Trusteeship in Turmoil--The Agreement," written by Jon A. Anderson, appearing in the *Micronesian Reporter*, Second Quarter, 1971, vol. XIX, no.2. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa. Pp. 26. <sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Ibid.

Ambassador Austin's discourse on Micronesian lack of readiness for independence can be contextualized here amidst deeper patterns of U.S. discourse on race and self-rule. Scholars on Race, American Culture and U.S. History have in recent decades traced U.S. paternalistic social constructions centered on race and self-governing capabilities. African American History Scholars like Penny Von Eschen and Kevin Gaines have revealed discourse at U.S. executive levels marking colonized and racialized peoples' incapable of self-governance. Von Eschen and Gaines have shown how these presumptions characterized the U.S. stance towards many decolonizing nations following World War II as their potential independence presumed to threaten the balance of Cold War alliances.<sup>74</sup> In these cases the U.S. feared that without U.S. intervention these nations would gain independence and inevitably fall into the hands of the "Communist menace." U.S. and Southeast Asian History Scholars have explored as well the tragic and criminal role this mentality played in perpetuating the Vietnam War during this period. Pacific Historian David Hanlon has identified U.S. postwar racial discourse regarding Micronesians as drawing upon perceptions of primitivity and irrationality. Hanlon identified these caricatured stereotypes in his 1998 Remaking Micronesia: Discourse over Development in a Pacific Territory, 1944-1982. He wrote, "The perceived backwardness of the people of the islands added further justification to the need for military government...the Navy characterized social traditions and indigenous forms of political government as primitive, feudalistic, and revolving around family, clan, and village."<sup>75</sup> Hanlon continued, "Island

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<sup>75</sup> Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, 34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> See Von Eschen's *Satchmo Blows up the World*, and Kevin Gaines' 2007 *American Africans in Ghana: Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006) for more on this topic as these pertained to U.S. Cold War policies in Africa.

peoples were said to seldom comprehend or respond rationally to political federations or to other features of Euro-American government."<sup>76</sup>

Early U.S. justifications for control over Micronesia also drew largely upon an equation of American soldier wartime sacrifice equaling postwar U.S. entitlement. In fact, early sources illuminated the defense department's initial preference to annex the region. That Americans died in Micronesia during the war played a significant role in arguments for U.S. control at the United Nations. Ambassador Austin voiced this narrative to the U.N. Security Council when negotiating the Trusteeship Agreement terms. He argued,

"Tens of thousands of American lives, vast expenditures of treasure, and years of bitter fighting were necessary to drive the Japanese aggressors back from these islands. These islands constitute an integrated strategic physical complex vital to the security of the United States. The American people are firmly resolved that this area shall never again be used as a springboard for aggression against the United States or any other member of the United Nations."<sup>77</sup>

Austin's statement tied a narrative of U.S. sacrifice to the contemporary strategic needs of the nation and rounded out by connecting U.S. defense to that of the international community. In his work, McHenry highlighted this discourse connecting American sacrifice to a justification for U.S. permanent control over the region. He noted that following World War II, two arguments dominated military thinking: "the United States should retain possession of the Pacific Islands" and "the United States should remain the most resilient and formidable military power in the world." McHenry further indicated that part of the effort to ensure national and global security remained rooted in a U.S. strategy of "denial." This strategy marked the primary U.S. motivation for controlling

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> "Trusteeship in Turmoil--The Agreement," written by Jon A. Anderson, appearing in the *Micronesian* Reporter, Second Quarter, 1971, vol. XIX, no.2. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa. Pp. 26. <sup>78</sup> McHenry, *Micronesia, Trust Betrayed*, 66-67.

Micronesia as the prevention of any other power from controlling the region again and threatening the United States.<sup>79</sup>

In addition to affording the United States exclusive control over Micronesia, the Trusteeship Agreement ensured the U.S. defense mission would take precedence over the directive to support the region's inhabitants towards self government. The agreement did so by authorizing the United States to veto any petitions or resolutions brought to the Security Council regarding U.S. administration of the region. No change to the agreement could be made without U.S. consent. The United Nations thus constituted an international body charged more with a public relations mission in the Trust Territory rather than any sort of authority to exercise power in overseeing U.S. practices.

One document detailing the relationship of the United Nations to Trust Territory peoples during the late 1960s reiterated the nature of U.N. impotence. This document entitled "The Trusteeship System: How the UN works for the Peoples of the Trust Territories," described the United Nations' role in overseeing the Trust Territory through three primary duties. First, the U.N. considered reports sent in by the administering authorities. Second, the U.N. considered petitions from the Territories. As will be shown throughout this dissertation, Marshallese political leaders often used this latter U.N. responsibility as one platform for airing grievances about the U.S. administration. Lastly, the U.N. would occasionally send missions to visit the Territories. After gaining information and updates through these three channels, the United Nations would make

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Ibid, 67-68.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>81</sup> The Trusteeship System: How the United Nations Works for People of Trust Territories, circa late 1960s-mid-1970s. Located in TTA, reel no. 166. in file entitled: Correspondence, Dispatches and other information regarding the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (General Information), U.N., Trusteeship documents.

recommendations to the administering authority regarding U.N. opinion about conditions in the Trust Territory and suggest areas for improvement. The document noted these suggestions intended to help the government of the Trust Territory and leaders in the territory's towns and villages make progress. The documented noted these duties further showed the UN to be "very interested in the welfare and progress of the people of the trust territories."82 The document concluded emphasizing that United Nations responsibility in the Trust Territory remained one of supervision, not governance; "to encourage and recommend, not to make laws and carry them out."83

While the United Nations' authority bore no real teeth in influencing the United States through laws, the organization over time created a number of resolutions and statements regarding colonialism in relation to the remaining Trust Territories. These resolutions followed the incorporation of a significant number of newly independent decolonized nations during the 1960s and 1970s. During the late 1960s the U.N. specifically addressed the contradictory role of the U.S. defense mission in the Trust Territory and the mission's inherent conflict with the goal of supporting the regions' inhabitants towards independence. The U.N. subcommittee report, entitled "Military activities and arrangements by colonial powers in territories under their administration, which might be competing in the implementation of the declaration on the granting of Independence to colonial countries and its peoples," built upon earlier proclamations on decolonization. The report offered a different interpretation of the initial Trusteeship Agreement crafted two decades earlier. The report specifically addressed article five's provision giving the administering authority use of the Trust Territory to ensure

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ihid.

international security through expansive military base construction. The report placed this directive in conversation with article six's directive to support the region's inhabitants towards independence. In doing so, the report elevated the importance of the article six directive over that of military defense and international security.

The U.N. report pushed one step further to identify the pattern of base construction and military expansion throughout the Trust Territories as presenting an increased threat to the world rather ensuring global peace. The report noted,

"it is obvious that the military personnel, equipment, naval and air force facilities, and bases maintained by the colonial Powers go far beyond the defense requirements of these small territories and that they are directed against third parties in the global military strategy of the colonial Powers and their allies. The net result of these arrangements in the smaller territories is that the military and the strategic requirements of the administering Powers and their allies are prevailing over the interests of the peoples of these Territories."

The U.N. subcommittee report continued on to note that such activities "in addition to creating a threat to international peace and security...affect adversely the economic, social and political advancement of the Territories and have resulted in alienation of the land and natural resources of colonial peoples." The committee recommended the colonial powers discontinue alienating lands belonging to the Trust Territory peoples for construction of military bases. The report also suggested these powers return lands already alienated to their rightful owners. <sup>86</sup>

The 1969 U.N. subcommittee report counter-posed the U.S. mission to promote national security and international peace with the mission to support Trust Territory

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> "Military activities and arrangements by colonial powers in territories under their administration which might be competing in the implementation of the declaration on the granting of Independence to colonial countries and its peoples," 1969 presented at the U.N. General Assembly. Located in TTA, reel no. 166. in file entitled: Correspondence, Dispatches and other information regarding the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (General Information), U.N., Trusteeship documents.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

inhabitants towards decolonization. The report argued that military buildup in indigenous peoples' homelands indeed harmed those inhabitants. Given that U.N. power remained limited to commissioning reports and offering recommendations, its suggestion to reduce military buildup seemed to have little influence on the United States. The report's only influence may have been in pushing the United States to withdraw from the U.N. General Assembly's Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Two years after the subcommittee report, the U.S. withdrew from this special committee with no explanation. U.S. representative to the United Nations Charles Yost sent a letter to the U.N. General Assembly stating that despite U.S. prior membership on the committee since its creation in 1962, the U.S. would no longer be participating. Yost remarked that committee membership had changed several times before. He added that while no longer a committee participant, the U.S. would still submit information on its Territories in accordance with U.N. Charter obligations.<sup>87</sup>

Keeping in mind the foundational contradictions embedded in the Trusteeship

Agreement and the ways these tensions surfaced at the U.N. over time, this chapter turns
now to examine how those charged with carrying out these directives negotiated their
conflicting goals on the ground in the early Trust Territory administration. Following the
1947 implementation of the Trusteeship Agreement, the temporary military government
in place since the war's conclusion formally shifted to naval jurisdiction. The transition to
a formal naval administration would prove a temporary solution to Trust Territory

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> Letter dated 11 January 1971 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America, Charles Yost, to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, regarding the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, January 11, 1971. Located in TTA, reel no. 166 File: Publication, correspondence and other info., regarding territories (U.N. Committee on Territories), Decolonization.

governance as civilian administration remained the long-term plan. This shift came in July 1951 when the Department of Interior took over administration duties from the navy. In order to train naval officers for this shorter term governing responsibility, Stanford University established a School of Naval Administration in 1946. The policies produced at this school on how to govern the Trust Territory will be examined closely in chapter two as that chapter focuses heavily on how naval policies played out on the ground in Kwajalein. This chapter next examines discourse produced by naval administrators on the broader Trust Territory and Trusteeship Agreement during the early postwar years.

During the early years of administration, naval officials produced narratives about the U.S. role within the Trust Territory and the specific relationship of the Trusteeship Agreement to the peoples of Micronesia. An early speech on this topic came from U.S. Navy Rear Admiral Leon. S. Fiske on October 23, 1950. Fisk spoke from his position as Deputy High Commissioner of the Trust Territory before the Hawaiian branch of the American Association for the United Nations. Fiske's speech discussed the relationship between the United States and the Trust Territory inhabitants. Close analysis of his speech offers insights into some of the early discourse informing naval governance in the Trust Territory. In his speech Fiske reiterated the story of American sacrifice in the islands highlighting the price paid for territorial control in men, money and combat years. He echoed Ambassador Austin's comments to the U.N. when he noted the U.S. would disallow the region's use as a platform for aggression against itself or any other nation. 88 Fiske explained how the former Japanese controlled islands "naturally" fell into the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>88</sup> "Relationship of the United Nations to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands," speech by Rear Admiral Leon. S. Fiske, U.S. Navy, Deputy High Commissioner Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, United Nations, October 23, 1950. Located in TTA, reel no. 166, File Correspondence, Dispatches, and other information regarding the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (General Info), U.N, Trusteeship Documents, 1952-1978. Pp. 2.

strategic trust category. He argued, "since we had fought for those islands and because they were of great strategic value to us, it was logical that we should control them." Fiske concluded that U.S. embrace of the Trusteeship responsibility implied the nation's faith in the United Nations and constituted a real contribution to international security. 90

Fiske's statements offered an on-site example within the Trust Territory of how the narrative of U.S. wartime sacrifice leading to the inevitable acquisition and control of Micronesia became legitimized as a mission to promote international security. Fiske's speech also recounted the role Ambassador Austin played at the United Nations in representing U.S. interests in the region to the Security Council in February 1947. He noted how Austin emphasized the need for U.S. control over the Trust Territory for the nation's security. He stated that Austin "told the council members that we did not propose to take over these islands for economic advantage, for they offer none, nor for philanthropic reasons. Our concern was for the future security of the United States, and that alone." Fiske's statements acknowledged Austin's separation of the two missions detailed in articles five and six. Fiske explained that the Ambassador stressed the dominance of U.S. security interests to the United Nations. In his speech, Fiske continued on to emphasize the importance of this security component adding, "because there may be a tendency, as we carry out our obligations under the terms of our Agreement, to forget the underlying reason for our assumption of these obligations."92 He continued, "Control of the Trust Territory is for the United States an insurance policy on which the

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

premium runs some seven million dollars annually...the denial of their bases to any potential enemy is a negative gain which cannot be reckoned in dollars and cents."<sup>93</sup>

Clarifying the priority of military control over the region early on in his speech, Fiske next highlighted some of the social achievements in Trust Territory administration. He discussed how the administration invested in developing institutions that could help the Trust Territory inhabitants become self-governing or independent in the future.<sup>94</sup> Fiske also emphasized the importance of regional economic planning given the risk of the Trust Territory lacking a future sustainable economy. He added, "The last thing we want to develop in the Trust Territory is a dependent economy supported by the American taxpayer." As will be shown later in the chapter, promoting economic dependency in Micronesia became actually the first thing rather than the "last thing" Washington's leaders aimed to do during the 1960s. In the area of social reform, Fiske applauded naval governance accomplishments in their efforts to legislate equal rights and teach the inhabitants "the responsibilities which in turn they owe to one another and to society in general."96 When discussing the issue of human rights and freedoms for the inhabitants, Fiske defined these efforts as core to the American tradition. He noted that while the region's peoples would not be familiar with the Bill of Rights or the U.S. Constitution, the Trust Territory administration afforded them an equal measure of protection under these laws. 97 Fiske concluded his speech noting these early reported accomplishments should give Americans a considerable level of satisfaction. He stated the achievements "reflect the practical idealism which is the American way of life...Our Western

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>94</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>95</sup> Ihid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> Ibid. 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> Ibid, 7.

conception of democratic self-government has been some 2000 years evolving." He concluded, "It is gratifying to realize that these people of primitive and feudal culture are making slow but real progress towards the attainment of self-sufficiency and self-government visualized for them by the United Nations."

Fiske's speech offers a rich example of how those charged with leading the Trust
Territory during the early administrative years attempted to articulate a coherent plan
amidst the Trusteeship Agreement's foundational contradictions. Not only did Fiske
emphasize an organized plan of action, he also worked to remind Americans of their
exceptionality noting they should take pride in having their Western values spread across
this "primitive" Pacific region. Perhaps as one strategy for negotiating the Trusteeship
Agreement's conflicting missions, Fiske split his discussion of territorial administration
foregrounding the primary objective to use the region as a U.S. "insurance plan."

According to Fiske, the military strategy to deny other powers access to the region
proved the "only" reason for the U.S. remaining in Micronesia. Despite this fact, he also
gave attention to the nation's other responsibility of supporting inhabitants towards selfgovernment and economic sustainability. Fiske identified the latter of these two goals as
important for saving the U.S. "taxpayer" from subsidizing a people clearly outside the
nation but whose islands remained strategically essential to protecting that nation.

In his speech, Fiske failed to acknowledge the conflict between supporting Micronesians towards self-government and the simultaneous U.S. mission to retain indefinite control over the region. This latter point took precedence in his vision for the region. Presumably in order to obtain this long-term goal, future independent

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>99</sup> Ihid

Micronesians would have to choose a path of continued U.S. control over their islands. If this proved the overarching U.S. goal, then helping develop institutions for Micronesian independence would go against the nation's future interests. As noted above, this realization surfaced more clearly and became directly articulated during the Kennedy administration. In 1961, President Kennedy commissioned investigation in the region that produced what would become known as the Solomon Report. The report documented official recommendations to keep Micronesians economically dependent on the U.S. to ensure continued control over the region. Details of that report will be taken up later in this chapter. For purposes of analyzing Fiske's speech, this section has attempted to reveal early conflicts underlying U.S. Trust Territory directives and how administrative officials parsed these out and glossed over their tensions.

This section has broadly offered analysis of the Trusteeship Agreement's foundational tensions infusing U.S. administration throughout the region that would carry specific challenges for U.S. administration on Kwajalein. As will be detailed throughout this dissertation, the separation between directives supporting the U.S. military mission in the region and Micronesian transitions towards self-government and independence would also separate responsibilities by those charged with carrying out these missions. On Kwajalein, this meant military governance over the island, while the Trust Territory government would be held responsible for Ebeye, the island where Marshallese displaced by the military to enable its mission on Kwajalein resided. This section has considered how the Trusteeship's contradictory goals became narrated in the immediate postwar period. The next section explores how these narratives continued amidst the growing

Cold War context, which brought increased Soviet critiques marking the U.S. presence in Micronesia as colonial.

## **Trust Territory Narratives Defending Cold War Imperatives**

As the Cold War emerged prominently during the 1950s, U.S. discourse narrating the continued Trust Territory administration as an exceptional national mission came under greater attack by Soviet commentators. This section considers this broader Cold War climate framing U.S. defense of its continued Trust Territory governance as outside any imperial ambitions. U.S. discourse further naturalized the nation's presence in the region by emphasizing the benevolent nature of that presence over military strategy.

The Trust Territory transition from naval governance to Department of Interior administration in 1951 coincided with a shift to a different set of political leaders and journalists narrating the Trusteeship Agreement to those working in the region. The *Micronesian Monthly* became a primary medium through which these narratives would be produced and distributed under civilian governance to Trust Territory personnel. The publication appeared just months after the transition and aimed to "weld this organization, separated by vast expanses of Pacific Ocean, into a more unified group." Commenting on how this print medium helped establish the Trust Territory's "imagined community," Trust Territory Library Services Director Daniel J. Peacock noted the *Monthly* newsletter served "the employees of the Trust Territory Government -- that large family of the 'house' of the High Commissioner." Peacock explained that the earliest

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 <sup>100</sup> Micronesian Monthly (twentieth anniversary issue), published by the Headquarters Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Fourth Quarter, 1971, vol. XIX, no. 4. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.
 101 I am referencing here Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983) in which he argues for the primacy of print culture in

*Monthly* issues primarily covered news of the High Commissioner, his staff and the headquarters office personnel. <sup>102</sup> By spring of 1956 the *Monthly* became the *Micronesian Reporter* shifting to a bimonthly distribution that carried more feature stories. Peacock noted in his 1974 publication index that during the 1950s and 1960s, "the Reporter was the only printed word that many Micronesians saw which provided narrative and pictorial coverage of the events that were newsworthy."

During the early 1950s, the *Micronesian Monthly* published several articles offering different interpretations of the Trusteeship Agreement and U.S. administration. In the September 1953 issue, the *Monthly* even provided space for inclusion of a Soviet perspective on the Trusteeship Agreement that comprised excerpts from a speech by Soviet delegate Mr. Zonov to the U.N. Trusteeship Council in June of that year. In his speech criticizing the U.S. record of administration in the Trust Territory, Zonov argued the U.S. remained far from fulfilling its obligations in the region despite ample time to achieve the U.N. directives.<sup>104</sup> The Soviet delegate primarily referenced article six's directive obliging the U.S. to create social, political and economic conditions to support the region's inhabitants towards self-government or independence. Zonov continued to note, "all power in the Territory is in the hands of the United States officials. Not indigenous inhabitants but United States officials hold the major administrative positions." He added that while the U.S. sent an annual report to the United Nations

establishing the "imagined community" that is the nation and promoting nationalism. Second reference: Micronesian Reporter Index, with introduction by Daniel J. Peacock, 1974. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa. Pp. vi.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>104</sup> "Russia Critical of T.T. Administration," appearing in collection of the *Micronesian Monthly* articles spanning from November 1952-January 1954, multiple authors. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid

indicating the creation of a municipal system in the region, upon close inspection the system appeared inadequate. Zonov argued that indigenous inhabitants did not fully participate in municipal affairs. The Soviet delegate leveled several more critiques at the United States, including marking U.S. failure to take necessary steps for guaranteeing economic progress in the region. He also labeled U.S. failure to return indigenous lands taken by the Japanese and German colonizers as "unjust."

The following *Monthly* issue included a response to the Soviet representative's critiques through excerpts from Trust Territory High Commissioner Frank Midkiff's speech at a U.N. Trusteeship Council meeting. Addressing some of the specific attacks, Midkiff highlighted U.S. efforts to train Micronesians for administrative positions prior to promoting them. He also addressed the charge of land dispossession explaining the U.S. held public domain lands "for the benefit and use of the Micronesians...except for small areas needed as sites for offices and for the Administering Authority's strategic use." Midkiff framed his larger response around the merits of incrementalism and posed two contrasting approaches to political and social change in the Trust Territory. He promoted gradual transformation over haste. He described the path of haste involving the kinds of "violent or cataclysmic" change often reserved for contexts of "unduly oppressive and restrictive conditions" of which he claimed did not apply in Micronesia. 109 The preferred approach embraced research and observation on the "needs and the factors underlying the existing system as worked out by the people themselves over untold and

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>108</sup> "High Commissioner Midkiff Answered Questions, Criticism Before UN Trusteeship Council," appearing in collection of the *Micronesian Monthly* articles spanning from November 1952-January 1954, multiple authors. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid

long generations to meet the conditions imposed by their environment."<sup>110</sup> He added, "we may observe that such system in Micronesia has a clearly reliable feature, namely, it works..."<sup>111</sup>

These early excerpts in the *Monthly* made evident the role of Cold War antagonisms framing narratives of the U.S. position in the Trust Territory. The U.S. would continue to experience pressure throughout the Cold War to demonstrate U.S. character and practice in the Trust Territory as motivated by support for Micronesians rather than imperial interests in the region. This public relations mission would become even more difficult to balance alongside growing U.S. military interests in the region over time. Interestingly, Midkiff's excerpts in the *Monthly* concluded with a telling observation on one major barrier for implementing effective and efficient change in the Trust Territory. This difficulty lay in an administrative structure staffed by primarily temporary employees that lacked any stable, long-term careers for Trust Territory personnel. He explained that this structure existed to achieve one Trusteeship Agreement objective: to prepare Micronesians to replace a substantial percentage of U.S. employees. Midkiff stated, "We do not have within our federal system of employment a colonial service. Broadly speaking, we have only the Civil Service and the Foreign Service systems. Neither of these is entirely suited to the Trust Territory employment situation." <sup>112</sup> Midkiff marked the difficulty in effective "administration" as tied to a U.S. reluctance to identify itself as a colonial power. 113 The importance of maintaining the U.S. exceptionalist narrative of a nation built upon an escape from colonialism rather

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>113</sup> Certainly this disavowal dates back to the foundations of the nation, but here I presume Midkiff is primarily thinking with the postwar period.

than a society founded upon the settler colonial acquisition of indigenous lands proved a potential liability when it came to administering this Pacific colonial territory. Midkiff may have identified something akin to British colonial service in India as more fitting to the conditions and challenges he faced in administering the Trust Territory.

That Cold War tensions like those surfacing in the *Micronesian Monthly* informed broader debates about the nature of the United Nations and the Trusteeship Agreement also came through in a 1962 paper on the U.S. role in the United Nations. U.S. Trusteeship Council Representative Jonathan B. Bingham presented this paper discussing the importance of U.S. involvement in this international community. Bingham drew attention to the existence of an isolationist American segment; those suspicious that U.S. participation in the U.N. somehow appeared the Communist enemy. He stated, "They appear to believe that we can score a total victory over communism throughout the world, that we can run things everywhere exactly as we would like to see them run, that we can do all this without the support of allies..."<sup>114</sup> Bingham continued on to note that these "go it aloners," U.N. opponents "are frequently heard to proclaim that the U.N. is a Communist instrument and that the United States and its allies are constantly being 'pushed around' at the U.N. by the Communists, acting with the support of the Afro-Asian neutralists."115 Refuting these alleged isolationist accusations and perhaps attempting to assuage potential fears, Bingham emphasized the U.S. disproportionate level of influence in the United Nations. He asserted, "the United States enjoys a special position in that it is a member of many other bodies, such as the Security Council, where the membership

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>114</sup> "The United States Role in the United Nations," by Jonathan B. Bingham, U.S. Representative on the Trusteeship Council, August 13, 1962. Located in TTA, reel no. 166, Folder, Correspondence, Dispatches and other info regarding the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (General Info) U.N., Trusteeship documents, 1952-1978. Pp. 250.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

is limited and the influence of each member is correspondingly increased." He reiterated U.S. veto power in the Security Council, the main body overseeing the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Bingham ultimately attempted to reassure those in doubt that he could state "categorically that the United States is by all odds, and without any close competitor, the most influential nation at the United Nations." Bingham's statements on U.S. veto power in the Security Council reinforced the reality that the primary U.N. space for Trust Territory oversight remained within U.S. control. His paper also alluded to continued Cold War tensions informing some American understandings of the United Nations and the U.S. role within this international body charged with overseeing the Trust Territory.

That the "Communist menace" weighed heavily upon the minds of those commenting on the Trust Territory during the 1950s came through in additional editorials and articles appearing in the *Micronesian Monthly*. One editorial submitted from Guam, entitled "World Situation, Military Strategy Require We Hold Trust Territory," began by predicting a permanent U.S. presence in the Trust Territory. The editorialist noted that judging by world events, the U.S. would likely stay in the Trust Territory. <sup>118</sup> Given the 1950s context, one can assume the writer's "world events" included increasing Cold War tensions. The author, who throughout the editorial referred to a collective "we" when detailing the U.S. position in the Trust Territory, presumably worked within Trust administration. His narrative implicated himself as among those responsible for trying to do a better job in administering the Trust Territory. He critiqued the work done thus far

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>116</sup> Ibid, 251.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>118</sup> "World Situation, Military Strategy Require We Hold T.T.," appearing in collection of the *Micronesian Monthly* articles spanning from November 1952-January 1954, multiple authors. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa. Pp. 17.

as not "the kind of job to which we can point with tremendous pride and say, 'That's what America can do with dependent peoples." The editorial exemplified the conflict glossed over in Fiske's 1950 speech, between the Trusteeship directive to help those he labeled "dependent peoples," alongside the broader objective to use the territory to ensure U.S. national security and global peace. The writer continued on to emphasize the importance of improving Trust Territory administrative quality because the U.S. needed to retain indefinite control in the region. He identified "military security" as the "one vital reason" for staying. The editorialist also recounted the commonly cited U.S. imperative to prevent any "potential national enemy" from occupying the Pacific and threatening the United States from that position. 120

After reiterating the importance of continued indefinite U.S. control of the Trust Territory, the editorial further detailed Cold War tensions by describing the shift from naval to civilian governance. He explained how this shift benefited the U.S. in its struggle against the Communists. He noted the change "deprive[s] our ready critics, particularly the Communists, of any real basis for argument that we are occupying the Trust Territory to 'colonize' and exploit it for our own 'imperialistic ambitions." The writer suggested this contention was "poppycock," but one freely expressed "by the Red propagandists." <sup>122</sup> He continued on to describe his perception of the region,

"Only a few months ago a Soviet Russia spokesman accused the United States of bad faith because we were not 'handing back the government of the Trust Territory areas' to the peoples themselves. This propagandist conveniently forgot that not in more than a hundred years have these island peoples really had selfgovernment. The Spanish, Germans and Japanese successively ruled them. And before that it was tribal rule, island by island, primitive and aboriginal feudal. We

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>120</sup> Ibid, 17-18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>121</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid

might as well face it fairly--we are in the Trust Territory to stay, barring a miraculous change in world conditions and world competitions. We need therefore accept the fact that if we are ever to get these areas on a reasonably self-supporting basis, we must at this time do a broader, more intensive-- a better-- job of assistance to presently backward peoples."

I quote this editorial at length because the writer seemed to capture likely broader presumptions informing the U.S. presence in the Trust Territory during this period. Given the 1950s context, a period when most U.S. perceptions of indigenous peoples in the Pacific came through anthropological studies and film caricatures, the editorial arguably marked commonly held stereotypes circulating among the Trust Territory's American personnel. The editorialist worked to evade Soviet critiques charging the U.S. administration with an imperialistic approach to the region. Yet his justification for continued U.S. control in the region built upon an argument based on the precedent of three previous colonial powers. He suggested these three powers presumably incapacitated the islanders from developing an ability to survive on their own. Given his perception of the islanders as "backward peoples," the author deemed it more than appropriate for the U.S. to guide them out of their primitive state and take them under the nation's wing. If along the way, the U.S. happened to acquire a massive territory to suit its own national security needs, so be it.

In addition to incorporating this editorial from Guam and articles from other Micronesian islands during the 1950s, the *Micronesian Monthly* ran several stories from journalists based in Hawai'i. The Hawai'i connection surfaced likely in part because High Commissioner Frank Midkiff administered the Trust Territory from his headquarters in Honolulu during this period. Riley C. Allen remained among the most prominent Hawai'i journalists submitting stories to the *Monthly* during these early years. Allen published

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several articles in the *Monthly* following his tour of the Trust Territory during the 1950s. Several themes colored Allen's stories, one of which included the tragic but inevitable story of war torn islands naturally fated for a history of successive foreign rule. He applied this narrative pattern to Kwajalein's story following the U.S. invasion. Allen described post-battle Kwajalein as a place marked by the "miracle" of "so many of the natives survive[ing]...[who] are now under the friendly flag of the United States."<sup>124</sup> Allen's description of the seamless move from wartime battle to postwar U.S. acquisition discursively shut down any alternative picture that may not have found Kwajalein's natives "under the friendly flag of the United States." The theme of Trust Territory status inevitability appeared throughout Allen's articles as he detailed his journey across the region. Echoing the Guam editorial analyzed above, Allen's piece, "Self-Government is Encouraged by the United States and Trust Territory," recounted the succession of foreign rulers in Micronesia. Allen's article explained how not since before the white man appeared, first incarnated in the Spaniard, had the islanders had self-government. 125 He added, "Today it is the hope of the United States, as trustee of the Trust Territory, that, perhaps slowly but surely, the natives of these far-scattered atolls and islands will learn to govern themselves as well as to be self-supporting." <sup>126</sup>

Like the Guam editorial above, Allen's article presumed self-government remained a concept natives could only grasp under U.S. administrative guidance. This notion relied upon the common "fatal contact" narrative that equated colonial encounter

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>124</sup> "Huge Kwajalein Atoll is Strong Point in America's Pacific Defenses," by Riley Allen appearing in collection of the *Micronesian Monthly* articles spanning from November 1952-January 1954, multiple authors. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa. Pp. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>125</sup> "Self-Government is Encouraged by the United States and Trust Territory," by Riley Allen appearing in collection of the *Micronesian Monthly* articles spanning from November 1952-January 1954, multiple authors. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa. Pp. 22.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid

with cultural destruction. That narrative dismissed the possibility that Micronesians retained any of their own meaningful forms of social, political or economic organization after the colonial encounter and that only by following the U.S. model could they hopefully someday stand on their own two feet. Of course this narrative conveniently lent itself to U.S. justification for making American forms of governance and social organization the model through which Micronesians could be taught to "govern themselves" and become "self-supporting." If U.S administrators and journalists viewed Micronesia as a blank cultural canvass upon which the U.S. could paint the Trust Territory administration, then clearly U.S. administration represented a noble act of kindness, charitable in its mission.

Another of Allen's articles appearing in the *Monthly* detailed the other side of this charitable arrangement; the side that greatly benefited the U.S. during the Cold War. Again, similar to the Guam editorial, Allen euphemized the Cold War competition as the "world situation." After further characterizing the moment as one of global threat, Allen asserted that the U.S. mission as Trustee had only just begun. He wrote, "Micronesian peoples are not ready to stand alone--and the world situation makes it absolutely necessary for the United States to hold to this great expanse of water and strategic island outposts, for security purposes." Allen narrated here how Micronesian incapacity to self-govern paired conveniently with U.S. strategic interests. As these excerpts exemplified, Allen's articles revolved around an assumption that while Micronesian lack of opportunity to learn self-government remained unfortunate, this

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>127</sup> "World Situation Makes it Necessary for U.S. to Hold Trust Territory," by Riley Allen appearing in collection of the *Micronesian Monthly* articles spanning from November 1952-January 1954, multiple authors. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa. Pp. 20.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid

tragic historical circumstance tied nicely to U.S. contemporary security needs in the region. Furthermore, these needs placed the U.S. in a position to help foster among the Micronesians the ability to self-govern.

When reading Allen's narratives, it is helpful to keep in mind that his articles appeared alongside various other *Micronesian Monthly* stories aimed at an audience primarily comprising personnel charged with carrying out the Trust Territory mission. Analyzing the production and reproduction of these narratives certainly does not equate to understanding how readers received or understood these articles. However, their inclusion suggests at the very least that the *Micronesian Monthly* editors viewed these narratives as significant enough for Trust Territory personnel to be included in this publication. Furthermore, the articles suggested the *Monthly*'s role in helping naturalize the U.S. Trust Territory relationship to Trust personnel. Many of the *Monthly's* stories reiterated a common interpretation of this relationship and excluded alternatives during the 1950s, with the exception of the Soviet excerpts noted earlier.

This section has illuminated how amidst Cold War critiques of U.S. Trusteeship narratives, U.S. political and media representatives further defended the preeminence of a U.S. benevolent position in the region. These proclamations of benevolence worked to naturalize the U.S. presence in Micronesia as something outside imperialism. As the next section reveals, U.S. narratives of national benevolence in the region became increasingly unstable as the Kennedy Administration's Solomon Report was leaked to the public during the 1970s. The report revealed the covert U.S. political strategy for keeping the Trust Territory in a perpetual state of economic dependence and thus under indefinite U.S. control.

## Trust Territory Narratives of U.S. Benevolence in Turmoil: The Solomon Report

The continuity of Trust Territory narratives naturalizing the U.S. presence in Micronesia as part of a benevolent and special national project did not go unchallenged. Ruptures and alternative stories about the Trusteeship Agreement began to surface during the 1960s and 1970s. Early on, the Trusteeship Agreement provided one platform upon which the myth American exceptionalism could be reproduced under the guise of international sanction. While these narratives worked to legitimize the U.S. presence in Micronesia throughout the 1950s, Trust Territory administrators would increasingly face challenges to address the contradictions foundational to the U.S. mission in the region. This final section examines these early challenges to the U.S. Trust administration, offering a lens into foundational ruptures that would continue to unsettle U.S. colonial control over the region for decades to come. In the Marshall Islands, the Trust Territory administration would come under increasing attack during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s as U.S. practices on Kwajalein and Ebeye ignited Marshallese protests and accompanying media scrutiny.

Micronesian and American critics began publicly probing the conflict between the U.S. military defense mission and the Trusteeship Agreement's directive to support Micronesians towards self-determination during the 1960s and 1970s. A 1961 U.N. Trust Territory visiting mission revealed the U.S. administration neglected article six of the agreement allowing the region's infrastructure to deteriorate, giving rise to the commonly used "rust territory" descriptor. Critiques of U.S. administration in Micronesia began appearing in mainstream U.S. magazines during the 1960s, including the *New Yorker*,

129 Hanlon, Remaking Micronesia, 51.

and the Saturday Evening Post. 130 At the same time, the United Nations began authoring a series of resolutions on decolonization and the rights of indigenous peoples that increasingly put pressure on the United States to justify continued and indefinite administration of the Territory. By this time, the majority of the original eleven territories under the Trusteeship system had become independent or integrated into a neighboring territory.

Following the 1961 U.N. visiting mission, President Kennedy called for an investigative report into the region to help strategize solutions to problems addressed by the mission. <sup>131</sup> In May 1963, a survey mission headed by Harvard economics professor and later Assistant Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, Anthony M. Solomon, visited the Trust Territory to report on economic, social and political developments. With U.N. pressure mounting in support of decolonization, Solomon's group was charged with offering recommendations that would lead to programs and policies to quicken the rate of development in the region. The group aimed to discover whether or not the region's inhabitants could make an "informed and free choice as to their future, in accordance with U.S. responsibilities under the Trusteeship Agreement." <sup>132</sup> While the Solomon group's findings were initially marked unclassified, the entire contents became quickly classified at the insistence of the Department of the State. According to former U.S. Ambassador Donald F. McHenry in his 1975 Micronesia: Trust Betrayed, Altruism vs. Self Interest, state officials wanted to avoid criticism contained in the report that could be

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>130</sup> McHenry, Micronesia, Trust Betrayed, 14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>132</sup> Ibid. 16.

used against the U.S. at the United Nations. More important, he added, they wanted to cover up secret political objectives referred to throughout the report.<sup>133</sup>

While parts of the Solomon Report became declassified over time, the first volume on political development remained classified. Foiling the State Department's secrecy plan, a student from the University of Hawai'i's Micronesian collective got hold of the Solomon Report's introduction and summary and published these classified documents in a student newsletter on July 10, 1971. 134 The Young Micronesian uncovered for the first time, "the official rationale and description of United States policy objectives of Micronesia." <sup>135</sup> The report's published portions revealed the Solomon findings that after two decades of U.S. administration, territory infrastructure remained worse than when the U.S. first took power. The report also characterized the Trust Territory economy as largely stagnant and identified minimal progress in social development. Solomon's group found the majority of Micronesians illiterate and struggling to survive through agriculture and fishing. The report noted that given this reality the U.S. came under increasing criticism from the press, the U.N. and Micronesians themselves. The report continued,

"Despite a lack of serious concern for the area until quite recently, Micronesia is said to be essential to the U.S. for security reasons. We cannot give the area up, yet time is running out for the U.S. in the sense that we will soon be the only nation left administering a trust territory. The time could come, and shortly, when the pressures in the UN for a settlement of the status of Micronesia could become more than embarrassing. In recognition of the problem, the President, on April 18, 1962, approved NSAM No. 145, which set forth as US policy the movement of Micronesia into a permanent relationship with the US within our political framework. In keeping with that goal, the memorandum called for accelerated

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

development of the area to bring its political, economic, and social standards into line with an eventual permanent association." 136

In his analysis of the report, McHenry discussed the Solomon group's suggestions for solidifying U.S. permanent association. These steps included preparing a favorable plebiscite and investing more in Trust Territory operating programs to ensure a favorable vote. The final goal included improving coordination between Washington and the Trust Territory government to make sure the first two steps could be implemented efficiently and effectively. 137 The Solomon Report recommendations directly articulated U.S. plans to convince Micronesians, through long overdue investments, to vote for a permanent relationship in their upcoming elections. The recommendations also attempted to raise awareness in the White House that continued control of the Trust Territory implicated the United States as "moving counter to the anti-colonial movement." The report's recommendations explained that including independence as an option in the plebiscite would be safe because if the U.S. implemented the recommended programs, Micronesians would show "little desire" for independence. 139 Chapter nine explores how once the U.S. perceived Marshallese as likely to vote for independence during the 1980s, the U.S. removed this option from the ballot.

The Solomon recommendations presented to President Kennedy in October 1963 never became implemented as Kennedy's assassination followed within a month. After Kennedy's death, the group charged with implementing the recommendations disappeared along with any substantive focus on Micronesia. McHenry noted that while numerous efforts followed to reestablish an interagency body on Micronesia issues,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>136</sup> Ibid, 16-17. <sup>137</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>139</sup> Ibid, 19.

Vietnam quickly captured the White House focus. <sup>140</sup> The Solomon Report clearly identified the Trusteeship Agreement's foundational tension since 1947: the preeminent goal of using the region for U.S. military strategy alongside a secondary obligation to support Micronesians towards self-government. The report further contextualized these two directives within the emerging anti-colonial political climate of the 1960s alongside continued pressure to grow U.S. Cold War military capabilities. The report constituted the first document to overtly pose a potential solution to this foundational conflict. The Solomon Report recommended the U.S. increase Micronesian dependency so Micronesians themselves would freely choose to allow U.S. permanent regional control. This solution addressed the period's decolonizing political pressure while simultaneously supporting the continued Cold War military mission. In the Marshall Islands, Kwajalein would play a central role in shaping the continued relationship between the U.S. and Marshallese governments following decolonization and the dissolution of the Trust Territory administration. That history will also be explored further in chapter nine.

The problems addressed in the Solomon Report and the admission of a U.S. government-sponsored conspiracy to sabotage Micronesian rights to self-determination were critiqued throughout Micronesia and specifically in the Marshall Islands.

Alternative narratives framing the Trusteeship Agreement came out of the Marshalls centering how the Agreement fared for Marshallese people. The Marshallese legislature, the Nitijela, sent a resolution to the United Nations in 1968 addressing this topic. In Resolution No. 71, the Nitijela asked the U.N. to reconsider the Trust Territory's legal and political status. The Nitijela prefaced the resolution with a letter from co-author, Chief, and future Marshall Islands President Amata Kabua. Kabua asserted that the

<sup>140</sup> Ibid, 20.

resolution constituted "one of the first attempts by the peoples of Micronesia to cry out to the world for help in righting the unjust neocolonial situation under which we now exist." Resolution No. 71 detailed the original Trusteeship Agreement language obliging the United States to foster development of political institutions to help promote self-government or independence. The resolution also cited U.S. obligations to support economic advancement and self-sufficiency, to protect the rights and fundamental freedoms of the inhabitants without discrimination and to promote educational advancement. The Nitijela argued the United States not only neglected these obligations but also attempted to transplant into the region a system of government closely resembling itself; one irrelevant to Micronesia's political conditions.

Disparaging the kinds of deceitful practices encouraged by the Solomon Report, the Nitijela charged the U.S. with refusing to discuss possibilities of independence or alliance with countries other than the U.S. in considering political alternatives for the Trust Territory. The Nitijela added that apparently the U.S. took for granted continued association whether or not this reflected Micronesian desires. The Nitijela also noted how the U.S. "for over twenty years deferred any program of political education for the inhabitants... the number of Micronesians in policymaking positions remained distressingly small." The resolution accused the U.S. of silencing Micronesian voices in the selection of their representatives or administrators. Resolution No. 71 also detailed a history of unjust land leasing practices on Kwajalein (to be analyzed closely in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>141</sup> Resolution no. 71 and accompanying correspondence submitted to the Fifteenth Regular Session, United Nations requesting reconsideration of legal and political status of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, signatures Amata Kabua (Speaker) and Atlan Anien (Legislative Secretary), October 21, 1968. Located in the Library of Congress Newspaper Room, U.N. collection, Washington D.C.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

chapter four) and also addressed the myth of U.S. military practices in the region ensuring national and international security. The resolution decried the use of Bikini and Enewitak islands for nuclear testing and the ensuing destruction of the islanders' homelands. The resolution stated, "the Marshallese people do not believe that such explosions are consistent with the maintenance of international peace and security." 146

The 1968 Nitijela resolution's continuing list of grievances pointed to the lack of adequate hospitals throughout the region, a concern that would continually surface between Kwajalein and Ebeye for decades to come. The resolution identified health care provisions for Micronesians as "generally...so bad as to render the population highly susceptible to periodic epidemics of hepatitis, measles, and other diseases." <sup>147</sup> Chapter six further reveals how this grievance surfaced on Kwajalein throughout the 1970s and 1980s and contributed to protests towards decolonization. Resolution No. 71 also acknowledged discriminatory wage scales throughout the region and specific segregation practices on Kwajalein. The Nitijela explained that on Kwajalein there existed "the most rigid form of segregation...in which Micronesians are not permitted to live on the same islands as Americans, to shop in Global Associates' stores, or even to take home with them anything of any value which Americans might freely give them." 148 These grievances would continue to surface through the 1970s and 1980s, also contributing to Marshallese protests on Kwajalein. After the Nitijela extensively enumerated colonial conditions throughout Micronesia, the resolution concluded with the following:

"Be it resolved by the Marshall Islands Nitijela that the manifestly unequal treatment which the Micronesian peoples receive even in their own homelands is positively destructive of the respect for human rights and for fundamental

147 Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

freedoms which the United States under Article 75c of the United Nations Charter is required to promote." <sup>149</sup>

The Nitijela added that they respectfully petitioned the U.N. Security Council to review the entire basis for U.S. continued presence in the region. Finally, the resolution advised the Security Council to revise or abolish the Trusteeship Agreement as necessary to promote Micronesian well-being.<sup>150</sup>

Resolution No. 71 represented a direct challenge to U.S. imperialism in Micronesia by employing Trusteeship Agreement language as a frame through which to hold the U.S. accountable to its documented U.N. commitments. In doing so, the Nitijela picked apart nearly every agreement directive and uncovered U.S. failures to meet its obligations at each turn. By using the framework provided by the U.N. to challenge U.S. imperialism, the Nitijela argued for the dissolution of the Trusteeship Agreement given U.S. failure to uphold its end of the bargain. While chapter nine explores the process of Marshallese decolonization, this section has attempted to reveal how the resolution showcased an early discursive platform foreshadowing similar Marshallese challenges to the U.S. Trust administration that would follow. In contrast to Trusteeship discourse detailed earlier in this chapter, the Nitijela resolution showed how Marshallese leaders began employing Trusteeship narratives to challenge U.S. presence in the region, rather than to naturalize U.S. entitlement.

Within a few weeks of submission to the United Nations, Nitijela Resolution No.
71 became a central story covered in the *Marshall Islands Journal*. The privately owned *Journal* published out of Majuro carried the tagline "Marshall's Free Press" and provided a rare media outlet in the Marshall Islands that voiced challenges to U.S. administration

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

in Micronesia. A November 6, 1968 editorial encouraged Marshallese and all Micronesians to embrace the Nitijela resolution and demand justice, equality and dignity for themselves. The editorial warned, "If the people's demands are ignored...they will find themselves much as America's Indians found themselves. For they will have lost their land and their culture. They will be doomed to an endless second-class existence."

The editorial continued to describe the more than two decades of Trusteeship efforts to cover up the "ill-disguised colonialism taking place in Micronesia."

Additionally, the editorial acknowledged that some "enlightened" U.S. Congress members could see through the "lip-service paid to the Trusteeship agreement," for the bungling policies that truly defined U.S. Trust administration. But these individuals' potential influence remained eclipsed by the U.S. defense department.

The November 1968 editorial addressing the issues brought forth by the Nitijela.

Letters to the editor appearing in the *Marshall Islands Journal* both before and after Resolution No. 71 expressed shared concerns and critiques voiced by the Nitijela. A letter from American nurse Susan Naylen appeared in the *Journal* on May 30, 1967, describing her experience of trying help sick Marshallese babies on Ebeye. Naylen complained about Ebeye's hospital conditions under Trust administration and the limited access to better facilities on Kwajalein. Similar concerns about health care quality and access across Micronesia would surface through the Nitijela resolution the following year. Naylen explained how she tried to take two sick Marshallese babies to Kwajalein

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>151</sup> Editorial on Resolution 71 appearing in the November 6, 1968 *Marshall Islands Journal*. Part of the *Marshall Islands Journal* (1967, 1968, 1969) issues located in TTA, reel no, 105.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

during a medical emergency when necessary medicine ran out on Ebeye. She said when she reached the dock on Kwajalein a police car met her rather than an ambulance. The Kwajalein police refused to take her and the babies to the hospital who at this point were struggling to breathe. When she finally reached the hospital with the babies, they were prevented from entering and refused emergency treatment. She returned the babies to Ebeye where 12 hours later one of them died. Naylen noted she continued to have difficulty speaking to the babies' mother. She also stated,

"Ebeye is an island of more than 4000 people and its sanitation and medical facilities are little better than those of an outer island...the people here can't understand why the Trust Territory Americans can't seem to make things better and Kwajalein Americans won't. Of course I know that the Army doesn't want to do the Trust Territory's job. And apparently the Congress didn't think 90,000 Micronesians were important enough to give much attention to. But to the Marshallese all Americans are the same and I'm getting tired of making excuses for them."

Naylen's statements addressed many issues that would continue to arise on Kwajalein and Ebeye during the Trust administration era. Chapters three, four and five will begin to explore the tensions she cited between army and Trust Territory officials regarding responsibility for Ebeye. For the purposes of this chapter, Naylen's statements also provide a lens into the complicated position in which she and likely other American Trust Territory employees found themselves. The Trusteeship Agreement charged these individuals with a mission to carry out policies the U.S. government never fully committed to fulfilling. Many Trust Territory personnel carried the burden of having to reconcile the Trusteeship Agreement's language with the reality of lacking support on the ground. Furthermore, they had to figure out how to mediate between these two realities when dealing with the Micronesian populations some presumably signed on to help.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>154</sup> Letter to the editor from Susan Naylen appearing in the May 30, 1967 *Marshall Islands Journal*. Part of the *Marshall Islands Journal* (1967, 1968, 1969) issues located in TTA, reel no, 105.

Another American who had been working on Kwajalein sent a letter to the Journal following the Nitijela resolution on January 11, 1969. This letter further reinforced allegations of discrimination on Kwajalein made by the Nitijela. Benjamin Hull of Rockport, Massachusetts wrote he had not been accustomed to writing political letters but felt compelled to discuss segregation and discrimination on Kwajalein. He worked as a computer programmer on Kwajalein for seven months and felt familiar with the situation. He wrote, "Of all the instances of discrimination that I saw, the most blatant was the barring of Micronesians from the Global snack bar at lunchtime." <sup>155</sup> Hull said he kept signs that Global put on the snack bar doors that read "No Micronesians allowed between 11:30-12:30' in both Marshallese and English," and offered to send them if anyone needed proof. 156 Hull ended his letter requesting that readers please not "interpret this as an attack on my government but as a gesture of concern, and a gesture of appreciation for many good moments among the Marshallese people." <sup>157</sup> Hull's statements further illuminated the compromising position some Americans found themselves in as they carried out their Trust Territory jobs while trying to make sense of U.S. policies in the region. While chapters five and six further explore discrimination against Marshallese on Kwajalein during 1960s and 1970s, these letters showcased how some American employees early on struggled with how to reconcile the contradictory Trust Territory and military policies on the ground.

Chapter one has argued that two primary narratives during the post-World War II period worked together to help naturalize the U.S. presence in Micronesia, the Marshall

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>155</sup> Letter to the editor from Benjamin Hull appearing in the January 11, 1969 *Marshall Islands Journal*. Part of the *Marshall Islands Journal* (1967, 1968, 1969) issues located in TTA, reel no, 105. <sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

Islands and ultimately Kwajalein. These narratives comprised the Kwajalein battle story and the U.N. Trusteeship Agreement. This chapter has explored how these narratives began normalizing U.S. presence in the region through an exceptionalist nation-state framework that obscured the imperial nature of the U.S. military expansion in the region. This chapter further revealed how the Trusteeship Agreement remained riddled with contradictions and came under continued critique and challenge through the 1960s and 1970s, destabilizing U.S. efforts at indefinite colonial control over the region. Amidst this broader narrative canvass of Kwajalein battle stories and Trusteeship narratives, chapter two next sharpens the lens of focus over Kwajalein to examine how the U.S. began culturally and spatially mapping the island as an American space under the navy.

## Chapter Two Mapping Kwajalein as a U.S. Space under the Navy

Building on chapter one's analysis of discourse contextualizing the U.S. relationship to Kwajalein during and immediately following World War II, chapter two turns now to explore how the navy began naturalizing Kwajalein as a U.S. space following the Kwajalein battle. This chapter provides a foundation for thinking broadly about spatial production on Kwajalein through attention to naval policies controlling Micronesians on the island through labor management, segregation and eventual displacement. How these processes played out during the 1960s and 1970s under the army will be examined in chapters three, four and five. Chapter two also explores how the navy marked Kwajalein a U.S. space by disciplining and regulating gendered and sexualized boundaries on the island according to U.S. cultural norms during and following World War II.

Chapter two begins by considering how naval policies marked Kwajalein a U.S. space by reproducing American hetero-normativity on the island through an examination Kwajalein court martial disciplinary records. These documents marked the early roots of hetero-normative regulations on Kwajalein that would continue through the army era to map the island as a space of U.S. militarized masculinity. Under both naval and army administration of the island, military regulations disciplining gender and sexual boundaries centered on the perceived threat posed by the predatory bachelor males

roaming free amidst the confining island setting. Naval documents illuminated how this fear came through in military attempts to discipline potentially deviant sexual behavior among the largely bachelor male population. As chapter five will explore, army regulations exemplified how this fear played out when civilian bachelor men resided in close proximity to the Cold War's most vulnerable target: the suburban nuclear family. This portion of chapter two remains inspired by the Pacific Cultural Studies Scholar Gregory Dvorak's work on gender and sexuality on Kwajalein. In his 2004 Master's Thesis, *Remapping Home: Touring the Betweenness of Kwajalein*, Dvorak explored how Kwajalein's suburban spatial constructs worked to naturalize a hetero-normative setting on the island. This chapter's examination of military policies disciplining sexual deviance during the post-battle era on Kwajalein reads as somewhat of a prequel to Dvorak's analysis of spatial discipline under the army.

To further explore the broad range of naval policies governing life in the postwar period on Kwajalein and marking the island as a U.S. space, chapter two also draws upon naval governance educational materials produced in early naval training guides. After identifying how these guides helped frame the naval mission in the Trust Territory, this chapter investigates how the navy began normalizing Kwajalein as a U.S. space through policies of labor segregation. These place making policies focused on segregating U.S. military personnel from Marshallese and other Micronesian laborers on island, as well as those Marshallese temporarily staying on Kwajalein as displaced nuclear testing evacuees. Chapter two explores how naval reports often framed policies segregating Micronesians laborers through the Trust Territory directive to protect the culture and customs of the region's inhabitants. This chapter reveals how U.S. military and Trust

Territory officials measured, valued and labeled various aspects of Micronesian and Marshallese culture on Kwajalein, determining those worthy of protection and those that would benefit from greater American influence. These latter cultural characteristics suited for change tended to be those needing adaptation to make Micronesians more productive workers in the navy's mission on Kwajalein.

Finally, chapter two explores the origins of how Kwajalein became a space of exclusive American residency. This moment, which would maintain for nearly fifty years thereafter, came in 1951 when the navy displaced all Micronesians from Kwajalein to Ebeye Island. As Kwajalein became marked by American residency, the continuity of Micronesian labor on the island got framed within a context of "commuters." Chapter two concludes with a brief portrait of one new commuter labor category: the Micronesian domestic. Broadly, chapter two illuminates naval patterns segregating space through U.S. gender and sexual norms on Kwajalein to fit a hetero-normative model. These policies would continue through the army administration's efforts to protect the Cold War nuclear family structure on Kwajalein thereafter. Chapter two further identifies early foundations of labor separation on Kwajalein that segregated American settler colonial residency from the racialized native commuting labor force on Ebeye. Both patterns of layering space through U.S. norms segregating labor and regulating gender and sexuality would persist on Kwajalein through the transition to the army missile installation in the early 1960s. These patterns over time furthered the cultural and spatial process of transforming Kwajalein from a Marshallese Island to a place within the U.S. domestic. While the suburban manifestation of American domesticity would not appear on Kwajalein until the early 1960s, chapter two reveals how policies naturalizing labor segregation and heteronormative gender and sexual roles foundational to the island's later domestic setting began under navy rule.

## Disciplining Hetero-Normativity on Kwajalein: Policing Wartime Sexual Deviance

Before the naval administration prioritized efforts to control native laborers on Kwajalein through segregation policies in the postwar era, early naval documents indicated that disciplining military personnel constituted an important task. In addition to archived naval directives detailing policies on hygiene, dress, barracks cleanliness and proper salutations, several documents specifically enumerated rules regarding appropriate sexual behavior on Kwajalein. These documents revealed that during the war, military concern about male sexual behavior on Kwajalein instigated severe disciplinary action against those perceived as deviating from accepted norms. This section examines some of these documents keeping in mind how early discourse suggesting military concern about potential predatory sexual behavior among bachelors on Kwajalein would continue thereafter under the army administration. Chapter five will begin analyzing this common fear that surfaced under both naval and army administrations. But shared analysis in chapters two and five do not intend to suggest a seamless continuity in policy or discourse lacking noteworthy distinctions. Rather, each chapter takes into account the diverging bachelor to family environment during each of these administrative periods. Under the navy, Kwajalein's primary population comprised bachelor soldiers with minimal female presence comprising primarily a few American nurses and Marshallese domestics. Thus, as this chapter reveals, wartime naval policies primarily policed perceived male deviant behavior towards other men. These policies focused on fears of

what the navy identified in several court martial cases as "sodomy" and "scandalous conduct tending to the destruction of good morals." Wartime naval policies and disciplinary action aimed to protect other bachelor soldiers from their presumed deviant and predatory counterparts. In doing so, these policies marked Kwajalein through U.S. gender and sexual norms during this period, further naturalizing the island as an American space.

As chapter five explores more closely, under army administration military segregation policies on Kwajalein aimed to protect the largely civilian family community from civilian and military bachelors. This fear of a potential predatory single male on Kwajalein moved from the postwar era into the 1960s. But under army rule the population to be protected constituted the Cold War nuclear family. In Cold War suburbia, as Kwajalein would come to mirror, the nuclear family and the home became valuable and vulnerable properties that the male father and husband needed to protect. He did so by isolating and segregating these properties away from dangerous elements, removing them to the American suburb.<sup>2</sup> On Kwajalein, the army assisted in the process of protecting the family man's property by creating rules and regulations preventing bachelors from moving freely throughout the suburban planned island. These policies aimed to keep this potentially threatening man away from the family man's properties. This section keeps in mind these regulatory spatial dynamics that would emerge under the army and considers how naval policies constituted the foundations of this continued

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Court Martial Orders No. 4-45, 12-7-44, 12-20-44 (For charges on November 8, 1944, November 11, 1944, November 21, 1944, November 22, 1944, March 15, 1945). United States Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas. Commander Task Force Ninety-Six. Located in RG 313, Records of Naval Operating Forces, Naval Air Base Kwajalein, General Correspondence 1943-1947, Box S900 at the Pacific Archives, San Bruno

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> For more on this history see May, *Homeward Bound* and Lassiter *The Suburban Crisis* 

dynamic. Fear of the single male on Kwajalein moved from wartime through postwar missile operations on Kwajalein to mark island boundaries around gender, sexuality and family norms over time. Early naval regulations and punishments for deviance from these norms reveal the origins of Kwajalein's naturalization as a hetero-normative space.

The navy articulated a commitment to protecting the few women on Kwajalein during the war from the potential threat of predatory bachelor men through executive memorandums and notices. Two such documents circulated in August 1945. The first, on August 13, instructed male officers about Nurse's Quarters visitation policies. This "Executive Officers Notice" detailed specific hours male officers could visit the Nurse's Quarters living room as guests of nurse residents.<sup>3</sup> The notice emphasized that officers could only visit this space during these designated hours. Furthermore, the navy expected officers calling at the Nurses' Quarters to do so "properly dressed in cotton uniform or similar appropriate uniform for their service force." Hinting at the navy's heightened challenge in regulating intimate encounters in an island environment, the notice continued on to state "No officers will be admitted to the Quarters in bathing attire." The second Memorandum, distributed on August 30, 1945, marked boundaries more broadly around all spaces occupied by women on Kwajalein. The memorandum stated "All buildings and areas occupied by women on this island are out of bounds for all male members of the armed forces." The notice qualified that the earlier directive detailing

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Executive Officers Notice: Visiting Hours, Nurses' Quarters. U.S. Naval Base, Navy 824. August 13, 1945. Located in RG 313, Records of Naval Operating Forces, Naval Air Base Kwajalein, General Correspondence 1943-1947, Box S899 at the Pacific Archives, San Bruno.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Executive Officer's Memorandum no. 94-45: Building and Areas Occupied by Women-Out of Bounds of. U.S. Naval Base, Navy 824. August 30, 1945. Located in RG 313, Records of Naval Operating Forces, Naval Air Base Kwajalein, General Correspondence 1943-1947, Box S899 at the Pacific Archives, San Bruno.

specific Nurse's Quarters visitation times and those on authorized duty in these designated buildings and areas remained the only exceptions to this policy. The notice warned that any violations would "result in prompt disciplinary action."

In addition to rules aimed at protecting the small population of women on island the navy attempted to protect military men from the potential threat of their bachelor counterparts. Wartime General Court Martial Orders revealed naval disciplinary action geared towards protecting male officers on the island. Several cases surfaced in November and December 1944, as well as March and April 1945 with charges against naval personnel for "sodomy" and "scandalous conduct tending to the destruction of good morals."8 These charges carried sentences for those found guilty that included reduced military rating, 12 months confinement and dishonorable discharge. Interestingly, two other cases appeared amidst these records during the same dates for different crimes receiving similar sentences on all but one account. One of these cases involved charges for involuntary manslaughter, the other for striking another person in the navy. Their sentences also included reduced military ratings and longer confinements--the striking charge for 18 months, the involuntary manslaughter for 30 months. But both charges led to a "bad conduct discharge," rather than a "dishonorable discharge." According to online information, the distinction between these two categories identifies dishonorable discharge as more severe and shameful. While not entirely clear if these same distinctions would have historically marked the categories similarly on wartime Kwajalein, their

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> I chose not to list the defendants' names here to protect their privacy. But for further information see Court Martial Orders No. 4-45, 12-7-44, 12-20-44 (For charges on November 8, 1944, November 11, 1944, November 21, 1944, November 22, 1944, March 15, 1945). United States Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas. Commander Task Force Ninety-Six. Located in RG 313, Records of Naval Operating Forces, Naval Air Base Kwajalein, General Correspondence 1943-1947, Box S900 at the Pacific Archives, San Bruno.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

recent noted differences are worth consideration. Today, military personnel receive dishonorable discharges for conduct the military considers most reprehensible, deemed equivalent to a felony conviction. Sentences for dishonorable discharge result in the loss of all veteran benefits alongside separation. Bad conduct discharges, on the other hand, are also ranked negatively, but less severe. Those separated under this charge can still retain some veteran disability benefits. Presuming that distinctions between these categories existed on wartime Kwajalein, otherwise different sentencing would prove unnecessary, it is worth considering the potential message embedded in these divergent sentences. The records suggested involuntary manslaughter or physical assault constituted lesser offenses than "sodomy" and "scandalous conduct tending to the destruction of good morals."

One case concerning sexual misconduct during the war deserves close examination given the degree of military scrutiny surrounding the charges. As in the cases mentioned above, I chose not to disclose the name of the accused in order to protect that individual's privacy. For ease of narrative, he will henceforth be referred to as Smith. For reasons not evident in the archival records, Smith's case garnered greater attention than the other dishonorable discharge cases of the same period noted above. It is certainly possible these other cases accumulated comparable accompanying documents that archivists either neglected to collect or could not locate. While not possible to determine if the greater number of sources accompanying Smith's case equated to greater production of materials surrounding his case, this next section will take advantage of access to these sources for closer analysis. Before exploring the accusations against Smith, I must also note his case fell under Ebeye naval base records. Smith's conduct

 $<sup>^{10}\</sup> http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military\_discharge.$ 

therefore occurred during his military duties on Ebeye, the island near Kwajalein that would later house Kwajalein's displaced native workforce. The charges against Smith shared commonalities with those dishonorable discharge cases on Kwajalein referenced above. Because naval governing patterns of Kwajalein and Ebeye seemed consistent during wartime and in the postwar period, I suggest Smith's case reflected naval policies regarding sexual misconduct throughout Kwajalein Atoll during the war.

On February 2, 1945 a confidential memo from the Naval Commanding Officer to the Commander Marshalls Gilberts Area detailed a recommendation for Smith's "Undesirable Discharge" for homosexual behavior. The memo explained this decision came based on statements enclosed, which included a signed admission of homosexuality by Smith and five testimonies of fellow naval personnel witnesses to his homosexual behavior. The enclosures also included the navy staff medical officer's physical and mental examination report on Smith. Each of these documents offered rare insights into navy perceptions of homosexuality during this period on Kwajalein. Their statements on homosexuality suggested the degree to which navy officials perceived this "condition" with fear and condemnation, consistent with broader U.S. discourse on homosexuality during the 1940s. Contextualizing the enclosed witness testimonies, the memo noted that "Because of the nature of homosexual cases, the reluctance of witnesses to speak make it difficult to arrive at the true facts." The memo continued on to add that one

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Confidential memo (with seven enclosures) on the subject of Recommendation of Undesirable Discharge for (keeping anonymous) from Commanding Officer to Commander Marshalls Gilberts Area. February 2, 1945. Located in RG 313, Records of Naval Operating Forces, Naval Air Base Ebeye, Kwajalein, Marshall Islands. General Correspondence 1944-1946, Box 1 (of 2) at the Pacific Archives, San Bruno.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> For more on the topic of U.S. military responses to homosexuality during World War II see Margot Canaday's *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth Century America*. (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 2009).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Confidential memo (with seven enclosures) on the subject of Recommendation of Undesirable Discharge for (keeping anonymous) from Commanding Officer to Commander Marshalls Gilberts Area. February 2,

challenge remained determining witness motivations in their testimonies to ensure none constituted falsified statements brought on by those disliking Smith. The Commanding Officer emphasized that close observation of witnesses testifying the witnesses felt favorably towards Smith. The memo further noted that in determining the veracity of Smith's own admission, "A person knows his own feelings, emotions and impulses better than anyone else. A homosexual would be the last to admit he is that way. It is a brand that will stay with him the rest of his life." <sup>14</sup> The memo continued on to note Smith showed no signs of any potential motivation to lie about his condition in order to get out of military service. Smith's admitting statement reinforced that he did not speak for the purposes "of avoiding military service." Smith continued on to assert, "I am in fact homosexual and that is the basis for this statement."<sup>15</sup>

In his memo, the Commanding Officer summarized the staff medical officer's findings on Smith's homosexual behavior. The Commanding Officer noted U.S. Navy Staff Medical Officer Captain Weisser classified Smith "as a high-grade moron with homosexual tendencies." <sup>16</sup> The memo continued on to note that other naval personnel testimonies indicated Smith talked about women and he seemed to just "be that way" when drinking.<sup>17</sup> The Commanding Officer added, "Whether he will revert to normalcy if again stationed where women are present is a question that cannot be answered." The memo concluded that because Smith "committed homosexual acts while in the service

<sup>1945.</sup> Located in RG 313, Records of Naval Operating Forces, Naval Air Base Ebeye, Kwajalein, Marshall Islands, General Correspondence 1944-1946, Box 1 (of 2) at the Pacific Archives, San Bruno.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Ibid.

and has homosexual tendencies and the additional fact that he may be dangerous, [the Commanding Officer] request[s] that he be discharged from the naval services."<sup>19</sup>

The contention that Smith behaved in both a homosexual and potentially dangerous manner came through in the accompanying naval personnel testimonies. One officer described having been attacked by Smith while sitting with him on the beach. He noted that Smith asked him if he would "play with his prick" and that while this officer immediately asked if Smith thought him to be "a freak" and threatened to "knock his brains out," Smith continued to ask the same question again later. But according to the testimony, when Smith asked again if the officer would "play with his prick" he also threatened to "kick his ass" if he refused.<sup>20</sup> At which point, the officer testified Smith grabbed him by the neck, choking him into unconsciousness. When he came to, Smith had gone to a nearby tent and when the officer followed him into the tent to hit him, another officer told him to leave. This other officer testified that when the first officer arrived to the tent to hit Smith, he walked in with the middle buttons of his dungarees undone. He noted this had constituted the third time such an occurrence had taken place in that tent. That officer also testified that Smith had come into his tent earlier making a lot of noise and stating "I am going to kill one of these sons-of-bitches if they don't stop beating me. They followed me to the tent. You're no good. Why don't you protect me?"<sup>21</sup> Interestingly, several other testimonies from naval personnel said they observed Smith with at least one, potentially two men laying on the beach together, but their testimonies lacked a description of the violence included in the first testimony. Several naval officers

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Ihid.

also testified they had been told Smith "was a freak, a queer," prior to the beach incident, with one officer adding the beach scene simply confirmed what he heard all along.

While determining any veracity amidst these testimonies proves impossible and besides the point of this chapter, the variety of narratives about the same incident suggested the possibility of equally varied events. It seems possible that even if naval officers had consensually engaged in homosexual acts with Smith or with each other, the atmosphere of fear regarding the potential repercussions for this behavior marked as deviant could have informed efforts to scapegoat Smith. Given the racializing context of the 1940s, that Smith's potential scapegoating could have been racially informed also does not seem like a stretch.

Staff Medical Officer Naval Captain J.R. Weisser's testimony offered additional statements on Smith's homosexual behavior, suggesting perceived distinctions between homosexual tendencies and "true homosexuality." Weisser described Smith as a "slender, moderately well developed young Negro male who appears slightly younger than his stated age of twenty-one." He noted Smith slouched and described his features as dull showing some signs of fear or embarrassment. Weiss explained that he could not determine if Smith's erratic answers to his questions reflected intended evasion or an inability to understand and reply adequately. He estimated Smith's intelligence quotient to be between 65 and 70 and classified him based upon his work record as borderline mentally competent, "a high-grade moron." He stated Smith's reasoning skills showed developmental retardation as well. Weisser concluded from the history elicited that Smith

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Ibid.

"may have homosexual tendencies, but is probably not a true homo-sexual."<sup>24</sup> He continued on to attribute "Low intelligence, possibly bad company and the stimulus of alcohol" having been constant factors potentially influencing Smith's behavior.<sup>25</sup> He added "The mannerisms, physique, gait, and actions in general are no more suggestive of true homo-sexuality, than is the sexual history."<sup>26</sup> His final prognosis marked Smith "A mentally defective (Moron) individual with tendencies toward homo-sexual behavior rather than possession of true homo-sexual personality."<sup>27</sup>

The collection of materials covering Smith's undesirable discharge alongside naval court martial records detailing discharges for "sodomy" and "scandalous conduct tending to the destruction of good morals" suggested that navy policing of sexual behavior constituted an important component of wartime governance on Kwajalein.

Naval punishment for these "deviant" behaviors, alongside other policies restricting officer interactions with women revealed the extent to which governing officials perceived bachelor officers as potential sexual threats on the island. These bachelors needed discipline to keep them in line with presumed "conduct productive to good morals," rather than that which would be classified as "destructive." Policing bachelor personnel on Kwajalein and protecting those potentially vulnerable to the insatiable lusts of these men would continue through the army era as will be explored in chapter five.

This section has attempted to reveal how some of these early policies began marking Kwajalein as a U.S. space through disciplining sexuality on the island during the war.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Ibid

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Ihid.

## Trust Territory Approaches to Protecting Micronesian Culture and Labor

Having considered how the navy attempted to control American sexual behavior in Kwajalein Atoll during the war, this next section turns to explore how early naval policies worked to control Micronesians on the island. Prior to the war's conclusion, the naval approach seemed to focus on studying, quantifying and qualifying native customs and behavior to better understand how to administer this population after the war. In the Marshall Islands, naval wartime policies also focused on moving islanders off their lands to utilize this space for military bases and base support. With control over Marshallese lands secured following the war, naval policies continued to focus on identifying and marking Marshallese culture on Kwajalein as a means for better understanding how to harness and manage this population's labor in the most effective ways. As this section argues, the navy often narrated a need to segregate Micronesians on Kwajalein away from the largely American naval community on island in order to protect their culture. However, these policies also accommodated bringing Micronesians and more specifically Marshallese into close proximity with American culture on Kwajalein when that proximity seemed to influence these individuals to work more productively for they navy.

Because the Kwajalein invasion constituted the first major battle initiating U.S. control of the Japanese Mandated Islands, naval officials identified documentation of early military governance in the Marshall Islands as important to helping further governance strategies across Micronesia. That the United States viewed the continued postwar governance of the Marshall Islands and all the Japanese Mandated Islands as crucial surfaced during the war through preparation and training materials for naval civil administrators. These administrators attended schools covering naval administration prior

to the war's conclusion. One article produced within this context entitled "The Navy Governs the Marshalls: Classroom Theories Prove Successful in the Handling of Natives on Pacific Atolls" highlighted the importance of naval wartime preparation and training. The article detailed how naval training of civil affairs officers to administer the postwar Japanese territory began in the summer of 1942.<sup>28</sup> To prepare for the many challenges they would face "governing the natives," civil affairs officers participated in an intensive nine-month training program at the Naval School of Government at Columbia University.<sup>29</sup>

The article continued on to describe how the naval school prepared civil affairs officers to gain expertise in native customs across Micronesia in a manner that would enable them stronger administrative capacities following the war. The article described the program as quite extensive as nine months constituted "a long time to go to school during a war." The article added however this was "not too long for those who must learn the complexities of native life in a variety of little-known Pacific areas." That nine months seemed sufficient for gaining an understanding of diverse Micronesian customs and history came through in the article's description of the expertise achieved by graduation. The article explained how civil affairs officers primarily studied anthropology to learn "how different peoples live and think--of their eating habits, their

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> "The Navy Governs the Marshalls: Classroom Theories Prove Successful in the Handling of Natives on Pacific Atolls." The article appeared as a copy without any reference to the broader publication in which is resided, nor the day of publication. However, text throughout indicated the author wrote at some point in 1943. The article can found alongside other naval training documents in the "Register of the U.S. Civil Affairs Training School," Stanford University Records 1942-1945. Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace. Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA [Hereafter referenced as Hoover Institution, Stanford].

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Ibid.

tribal customs, their social taboos, their rituals."<sup>32</sup> The program also instructed officers in military governance with particular attention to how native populations would react to "highly unsettled and strained circumstances." The civil affairs officer coming out of this program thus constituted one trained in law, language, custom and economics in the region "destined to be occupied by [U.S.] forces." The article added, this individual would be responsible thereafter for all dealings with the natives and their local government.34

In outlining civil affairs officers' duties, the article identified the tasks of displacing and segregating native populations in the Marshalls to protect them from the U.S. troop influx. The article stated "Realizing that the natives would be completely bowled over by the arrival of such vast numbers of American troops, the civil affairs officers on the staffs of task force commanders made their plans in advance to segregate the native populations on islands not needed for military purposes."<sup>35</sup> While highlighting the extent to which civil affairs officers worked to protect natives in the Marshall Islands, the article also emphasized U.S. military imperatives in the region. The article explained that "The welfare of the natives has to be secondary to military necessity, of course. The war comes first."<sup>36</sup> This dual narrative of American benevolence alongside prioritized military goals across Micronesia would also infuse U.S. discourse on approaches to colonial governance on Kwajalein for decades thereafter.

The article continued on to note that within this wartime context, civil affairs officers also faced the challenge of how to discipline these newly segregated natives. The

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

article raised the question of "How to punish uncomprehending natives caught violating military ordinances, for whom a jail sentence would be just a welcome chance to get some good food without working?" The article noted that such problems and issues called for a certain "know-how" not found in Navy Regs.<sup>37</sup> In addition to these disciplinary challenges, the article identified obstacles civil affairs officers faced in helping displace natives and finding them new food sources as the military bulldozed through their islands.<sup>38</sup> The article marked this task as necessary given the fact that often land best suited for military needs proved to be lands natives lived and subsisted upon. According to the article, since most wartime military construction required urgent bomber strips, military officers sometimes removed natives from their lands without much notice and civil affairs officers often helped mediate.<sup>39</sup>

What the experience of mediating native land dispossession may have looked like to a civil affairs officer came through in narratives produced by Lieutenant Leland T. Chapin on April 22, 1944 and May 5, 1944. Assigned to the Marshall Islands as a civil affairs officer after training at Dartmouth and Columbia, Chapin described his experience dealing with "Military-Native Relations." He noted the Commander in Chief of the Pacific area announced a policy that natives in conquered territories not be disturbed except in cases required for military security. Given that U.S. military security would become the top priority governing U.S. policies in the region thereafter, this "except" clause would prove a significant one. And a clause that would cause enormous

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Chapin, Leland T. "Experiences of Lieutenant Leland T Chapin USNR as a civil affairs officer in the Marshall Islands during World War II." Recorded: April 22, 1944 and May 5, 1944. Located in Film No. 216, at the Hoover Institution, Stanford. Pp. 3.

"disturbances" to Micronesians for decades to come. According to Chapin, this policy meant segregating Majuro natives from military personnel. He wrote, "It [was] readily apparent that the normal existence of the native population would be immediately compromised by intermingling of natives in greatly superior numbers of military personnel." Chapin added the ratio of military personnel to natives remained about 10,000 to 600.<sup>41</sup>

Chapin's narrative continued on to illuminate tensions that surfaced when civil affairs officers' responsibilities included helping the natives while naval officers seemed less concerned about such obligations. These conflicting interests came through in Chapin's description of his efforts to remove a native population on one of the Marshallese islands to make way for naval bulldozing. Chapin described his exchange with the naval admiral on island stating this admiral asked Chapin if he presumed he was the "admiral" as Chapin tried to lead the native women and children off the island. Chapin wrote he responded "'No, sir, but the Island Commander has told me to get these women and children off this island at once. They haven't done any wrong, we have taken the island and we have got to help them out a bit." Chapin continued on to note that as he worked with native families to gather their belongings and their livestock, the navy began bulldozing native huts and coconut trees. Chapin added, "The natives, seeing that, would try to run in and try to grab a few of their things." He continued on to express his frustration with being put into a situation with a mission to support natives that military actions simultaneously undermined. He wrote, "You can see how difficult it is for a civil affairs officer because we had tried to state we'd come there as friends and then were

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Ibid, 6.

practically throwing them out without giving them a chance to get their possessions together." Echoing chapter one's analysis of letters from Americans working on Kwajalein, the conflicts underlying divergent civilian and military goals that would later surface under Trust Territory administration appeared to have precedent during the war.

In addition to Chapin's account and the article noted above, additional narratives on wartime military and civilian administration of Micronesia's natives alongside stated postwar goals came through in naval governance educational materials. A collection of these materials produced for Stanford University's School of Naval Administration included several papers describing U.S. wartime administration and future goals in the territory. Stanford's naval administration school began in 1946. The educational papers to be examined in this next section contributed to the school's year-one instructional materials. While these materials preceded the official signing of the Trusteeship Agreement in 1947, several acknowledged awareness of trusteeship negotiations under way at the time.

In contrast to the increasing political heat U.S. colonialism would come under in the following decades, Stanford's postwar educational materials openly aimed to instruct naval officials on how to build a long-term, permanent U.S. presence in Micronesia.

These materials did so by teaching about previous colonial policies, both in the United States and throughout the world. In fact an extensive educational syllabus instructing naval personnel in March and April 1946 included an entire section on "Comparative Colonial Administration." This section consisted of papers exploring British colonial

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Ibid. 7.

<sup>44</sup> Stanford University. School of Naval Administration. Documents, NA1-NA14. Prepared at the School of Naval Administration, Hoover Institute, Stanford University. 1946. Located at the Hoover Institution, Stanford.

policies of direct and indirect rule, with one particular paper entitled "British Rule and Colored Peoples."<sup>45</sup> Other papers explored Australian colonial administration, Japanese colonialism and Dutch policies in the Indies. Interestingly, while the overall syllabus included just one paper on U.S. Indian Service exploring the history of U.S. policies towards Native Americans, this paper fell under the syllabus category "International Law and Organization."46 This separation of U.S. settler colonial history from other colonial studies seemed to further exemplify the strength of American exceptionalist narratives even within this context of instruction on how to become a better colonial administrator. While the naval school may not have categorized historic and contemporary U.S. Indian policies as colonial, the syllabus' substantive inclusion of several papers on other colonial administrations suggested that in 1946 the navy aimed to build U.S. governance policies in Micronesia by perfecting upon these colonial examples.

While not classified as such, the naval government school's contributed paper on U.S. Indian Service offered insights on how U.S. colonial history could potentially help inform naval administration in Micronesia. The paper, submitted by Dr. Whitaker, traced the origins of "trusteeship" as a concept to the mid-1800s U.S. federal Indian policy.<sup>47</sup> His paper also raised concerns about dealing with natives. He enumerated problems "resulting from a policy of indirect administration or 'association'" in U.S. Indian policy. 48 He included in his list of concerns, administrators needing to understand Indian tribal organization and customs and tribal social customs. Whitaker added, "Sometimes it

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> "The United States Indian Service," by Dr. Whitaker. Job #134. Paper included in collection entitled: Stanford University. School of Naval Administration. Documents, NA1-NA14. Prepared at the School of Naval Administration, Hoover Institute, Stanford University, 1946. Located at the Hoover Institution, Stanford.
<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

becomes a nice problem how far tolerance of native customs should be carried."<sup>49</sup> As this section and the larger chapter continues to explore, this "problem" of dealing with native customs would continue to be marked by those administering Micronesia as among their most important yet daunting tasks. Dr. Whitaker continued on to explain that Indian judgments of white administrators proved shrewd and merciless, explaining, "Indians have very long memories and abundant leisure to exercise them."<sup>50</sup> Whitaker added, "Consequently an administrator must be absolutely consistent and far-sighted enough not to make decisions that will lead to dangerous precedents."<sup>51</sup>

The inclusion of Whitaker's insights on U.S. policies towards Indians amidst a variety of other educational materials comparing international colonial policies complicate recent historiographic trends in U.S. colonial and imperial periodization. During the past few decades, historians have begun bookmarking 1898 as a significant divergent moment in U.S. imperial history in part because this period saw U.S. imperial policies and discourses moving most dramatically beyond the continent. Some of these recent theories periodizing U.S. imperialism seem to privilege this spatial divergence perhaps above some of the continuities informing policies as they moved beyond land to sea. But as these early naval governance materials reveal, as naval personnel began preparing for expansive colonial rule throughout Micronesia, the navy drew upon earlier colonial histories and policies, including those of settler colonial rule across the continental United States. Navy administrators employed these histories to help inform

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> For more on this topic see the most recent collection edited by Alfred W. McCoy and Franciso A. Scarano, *Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009).

future planning for U.S. imperial rule in the Pacific. While recent historiography identifying 1898 as the significant break in U.S. imperial history have narrated many important changes occurring at this moment, scholars should continue as well to explore some of the continuities in colonial planning that drew upon pre-1898 history. The historiographic trend to see 1898 as a significant divergence seems based in part on spatial assumptions that potentially obscure the ways that some colonial discourse and policies continuously informed and built upon one another across land and oceanic divides.

In addition to Whitaker's paper on U.S. Indian Service, the naval school's educational documents included a revealing paper on social reconstruction for the territory. Lt. John Useem, of the U.S. naval reserves, submitted this paper entitled "Social Reconstruction in Micronesia" on February 7, 1946. Useem's paper included several interesting statements on U.S. intentions in Micronesia and potential barriers administrators faced in meeting their goals. He noted the naval government during the war proceeded under a guiding policy of military necessity "defined by international rules of land warfare." He reassured those in doubt that "reconstruction of the societies of the South Pacific [was] not a hopeless enterprise nor need it be an expensive one." He continued on to describe the "natives and orientals" in the region as industrious, frugal and eager to re-establish themselves again economically and culturally. He characterized the lands in the Pacific as capable of providing essential foods, with ample fish and agricultural resources as well as copra and phosphates to market as commodities. He

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> "Social Reconstruction in Micronesia," by Lt. John Useem, USNR. February 7, 1946. Paper included in collection entitled: Stanford University. School of Naval Administration. Documents, NA1-NA14. Prepared at the School of Naval Administration, Hoover Institute, Stanford University. 1946. Located at the Hoover Institution, Stanford.

noted, however, that U.S. resources would need to supplement areas of acute shortage, including clothing, rice and medical supplies.

Foreshadowing U.S. policies that would come under scrutiny after the Solomon Report's exposure in 1971 noted in chapter one, Useem also detailed the need for indefinite political control of the region and the role natives would play in this process. He wrote "Political orientation would define the relationship of the natives to Americans; this encompasses the basic programs the United States will pursue in its permanent territorial governing of the area, the degree of native self-government which will be permissible, and the status of various local ethnic groups." Useem's statements showcased early outright U.S. intentions for permanent control of Micronesia, goals that would later clash with U.N. obligations to promote event self-government throughout the region. In addition to working to ensure a permanent political presence in Micronesia, Useem said the U.S. needed to also provide natives with sociological guidance. This included "the accommodation of native institutions to American patterns, the rehabilitation of dependent groups, and the guidance of the whole acculturation process."56

Keeping in mind Useem's acculturation directives alongside aims for permanent control of the region, his paper also enumerated problems already apparent in military governing tactics. He discussed the divergence between U.S. stated trusteeship policies and military objectives, echoing conflicts detailed as well in chapter one. Useem also identified governance challenges posed by natives customs. These included conflicts between ethnic groups, subordination habits making natives dependent on outsiders for

55 Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Ihid.

direction, and a native "lack of comprehension of the larger society and how to operate within its framework." In these passages, Useem helped position naval governing personnel by narrating them into the role of those directing the territory's inhabitants, a population unaccustomed to the workings of "larger society." As noted in chapter one, this discourse on Micronesia as somehow removed or outside of a central society, drew largely on presumptions of the region's spatial insignificance and temporal stagnancy. "Larger society" often equated to Western society or modern society. Many Native Studies Scholars have shown how those in the West and specifically the United States have historically identified natives as outside modernity, as part of culture not history. have historically identified natives as outside modernity, as part of culture not history. Thus, if natives proved incapable of changing with history--or more accurately their change forfeited their native status--they clearly needed to rely upon those accustomed to and defined through historic change for direction and guidance in this inevitable process.

In assessing native cultural distinctions making naval governance difficult, Useem also offered analysis of American culture and American perceptions of Micronesians. His insights provided an interesting perspective from one military officer that reflected many patterns identified by Pacific Scholars in their analysis of historic U.S. approaches to the Pacific.<sup>59</sup> Useem explained that "Americans regard natives through the focus of the Hollywood movie projector and feel let down when this does not correspond to reality."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> For a good introduction to this literature, see Phil Deloria's *Indians in Unexpected Places*. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2006; and Vicente Diaz's "Fight Boys, 'til the Last...' in *Pacific Diaspora*, Paul Spickard et al.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> For more on this subject see Trask *From a Native Daughter*, Teaiwa, "bikinis and other s/pacific n/oceans," Vicente M. Diaz's article noted in the previous footnote, Lutz and Collins, *Reading National Geographic*, and Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> "Social Reconstruction in Micronesia," by Lt. John Useem, USNR. February 7, 1946. Paper included in collection entitled: Stanford University. School of Naval Administration. Documents, NA1-NA14. Prepared at the School of Naval Administration, Hoover Institute, Stanford University. 1946. Located at the Hoover Institution, Stanford.

He continued on to describe Americans as anxious about the natives liking them more than their former rulers. He also noted these Americans expected "sexual drama" and appeared disappointed when confronted with the complexity of prevailing marital patterns. Useem's observations of American sexual expectations of Pacific Islanders likely built upon U.S. primary exposure to Micronesians during this period through early anthropological narratives showcasing native sexuality. How an American gaze continued to center on anticipated native sexual behavior came through in Anthropologists Catherine A. Lutz and Jane L. Collins' 1993 work *Reading National Geographic*. In their book, Lutz and Collins identified the continuity of anthropological traditions centering native sexuality through the magazine's photographic narratives. They deconstructed how images of "women and their breasts" filling the magazine's pages enabled American readers to consume native bodies through sexualized connotations. 61

Useem's paper continued to note Americans in the region admired native independence but resented any native displays of aggression, hinting at the tensions underlying this contingent moment of transition in colonial rule. <sup>62</sup> This dual embrace of some native customs and rejection of others would continue to fall along a spectrum that positioned Americans encouraging those customs that could help further strengthen their indefinite control over Micronesia. Useem's impressions offer one set of insights into potential perceptions informing policies and behavior of Americans involved in postwar governance of Micronesia. Useem's analysis also narrated native impressions of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Lutz and Collins, *Reading National Geographic*, 172.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> "Social Reconstruction in Micronesia," by Lt. John Useem, USNR. February 7, 1946. Paper included in collection entitled: Stanford University. School of Naval Administration. Documents, NA1-NA14. Prepared at the School of Naval Administration, Hoover Institute, Stanford University. 1946. Located at the Hoover Institution, Stanford

Americans and how these continued to impact U.S. efforts at governing the region. He described Micronesians as tending to admire U.S. technological skill and equipment and seeming eager to "emulate American ways of doing things." He continued to note, however, that these same natives feared U.S. attitudes "on the race question" and wondered about the real motivations of the U.S. in the region. He also noted natives seemed upset by the ambivalence of American personalities and confused by the "constantly changing orders, the frequent turnover in administrative personnel and the contradictory activities undertaken."

Elaborating on the "race question" later in his paper, Useem noted U.S. hypocrisy in the region when it came to living by stated American values. He wrote, "despite our verbal profession of equality of peoples, most Americans actually regard natives as innately inferior." He added that while a nice symbol, self-government proved far from simple to employ as a framework in a society where peoples had been subservient for nearly three hundred years. He asserted that Americans should also take notice that Micronesians constantly compared their policies in the region to those of Japanese. Suggesting American presumptions about their perceived benevolent mission in the region, Useem added "Merely because a measure is launched by Americans does not make it in the eyes of natives inherently superior or more humanitarian." Useem concluded by highlighting the broader significance surrounding U.S. administrative goals in the region. He marked the potential misfortune if U.S. administration in Micronesia should fail from within due to debates on civil or military control, or from without

<sup>63</sup> Ibid

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ihid.

because of incompetence and conflict with U.N. sponsored trusteeship principals. Echoing narratives explored in chapter one marking the region's global insignificance, Useem stated that "In terms of world society, Micronesia is inconsequential." He added, however, that the way the U.S. governed in the Pacific would indicate to the peoples around the world how the nation "live[d] up to our commitments in the nascent world organization."

Building upon Useem's discussion of race in Micronesia, another paper appearing in the Naval School Administration documents further suggested how early territorial administrators' perceptions of culture and race likely influenced their work in the region. In his February 28, 1946 paper, "Some Notes on 'Race' and 'Culture," Felix M. Keesing discredited biological notions of race presumably infiltrating U.S. approaches to Micronesians. He classified these racial theories based on genetic inferiority as inaccurate and specifically as irrelevant to understanding Micronesians. Keesing marked the cutting edge nature of his assertions, as "fully supported by the latest (but still all to little known) findings on science of race." He asserted that Micronesians showed a range of personality and behavioral variations that should be assessed on an individual basis rather than by any perception of group biologically fixed traits. Keesing regarded the term "people" rather than "race" to be a more accurate descriptor of Micronesians and identified culture as a better lens for understanding behaviors and personalities.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> "Some Notes on 'Race' and 'Culture," by Felix M. Keesing. Job #14. February 28, 1946. Paper included in collection entitled: Stanford University. School of Naval Administration. Documents, NA1-NA14. Prepared at the School of Naval Administration, Hoover Institute, Stanford University. 1946. Located at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University. Underline included in text.

Keesing's paper focused on cultural determination as the more meaningful lens for understanding Micronesians, reflecting the shift in racialization based on biology to that of culture beginning to emerge across U.S. research at the time. Reesing asserted that in order to successfully administer Micronesia, U.S. governing officials would need to rely on cultural change in the region. But this change should be spurred by self-motivation rather than outside imposition. He noted that "self-motivated change may revolutionize culture and personality" and could be seen by the numbers of Pacific Islanders given special educational opportunities who had become "well adjusted to modern civilization." Keesing concluded the administrator's major problem resided in cracking the mystery of "how to stimulate self-motivated change along desirable lines and to guide their development with a minimum of external coercion." As will be illustrated in later chapters, one way Kwajalein administrators influenced change came through displacing Micronesians from their homes, creating a situation in which cultural adjustment to wage economy became necessary for survival.

The goal of influencing Micronesians in such a way as to align them with U.S. interests in the region also came through in the School of Naval Administration's extensive 311-page training handbook. Produced in 1948, the "Handbook on the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands: A Handbook for Use in Training and Administration" drew upon precedents offered by Columbia's Naval School of Government that trained civil affairs officers during the war. Following the 1946 papers noted above, Stanford's

To Ibid. For more on this topic, see Walter Jackson's *Gunnar Myrdal and America's Conscience: Social Engineering and Racial Liberalism, 1938-1987.* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), and Alice O'Connor's *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).
 Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Ibid

School of Naval Administration carried the postwar mission of Trust Territory governance and efforts to influence natives to fit within a U.S. model of progress in the region. Similar to the training article noted earlier in this chapter, the handbook also incorporated anthropological descriptions of the islanders alongside analysis of the physical setting of their islands. The handbook also detailed Micronesian transportation, population trends, history, politics, economics, contemporary resources, religion, education, health and sanitation among other topics. These practices of narrating and cataloguing Micronesian life would continue to prove core to instructional materials on how to secure U.S. indefinite control over the region.

The naval administration handbook also included a section documenting the important task of understanding native perceptions of Americans in garnering greater influence over the region. The section, entitled "Attitudes Toward Outsiders," briefly narrated native resentment towards Japanese administrators mostly on larger islands where Japanese control had curbed the influence of some traditional leaders. The handbook emphasized native resentment especially as wartime neared when the Japanese had been described as enslaving some islanders and taking their food and land. In contrast, the handbook stated that "On the whole, relations between Americans and natives had been friendly, and their attitudes of confidence are being strengthened as they recover from the shock period of the war and come to understand United States intentions." The handbook continued on to note, however, that islanders evidenced a "wait-and-see" attitude as they understandably felt unsure and hesitant given the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> "Handbook on the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands: A Handbook for Use in Training and Administration," prepared at the School of Naval Administration, Hoover Institute, Stanford University, by the Navy Department, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Washington D.C., 1948. Located at the Hoover Institution, Stanford. Pp. 67.

succession of alien rulers in their lands. The handbook described native sophistication in maintaining one "front" of conduct that met and satisfied foreign rulers while simultaneously carrying on their own affairs as they saw fit quietly in the background. The handbook applauded U.S. administrators' patience in trying to acquire understanding and confidence among the natives. This section noted that "With increasingly stable administration and improving economic conditions the way is open for the widespread passive acquiescence in the face of a new foreigner to turn gradually into active cooperation and appreciation."

The handbook's narrative of an inevitable path towards Micronesians' active embrace of a U.S. model of progress came through again in the manual's conclusion. This section noted that, understandably, time would pass before the natives would see Americans as something other than "another version of their past alien overlords from whom they merely took orders." According to the handbook, these natives had begun charting their course to increased understanding of the "larger modern world." Presumably, this modern world offered a unique context in which hierarchical dynamics continued to be structured by a foreign ruler, the United States, who still "gave orders," but somehow existed outside the category of "overlord." The conclusion ended on a hopeful note predicting Micronesia's transformation over time. This section asserted,

"the next quarter century will show great changes in the island condition, particularly as the peoples become increasingly aware of the rich heritage of American ideas and technology. It is the task of the civil administration of the trust territory to aid the islanders in integrating into their present culture such of

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> Ibid, 68.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> Ibid, 231.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> Ibid.

these ideas as will contribute most effectively to their welfare and advancement."<sup>78</sup>

The concluding text suggested this "rich American heritage" consisting of "ideas and technology" would become relevant or meaningful to Micronesians over time.

Furthermore, these models would help Micronesians move towards a level of cultural "advancement" defined by these presumably superior U.S. cultural models.

That labor management would prove central to U.S. efforts to advance Micronesian culture came through in various naval governance materials during the war and postwar period. The task of organizing and controlling native labor seemed to weigh heavily on the minds of Trust Territory administrators who faced the challenge of transforming societies based largely on sustainable agriculture, fishing and supplemental copra trade to a wage economy directed at benefiting the U.S. presence in the region. As will be further explored below through Pacific Historian David Hanlon's scholarship on Micronesia, Americans diverged from their Japanese predecessors in the region who had not relied heavily upon native laborers to build their settler economy. Japanese administrators instead recruited Japanese and Korean settlers to work in the region.

One interesting Trust Territory source suggested how important educating Micronesians towards entry into a U.S. modeled workforce remained to administrators. This children's book produced in 1951 by the High Commissioner's Office in the Trust Territory's Department of Education illustrated U.S. efforts to indoctrinate Micronesian children into a normalized system of work. The book constituted one among early literacy materials intended to teach Micronesian children how to read in English. The attached series of images and text in the book *Three Children*, shows Micronesians

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

(specifically Trukese children) as "good" because they "work."<sup>79</sup> The narrative detailed images of Micronesian boys and girls working to help their parents. Several pages painted a portrait of good, working Micronesian children and adults that culminated in final images locating the children "where they are" in space. In these images, the "good" and "working" children find themselves in a Micronesian village (here an illustrated Trukese village) marked by the United States flag. Thus among the many messages communicated within this book tailored to help six-year old Micronesians learn English remained the message that good Micronesians work and they work within a U.S. controlled space.

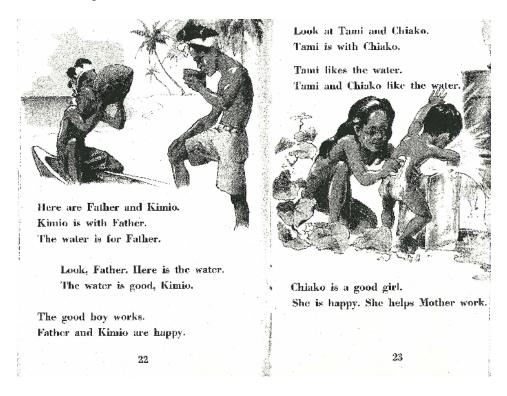


Figure 1. Image from *Three Children*; "The good boy works." 80

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Grey, Eve with illustrations by Tambi Larsen. *Three Children*. Published by the High Commissioner, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Department of Education. 1951. Located at the Hoover Institution, Stanford. Pp. 8-25.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 22-23.

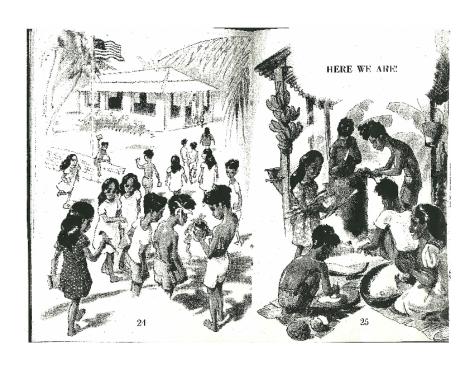


Figure 2. Image from *Three Children*; "Here we are!"<sup>81</sup>

## Segregating Micronesian Labor on Kwajalein

As the last section detailed naval approaches to governance over the entire Trust Territory region through one focus on studying, marking and influencing Micronesian culture, this next section hones in on how this process played out on Kwajalein. This section examines naval policies segregating Micronesian laborers on Kwajalein as justified through an attempt to protect Marshallese culture. But the section also suggests that some of these segregation policies on Kwajalein may have also been informed by a fear of Micronesian disease and contagions and also naval attempts to police racial boundaries on the island. While working to keep Americans and Micronesians separate on Kwajalein, naval policies on the island also reflected their larger governing approach to the entire Trust Territory. This strategy aimed at protecting Micronesians on Kwajalein

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 24-25.

from too much American cultural influence while simultaneously welcoming the kind of exposure that could help Micronesians become better workers for the navy.

In his 1998 Remaking Micronesia: Discourses over Development in a Pacific Territory, 1944-1982, Pacific Historian David Hanlon offered a picture of U.S. labor administration of Micronesians in the postwar period. Immediately following the war, military administrators recruited Micronesian laborers to help rebuild the infrastructure that American bombs and wartime combat had destroyed. Hanlon explained how the U.S. military largely destroyed the economy and infrastructure the Japanese had created in the region during their colonial rule, a period of unprecedented economic growth in Micronesia. Following the war, the U.S. repatriated the region's Japanese and Korean laborers further crippling that economy across Micronesia. In the wake of their destructive acts and policies, the U.S. administration quickly began scapegoating Micronesian labor for economic challenges throughout the region.<sup>82</sup> Following its repatriation of Japanese and Korean laborers, the U.S. administration became more dependent upon Micronesian labor to help clean and rebuild areas devastated during the war. Hanlon noted that in the Marshall Islands, employing Marshallese laborers meant accommodating their preference to be close to home and helping them adjust to a new conception of time under a capitalist economy. This challenge, common throughout the region, had influenced the Japanese to depend less on Micronesian labor in their development plans. 83 Economic development succeeded under Japanese rule because the settler colonial nature of that rule brought thousands of Japanese and Korean laborers to live in the region and help build the economy.

<sup>82</sup> Hanlon, Remaking Micronesia, 37-43.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

The immediate labor needs on Kwajalein following the 1944 invasion involved clearing the island after U.S. bombardment so the navy could use Kwajalein to support further military action in Micronesia during the war. Following the Kwajalein battle, the military moved most surviving Marshallese to Ebeye Island, increasing Ebeye's population from about 20 to 300.<sup>84</sup> After displacing Kwajalein's resident population, the military created a new labor camp on the island where Marshallese from throughout the region and other Micronesians could be brought in to clean up and help rebuild.<sup>85</sup> From the time of the Kwajalein labor camp's inception, the U.S. military segregated American and Micronesian living quarters on the island. While naval reports documenting this early period on Kwajalein do not specify any singular motivation for initial segregation policies, one possibility may have centered U.S. concerns about potential spread of disease and illness. References to disease appeared in several military reports during this period. Reports tended, however, to treat separately issues of native labor housing and disease prevention.

Given racial projects that informed segregation policies in the United States during the 1940s, another factor possibly informing Kwajalein segregation may have been racial perceptions of Micronesians and a military compulsion to police racial boundaries. The objectification of native laborers' bodies appearing in early military reports, often through medical discourse, offered one lens into the kind of "othering" potentially informing Kwajalein's segregation policies. On June 1, 1945, a little more than a year after combat ended on Kwajalein, the Commander of the Marshalls and Gilbert Area sent a report to the Island Commander Kwajalein concerning native

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> Ibid, 191.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

employment under the military government. The commander included a section on native labor camps, ordering these camps remain out of bounds for all personnel "except for those on official business." The order also identified each base employing native labor as responsible for providing its own labor camp supervision. 87

Following the report's enumeration of native labor rules and regulations on Kwajalein that included work hours, dress code and time-off policies, the commander inserted an extensive section on native employee physical requirements. In this section, the commander stated, "careful examination will be made to determine whether the applicant is suitable for labor. Minor defects are not considered cause for rejection provided they do not greatly interfere with function and provided they will not be aggravated by work."88 To clarify that which should be considered minor or major defects, the report described an exhaustive list of native body parts for inspection. These parts included native eyes, ears, teeth, nose and throat, head and face, neck, spine, lungs, heart and blood vessels, abdomen, pelvis, the genito-urinary system, skin, the extremities and the nervous system. The report paired each body part with information about accompanying conditions that constituted cause for rejection. A general list of disqualifying diseases and conditions followed the body part breakdown. 89 The report's objectification of native body parts and discursive dismemberment seemed reminiscent of the kinds of bodily scrutiny characterizing U.S. antebellum slave auctions. On Kwajalein this scrutiny attested to the dehumanizing othering that potentially informed the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup> Correspondence on Military Government-Native Employee Directive, Marshall Islands from Commander Marshalls Gilberts Area, June 1, 1945. Located in RG 313, Box Naval Air Base Ebeye, 1944-1947 at the Pacific Archives, San Bruno.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, (my emphasis added).

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

segregation of Marshallese and Micronesian laborers. The report's discourse marked these individuals as merely functional tools in the U.S. military machine working to rebuild the island.<sup>90</sup>

A deeper cultural pattern of U.S. objectification of Micronesians rooted in early anthropological studies marking islanders along a spectrum of cultural primitivity also came through in a 1947 military report on the Kwajalein labor camp. This monthly report of Kwajalein activities from the U.S. Pacific Fleet Commander Marianas to the Chief of Naval Operations contextualized the Kwajalein native laborer through "natural habitat" discourse. The report's section on "Native Affairs" discussed activities occurring in the labor camp on Kwajalein. The report noted, "offenses involving drinking, fighting and disorderly conduct were confined to the labor camp, which appears to be one of the disadvantages of removing natives from their natural habitat." This report description objectified Kwajalein's native laborers comparing their behavior to that of animals, incapable of self-control and orderliness when removed from their "natural habitat." These objectifying statements again suggested roots in anthropological positions that historically characterized native Pacific Islanders as component figures in a natural mosaic. Once the native figures were removed from that nature portrait, they became lost and potentially reckless or dangerous. This dehumanizing discourse further revealed how naval officials implementing segregation policies on Kwajalein in the postwar era did so

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup> For more on this history, see Walter Johnson's *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> Kwajalein Monthly Report, U.S. Naval Military Government Unit Kwajalein, from C.H. Wright, Rear Admiral, Deputy Commander Marianas, April 8, 1947. Located in RG 313, Records of Naval Operating Forces, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, at the National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD [Hereafter referenced as NARA, College Park].

governed by perceptions of Micronesian otherness positioning them as foreign in their own islands.

If early reports suggested military segregation policies on Kwajalein may have been informed by fear of disease and/or possibly alongside objectifications of natives through perceived bodily or species otherness, additional reports linked segregation practices to efforts at protecting "native culture." Early military reports cited native culture protection as one goal when discussing policies keeping native laborers separate from Americans on Kwajalein. Discreet sections on the status of native culture appeared as a continual category for updates in these early military reports. Given the perceived importance of this goal for the military and its relationship to segregation on Kwajalein, this next section explores how early administrators defined their efforts and achievements in this area. The section examines what military officials understood as "native culture" and which aspects of this culture they deemed worth protecting. As the following section will show, the parts of native culture described as benefiting change tended to be those parts needing adjustment to enable U.S. economic, political and military objectives in the region. These reports suggested that on Kwajalein, explanations of segregating native laborers in order to protect their "culture" proved at the very least a mission riddled with contradictions and more commonly appeared to justify increased control over natives laborers on the island.

That protecting "native culture" would be interpreted through a lens of identifying which aspects of native political, social and economic life benefited U.S. goals in Micronesia surfaced in a naval report sent to the United Nations in July 1948. The extensive report on Trust Territory administration included a section addressing concerns

about the protection of "native culture" throughout the region. The report noted "the administration and the Trust Territory has recognized many customs regulating native behavior as being of paramount importance, and every effort has been made to act in accord with established local customs wherever it was felt that they were beneficial and not contrary to normal advancement." "Pat "beneficial" and "normal advancement" would be defined by those customs contributing to U.S. goals in the region came through as the report continued on to identify military governing policies. The report stated that the year prior, the military governor "decreed that local government should reflect American concepts as closely as might be feasible, but without radical changes in native systems." This statement perhaps indicated a lack of awareness as to the diversity of political and social organization throughout Micronesia or simply constituted an effort to pay lip service to a stated goal that in reality would be eclipsed by U.S. interests.

Early reports from Kwajalein exemplified the military's perceived predicament in trying to determine when intimate contact with American culture threatened native culture and when contact seemed an opportunity for improvement. A December 1946 military government monthly report on Kwajalein from Atoll Commander R.C. Benston included a section on "native culture" illuminating some of the contradictory tensions underlying this concern. Commander Benston reported, "The natives have a high degree of culture and show evidence of contact with Western Civilization...No attempt has been made to change native acculturation...New ideas are accepted with great enthusiasm."

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> Information on the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands Transmitted by the United States to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Pursuant to Article 88 of the Charter, prepared by the Navy Department, Washington D.C., July 1948. Microfiche D70197 located at the University of Hawai'i, Manoa Hamilton Library Microfiche Collection. Pp. 13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>94</sup> Monthly Report for November 1946 on Military Government from Atoll Commander, December 5, 1946. Located in RG 313, MGU Truk, Box: 4 of 6 at the Pacific Archives, San Bruno.

Benston's report suggested the benefits of native contact with Western civilization alongside a disclaimer identifying U.S. intentions to avoid direct cultural imposition. Rather than U.S. attempts to force Western culture onto the natives, Benston narrated how native embrace of Western ideas evolved naturally. He discussed the ease with natives accepted and complied with U.S. regulations and orders on Kwajalein. Benston described this phenomenon as characteristic of the natives' "genuine effort to please." Benston's report echoed the earlier instructions given by Felix M. Keesing's paper in the Stanford naval governance instructional materials worth reiterating here. Keesing had emphasized the importance of nurturing native potential to embrace American culture through their own free will rather than trying to force American culture upon them.

Keesing and Benston both seemed enthusiastic about a real potential for the U.S. to have altered the land and resources throughout Micronesian during and following the war while somehow maintaining minimal cultural impact on the region. One inspection report detailing life on Kwajalein in November 1946 discussed the limitations of this narrative by acknowledging a shift in native cultural practices due to wartime island defoliation. The report detailed how native cultural food production practices could no longer survive on Kwajalein given the denuded vegetation from bombardment. The report also cited labor demands limiting time natives had for engaging in these practices even if the land resources had permitted. <sup>96</sup> The report noted that wartime devastation on Kwajalein also prevented the few female native laborers on the island from engaging in handicraft production. This cultural practice comprised another component of

<sup>&#</sup>x27;<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> Report of Inspection of the Marshall Islands by the General Inspector of the U.S. Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas by the Commander Marianas, December 5, 1946. Located in RG 313, MGU Truk, Box: 4 of 6 at the Pacific Archives, San Bruno. Pp.82.

Marshallese industry discontinued on Kwajalein because necessary materials no longer grew on the island. Positioned alongside this discussion of limitations on native cultural practices, the report detailed the segregation of laborers into a separate camp on Kwajalein. The report noted native laborers lived at the camp in tents on wooden platforms. The report added they ate all their meals comprising imported U.S. foods in a separate mess hall. Proceedings of the segregation of laborers into a separate camp on tents on wooden platforms. The report added they are all their meals comprising imported U.S. foods in a separate mess hall.

That native labor segregation on Kwajalein may have been more informed by medical concerns rather than attempts to protect "native culture" came through in the 1946 report's details on labor camp medical inspections. The report explained that all native workers living at the camp received disease checks and vaccinations upon reporting for duty. This update read alongside the report's discussion of U.S. military government provision for adult classes on English, geography and civics at the labor camp during evenings.<sup>99</sup> The report further boasted the classes brought in approximately 70 to 100 attendees each week, indicating that any concern for potential imposition of Western ideas on native culture seemed minimal in this case. And yet, the articulation of concern about native contact with American culture continued to pervade military and Trust Territory reports in the postwar era, suggesting a seemingly schizophrenic stance on the subject. These reports on efforts to influence native culture while simultaneously protect native culture from outside influence seemed to illustrate foundational instabilities underlying U.S. imperial rule in Micronesia. Similar tensions pervaded chapter one's analysis of contradictory military and civilian goals in later Trust Territory

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>99</sup> Ibid. Also see Hattori, *Colonial Dis-Ease* for further insights into the tension between U.S. Navy colonial rule in the Pacific colliding with concerns about protecting military personnel from disease. Perez Hattori explores Naval policy towards Chamorus on Guam during the first half of the 20th century.

administration. Beginning with chapter three, these conflicts and instabilities will be analyzed as they continued to surface under army governance on Kwajalein.

This section has attempted to reveal the continued military struggle to balance the need for influencing native culture to align with U.S. labor needs alongside stated goals of protecting natives from American cultural influence on Kwajalein. As this chapter later explores, when it came to removing the native labor camp from Kwajalein in 1951, military administrators cited protecting "native culture" from intimate contact with Americans as among the primary benefits. Before examining the labor camp removal more closely, the next section first considers another component to the history of Marshallese segregation on Kwajalein. This section does so by examining the temporary stay of nuclear refugees during the postwar period.

### Segregating Bikinians on Kwajalein

By briefly examining the structure of segregation on Kwajalein informing the evacuation of nuclear refugees from the Northern Marshall Islands, this section hopes to further consider larger military policies of segregation on the island that would remain through the army period. While those evacuated from Bikini Island during the U.S. nuclear testing campaign did not arrive to Kwajalein as laborers like their fellow cohort of segregated Marshallese, their presence on the island still seemed to necessitate separation and control by the navy. As will be detailed below, this experience of surveillance and segregation on Kwajalein added to the larger Bikinian trauma of nuclear testing in and displacement from their home islands. Taken together, the navy's policies governing Marshallese laborers and Bikinian refugees on Kwajalein showed how in the

postwar period segregation between Americans and Marshallese was becoming normalized on the island.

On March 14, 1948, 171 Bikinians came to Kwajalein after a two-year stay on Rongerik Island following their displacement from Bikini Island. The navy removed the Bikinians from their home island in 1946 to make way for U.S. nuclear testing. 100 The navy later evacuated the Bikinans from Rongerik, moving them to Kwajalein following a report by Anthropologist Leonard Mason who visited Rongerik and quickly identified the Bikinians as near starvation. 101 The Bikinians had expressed concern about food resources on Rongerik two months into their stay on the island and a medical officer who inspected the island in July 1947 concluded they were "visibly suffering from malnutrition." When the Bikinians evacuated to Kwajalein nearly one year later, they arrived stressed from their dire situation on Rongerik. They also came to Kwajalein following continued pleas to return home to Bikini, which the U.S. military indicated might be a possibility upon the conclusion of the nuclear testing campaign.

The Bikinians' seven-month stay on Kwajalein placed them under the island's military governance and consequently in segregated living conditions. On Kwajalein, the Bikinians resided in a segregated tent camp. Bikinian Kilon Bauno described the experience of arriving on Kwajalein following two years of deprivation on Rongerik to anthropologist Jack Niedenthal in 1988 and 1990. His recollection appeared in Niedenthal's *For the Good of Mankind: A History of the People of Bikini and their* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>100</sup> Micronesia Support Committee. *Marshall Islands, A Chronology: 1944-1981* (Honolulu: Maka'ainana Media, 1981), 9.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>102</sup> Ibid. 7.

*Islands* in 2001. Bauno remembered the tent camp situated next to the Kwajalein airstrip. He stated,

"We lived a strange life on Kwajalein. From day to day we were frightened by all the airplanes that continuously landed very close to our homes. We were also frustrated by the small amount of space in which we were permitted to move around. We had to depend on the U.S. military for everything. We were always asking them to help us in one way or another. We were afraid of this alien environment and almost from the day we got there we began thinking about other places to live."

Bauno's details of confinement in the segregated tent camp and expressions of fear offered a rare insight into Bikinian life on the island obscured in U.S. accounts of this period on Kwajalein.

U.S. narratives of the temporary Bikinian stay on Kwajalein illuminated how one of the more egregious acts of colonial destruction and displacement became discursively anesthetized in the context of daily life on Kwajalein. Prior to the Bikinians' arrival on Kwajalein, an island monthly report described their displacement following the first nuclear test in July 1946. The Kwajalein Island Commander characterized those on Bikini and nearby islands as having been removed from their homes "for their own protection." The commander narrated the removal as done to help the islanders rather than an act of imperial land acquisition and destruction. The report also acknowledged that those Bikinians removed to Rongerik had already expressed a desire to return to Bikini. The commander added, however, the Bikinians appeared quite cooperative and would stay on Rongerik as long as the navy desired. The commander's bestowal of agency upon the Bikinians framed the situation as one of "cooperation," presuming the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> Niedenthal, For the Good of Mankind, 68.

Monthly Report on Military Government Administration from the Island Commander Kwajalein,
 August 19, 1946. Located in RG 313, Folder Military Affairs at the Pacific Archives, San Bruno.
 Ibid.

Bikinians had any real choice to return home. His report also marked the islanders' desire to return to Bikini as undoubtedly "motivated by that age-old desire to return 'home." The commander's words positioned the Bikinians' plight as somehow a relatable shared experience, generically familiar rather than a distinctive, violent colonial act. <sup>107</sup>

One month into the Bikinians' stay on Kwajalein a Civil Administration Quarterly Report described the Bikinian's plight. The April 6, 1948 report from the Marshall Islands Governor to the Chief of Naval Operations identified Bikinian struggles on Kwajalein as "the results of an accumulation of errors incident to the original move from Bikini, errors which appear to have arisen from a superficial investigation of the problems and overhasty action." <sup>108</sup> The report continued on to argue that Bikinians' experiences left them with psychological scars necessitating deliberate and careful repair to avoid a repeat of the same mistakes. As such, the report detailed the first month of their Kwajalein stay as devoted to restoring Bikinian health, rehabilitating their clothing and possessions and orienting them to their new surroundings. The report added that above all the first month's goal aimed at "establishing a sense of security and self-respect after their unfortunate experiences with displacement and under-nourishment." <sup>109</sup> The report concluded that during this first month, "it was thought advisable to avoid all discussions of re-settlement, in order to reduce the feeling of instability, and permit the people to concentrate on the readjustment problems incident to their move to Kwajalein."110

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

 <sup>108</sup> Correspondence on Civil Administration Unit, Kwajalein Quarterly Report for the months of January,
 February, and March, 1948, Report no.9 from Governor of the Marshalls, May 12, 1948. Located in RG
 313 Records of Naval Operating Forces, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Office of the Deputy High
 Commissioner, General Administrative Files at NARA, College Park. Pp.1.
 109 Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid

This early military report acknowledged many challenges facing Bikinian resettlement on Kwajalein, while simultaneously obscuring the controlled and confining conditions into which Bikinians entered on island. Other stories appearing in local media framed the Bikinians' arrival as a narrative of celebration; an event abstracted from the broader context of their continued struggle. The Marshall Post Inquirer, a bilingual (English and Marshallese) weekly publication distributed throughout the Marshall Islands, ran a series of articles beginning the week prior to the Bikinians' arrival on Kwajalein. These articles, prepared by the Navy's Civil Administration Unit and Marshallese translators on Kwajalein, drew upon some stories pulled from outside news sources and others written by journalists on the island. The stories covered the Bikinians' arrival alongside atomic weapons development news. One of the earliest stories pulled from the *Honolulu Advertiser* detailed an interview with Admiral De Witt C. Ramsey, Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet. In the interview, Ramsey discussed the nuclear tests in the Marshall Islands, and referred to those displaced by atomic testing as "the reluctant nomads of Bikini Island." Ramsey stated these nomads "first moved to Rongerik Atoll to make way for the A-bomb test [and] are happy with their forthcoming journey to Kwajalein." He added "And there will be plenty for them to do at Kwajalein." Ramsey's statements narrated the Bikinians' arrival as happy while obscuring reasons why Bikinians might be relieved to arrive on Kwajalein, or rather to leave Rongerik given their near starvation on that island. This omission characterized all articles appearing in the *Inquirer* covering the Bikinians' arrival.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>111</sup> "Navy can cope with atomic war: Ramsey" (taken from the *Honolulu Advertiser*), appearing in the March-September 1948 issues of the *Marshall Post Inquirer*. Located at the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa. <sup>112</sup> Ibid.

Another article appearing in the *Inquirer* the week of the Bikinians' arrival narrated the event as a light-hearted story of cross-cultural encounter, highlighting first time experiences and unexpected commonalities between different communities. The article painted a picture of the Bikinians' encounter on Kwajalein with details of the elderly ex-chief Lokiar's first time in a station wagon that took him to his living quarters. The article noted that prior to this, Lokiar had only gotten around via water craft. Another arrival detail stated, "a touch of human nature was displayed by one of the Marshallese families just departure from Rongerik. It seems that a Marshallese husband and wife are capable of family disputes also."113 The narrative went on to describe how one of the men departing Rongerik refused to travel on the same ship with his wife and despite efforts to convince him otherwise, he chose to arrive on a later date rather than come with her. 114 The article's care-free tone highlighted these quirky "human nature" details erasing the traumatic experience of this emergency evacuation to the segregated tent camp on Kwajalein. Finally, an article appearing in the *Inquirer* describing the welcoming reception for Bikinians on Kwajalein detailed the celebratory party at the labor camp that included gifts, dances and songs. The article noted "By the Marshallese from Bikini a very good time was had by all." While the article did not specify, one wonders if the welcome party was "located at" the labor camp or "confined to" the labor camp, given the island's segregated structure at the time.

Alongside these carefree and celebratory narratives of the Bikinians' arrival on Kwajalein, the *Inquirer* also ran articles previously published in the *Honolulu Advertiser* detailing a potentially new and deadly U.S. weapon. One article featured airplane

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>113</sup> Ibid. <sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

manufacturer Glenn L. Martin describing this weapon, a "radioactive cloud," as more deadly than the atom bomb and "fatal to any human touched by it." Martin continued on to note the opportunity to use the radioactive cloud as a weapon first came to the attention of the U.S. Senate in May 1947. He added the cloud would "kill people slowly, but would leave buildings intact and thus would be 'superior' from a classic military viewpoint, to the atom bomb itself." The publication of this article alongside stories covering the Bikinians' 1948 arrival to Kwajalein tragically foreshadowed the arrival of another Marshallese group to Kwajalein six years later. This group would be displaced by a U.S. "radioactive cloud" that showered their islands with deadly contamination. On March 1, 1954 the navy detonated a hydrogen bomb on Bikini Atoll equivalent to 1,000 Hiroshima-sized explosions, contaminating islands within a 275-mile periphery. This radioactive cloud would "kill people slowly" as countless Marshallese endured years of radiation related illness, miscarriages and cancers.

The navy evacuated many of the exposed Marshallese on the islands of Rongelap, Rongerik and Utirik to Kwajalein following their contamination in 1954. Between 1951 and 1958 the Kwajalein navy base primarily served to support the continued U.S. nuclear testing campaign in the Northern Marshall Islands. The testimony of Entry Enos, who arrived on Kwajalein in 1954 after being contaminated with radioactive fallout on Rongelap, appeared in the 1981 *Marshall Islands: A Chronology, 1944-1981*. Enos stated "When we arrived on Kwajalein, we started getting burns all over our bodies and people were feeling dizzy and weak,...After two days something appeared under my fingernails

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid

<sup>118</sup> Giff Johnson, Nuclear Past: Unclear Future (Majuro: Micronitor, 2009).

<sup>119</sup> Ibid

and then my fingernails came off and my fingers bled. We all had burns on our ears, shoulders, necks and feet and our eyes were very sore."<sup>120</sup> While the Bikinians who came in 1948 remained on Kwajalein for seven months, the irradiated islanders who came in 1954 stayed just three months and left after medical examinations and temporary treatment on island.<sup>121</sup> Their stories will be explored further in chapter seven.

The Bikinians left Kwajalein for their new island home on Kili in November 1948, which soon proved to be another space where they would struggle to survive. Kili lacked a lagoon making anchorage for dropping supplies and fishing near impossible. The Bikinians on Kili faced food shortages through the 1960s. 122 U.S. failure and neglect on behalf of the Bikinians would help fuel Soviet critiques of Trust Territory administration during the 1950s. Soviet commentary on the Bikinians suggested the continued role the Marshall Islands would play as political pawns in the ongoing Cold War competition detailed as well in chapter one. An April 12, 1952 memorandum from John L. Palmeter in the Department of the Interior summarizing recommendations and criticisms advanced by the representatives at the U.N. Trusteeship Council on the Trust Territory noted these critiques. Palmeter cited that U.S.S.R. representatives "emphasized that the population of Bikini, which is now on Kili, is suffering from an insufficiency of food." 123

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>120</sup> Micronesia Support Committee, Marshall Islands, A Chronology, 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>121</sup> There is a rich and growing amount of scholarship covering the experiences of Bikinians as well as those on Rongelap and other islands impacted by radioactive fallout during the 1954 hydrogen test, including the work of Holly M. Barker, Giff Johnson, Jack Niedenthal, Bob Kiste, Leonard Mason, Stewart Firth

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>122</sup> Micronesia Support Committee, Marshall Islands, A Chronology, 11-13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>123</sup> Memorandum from John L. Palmeter in the Department of the Interior on "Summary of recommendations and criticisms advanced by the representatives of the 10th session of the United Nations Trusteeship Council on the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, April 21, 1952. TTA, reel no. 166.

This section's brief examination of narratives detailing the Bikinians' segregated stay on Kwajalein has intended to further show how patterns of segregation on the island were becoming normalized in the postwar period under navy rule. Naval officials and local media outlets obscured this segregation by narrating the Bikinians' arrival as celebratory and entertaining rather than a journey marked by colonial dispossession and trauma that became worsened through their living conditions on Kwajalein. These segregation patterns marking Marshallese as outsiders in their own lands, as requiring separation, control and surveillance would continue through the army era on Kwajalein.

# Displacing Micronesian Labor: Marking Kwajalein a Space of Exclusive American Residency

Building upon the earlier precedent of Bikinian displacement for U.S. military objectives, the navy chose to displace all Micronesians laborers and residents from Kwajalein in 1951. According to Lieutenant Commander of the U.S. Navy, Dorothy E. Richard, in the third volume of her tome *United States Naval administration of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands*, as early as 1949 the navy viewed all space on Kwajalein as necessary for naval facilities. The naval government determined that suitable living space could no longer be provided on island for native employees and suggested Ebeye as the best alternative location for the 450 laborers living then on Kwajalein. The naval commander's decision to displace native laborers from Kwajalein also built upon a lack

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>124</sup> Dorothy E. Richard, *United States Naval Administration of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, vol. III* (Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, 1957), 556-557.

of desire to improve living conditions in the island's labor camp constructed to house these workers. 125

This section examines naval discourse informing the decision to remove all Micronesians from Kwajalein that resulted in the island becoming a space of exclusive American residency for more than four decades thereafter. The larger dissertation identifies this early military decision to segregate Kwajalein's two primary labor force communities, the Americans and the Marshallese, as one of the most significant factors informing the history of Kwajalein and Ebeye's relationship thereafter. While not recorded as such at the time, this 1951 decision proved to be a moment of contingency that would fuel conflicts between Trust Territory administrators and the army through the 1960s and 1970s and Marshallese grievances and protests against the U.S. through the 1970s and 1980s. Given these greater long-term consequences emerging out of the navy's decision to remove all Micronesian residency from Kwajalein, the discourse surrounding that policy deserves careful consideration.

In the fall of 1949 the Trust Territory High Commissioner requested that Captain Cecil B. Gill, Commander of Naval Operating Base Kwajalein and Governor of the Marshall Islands, prepare recommendations for the relocation of Marshallese to Ebeye. Captain Gill indicated he saw the proposed move as "highly desirable" because of conditions then existing on Kwajalein, which he described in a detailed reply to the High Commissioner. Amidst the challenges in keeping native laborers on Kwajalein, Gill cited the complications of feeding them at Kwajalein's mess hall given food prices being higher than native wages. <sup>126</sup> Gill continued on to note that in the "long range plans for

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, 557.

Kwajalein, no facilities have been inserted into the blueprint for native use...The available space on Kwajalein is too small to envisage a native village here without creating problems which adversely affects the social welfare and economy of the Marshallese." In his report, Gill posed the question of whether or not the military establishment really needed native labor. He answered "obviously no," but continued on to highlight the benefit of native labor as "cheap and useful." Gill's assessment also described the existing labor camp conditions on Kwajalein comprising 26 small 16' x 4" tents, 16' x 4" wooden houses and 41 canvas roofed houses. He qualified that while all housing appeared clean, the accommodations remained "entirely inadequate" and too densely situated posing a fire risk. He described the housing as incomparable to indigenous standards in the outer islands of other atolls. Gill concluded that sooner or later a large investment would be required to rehabilitate these quarters.

Gill's assessment highlighted several interesting facts informing the impetus to move native laborers off Kwajalein. The first came through the reality that the navy paid native laborers too little for them to afford food on Kwajalein. So naturally, instead of increasing their wages, the navy found the option of displacement more desirable. This pattern of the military neglecting to address the problem of Micronesian wage levels as unmatched with food expenses would continue through the army administration. Under the army, food on Ebeye would prove to be prohibitively expensive, while Kwajalein's food would remain tax free for American employees to purchase. Army rules implemented in 1968 would prevent Marshallese laborers from purchasing any food

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>128</sup> Ibid, 558.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

items on Kwajalein to bring back to Ebeye, despite these laborers' wages remaining too low to match Ebeye's higher food prices.

Gill's assessment also revealed how the navy built inadequate living quarters for Marshallese laborers on Kwajalein using salvaged materials and providing minimal maintenance thereafter. Thus, when determining that the task of improving this housing would impose greater costs on the navy than simply displacing the camp to Ebeye, again this latter option proved preferable. Gill noted that even if the commander selected a new site on Kwajalein to build native housing, the cost would be considerable compared to the cost of erecting homes for native laborers on Ebeye. In his 1954 Ebeye study commissioned by the Trust Territory High Commissioner, Marshall Islands District Anthropologist Jack Tobin also highlighted the Kwajalein labor camp's deteriorated conditions as impetus for displacement. Tobin wrote in Ebeye Village: An Atypical Marshallese Community that by January 1950 the Kwajalein labor camp had swelled to a population of 559 people and "presented a squalid, shantytown appearance, contrasting sharply with the spick and span buildings of the adjacent military establishment." <sup>130</sup> Tobin added that at this point the navy decided to relocate the camp to Ebeye. By removing Micronesian laborers to Ebeye where they would continue to live for decades amidst inadequate housing and infrastructure, the navy simply removed its own responsibility to help improve these structures. With removal of the labor village to Ebeye, the responsibility shifted to the Trust Territory administration.

According to Gill's report, displacing the Micronesian labor camp to Ebeye would free the navy from the burden of feeding large numbers of transients coming through

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>130</sup> Tobin, Jack (District Anthropologist Marshall Islands). *Ebeye Village: An Atypical Marshallese Community*. Majuro, 1954. Pp. 3.

Kwajalein and the problems underlying civil administration of natives. <sup>131</sup> In Gill's plan, the navy would provide boats for those commuting to work on Kwajalein and continue to offer medical and dental services. Gill argued native laborers also supported the move. He added the most important consideration in the navy's decision centered on removing "Marshallese from intimate contact with service personnel and those modern influences with which the natives are unable to cope." He continued, "They could live on Ebeve under their own economy, customs, and desires, rather than to be forced into the third foreign mold in a period of three generations." <sup>133</sup> Gill's statements echoed arguments analyzed earlier in this chapter justifying Kwajalein's segregation as protecting "native culture." Showcasing this noble goal while also identifying navy cost saving benefits, the report explained how the move allowed the navy to offset native housing costs by bringing the Trust Territory on board to foot most of the bill. The report estimated the cost of native housing at \$33,200 with the potential to lower expenses by utilizing available scrap. Of this cost, the Trust Territory High Commissioner agreed on December 30, 1949 that \$25,000 would be underwritten by Trust Territory treasury to be replaced from Naval Station Kwajalein funds "if" and when they became available at a later date. 134

On January 26, 1951 the navy completed the Kwajalein labor camp relocation to Ebeye. Following debate between the High Commissioner, the Governor of the Marshalls and Captain Gill regarding whether or not the village would be viewed as just another Marshallese community or as an artificial space created primarily to benefit the navy, a

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid. 559.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

staff anthropologist offered an assessment. The anthropologist concluded the village could only be considered a labor camp, maintained artificially through wages from the navy since the space proved incapable of being self-supporting according to Marshallese economic patterns. Given this context of native labor displacement to Ebeye, this next section turns to briefly examine naval administration discussions on removal logistics as they related to native laborers. While my research efforts located no archival records authored by Marshallese laborers during this period to speak to their relocation experiences, clues embedded in Trust Territory memorandums and correspondence hinted at potential challenges facing displaced workers early on.

A memorandum sent from the Kwajalein Civil Administration Representative Z.B. Andrews to the Kwajalein Executive Officer, Naval Air Station detailed the labor camp's relocation to Ebeye suggesting potential impacts on Marshallese. The September 30, 1949 memorandum offered insights into interpretations of Marshallese concerns about transitioning from the role of resident laborer to that of commuter. Andrews began by asserting the memorandum constituted a reply to a recent request for updates on the preliminary plans to establish the Marshallese village on Ebeye. <sup>136</sup> He continued on to describe his observations of Marshallese responses to the upcoming move. He narrated considerable Marshallese enthusiasm for relocating to Ebeye. But added that "many people who work on Kwajalein, especially those who are batchelors prefer to remain on Kwajalein." <sup>137</sup> He continued on to note that married men seemed divided on the issue of a

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>135</sup> Ibid, 563.

Memorandum on Relocation of Marshallese on Ebeye from Civil Administration Representative,
 Kwajalein Z.B. Andrews to Executive Officer NAS Kwajalein. Sent September 30, 1945. Located in RG 313, Records of Naval Operating Forces, Box: Naval Station, Kwajalein, General Correspondence 1948-1949 at the Pacific Archives, San Bruno.
 Ibid.

daily commute, but many expressed preference for solely commuting on weekends. He added, "The thought of spending two hours each day commuting, is not universally approved." Andrews also noted that the commute could increase absenteeism due to water transportation issues. He explained that many workers indicated a preference to keep a Marshallese barracks on Kwajalein for those preferring to live there. Andrews said he believed this idea should be considered. He added that if the navy provided limited cooking and washing facilities, Marshallese workers could furnish and cook their own meals and also keep their own laundry service. 139

The following year a letter from Trust Territory Chief Administrator S.C.

Anderson to the High Commissioner also discussed the impending move, this time noting concern among Marshallese about rent on Ebeye. The September 12, 1950 letter stated "The Marshallese reaction is one of apprehension and uncertainty in respect to their ability to afford to pay rent and subsist themselves on imported foods (as all food must be imported at Ebeye). They are wondering if they will have any take-home pay left after these expenses."

The correspondence also pointed out that no administrative organization had been planned for establishing or collecting rents. The letter added that Marshallese preferred to think of Ebeye as a labor camp and they viewed rental charges as a potential "future deterent to labor recruitment."

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Anderson's letter also narrated additional challenges likely to face Marshallese moving to Ebeye given the lack of thoughtful planning for the island. He noted the navy

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

 <sup>140</sup> Correspondence from Chief Administrator, Field Headquarters, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Subject: Proposed move of Kwajalein Marshallese Village to Ebeye Island: Comments and Recommendations, September 12, 1950. Located in RG 313, Box: Records of Naval Operating Forces, Naval Air Base, Roi-Namur, Kwajalein, Marshall Islands, General Correspondence, 1946, at the Pacific Archives, San Bruno. Pp. 2.
 141 Ibid.

made no provisions to allow private enterprise to establish operations on Ebeye. Anderson asserted that naval and Trust Territory use of eminent domain to remove the village obliged them to assist in establishing private business on Ebeye. His letter added this assistance proved particularly important because Ebeye's natural resources could not sustain the arriving population. Anderson emphasized that retail food supplies needed to be established before the move since less than five percent of subsistence requirements could be met by Ebeye's resources. All other food would need to be imported and purchased from non-indigenous sources. 142 This fact noted in 1950 contradicted Gill's assertions the prior year that moving laborers to Ebeye would ultimately allow Marshallese to "live under their own economy, customs and desires, rather than to be forced into [a] foreign mold."<sup>143</sup>

Foreshadowing the countless comparisons between quality of life resources on Kwajalein and Ebeye that would emerge from Marshallese and American voices of protest, Anderson's letter also cited how in this initial stage of labor camp displacement no firm plan existed for a Marshallese standard of living on Ebeye. He recommended one be created. Finally, Anderson suggested the Kwajalein Naval Station limit labor requirements to ensure the Ebeye village would not exceed a population of more than 370 permanent residents and 70 transients. Anderson anticipated at this early date the potential crowding repercussions that increased labor demands could bring, a challenge chapters three, four and five will further examine. 144 Both Andrews' and Anderson's early

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>142</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>143</sup> Richard, United States Naval Administration, 559.

<sup>144</sup> Correspondence from Chief Administrator, Field Headquarters, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Subject: Proposed move of Kwajalein Marshallese Village to Ebeye Island: Comments and Recommendations, September 12, 1950. Located in RG 313, Box: Records of Naval Operating Forces, Naval Air Base, Roi-Namur, Kwajalein, Marshall Islands, General Correspondence, 1946, at the Pacific Archives, San Bruno. Pp. 6-7.

identifications of concerns among Marshallese workers forced into a commuter status with no quality of life measures in place for their new home on Ebeye foreshadowed grievances that would fuel later Marshallese protests. Marshallese demonstrations would arise during the 1970s and 1980s as strict residential segregation between Kwajalein and Ebeye continued alongside the emergence of starkly divergent infrastructure between the two islands.

This section has tried to identify the contingent moment in 1951 initiating complete residential segregation between Kwajalein and Ebeye and some of the rationales governing this naval policy. This 1951 segregation policy would continue to shape not only the local relationship between Kwajalein and Ebeye, but in turn these two islands' larger historic influence on the Marshallese nation's decolonized future. Naval discourse justifying segregation between Kwajalein and Ebeye in 1951 would continue through the following three decades and ignite intense Marshallese and American media critiques into the 1970s and 1980s. Despite coming under heat during this period, Kwajalein and Ebeye's separation would become naturalized following Marshallese decolonization to the extent that the army's continued structure of segregation no longer garnered much scrutiny.

#### Portrait of the Domestic on Kwajalein: Policing the Intimate within Colonial Space

By January 1951, all Marshallese had been cleared from Kwajalein, sewing the seeds of what would become thereafter a spatial dynamic comprising the commuting Marshallese laborer and the American resident. Having explored the planning, or lack thereof, for Ebeye's labor village and rationales for separating native labor on Kwajalein

from American residency, this chapter concludes with a brief portrait of one of Kwajalein's earliest and most enduring commuting labor categories. The Marshallese domestic servant would serve Kwajalein's military community during the 1940s and 1950s through the island's transition to a missile base in the 1960s. Today, domestics continue to comprise an important component of Ebeye's commuting workforce on Kwajalein. While Kwajalein initially housed a much smaller percentage of female than male laborers prior to displacement, the role of domestics living at the Ebeye labor village grew over time. Historically, domestic servants have negotiated complicated roles across a variety of colonial contexts, often moving through intimate spaces amidst heavily controlled boundaries. 145 Such proved as well to be the case on Kwajalein as the island developed into an increasingly regulated and restricted military environment over time. The experience of employing a domestic servant could signify a marker of status for Kwajalein's temporary settlers; a short-term luxury many may not have enjoyed in other contexts. A closer look at narratives of this labor dynamic offers insights into some of the early experiences and expectations between Ebeye's commuting laborer and Kwajalein's resident American employer.

While I encountered scant materials detailing the conditions and roles of domestic servants before and immediately following the war, Cultural Studies Scholar Gregory Dvorak's analysis of Kwajalein photographs mentioned domestic work during this period. In his 2007 dissertation on memory and cultural mapping on Kwajalein, Dvorak deconstructed wartime photographs on Kwajalein. His analysis included Marshallese

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>145</sup> Anne Stoler's work on policing colonial boundaries in spaces of intimacy in the Dutch East Indies has been foundational to this scholarship. For recent work on the subject in Pacific literature, see Margaret Rodman's *House-Girls Remember: Domestic Workers in Vanuatu* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007).

woman pictured and captioned as "domestic help" through laundry services some provided to prewar Japanese and postwar Americans. 146 Illustrating the continued demand for domestic servants following the war, a memorandum produced by Naval Commanding Officer M.E. Arnold offered insights into expectations about this work on Kwajalein. The June 1952 memorandum sent to "all military personnel occupying public quarters" on Kwajalein gave directives regarding employment of Marshallese domestic servants. Arnold began the memorandum by stating he had become aware of certain military personnel on Kwajalein encountering difficulties in hiring Marshallese domestic servants. He noted some had cited problems arising due to a lack of standardization in wages and working conditions. Arnold also identified apparent "competition" among prospective employers in offering extra wages or inducements to prospective employees as potentially contributing to hiring challenges. 147

In order to address these concerns about domestic labor on Kwajalein, Arnold's memorandum continued on to offer specific instructions regarding military employment of these women. His memorandum provided directives on expected wages, with a maximum monthly rate of \$31 for a 40-hour workweek for families with no more than one child, or \$7.50 per week. Arnold added the maximum daily rate for part-time domestic employees would be \$1.50 per day or \$.75 per half day. He enumerated assigned duties to include housecleaning, washing dishes and clothes, ironing and "babysitting." His memorandum added employers could offer a pay raise to those

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>146</sup> Dvorak, Seeds from Afar, 216.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>147</sup> Memorandum No. 23-52 by Commanding Officer E.M. Arnold of U.S. Naval Station, Navy 824, Subject: Employment of Marshallese as Domestic Servants, June 21, 1952. Located in RG 313, Box: Naval Station Kwajalein, at the Pacific Archives, San Bruno. Pp. 1-3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>148</sup> Ibid. Quotes included in the source. It is not entirely clear here why "babysitting" is the only duty marked by quotations in this directive. It is possible there may not have been many children on the island to

domestics working longer than six months. Arnold qualified, however, that no extra gifts should be offered to Marshallese domestics, such as additional cash compensation, as an inducement to accept employment. Clarifying this point, Arnold stated this did not mean employers could not give Marshallese domestics "nothing under any circumstances." <sup>149</sup> He considered lunches, leftover food items and cast off clothing as appropriate options if the employer wanted to give something extra. 150 This military policy of encouraging American employers to reward Marshallese laborers with gifts of basically discarded American trash would also carry through to policies under the army administration.

Arnold's memorandum continued on to explain that domestics employed in public quarters should be given a physical exam prior to employment. Likewise, he directed employers to secure a certificate of such exam prior to employment. Arnold added that domestics should be periodically examined every four months thereafter. <sup>151</sup> Arnold's insistence that military personnel adhere to hiring alongside these medical exam procedures echoed postwar concerns voiced about potential Marshallese disease and contagion on Kwajalein noted earlier in this chapter. Addressing the issue of potential overcrowding on Ebeye, Arnold advised employers to only hire those Marshallese coming from within Kwajalein Atoll. He noted this directive came at the request of the Trust Territory High Commissioner given concerns about density on Ebeve. 152 Finally, Arnold's memorandum concluded by stating his intent to enlist military personnel cooperation to ensure all Kwajalein residents could enjoy equal opportunity in employing

"babysit" and thus the duty may have been referencing another other task. Or perhaps "babysitting" at the time was a newer coined term referring to child care.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>149</sup> Ibid. 150 Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

Marshallese domestic servants. He reiterated that, if continued, lucrative gift inducements that could lure domestics and create an "artificial increase of the wage scale of Marshallese domestics to an unreasonable level," would undermine this goal. 153

Clearly, Arnold's memorandum intended to exact price controls on services offered by Marshallese women highly coveted by Americans on Kwajalein. The demand for domestics would remain high during the following five decades. Policies governing domestics' movement through Kwajalein and their continued medical examinations would also persist through the 1960s and 1970s as chapter three further illuminates. Kwajalein's military command would continue to struggle with their need for Marshallese service labor alongside their simultaneous need to mark this labor force as foreign to the island's American domestic employees, keeping distance in place spatially and discursively.

Chapter two has attempted to examine postwar naval policies beginning to map Kwajalein as a U.S. space along lines of expected gender and sexual norms and segregated labor conditions. This chapter has argued that naval officials in part justified the complete removal of any Micronesian residential presence on Kwajalein as a means for helping to protect and preserve Micronesian culture. This chapter has also revealed how these same naval officials seemed quite comfortable with Micronesian culture adapting when necessary to suit naval labor needs. And yet, as the portrait of the Marshallese domestic indicated, the tensions surrounding military dependence upon Marshallese to work in the most intimate American spaces on the island also raised fears requiring greater military surveillance and boundary marking. These policies monitoring proximity and intimacy with Marshallese labor through rules and regulations cementing

153 Ibid.

U.S. colonial hierarchies on Kwajalein would continue through the army period. In fact, army regulations monitoring Marshallese laborers would become heightened as Kwajalein became home to an influx of American civilian contract personnel and their families during the 1960s. Chapter three further explores the role of Marshallese domestics on Kwajalein as the island transformed during this period into a U.S. missile installation.

## Part II Producing Kwajalein's Suburban Domesticity Alongside Ebeye's Foreign Urbanity

The naval period of administration on Kwajalein concluded within a few years of the island's designation as the new military test site for the Nike Zeus anti-ballistic missile program in 1959. Kwajalein had fallen onto the military base surplus list the year before but the military quickly revalued the island as a key defense site for missile development and testing, a role Kwajalein would retain through today. Housing a multibillion dollar missile technology complex, during the 1960s Kwajalein became a suburban home to thousands of civilian personnel brought to the island to operate the missile defense system. Part II explores Kwajalein's transformation into a militarized suburban space during this period alongside the simultaneous production of Ebeye as an urban space housing Kwajalein's service sector. Chapters three, four and five explore this process of spatial production by keeping both islands' narratives together in each chapter to reveal the relational and interdependent manner in which the islands historically emerged. Methodologically, these three chapters approach spatial production with a focus on how people became narrated into place, how administrators legalized land control and planned built environments and how military officials regulated mobility within these spaces. Accordingly, chapter three begins by examining how Americans and Marshallese were narrated into place on Kwajalein and Ebeye. Chapter four analyzes land contract practices and built environment planning on both islands. Finally, chapter five

investigates U.S. policies controlling access and movement between Kwajalein and Ebeye.

Taken together, these three chapters comprising part II reveal how Kwajalein and Ebeye's suburban and urban transformations represented local manifestations of U.S. practices naturalizing the Trust Territory as within U.S. national discourse. By contracting each island's space and physically transforming the islands to fit U.S. labor and residential spatial patterns, army and Trust Territory officials helped further obscure the imperial nature of the U.S. presence in the Marshall Islands. These historic changes on Kwajalein and Ebeye illuminated U.S. success, to a certain extent, in domesticating this space, which remained foreign to the nation. Part II argues that army and Trust Territory practices marking Marshallese as remaining within the realm of the foreign proved central to their successes in creating the U.S. domestic on Kwajalein. As U.S. investments and suburban design turned Kwajalein into a space of American domesticity, army and Trust Territory approaches to Ebeye further positioned the island as a space of foreign racialized labor. While only three miles of reef and lagoon separated the two islands, as Kwajalein became a part of America, Ebeye remained within Micronesia.

### Chapter Three Narrating People into Space on Suburban Kwajalein and Urban Ebeye

Chapter three's examination of how Americans and Marshallese historically became narrated into their relational roles on Kwajalein and Ebeye emphasizes patterns of othering based on intersectional categories of race, labor and family. This chapter explores how U.S. Trust Territory and military administrators deployed these categories to mark people into spaces of residency and spaces of labor. Chapter three also reveals how during the 1960s Kwajalein emerged as a militarized suburban space populated by an unexpected cohort of U.S. imperial ambassadors. These accidental representatives of America's expanding military empire comprised the American families residing and working on Kwajalein's emerging suburban missile structure. Kwajalein's suburban nuclear families represented that which had become defined as the nation's most vulnerable assets in need of protection during the Cold War. While Kwajalein became naturalized as a suburban space imprinted by the mark of these American families and the army rules protecting them, Ebeye emerged narrated as an urban space of labor. In contrast to Kwajalein, most army and Trust Territory officials and American contract workers identified Ebeye as a repository for Kwajalein's service sector rather than a site of family residency. As the latter portion of this chapter's oral history interviews reveal, many Marshallese calling Ebeye home offered a different narrative, and one that marked the island's significance in sustaining familial and community relationships.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> For more on this topic see May, *Homeward Bound* 

Chapter three's analysis of U.S. discourse infusing the domestic on Kwajalein and the foreign on Ebeye employs these terms in a few different ways. This chapter considers one level of the domestic in describing Kwajalein's transformation into a space of domesticity. This approach considers how the spatial and cultural structures of suburbia layered the island with a Cold War narrative of home and family protection. On another level, this chapter considers the domestic and the foreign on Kwajalein and Ebeye through how these terms identify that which is considered to be interior and exterior to the United States. As Historian Elaine Tyler May's scholarship suggests, Cold War suburbanization captured both narratives of domesticity as the suburbs became the familiar/interior and familial manifestation of the domestic through the home, the family and the nation. Likewise, scholars of urban history have shown how during the Cold War, the urban became a space of racialized threat from which the suburbs provided a protective domestic refuge. Similar to historical narratives of urban spaces in the United States, urban Ebeye was perceived as a home to workers not families; a space foreign to the domestic of American suburbia. In the Marshall Islands context, the foreign-ness of Ebeye came through Ebeye's urbanity and Micronesian-ness, in contrast to Kwajalein's American suburban setting.

As the second half of chapter three explores, Marshallese narratives of Ebeye in relation to Kwajalein do not employ these ideas of foreign and domestic. However, some oral history interviews offered analysis of cultural distance and distinctions between the two islands that suggested American practices on Kwajalein remained foreign to Marshallese culture. These interviews identified Kwajalein's surveillance policies and army rules regulating access and mobility on the island as outside that which remained

familiar in Marshallese culture. Primarily, Marshallese workers noted that American practices on Kwajalein remained foreign to those Marshallese cultural values that could be termed in many ways as manifestations of the Marshallese domestic. In contrast to that which defined U.S. Cold War suburban domesticity taking shape on Kwajalein, this Marshallese domestic focused on extensive family and community support on Ebeye and ease of movement particularly around sociality.

## Narrating People into Place on Kwajalein: Introductions and Instructions about Race

In creating the domestic on Kwajalein, military and contractor officials produced text in their personnel introductory manuals that narrated the existence of an indigenous population who could also claim the islands as part of their domestic; their home.

Maintaining a national sense of entitlement to Kwajalein--something outside the realm of the imperialism--the manuals worked to position Marshallese workers on island as foreign to Kwajalein. One way these manuals did so was by reproducing racializing narratives about Micronesians, further marking their foreign otherness. The manuals also informed incoming American personnel about the rules and regulations governing this racialized labor population.

In many welcome manuals, the identification of Marshallese with segregation and servitude constituted the primary introduction Americans received to the region's indigenous population. This introduction simultaneously translated into an expected relationship between American residents and Marshallese workers. The guides marked American residency on Kwajalein through entitlements to suburban luxuries and family

amenities. Amidst these island comforts came the service of Micronesian laborers and a connected hierarchical relationship with this commuting workforce. This first section examines how Americans and Marshallese became narrated into these relational hierarchical positions on Kwajalein through discourse in these introductory welcome manuals. This section argues that racializing discourse alongside enumeration of army rules and regulations governing Marshallese labor on Kwajalein worked to position Kwajalein's Micronesian service sector as separate and foreign to the island's domestic space housing the American workers.

This chapter's analysis of how army and civilian contractors narrated Americans and Marshallese into space on Kwajalein picks up where chapter two left off, with a portrait of the Marshallese domestic. As chapter two revealed, during the navy period on Kwajalein American military personnel expressed strong desires to have Micronesian domestics serve them. In fact, these desires proved so strong that the navy implemented policies regulating hiring practices to curb the domestics' ability to leverage this demand for their labor. American desire for Marshallese domestic service remained consistent through the army period on Kwajalein. As the island transformed into a suburban missile range during the early 1960s, contractor manuals introduced incoming American personnel to their new island home and detailed the availability of domestic labor. These manuals helped narrate Americans into place on Kwajalein. The manuals did so, in part, by distinguishing for Americans who they were *not* on Kwajalein. Americans were not the Marshallese workers who needed to vacate the island by a certain time each day. They were not the racialized domestics that American families would depend upon to raise their children.

Kwajalein's introductory manuals narrated Americans into their place of residency on Kwajalein in relation to Marshallese non-resident labor. These narratives discursively naturalized a colonial dynamic of American entitlement to land on Kwajalein and to the labor of those Marshallese excluded from that privilege. In a 1961 Bell Laboratories guide for incoming Kwajalein employees, a section entitled "Domestic Help" explained that "Marshallese women are available for domestic help for \$1.50 to \$1.80 per day, depending upon the size of the family." The manual continued "They are transported to Kwajalein in the morning and returned to *their* island (Ebeye) at the end of the day." Message to Americans? Marshallese people come to *your* island to work and go home to *their* island when work is done. The text naturalized Kwajalein as part of the United States, as discursively outside Marshallese islands. The Bell guide added maids would be hired on a first come first serve basis as there were not enough women to provide a "domestic servant" for every family.

A few years after Bell included text on domestics in its introductory manual, the Transport Company of Texas welcome guide described rules and regulations governing the hiring of domestics. The Texas guide noted, "some of the Marshallese women on Ebeye Island come to Kwajalein to help with the house work and care for children." The guide continued to instruct that "These women are brought over from Ebeye by boat and arrive about 7:30 a.m. They are returned to Ebeye at 4:45 p.m." The manual emphasized the restriction against Marshallese residing on Kwajalein past their work hours asserting

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> "A Guide to Kwajalein Pacific Missile Range Facility," Bell Telephone Laboratories Incorporated, January 1961. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Ibid. (My emphasis added).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> "Welcome to Kwajalein," Transport Company of Texas, published circa 1963-1964. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Ibid.

"None are allowed to remain overnight or into the evening." While the Texas guide informed Kwajalein personnel of restrictions prohibiting Marshallese from staying on Kwajalein beyond work hours, another set of military guidelines instructed that all personnel (meaning "all men") desiring to stay overnight on Ebeye simply needed to sign a form and request approval from the island's military officials.

The Transport Company of Texas guide also detailed Marshallese domestics' special skills that would help attend to all American family needs on Kwajalein. The guide noted, "some iron very well" and reassured families interested in hiring Marshallese that "maids are also given physical examinations at the hospital before being employed." The relationship between physical examinations and domestic labor suggested a continuity from the naval period marking a shared colonial predicament through the army administration. This challenge centered on the desire to employ colonial subjects in the most intimate settlers spaces while also addressing fears of potential diseases contaminating this realm of intimacy. Highlighting a variety of Marshallese services available to Americans, the Texas manual continued on to identify Marshallese men as also available for yard work. Hypothesis 11 By 1968, the army produced a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> "A Guide to Kwajalein," Prepared by the Kwajalein Office of the Defense Information Office, Bell Telephone Laboratories, September 1, 1966, TTA, reel no. 993. This guide is part of a larger file labeled "A Publication on the Nike-X Kwajalein Test Site."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> "Welcome to Kwajalein," Transport Company of Texas, published circa 1963-1964. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> For more on the subject of disciplining intimacy on colonial spaces see Ann Stoler's *Carnal Knowledge* and *Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002) and her edited collection *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006). For recent scholarship specifically exploring U.S. colonial concerns about contagion and disease in Micronesia see Hattori, *Colonial Dis-Ease* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> "Welcome to Kwajalein," Transport Company of Texas, published circa 1963-1964. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

Kwajalein Test Site National Range guide that discussed domestic labor and indicated wage rates for Marshallese maids had risen to \$12.50 to \$24.00 per week.<sup>12</sup>

While Kwajalein's introductory guides instructed incoming American settlers about their expected relationship to Marshallese people through discourses of segregation and servitude, the manuals also offered Americans a brief tutorial on Marshallese history and culture. These narratives often accompanied explanations on how the U.S. came to occupy the Marshall Islands. The manuals detailed precedent "colonial" rule by German and Japanese Empires as these regimes shifted to U.S. "administration" of the Marshall Islands following World War II. The 1961 Bell Labs narrative described German and Japanese colonial rule in the region, then detailed the U.S. victory in World War II and the establishment of the Trusteeship Agreement. The Bell history section concluded by narrating the inevitability of the contemporary relationship between the United States and Micronesia. The guide explained that "because of a fateful day in December 1941, [Micronesians] later found themselves the wards of Uncle Sam." Bell's narrative obscured any alternative to American rule in the region. Incoming personnel received a story justifying the contemporary colonial and hierarchical labor dynamic on Kwajalein through paternalistic language marking Micronesians as helpless "wards of Uncle Sam." The image of Uncle Sam and his Pacific wards carried deep roots in U.S. history. Late 19th century politic cartoons caricatured Pacific Island colonies as Uncle Sam's children and students during the Spanish American War. These images accompanied simultaneous

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Kwajalein Test Site, U.S. Army Material Command, Kwajalein, Marshall Islands, 1968. Located in the Pacific Collection. UH Manoa.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> "A Guide to Kwajalein Pacific Missile Range Facility," Bell Telephone Laboratories Incorporated, January 1961. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa. Pp.68.

political debates regarding the fate of U.S. imperial acquisitions in the Pacific and the Caribbean.<sup>14</sup>

Alongside enumeration of rules regulating Marshallese labor on Kwajalein and narratives obscuring U.S. colonial history in the region, some Kwajalein welcome guides also instructed incoming American personnel about Micronesian racial features. In doing so, these manuals further marked Marshallese as foreign to Kwajalein's racially unmarked space of American domesticity. The 1961 Bell Guide contextualized Marshallese racial characteristics along a spectrum of "basic Micronesian racial stock." <sup>15</sup> The guide drew upon the anthropological tradition of employing a kind of "species language" to explain variations in the physical appearance of different islander populations across the Pacific. The Bell manual explained that "the full-blooded Micronesian islanders in the territory show physical characteristics that vary a great deal in individuals and to some extent regionally." The guide continued, "Together with other Pacific peoples, they have complicated *breed* lines in which are interwoven genetic elements associated in the adjacent south and east Asian countries with 'Mongoloid' and 'Caucasoid' racial types and, to a smaller extent, with 'Negritoid' and 'Australoid' types." 17 This section of the Bell manual continued on to distinguish Marshallese physical features from those of other Micronesians. The guide noted that "while the peoples of the West and Central zones (Palau, Truk and Ponape) tend to have Mongoloid type characters somewhat more emphasized, including medium to round (brachycephalic) heads and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> For more on this subject, see the work of historians of U.S. Empire that have looked at the Spanish American War and the Philippine American War, including Emily Hoganson, Walter LeFeber and Paul Kramer.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> "A Guide to Kwajalein Pacific Missile Range Facility," Bell Telephone Laboratories Incorporated, January 1961. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa. Pp. 51.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Ibid. (My emphasis added)

rounded faces...those in the Marshalls to the east appear rather more Caucasoid in type, as are their Polynesian neighbors, with longer narrower heads and faces." The Bell guide concluded by lamenting "scientists still know all too little about the physical characteristics of the Micronesian peoples." The guide added that while German and Japanese scholars made scientific measurements, their studies remained limited to only a few living subjects, mostly through skeletal remains.

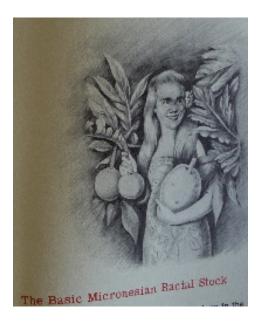


Figure 3. "Basic Micronesian Racial Stock" on Kwajalein.<sup>20</sup>

Earlier iterations of these passages on Micronesian racial characteristics appeared in Stanford University's 1948 School of Naval Administration Handbook on the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. The inclusion of the text in the 1948 handbook suggests the Kwajalein introductory manuals likely pulled the passages from these earlier publications geared at postwar training for Trust Territory administration.<sup>21</sup> The passage's

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 52.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Ibid, 51.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> "Handbook on the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands: A Handbook for Use in Training and Administration," prepared at the School of Naval Administration, Hoover Institute, Stanford University, by

appearance in 1948 seemed to reflect the prevalence of biological racial theories noted in chapter two by Anthropologist Felix M. Keesing who described these as infusing America perceptions of Micronesia at the time. These racializing texts' appearance again more than a decade later in Kwajalein personnel manuals suggests the staying power of these perceptions of Micronesians. Presumably, those writing the Kwajalein manuals included discourse on racial characteristics in an attempt to potentially clarify or reinforce perceptions they and their incoming American counterparts brought to their understanding of Micronesia and the Pacific in the 1960s. The descriptions worked again to define Americans and their presence on Kwajalein through who and what they were not. Americans were not the racialized other. According to the manual, they resided in the space of Kwajalein racially unmarked.

The history of Pacific Islander racialization and particularly Micronesian racial othering has deep roots in American culture. The racialization of Micronesians greatly informed the emergence of the field of anthropology in the United States. Scholars of the Pacific have traced U.S. racial othering through films, magazines like *National* Geographic, novels, tourism materials and television shows. 22 A recent television example, Survivor, has produced more than one third of all 22 seasons in the Pacific. Many of Survivor's Pacific episodes have drawn upon this deep history of U.S. racial stereotypes to set the cultural "stage" for each locale's "reality" competition. These stereotypes have historically included imaginings of islanders as either sexualized bodies available for the taking, docile peoples existing to welcome and help, or vicious,

the Navy Department, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Washington D.C., 1948. Located at the Hoover Institution, Stanford. Pp. 38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Here I am referring to a vast literature on colonizing cultural productions in the Pacific including the work of Haunani-Kay Trask, Catherine Lutz and Jane Collins, Amy Kaplan, Teresia Teaiwa, Nicolas Thomas to cite just a few.

cannibalistic savages amidst other dehumanizing depictions. In many ways, Americans have portrayed islanders alongside caricatures of Native Americans, as primitive and outside modernity. Native peoples within the settler continental space and throughout the U.S. oceanic empire have been depicted as peoples having culture not history.<sup>23</sup> Those contractors writing Kwajalein's manuals who included passages on racial stock may have anticipated a curiosity, suspicion or even fear among incoming Americans in regards to their new "brown" neighbors. While not possible to understand one clear motive behind the manuals' inclusion of text on "Micronesian racial stock," the racializing work these narratives reproduced contributed to the dehumanization of Marshallese individuals. In their abstraction and objectification of Marshallese people, these passages also helped obscure the history and continuity of Marshallese land dispossession under U.S. colonial rule.

Another way Kwajalein personnel manuals masked U.S. colonialism in the region came through their narrative erasure of Kwajalein and Ebeye's relational histories. By detailing the two islands as historically disconnected, the manuals also detached the relationship between Americans on Kwajalein and Marshallese on Ebeye. Thus, Americans arriving to settle on Kwajalein had little access to any information identifying how their new lifestyle of privilege on the island came in direct relation to Marshallese displacements to Ebeye to make way for U.S. missile testing in the atoll. American personnel learned that Ebeye simply constituted the island where their Marshallese workers returned home each day. One exception appeared in the Bell Laboratories retrospective report commemorating employee experiences on Kwajalein. This report,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> For more analysis on these depictions in the Pacific and U.S. see the work of Vicente Diaz and Phil Deloria respectively.

published during the 1980s, narrated the missile range history and briefly mentioned a connection between Ebeye and Kwajalein. The report traced a play-by-play account of Micronesia's emergence as a Trust Territory following World War II. Following this designation, the report noted that Kwajalein gained importance as a refueling, transportation and communications link between east and west during the "Korean conflict." The report stated "as air and shipping traffic increased, Kwajalein's native laborers, who resided at the southern part of the island, were moved to permanent quarters on Ebeye, four miles north. The beginning of Ebeye's 'commuter' culture was at hand." Bell's narrative failed to mention why the navy displaced Micronesians from Kwajalein and instead narrated the history of removal as if American and Micronesian labor segregation had been an inevitable event rather than a structural continuity. Bell's narrative contextualized the colonial act of displacing Marshallese from Kwajalein and the subsequent structure of segregation as a quaint origins story about another "commuter culture."

Bell's retrospective report narrated Marshallese as racialized workers who served American personnel and then returned to Ebeye as part of a "commuter culture," leaving Kwajalein a safe, segregated suburban community. That American civilian and military contractors produced these manuals employing racializing messages naturalizing segregation to introduce personnel to Kwajalein seems not terribly unusual given the racializing spatial context of the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s. As scholars of U.S. race relations during the Cold War have illuminated, the patterns of discourse on segregation

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> A 104-page report/narrative on the experience at Kwajalein for Bell Laboratories employees between 1960 and 1975. Published circa 1975. Report is prefaced by C.A. Warren, Executive Director of SAFEGUARD Division of Bell Laboratories and was obtained at the Archive Repository National Register, National Historic Landmarks in a folder labeled "Kwajalein Island Battlefield," in Washington D.C.

and servitude appearing in Kwajalein's manuals aligned closely with the lifestyles likely many incoming personnel came from across U.S. towns, suburbs and cities.<sup>25</sup> Whether American readings of Marshallese labor segregation drew more from racial registries of African American of Latino American servitude in suburban communities as segregated urban "commuter cultures" for example, or from a colonial racial registry of natives within and outside the continental U.S. remains unclear. As this next section reveals, some Americans on Kwajalein would have been familiar with colonial segregation within a Pacific context as a substantial contractor presence on the island came from Hawai'i. Regardless of which racial registry incoming Americans used to integrate Kwajalein's colonial structure of segregation, U.S. identification of Marshallese through racializing texts and army segregation policies positioned these individuals as foreign within their own islands. Americans' integration into Kwajalein's suburban space increasingly marked that space as part of the U.S. domestic. Simultaneously, army segregation policies and contractor racializing discourse positioned Marshallese laborers as foreign to Kwajalein's American domesticity.

## Talking about Race on Kwajalein

While military and civilian contractor introductory manuals produced and reproduced racializing discourse about Marshallese and Micronesians more broadly, how civilians on Kwajalein consumed these messages remained another story. Recent oral history interviews with some of these civilians indicated no contractor or military rule

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> While there is a vast and continually emergent literature on this topic, that is productively conversing across disciplines, I am thinking here with the urban history work of Thomas Sugrue's *The Origins of the Urban Crisis* and literature on Cold War race relations inclusive of scholars like Penny Von Eschen, Thomas Borstelmman, Elaine Taylor May and Mary Dudziak.

requiring incoming employees read their manuals. While some acknowledged they did so of their own accord, likely many others bypassed the various messages included in these manuals. Introductory manuals offered one set of racializing texts marking Marshallese and other Micronesians to incoming civilians that provided a template for Americans to understand their relational, hierarchical roles with these populations. But the manuals did not capture the entire story of how Americans and Marshallese chose to negotiate that dynamic. In order to gain a broader perspective on how race may have operated on Kwajalein in positioning Americans and Marshallese relationally, but also Americans among each other, questions about race and social integration remained one focus of oral history interviews.

This chapter's focus on race as one primary lens through which to analyze U.S. practices naturalizing Kwajalein as American through narrating people into space considers how structural segregation influenced American perceptions of Marshallese in the region. Segregation between Kwajalein and Ebeye simultaneously informed civilians' understandings of their own role on Kwajalein in relation to Marshallese. While military security policies excluded non-employed Americans from freely entering and staying on Kwajalein without sponsorship, these policies did not exclude Americans who worked on the island from living there. In contrast, Kwajalein's service sector largely represented by brown Marshallese laborers remained excluded from island residency. Thus, each day an exodus of brown workers transited from Kwajalein back to Ebeye on the ferry; an image impossible to ignore as representative of the two islands' racially informed segregation structure.

As this next section reveals, civilians offered varied interpretations of Kwajalein's segregation structure and army policies othering Marshallese as foreign racialized laborers. Some civilians denied any racializing practices on Kwajalein. Other civilians characterized American approaches to Marshallese as paternalistic, but based more on perceptions of cultural distinction rather than race. Less varied, however, remained civilian narratives of racial dynamics among Americans living on Kwajalein. Overall, oral histories revealed a narrative of exceptional racial harmony marking Kwajalein distinct from other diverse communities in the United States. This oral history section, however, will be followed by analysis of some Kwajalein community photographic materials that raise questions about this narrative. These images suggest the picture of racial harmony on the island may not have been quite as inclusive as some civilians perceived.

During discussions of social and labor dynamics on Kwajalein, the issue of race proved to organically arise more often when speaking with Americans than with Marshallese. While Marshallese political leaders have historically addressed racial segregation on Kwajalein during protests and through U.N. petitions, for several Marshallese individuals who worked on Kwajalein over the years the topic seemed less relevant. In the rare exception when race came up during an interview, the topic clearly made the interviewee visibly uncomfortable. This distinctive response surfaced during an interview with Julian Riklon, Ebeye's high school principal. Riklon had also been involved in the 1980s Marshallese protests on Kwajalein, the subject of chapter eight. Riklon grew up on Ebeye and worked with American missionaries on Kwajalein for several years helping translate the Marshallese bible. During our May 2010 interview on

Ebeye, I asked Riklon how Americans treated him over the years on Kwajalein. He explained he saw many good Americans on Kwajalein who understood Marshallese needs and seemed willing to help. His demeanor shifted slightly with a nervous chuckle when he added that along with these good people "there are people don't care, who look down on us, think we are just a bunch of people who...how should I say, like people who don't like colored people?" I clarified, "Racists?" Riklon replied hesitantly, "Yeah, racists. And some of them would like to get rid of the people who are working there, just...fire them from their jobs."

While Riklon stood out among Marshallese interviewees in his hesitant acknowledgment of racism on Kwajalein, a few different Kwajalein civilians openly shared their perspectives on the topic. Given historic and cultural distinctions around the topic of race in the U.S. and the Marshall Islands--and even simply the naming of race in the Marshalls--the lack of Marshallese participation in this topic should not be read as an absence of experience with American racialization. Many factors explain these distinctions in interview responses, not the least among them the fact that a white American woman was asking the questions. But since several Kwajalein civilians offered their commentaries on how race operated on Kwajalein, this next section analyzes some of those candid discussions.

The topic of race on Kwajalein surfaced in differing ways and garnered many varied interpretations among civilians who lived and worked on the island. Commenting upon how race operates today, one individual working on Kwajalein who wished to remain anonymous for fear of losing her job, identified race as the underlying cause for

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Oral history interview with Julian Riklon on May 17, 2010. Ebeye, Marshall Islands.

the island's schizophrenic atmosphere. She explained that overt racism seemed culturally unacceptable for Americans in 2010. She added that because "this place is inherently racist," people living on Kwajalein have to rationalize their participation in that system. She said most do so by justifying the island's racially segregated structure as a security issue. She noted, however, this rationale proves unstable when Americans consider Marshallese exclusions from shopping centers, seemingly secure spaces. She characterized Kwajalein's atmosphere as a "hyper-America...more American than America" where civilians often experienced extreme nostalgia when they moved away. This nostalgia longed for an "idealized time in the past," she added, typically the 1950s. But a 1950s that never really existed in the first place, she qualified. She likened the image most to *Leave it to Beaver*, and noted Americans who left tended to most miss the privileged and practical ease of their lives on Kwajalein. She added that for many, this privilege involved the luxury of Marshallese domestics and servers.

The anonymous source also discussed how Kwajalein's demography today comprises a much whiter population than during the early missile installation years of the 1960s and 1970s. While demographic figures remained absent from the archived military and civilian contractor materials describing the island during these years, several civilians who lived on Kwajalein at the time described the environment as consisting of a substantial population from Hawai'i. Former Kwajalein resident Robert Barclay explained during our interview why the island retained such a large Hawai'i population during these years. Barclay, who later wrote the historic fiction novel *Melal* about life on Kwajalein, said that during the 1960s and 1970s a sizeable blue-collar labor force came to Kwajalein from Hawai'i to work in construction. During these years, island

construction transformed Kwajalein's physical landscape from naval base to suburban missile range. 28 Several civilians shared varying perspectives on how socially integrated the island seemed during this period that they identified as more diverse. Some narrated Kwajalein as a space where people from all walks of life worked and socialized together. Others identified the largely Japanese American and Native Hawaiian communities from Hawai'i as tending to socialize more among themselves and more openly with Marshallese than with the largely white American population from the continental United States.

One of the longest running Kwajalein residents, Japanese American Jimmy Matsunaga shared his insights on what this Hawaiian presence on Kwajalein meant for him. Matsunaga came to Kwajalein from Hawai'i in 1966 and remains on the island today. His lengthy island tenure inspired a special profile feature in Kwajalein's newspaper *The Kwajalein Hourglass* in 2006. The article detailed Matsunaga's reminiscences about his early days on Kwajalein in which he narrated the influence of Hawaiian culture on the island. Matsunaga explained in the article, "There were a lot of people from Hawaii, the majority were from Hawaii... I would say at the highest point there were maybe 5,500 [residents], I would say out of that at least 2,000 were Hawaiian." Matsunaga noted, "There was a lot of aloha spirit, the feeling of Hawaii." <sup>30</sup> During our November 2010 interview on Kwajalein, I asked Matsunaga to elaborate on what this "aloha spirit" meant on Kwajalein. He explained that given the large number of Kwajalein employees from Hawai'i during those years, the community tended to treat

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Oral history interview with Robert Barclay on December 23, 2010. Kaneohe, O'ahu.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Klein, J.J. "40 and counting: Matsunaga turns two-year tour to forty years of living on Kwaj," in *The Kwajalein Hourglass*. August 5, 2006. <sup>30</sup> Ibid.

each other like brothers and sisters and often shared luaus and local foods.<sup>31</sup> He said during the 1960s and 1970s everyone mixed and had a feeling of camaraderie. While he noted some social dynamics changed over time with the island becoming more strictly regulated and the demographics shifting, he said today the community still seemed open and amicable.<sup>32</sup>



Figure 4. Jimmy Matsunaga. 33

The lasting imprint of Hawai'i on Kwajalein remains evident today. A few civilians explained to me how a touristic vision of Hawaiian and more broadly Polynesian culture has historically infused life on Kwajalein from these earlier years to the present. In addition to the early demographic influence from Hawai'i noted by Matsunaga, part of the non-Hawai'i resident connection to the islands may have been informed by logistics governing life for those moving to Kwajalein from the continental

<sup>31</sup> Oral history interview with Jimmy Matsunaga on November 11, 2010. Kwajalein, Marshall Islands.

<sup>33</sup> Photograph taken by Lauren Hirshberg in May 2010 on Kwajalein, Republic of the Marshall Islands.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

U.S. For these tens of thousands of Americans, moving to Kwajalein meant more frequent contact with Hawai'i. Civilian contractors from the continent transited through Hawai'i when they returned home over the years, giving many an opportunity to vacation in the islands. During oral history interviews and casual conversations, several civilians recalled with fondness their visits to Hawai'i en route to see family back on the continent.

But the anonymous source suggested another reason Hawai'i seemed to have left a lasting imprint on Kwajalein through today despite demography changing to reflect island residency comprising a largely white civilian cohort from the continental U.S. She explained how over the years, Americans had appropriated and celebrated a touristic version of Hawaiian culture to help make sense of their lives in the Pacific. She said Americans continued to greet each other today with "aloha" more often than "yokwe" (the primary Marshallese greeting). She said she observed Americans on Kwajalein seeming more comfortable embracing their version of Hawaiian culture over Marshallese because they viewed this version of island culture as more accessible and more elegant. During our December 2010 interview on O'ahu, Robert Barclay echoed this observation of Americans on Kwajalein relating more closely with a touristic view of Hawaiian culture than to any perception of Marshallese culture. Barclay contextualized this phenomenon as another way in which Americans othered Marshallese. A white American civilian who grew up on Kwajalein, Barclay perceived fellow Americans on the island as othering Marshallese through more of a focus on culture than race.<sup>34</sup> He explained that while growing up on the island during the 1970s and 1980s, he observed Americans seeming unable to grasp Marshallese culture. He said, "the problem is that Marshallese culture is just too foreign from American culture for a lot of Americans to embrace it. So

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Oral history interview with Robert Barclay on December 23, 2010. Kaneohe, O'ahu.

what they instead do is they adopt their touristic view of Polynesian culture and apply that instead, that's why they'll say 'aloha' instead of 'yokwe.'"<sup>35</sup>

Barclay and the anonymous source's observations about American appropriation and performance of a touristic version of Hawaiian and Polynesian culture on Kwajalein may also speak to one way in which Americans further produced and reproduced Kwajalein as part of the U.S. domestic. The United States inaugurated Hawai'i as the fiftieth state on August 21, 1959. As the only Pacific island state, perhaps Americans' perceived familiarity with Hawai'i through popular cultural representations over the years alongside this changing political status worked to position the island as a more familiar reference point through which to narrate the American experience on Kwajalein. Hawaiian Studies Scholar and activist Haunani-Kay Trask has shown in her 1993 From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawai'i how historically American appropriation of Hawaiian culture mirrored similar appropriations of Native American culture. Trask and Native American Studies Scholar and Historian Phil Deloria have each explored how American performances of perceived Hawaiian and Indian rituals respectively helped naturalize American settlers into space by culturally appropriating and displacing a presumed "vanishing native." <sup>36</sup> Deloria traced this history of American performance of native rituals in his 1998 *Playing Indian*. In doing so, he revealed how these settler performances attempted to control the continuity of an Indian presence within the settler colonial U.S. while simultaneously enabling a new sense of a national Self for Americans inhabiting this space.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Trask, From a Native Daughter

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Phil Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale, 1998), 8.

Most recently, Education Studies Scholar David Kupferman examined this process of Western cultural production of the Pacific as a touristic pan-Polynesian space through representations of Micronesia in film. In his 2011 article appearing in The Contemporary Pacific, Kupferman centered film to explore how Americans produced a kitsch-oriented picture of pan-Polynesian culture to narrate culture across the Pacific.<sup>38</sup> Kupferman detailed how this touristic pan-Polynesian vision became a stand-in for the entire Pacific, erasing the multiplicities of cultures and histories throughout the region.<sup>39</sup> Considering Deloria, Trask and Kupferman's analytic frameworks, Americans on Kwajalein may have indeed "played Hawaiian" more often than "Marshallese" in a way that further naturalized their presence on the island by referencing more readily accessible cultural caricatures. These performances seemed to further obscure the settler nature of the American presence on Kwajalein just as performances of touristic visions of Polynesian culture did so in Hawai'i. Americans appropriating and disseminating their version of a Hawaiian and pan-Polynesian vision of the Pacific on this Marshallese colony worked to further mark Kwajalein as a part of the United States. As Hawai'i took its place alongside the other 49 states within the nation, perhaps some Americans helped integrate Kwajalein into the space of the U.S. domestic by performing their versions of Hawaiian culture on this other Pacific colony.

In addition to offering insights on why Americans may have appropriated a more readily available touristic vision of a Hawaiian culture on Kwajalein, Robert Barclay also gave his impressions of how race seemed to partially inform American perceptions of Marshallese. He explained, "You have sort of short dark people who live in poverty, and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Kupferman, D.W. "On location at a non-entity: Reading Hollywood's 'Micronesia,'" in *The Contemporary Pacific*, *23*(1). 2011. Pp. 141-168

you just look and say no I don't want to be a part of that." Barclay categorized American responses to Marshallese as a seemingly unconscious sense of superiority. But he emphasized again that he found this approach rooted more in perceptions of culture than race. He concluded Americans saw a "larger sense of otherness; rather than 'I don't like dark people' racism. They [Marshallese] were just too far from their sense of what people are supposed to be." Barclay narrated how most Americans seemed to interact with Marshallese in a manner devoid of overt racism. Instead they employed a paternalistic approach to encounters with Marshallese. He said many expressed a belief that their American presence helped the Marshallese people. He added that they frequently asserted how Marshallese should be happy Americans gave them clothes and other discarded items. Barclay laughed when stating that Americans seemed to often wonder where the Marshallese would be without them. Reiterating to me how he used to

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41 Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Oral history interview with Robert Barclay on December 23, 2010. Kaneohe, O'ahu.

respond in his head, he said "I'd think, 'well...they'd probably be on the island!" 42



Figure 5. Robert Barclay. 43

While Barclay shared many observations about Americans' paternalistic othering of Marshallese, he also categorized the racial environment amidst Americans on Kwajalein as exceptionally open compared to other communities in the United States. He said he never recalled any problems with racism among the Americans. He noted instead how shocked he felt when first observing overt racism while working in Virginia after having grown up on Kwajalein. Barclay said he found the separation between blacks and whites at his Virginia jobsite a dynamic he never witnessed among Americans on Kwajalein. He offered an interesting hypothesis as to why race may have operated differently on Kwajalein. Barclay said he believed much racism in the United States seemed tied to classism. But on Kwajalein, because everyone worked in some capacity,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Photograph taken by Lauren Hirshberg in December 2010 in Kaneohe, HI.

no residential population existed that could be racially categorized as lazy or unemployed. Aside from accompanied versus unaccompanied employment status distinctions impacting housing opportunities, Barclay noted most housing on Kwajalein came through a lottery. So neighborhoods seemed racially integrated, although a distinct divide remained between bachelor and family employee housing. Echoing several other civilian interviews, Barclay also noted that the small size of the island community meant that inevitably everyone ended up on softball teams and bowling leagues together and sat next to each other in church. Most civilian oral history interviewees agreed the island remained too small for people to not get along. They all noted that those who could not handle living amidst this small island community tended to leave soon after arriving.<sup>44</sup>

Kwajalein's long-time residents Nate Jackson, Jimmy Matsunaga and Cris Lindborg each recalled a sense of close community ties defining their experience on Kwajalein. All three acknowledged the people they met and befriended on Kwajalein as among their most cherished memories. Among the smaller number of African American residents living on Kwajalein over the years, Jackson grew up in Louisiana and came to Kwajalein for his first tour in 1970. Jackson moved back and forth between the U.S. and Kwajalein during the 1970s and 1980s transiting in accordance with different job opportunities and family responsibilities at home. During our October 2010 interview, he reminisced about his time on Kwajalein, narrating the island as "the best place in the world" for outdoor recreational activities like swimming, diving and biking. 45 He identified the people as Kwajalein's greatest asset. His only complaint remained

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> In addition to Robert Barclay, these sentiments were shared during oral history interviews with: Cris Lindborg and Raymond Wolff on October 16, 2010 on the Big Island, HI; Nathaniel Jackson Jr. on October 17, 2010 on the Big Island, HI; Jimmy Matsunaga on November 11, 2010 on Kwajalein, Marshall Islands; and Bob Butz on November 14, 2010 on Kwajalein, Marshall Islands.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Oral history interview with Nathaniel Jackson Jr. on October 17, 2010. Big Island, HI.

Kwajalein's fishbowl effect and lack of anonymity. Jackson recalled with fondness his years working as a photographer on Kwajalein and Ebeye and later as boat captain operating the ferry between Kwajalein and Ebeye and leading other boat trips within the atoll. Jackson's sense of community connection grew in part out of his first job photographing all the island's children for the yearbook. He narrated his impression of familial intimacy on Kwajalein when explaining how he considered all the "Kwaj kids" his own children.<sup>46</sup>

Cris Lindborg also shared her impressions of Kwajalein's tight knit American community, but did so while emphasizing her discomfort with the island's segregation from Ebeye. Born in Argentina, Lindborg met her American husband during his medical internship in Panama and both came to Kwajalein in 1981. Lindborg talked about her experiences in getting to know the Marshallese people as among the highlights of her time on Kwajalein. Her reputation for sneaking foods or gifts to Ebeye and skirting around other military rules and regulations governing American and Marshallese interactions preceded her. During oral history interviews and casual conversations, several civilians identified Cris with these covert activities. At our interview in October 2010, she acknowledged them as well. Lindborg explained how she once nearly got banned from Kwajalein for trying to bring a turkey off island to share with Marshallese friends in Majuro for Thanksgiving.

While Lindborg echoed Jackson and Matsunaga's sentiments in acknowledging some benefits of Kwajalein's close island community, she also voiced her discomfort with Americans' treatment of Marshallese. She described how some Americans boasted

46 Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Oral history interview with Cris Lindborg on October 16, 2010. Big Island, HI.

about having never visited Ebeye during their multi-year tenures on Kwajalein. She said most Americans viewed Ebeye as dirty and uncomfortable. Lindborg characterized Kwajalein as a beautiful and safe community, particularly from the perspective of a mother raising young children on the island. But she added she never understood why Kwajalein and Ebeye remained segregated. She said she expressed her opposition to this segregation over the years to no avail. In her own acts of subversion, Lindborg clearly ignored these regulations as often as she could. She concluded, however, that Kwajalein remained a space of rules not democracy. She said under a military structure you follow the rules or you are out. 49

Civilian rumors also identified Jimmy Matsunaga alongside Lindborg as among those civilians reputed for skirting around army rules whenever possible to help Marshallese on Kwajalein. Matsunaga gained this reputation for using his position as manager of transportation and shipping services to help promote and increase wages for Marshallese employees at any opportunity he could. I followed up on the rumor during our November 2010 interview and Matsunaga confirmed. When asked if he believed his managerial practices over the years seemed exceptional among Kwajalein's employers, he replied that indeed he perceived his approach to be more the exception than the rule. <sup>50</sup> Both Lindborg and Matsunaga's actions suggested potential discomfort with Kwajalein's racializing discriminatory practices towards Marshallese. Their behavior also revealed the distinct ways each negotiated their own privileged position on Kwajalein to push beyond some of the military policy barriers separating the two islands.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Ibid.

This section has traced and analyzed a diverse range of civilian perceptions of how race marked people into place on Kwajalein, positioning civilian contractors in relation to Marshallese workers and civilians in relation to each other on island. Kwajalein's segregation policies towards Marshallese would come to be categorized by some Marshallese political leaders and American journalists during the 1970s as American style apartheid. While part III will examine that apartheid discourse more closely, this chapter has aimed to reveal how individuals living on Kwajalein and Ebeye understood these racializing practices. Racial segregation between Kwajalein and Ebeye has proved historically and through today to be among the most distinctive markers of each island space and the islands' relationship to each other. Oral history interviews revealed how civilian contractors narrating race on Kwajalein compared the island's racial dynamics with those of the United States rather than any perception of how race and space operated in the Marshall Islands. This relative comparison further revealed Kwajalein's naturalization as an American space by exemplifying how the island's suburban racial dynamics would be more quickly aligned with those of the United States. While some civilians during oral history discussions identified racializing practices towards Marshallese on Kwajalein, most categorized the civilian community dynamics as exceptionally open and integrated. By drawing upon visual sources narrating Kwajalein's community dynamics, this next section reveals how this picture of racial harmony on island may have been less inclusive than suggested.

## Visualizing Race on Kwajalein

While the second half of this chapter considers how racializing discourse connected to notions of urbanity marked people into place on Ebeye, this next section continues to focus on how racializing discourse positioned people on Kwajalein. To further contextualize the array of narratives on Kwajalein's racializing dynamics voiced during oral history interviews, this section explores visual sources produced in one of the island's community sources. The Kwajalein High School yearbooks offered an unexpected set of visual narratives further complicating the picture of the island's racializing practices. While yearbook photographs seemed to confirm some civilian impressions of Kwajalein's racialization of Marshallese, the images also complicated the picture of the island's internal racial dynamics also narrated during these interviews.

In the previous section, former Kwajalein resident Robert Barclay suggested that the absence any structural racism linked to classism on Kwajalein marked the island as an exceptionally racially inclusive space. Barclay's analysis of integrated housing and forced community sociality given the island's small size identified Kwajalein as a potentially unique space of consideration for scholars of U.S. urban and suburban history. These scholars have often pointed to mixed income housing as one solution for attacking racialized structural inequalities taking spatial form following World War II. Does Kwajalein represent the resultant racial inclusivity that would result from such suggested policies in the United States? On a structural level, the island seems in some ways to have offered an exceptional picture of what greater mixed income housing might look like. The island's accompanied housing aligned with higher paying white collar positions and unaccompanied housing matched lower salaried and wage work. These divergent accommodations resided in close proximity to one another and the children of families in

either income bracket went to school together and participated in shared recreational and social activities.

Kwajalein's seemingly exceptional structure of internal spatial and racial integration clearly emerged in relation to extreme racial segregation marking the island's historic connection to Ebeye. This racialized dynamic came through in Kwajalein's High School yearbooks, as did the reality that greater structural integration on island did not necessarily mean a completely open and inclusive racial atmosphere. While scanning Kwajalein's high school yearbooks for information about the Ebeye student guest program, I came across several images offering additional insights on how race operated on Kwajalein. Images appearing in these yearbooks suggested limitations to the narrative of Kwajalein's exceptional racial inclusivity among the civilian community.

The Kwajalein High School yearbooks revealed how discourse racializing Marshallese in the early 1960s Kwajalein welcome manuals became reproduced over time by civilians connected to education on the island. This reproduction of racializing discourse came through in several yearbook photographs positioning Marshallese as island scenery. For the 1971 *Ekatak* (Marshallese meaning to study) yearbook theme of seasonal change, the yearbook staff chose to divide several sections of the publication with scenery photographs. These divider images began with a photograph depicting Kwajalein's idyllic setting through a lagoon sunset with a sailboat idling in the background. Another divider image showed a portion of what appeared to be sunken Word War II metal with lush tropical forest in the distance. A third image dividing the yearbook depicted swaying palm trees framing Kwajalein's tranquil suburban setting. Rounding out this series of scenic images appeared another set of images employing

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Ekatak Kwajalein High School Yearbook, 1971.

Marshallese people as continuations of island scenery. These photographs comprised uncaptioned, nameless images of Marshallese to divide yearbook sections. [see images B at chapter conclusion] One image depicted a Marshallese woman presumably sitting with her two children or grandchildren on Ebeye. While not possible to know exactly who and where these individuals sat, given the lack of captions, the image likely took place on Ebeye as suggested by the concrete surroundings. While the image of the woman and children seemed to bare no explanatory utility for the "organizations" section the photograph marked, another image of Marshallese children sitting on ropes introduced the elementary portion of the yearbook.<sup>52</sup> Given the yearbook's 1971 publication date, these Marshallese children likely remained among the majority excluded from Kwajalein's schools at the time. Marshallese children would remain excluded until 1987 when five would be chosen annually to attend school on Kwajalein through a special "guest" program. Another image locating the "advertisement" section showcased shadowy profiles of what looked like a group of Marshallese men fishing with nets.<sup>53</sup> Again this remains not entirely clear because the images included no captions.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

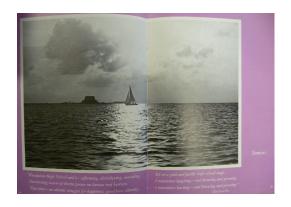


Figure 6. Kwajalein's *Ekatak* yearbook scenery: sailboat, 1971.

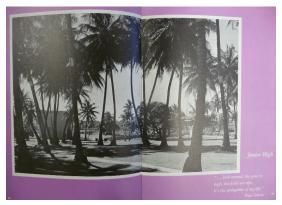


Figure 8. Kwajalein's *Ekatak* yearbook scenery: palm trees, 1971.



Figure 10. Kwajalein's *Ekatak* yearbook scenery: unnamed Marshallese fishermen, 1971.

Figure 7. Kwajalein's *Ekatak* yearbook scenery: traces of war, 1971.



Figure 9. Kwajalein's *Ekatak* yearbook scenery: unnamed Marshallese woman and children, 1971.



Figure 11. Kwajalein's *Ekatak* yearbook scenery: unnamed Marshallese children, 1971.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Ibid (Figures 6-11).

The positioning of Marshallese alongside yearbook photographs of sunset vistas, swaying palm trees and lagoon scenery marked the islanders as static elements amidst the larger island setting. The inclusion of uncaptioned, unnamed Marshallese to divide the yearbook alongside the absence of any comparable photographs positioning Americans in such a manner further suggested the ways in which the yearbook worked to dehumanize Marshallese as scenery. In these images Marshallese remain static, acted upon. While the island's historic and changing actors remained unmarked in such a manner. Americans certainly appeared predominately throughout the yearbook, but in ways where they had been accorded agency and history. Their images showed up with names and captions; as individual identities. The yearbook's presentation of Marshallese in such a manner reflected deeper U.S. historic patterns racializing islanders as equivalent to the palm trees locating tropical settings. As noted earlier in this chapter, these kinds of images have historically appeared most famously in the pages of *National Geographic* magazine. This thematic also historically pervaded anthropological studies, films, novels, and tourist materials among others.<sup>55</sup> Islanders have appeared in these U.S. mediums as nameless receptacles of culture not history; static primitive figures trapped in time helping to comprise a larger romanticized picture of paradise inviting the imperial gaze.

While the 1971 yearbook provided insights into how civilian yearbook staff members helped reproduce discourse racializing Marshallese on Kwajalein, other yearbooks spoke to racial dynamics among Americans on the island. The 1967 *Ekatak* featured a photographic spread illustrating some of the island's school dances. Entitled "The rock rocks with Kwaj hops," the feature section's images illustrated dances

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Again here, as noted above, see the vast literature on colonizing cultural productions in the Pacific including the work of Haunani-Kay Trask, Catherine Lutz and Jane Collins, Vicente Diaz, Amy Kaplan, Teresia Teaiwa, Nicolas Thomas to cite just a few.

captioned the "aloha style" student council event and the Halloween party. <sup>56</sup> One individual costumed as a Klansman appeared in several of the dance images. Whether or not dressing as a Klansman would have been a common Halloween costuming practice in 1967 remains unclear. Casually speaking with Americans who attended U.S. high schools during this period revealed this may not have been typical Halloween attire. Some Americans who recalled the explosive racial context of the 1960s in the United States expressed shock at the idea of an individual attending a high school dance in Klansman attire. The Ekatak's 1971 dance spread primarily included candid group photographs capturing dance and movement. Noteworthy among this photographic spread remained the fact that only two out of twelve images depicted posed individuals. One of these two constituted the profile of a smiling blonde teenage girl framing the upper left corner of the two-page spread. The profile of the Klansman posing for the camera with a nearby onlooker framed the right corner. While perhaps unintentional, the positioning of these two figures in such a manner eerily brought to mind the racializing violent messages infusing the film *The Birth of a Nation* more than five decades earlier. That Kwajalein remained a space where white women and their children resided within the security of a suburban structure protecting them from the outside penetration of Soviet threats and "brown" urban others further layered these images' with multiple meanings.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Ekatak Kwajalein High School Yearbook, 1967. Also, American civilians on Kwajalein have historically used "The rock" and Kwajalein interchangeably.



Figure 12. Scenes from Halloween on Kwajalein, 1967 (*Ekatak* yearbook).

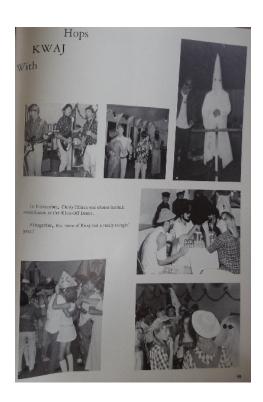


Figure 13. Scenes (2) from Halloween on Kwajalein, 1967 (*Ekatak* yearbook).



Figure 14. Closeup of Klansman costume at Halloween on Kwajalein (1), 1967.



Figure 15. Closeup of Klansman costume at Halloween on Kwajalein (2), 1967.



Figure 16. Portrait of Klansman at Halloween on Kwajalein, 1967.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Ekatak Kwajalein High School Yearbook, 1967 (Figures 12-16).

That one individual would arrive to a Kwajalein high school dance costumed as a Klansman seems less suggestive of island racial dynamics than the larger reality that the yearbook's adult supervisory staff chose to publish several of these photographs. The showcasing of this individual in a singular photograph also seems significant. As far as I could find amidst extensive archival research on island materials, including the daily newspaper as well as several oral history interviews, neither the costume nor its publication seemed to evoke any noteworthy response. This historic absence suggests limitations on the picture of racial inclusivity and community harmony on Kwajalein voiced in civilian interviews cited above. The same 1967 yearbook included classroom photographs indicating a small presence among African American civilians on island at the time. While I lack oral history interviews to confirm, one can imagine how the yearbooks' celebration of the Klansman costume alongside the apparent absence of any noteworthy condemnation against the publication could have created a less than welcoming sentiment for some on the island.

That these potentially intimidating racial messages showcased in the 1967 *Ekatak* persisted on Kwajalein over time came through in another set of images appearing in the 1982 yearbook. These photographs also made light of historic violence against African Americans by re-enacting this violence as a fun hazing tradition. The images spread across the pages of a section entitled "Slave Day" that illustrated events involved in this specially marked annual occasion. <sup>58</sup> While some Americans I have spoken with shared how their high school experiences also included a special day where older students hazed younger students, none recalled this day being marked "slave day" at their schools. Several Kwajalein yearbook issues included a section celebrating "slave day" with a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Ekatak Kwajalein High School Yearbook, 1982.

variety of images depicting an array of activities belittling younger students. In 1989, this harassment involved requiring younger students to dress in drag.<sup>59</sup> These images constituted additional messages normalizing patriarchal gender roles on Kwajalein by positioning the transgression of males imitating females as a form of shame. While the theme of harassing younger students for one day each year may have traversed high schools across the United States, the set of images appearing in the 1982 Kwajalein yearbook to illustrate the day again seemed remarkable. The images also subtly suggested the continuity of a potential racially intimidating atmosphere on the island.



Figure 17. Kwajalein's 1989 *Ekatak* yearbook showcases "Slave Day" in drag.<sup>60</sup>

The 1982 *Ekatak* yearbook images celebrating "slave day" depicted high school students physically bound in chains.<sup>61</sup> In several photographs, the chained students appear smiling and laughing. One image, however, revealed the singular straight face of the only "brown" adolescent in chains surrounded by his smiling white counterparts. The "slave day" images also included a photograph of a white male adolescent standing

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Ekatak Kwajalein High School Yearbook, 1989.

<sup>61</sup> Ekatak Kwajalein High School Yearbook, 1982.

beside his chained up counterparts holding a whip. 62 The continuity of racializing narratives appearing in Kwajalein's 1967 and 1982 yearbooks celebrating the most violent chapters in African American history hinted at the subtle racial intimidation framing life on the island. Again in 1982, no materials found in archival research suggested any public response to the inclusion of these "slave day" images in the yearbook. Perhaps individuals objected but their voices remained undocumented or never reached the archives. Yearbook staff decisions in 1967 and 1982 to publish these images in this most community oriented publication on island complicates narratives about race and community on Kwajalein voiced during oral history interviews. The publication of these images suggests limitations on civilian perceptions of the island's inclusive and safe familial community atmosphere for all.



Figure 18. Kwajalein's 1982 Ekatak yearbook showcases "Slave Day" in chains.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

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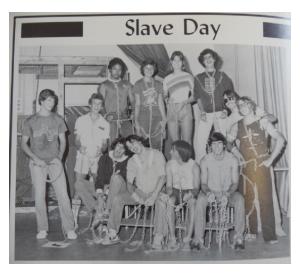


Figure 19. Closeup of Kwajalein's "Slave Day," 1982 (Ekatak yearbook).



Figure 20. Faces of "Slave Day" on Kwajalein, 1982.

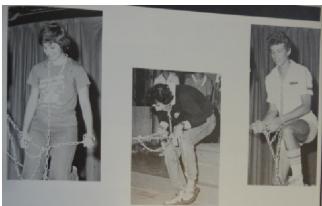


Figure 21. Spotlighting "Slave Day" on Kwajalein, 1982.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> Ibid (Figures 18-21).

## Narrating Work and Residency on Kwajalein: Cold War Missions and Suburban Luxuries

As the previous section argued, American personnel on Kwajalein learned of their place on the island through their relational roles to Marshallese and to each other connecting all to various positions within the island's social hierarchy. Building upon how racializing discourse framed these roles, this next section considers the contribution of military and civilian contractor instructions on work and family life. This section explores how Americans became further emplaced into relational roles of hierarchy on island through these narratives of work and residential expectations. The section also reveals how narratives of civilian responsibilities and contributions to the larger Cold War mission further naturalized Kwajalein as a space of U.S. entitlement for national security.

Kwajalein's introductory manuals instructed incoming personnel about the importance of their individual role on Kwajalein to the island's mission in the broader Cold War conflict. These narratives also detailed the unique challenges and benefits accompanying those choosing to participate in this mission on such an isolated island space. Incoming civilian and military personnel received guidance in their journey to Kwajalein through roles defined as workers (or worker's wives) and suburban residents. The manuals narrated life on Kwajalein as governed by the Cold War threat of mutually assured destruction that the island mission could help prevent. This narrative of insecurity appeared alongside a divergent story of residential life on Kwajalein. That story remained one of the secure embrace of domesticity, the narrative of Kwajalein's tranquil and tropical, suburban family setting.

This section argues that army and civilian contractor narratives marking the national security imperative on Kwajalein worked to further enlist civilian laborers into the process of colonial settlement on the island. Without civilian labor, the military could not operate its mission. Likewise, this mission could not move forward without army displacement of Marshallese from the newly created missile impact zone. Nor could Kwajalein function without the Marshallese service sector residing on Ebeye. In driving home the importance of the national security mission on Kwajalein, army and civilian contractor narratives directed at American laborers further justified the U.S. presence in the region and obscured the colonial nature of that presence. These narratives domesticated Kwajalein making the island and its American laborers central to the Cold War national security mission. In doing so, these narratives further erased the presence of Marshallese and Marshall Islands history in the region.

To begin exploring how this process worked, this section first considers how these narratives positioned American workers on Kwajalein through their role in deterring nuclear annihilation. Incoming contractors received an early introduction to Kwajalein through a tour of the emerging Nike Zeus missile facilities that highlighted the role each employee played in this larger defense mission. This 1960 tour, organized by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Western Electric Company, aimed to introduce employees and their families to the island's facilities. The Nike Zeus tour material identified Americans on Kwajalein as essential to the urgent Cold War mission. The tour narrative informed visitors that "Whether or not we have our defense ready in time will depend to a significant extent on the quality and timeliness of the construction,

installation and testing done here at Kwajalein."<sup>64</sup> The tour narrative continued, "It is not a one-man job; all people on the island are needed to support in some way the big task of making Zeus do the job that is expected."<sup>65</sup> The narrative emphasized the importance of having all facilities and technology "ready in time," a Cold War cautionary about the risks of failing to pre-empt Soviet weapons development and deployment. The tour detailed the Zeus missile capability to intercept incoming missiles traveling at 15,000 mile per hour and warned visitors of the all-encompassing threat of attack. This threat could arise from any side of the planet, from off shore submarines, earth satellites or lunar bases, the narrative explained.<sup>66</sup> The tour reinforced the urgency of each American's individual work. The narrative concluded, "in this game, time is precious, precision is essential...the threat seems unsurmountable," and to counter this threat, "all people on the island are needed."<sup>67</sup>

Transport Company of Texas personnel also received an introduction to Kwajalein emphasizing the significance of their individual contributions to the Cold War mission. The Transport Company's early 1960s manual informed employees that their presence on Kwajalein not only provided support for island facilities, but in doing so freed up 1,000 military officers to be deployed for active duty at other stations. The manual noted "each employee of the Transport Company of Texas is therefore making a contribution toward a most important project for the Defense of our Country, and by his working at the Kwajalein facility a serviceman can be utilized elsewhere needed by his

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> Open House Nike Zeus Facilities, Army Rocket and Guided Missile Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, November 20, 1960. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

particular Service."<sup>68</sup> Both the Nike tour and the Transport Company of Texas guides stressed the relationship between individual work and the national defense mission's success. Given the timing of their production, both publications undoubtedly echoed broader Cold War discourse moving between the United States and Kwajalein centered on fears of mutually assured destruction informing the imperial arms race.

While these welcome manuals would over time come to remind employees of the larger importance of their work, the initial effort to recruit America's top scientists and engineers to relocate to Kwajalein proved challenging and would rely upon narratives detailing the many benefits of residential life on the island. Many employees who signed on during Kwajalein's early Nike Zeus project worked for Bell Laboratories in New Jersey and lived close to New York City. A Bell retrospective report narrating employee history on Kwajalein discussed the challenge facing recruiters in convincing employees to move from the New York metropolitan area to a Micronesian Atoll.<sup>69</sup> Situating the early context for Bell employees facing this life altering decision, the report explained "It was 1960...John F. Kennedy began sparring with Richard Nixon for the Presidency. And in Morris County, New Jersey, Bell Labs husbands began coming home to Bell Labs wives with the second biggest proposal of their lives: 'How would you like to go to Kwajalein?"<sup>70</sup> The challenge of recruiting and retaining the nation's top scientists and engineers to Kwajalein was met by the island's financial and quality of life incentives. In creating a largely subsidized suburban lifestyle on island, the military deployed a

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> "Welcome to Kwajalein," Transport Company of Texas, published circa 1963-1964. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> A 104-page report/narrative on the experience at Kwajalein for Bell Laboratories employees between 1960 and 1975. Published circa 1975. Report is prefaced by C.A. Warren, Executive Director of SAFEGUARD Division of Bell Laboratories and was obtained at the Archive Repository National Register, National Historic Landmarks in a folder labeled "Kwajalein Island Battlefield," in Washington D.C. Pp.27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> Ibid, 28.

powerful financial and cultural lure for Americans to Kwajalein. Army suburban design plans transformed Kwajalein into a space of familiarity and comfort for Americans marked by social privilege and financial savings.

Army and civilian contractor introductory manuals listed the many modern suburban conveniences making life easier for those settling on Kwajalein. These manuals informed incoming residents not to worry about grooming setbacks on Kwajalein as they could visit the neighborhood beauty parlor or barber shop. The manuals also detailed how island residents could keep up with the latest fashions by shopping at the island department store. Avid readers could enjoy a new library stocked with over 10,000 books, and families could send their children to either the island nursery school or the newly built George Seitz K-12 School. The welcome guides even detailed how island dining halls and social clubs hosted special theme nights where personnel could dine on hometown favorites like prime rib. 71 The army aimed these many comforts and conveniences towards creating a sense of home away from home for the nation's top scientists and engineers and their families. The military justified expenses for the island's suburban luxuries as a means for recruiting these top employees and ensuring their work on the missile range proceeded efficiently and effectively. <sup>72</sup> Army Colonel Peter F. Wittereid described the benefits of working on an important defense mission while

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> These various island amenities are listed throughout the following sources: "A Guide to Kwajalein Pacific Missile Range Facility," Bell Telephone Laboratories Incorporated, January 1961. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa; "Welcome to Kwajalein," Transport Company of Texas, published circa 1963-1964. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa; A 104-page report/narrative on the experience at Kwajalein for Bell Laboratories employees between 1960 and 1975. Published circa 1975. Report is prefaced by C.A. Warren, Executive Director of SAFEGUARD Division of Bell Laboratories and was obtained at the Archive Repository National Register, National Historic Landmarks in a folder labeled "Kwajalein Island Battlefield," in Washington D.C; United States Army Kwajalein Atoll, published by U.S. Army Space and Strategic Defense Command, 1994. Located at Gov. Docs, UH Manoa.
<sup>72</sup> Final Report of Kwajalein-Ebeye Fact Finding Team, Department of the Army. January 28, 1977.

Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa. Appendix.

residing in a tropical suburban setting to incoming personnel on June 1, 1980. In a directive to new employees, Wittereid stated, "the unique beauty of this isolated atoll is everywhere evident [making] the location ideal for accomplishment of the technological mission also [contributing] to a storybook setting for the Kwajalein community. A wider variety of activities are available to you in your off-duty time to enhance your enjoyment in this island setting."

Alongside advantages of living in a suburban community designed like a tropical version of small town U.S.A., Kwajalein's incoming settlers received significant financial incentives to relocate. In addition to salary bonuses, the lifestyle on Kwajalein afforded many Americans the opportunity to save a sizable portion of their income. Because Kwajalein prohibited private vehicles and housing remained subsidized, employees avoided spending money on these typically large investments in contrast to their stateside counterparts. According to a 1975 finance column in the Kentron employee newsletter, the telephone and communications contractor explained how their employees working for 18 months or longer on Kwajalein could expect to save nearly 50 percent of their gross earnings. This compared with a U.S. national average of about 8 to 10 percent after taxes. Kentron's calculation even took into account a two to four week stateside or overseas vacation among the contractor's Kwajalein personnel. 74 Confirmed during recent oral history interviews with current and former employees, these financial incentives continue to constitute the primary reason Americans choose to work on Kwajalein. According to my conversation with a long-time Kwajalein resident who wished to remain anonymous,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Directive from Army Colonel Peter F. Witteried to Visiting Personnel, Subject: Welcome to Kwajalein Missile Range, June 1, 1980, TTA, reel no. 637. This letter is part of a larger file labeled "A Visitor's Guide to Kwajalein Missile Range."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> *Pacific Echo*, Kwajalein Missile Range, a 10-page employee newsletter for Kentron Hawai'i Ltd., October 1975, financial column written by Bill Patton on Pp.4, TTA, reel no. 095.

the potential for substantial savings remains a key lure today. In May 2010 she explained to me that many young Americans come to Kwajalein in order to pay off school or consumer debt. Oral history interviews in the fall 2010 also revealed that many Americans over the years have been able to save enough money by avoiding housing costs on Kwajalein to invest in properties elsewhere.<sup>75</sup>

These historic financial gains for Kwajalein's civilian settlers raise interesting questions about potential distinctions in settler colonialism under the context of U.S. military empire. A recent oral history interview with Kwajalein's golf course manager Bob Butz revealed insights into how Americans on Kwajalein may have historically perceived their settler presence on island as outside colonialism. <sup>76</sup> Butz explained that most Americans seemed to view themselves as living on a U.S. base, stuck somewhere between expatriate status and American citizenship. In Kwajalein's post-Trust Territory context, the continuities of U.S. colonial influence in the region have certainly become further obscured. But, Butz argued his primary reason for identifying Kwajalein's history as outside colonialism centered on the fact that the island did not constitute a space of colonial resource extraction.

As Butz noted, Kwajalein's history did not mirror well-known models of colonial resource extraction, like Hawaiian or Caribbean sugar plantations. Nor can American civilians on Kwajalein acquire and pass along indigenous land to future generations, as they can in the settler colonial United States. But as this and other chapters will continue to explore, Americans gained wealth on Kwajalein at the expense of Marshallese

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Oral history interviews with Cris Lindborg and Raymond Wolff on October 16, 2010 on the Big Island, HI; Nathaniel Jackson Jr. on October 17, 2010 on the Big Island, HI; Jimmy Matsunaga on November 11, 2010 on Kwajalein, Marshall Islands.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> Oral history interview with Bob Butz on November 14, 2010 on Kwajalein, Marshall Islands.

displacement from the island and other home islands throughout the atoll. These displacements enabled the U.S. military to carry out its missile-testing mission on Kwajalein and create a space for civilian settlers to reap the benefits of subsidized living. As Americans gained fortune through their colonial privilege to settle on Kwajalein, displaced Marshallese remained excluded from the island's affordable living. While historically Marshallese could work on Kwajalein--for wages lower than their American counterparts--they remained excluded to Ebeye for residency where expenses remained much higher than those on Kwajalein. These exclusionary policies took place without input or approval from those Marshallese whose home islands Americans settled upon to earn their wealth. At the 2011 Organization for American History conference in Houston, Historian Naoko Shibusawa distinguished this model of "military settler colonialism" from other colonial histories. She noted that in many settler colonial contexts, resource extraction tended to be geared towards life-sustaining materials like food or cotton. But in cases of expansive U.S. military settler colonialism across the globe, the extraction of wealth accompanies the creation of death-producing resources.<sup>77</sup>

Kwajalein's settler colonial privileges enabling wealth accumulation through financial subsidies combined with the island's tropical setting and convenient suburban amenities to create a unique experience for many island residents. Former resident Eugene C. Sims wrote about the way in which this unique lifestyle impacted many Americans through what he called the "Kwaj condition." Sims lived on Kwajalein for 18 years and dedicated his 1993 memoir of island stories to "all those who know the

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Litho Service, 1993), 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> Comments offered by Historian Naoko Shibusawa for my conference panel entitled: *Island Stories from Kwajalein, Vieques, and La Maddalena: Militarized Geographies in the Cold War U.S. Empire* at the Organization for American Historians Annual Conference in Houston, TX on March 17, 2011.

<sup>78</sup> Eugene C. Sims, *Kwajalein Remembered: Stories from the "Realm of the Killer Clam"* (Eugene: West

Kwaj Condition."<sup>79</sup> He described this as a conditioning to a way of life not found any other place in the world, comparable to perhaps those who survived the Bounty on Pitcairn or if a population had resided in the Galapagos Islands.<sup>80</sup> Sims employment of these particular examples suggested he viewed the sense of community emerging from conditions of isolation as largely informing this "Kwaj condition." These seem interesting references to cite given the contrast between romanticized stories of "survival" on deserted islands compared to the reality of Americans showing up to live and work in a heavily subsidized and luxurious suburban space. Given the presumed desertedness of these other islands examples, Sims narrative perhaps also reflected an American sense of entitlement to Kwajalein that further erased any historic traces of indigenous inhabitants on the island.

Oral history interviews with current and former Kwajalein residents in 2010 confirmed that few if any viewed their presence on Kwajalein as potentially exploitive or reflective of settler colonialism. Army design plans transforming Kwajalein into a suburban small town USA seems quite successful in isolating civilians from the broader colonial context of their presence. Kwajalein's suburban setting enabled Americans to reside in the Marshall Islands without necessarily having to acknowledge that fact. Several Kwajalein residents told stories of some Americans who lived on Kwajalein for years, even decades, and boasted that they never once stepped foot on Ebeye despite the island's close proximity (a 20-minute, free ferry ride). That Sims' 190-page memoir on Kwajalein contained only one or two passing references to the existence of primarily unidentified Marshallese transiting the island further exemplified how Americans could

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

historically isolate themselves from the larger Marshall Islands setting if they so chose. Yet other examples abound of instances where Americans on Kwajalein frequently visited Ebeye over the years leading to seemingly meaningful interactions between the two island's communities despite their continued structure of segregation. Most prevalently cited among these interactions included women's volunteer work on Ebeye through educational exchanges and the Kwajalein Yokwe Yok women's club.

Even interactions within Kwajalein and Ebeye's hierarchical and segregated labor structure seemed to have included some meaningful connections for Americans and Marshallese over time. In his Master's thesis, Pacific Studies Scholar Gregory Dvorak's wrote extensively about his close connection to his Marshallese nanny and his experience of revisiting her after many years away from Kwajalein. 81 An oral history interview with Neilat Zackhrias on Ebeye in May 2010 revealed similar sentiments acknowledging the kinds of meaningful connections that took place between Americans and Marshallese despite the army's segregation policies. Zackhrias came to Ebeye in 1961 from the outer island Ailinglaplap to be with her child. While on Ebeye, she worked as domestic on Kwajalein. In narrating her experience as a domestic, Zackhrias reminisced about the American boy she cared for on Kwajalein. She explained how the boy grew up and left for the U.S. She said he came back to live and work on Ebeye years later as principal of Ebeye's Christian High School stating he missed the islands and specially Zackhrias.<sup>82</sup> Zackhrias explained how she had taught the boy Marshallese and he knew the language well and also ate Marshallese foods. She described the boy as "like a real Marshallese

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<sup>81</sup> Dvorak, Remapping Home

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>82</sup> Oral history interview with Neilat Zackhrias, interpreted by Rachel Miller on May 14, 2010. Ebeye, Marshall Islands.

guy."<sup>83</sup> Despite my shift in interview questions, Zackhrias returned to the topic of the boy stating he had not forgotten her even today. Now an older man living back in the U.S, he had recently sent Zackhrias a letter accompanied by photographs of his family.<sup>84</sup>

That Kwajalein left and continues to leave a lasting imprint in the minds of tens of thousands of Americans who lived there seems clear. In his memoir, Eugene Sims estimated that between 110,000 and 150,000 military and civilian personnel and families came through Kwajalein between World War II and the 1990s and potentially experienced his termed "Kwai condition" at some point. 85 Sims identified the thousands of former Kwaj residents who came for short or long tenures as having populated the largest and most elite club in the world. 86 Sims assertion of the "elite" nature of this club seems telling and likely a characterization neither Sims nor many other Americans on Kwajalein would compare with their historic counterparts traversing the globe taking advantage of "elite" colonial privileges. These might include the British working in colonial India or the Dutch employed in Indonesia. For Americans, Kwajalein and this "Kwaj condition" constituted something unique, something outside any colonial structure. An increasing number of annual Kwajalein reunions suggests many former Kwajalein residents relate deeply to having been part of this island's perceived exceptional history. Sims tracked 20 reunions in the continental states the year of his book's publication, not including Hawai'i, which is home to one of the largest cohorts of former Kwajalein employees. 87 Several online communities also thrive today, celebrating

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Sims, Kwajalein Remembered, 2.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> Ibid, 3.

Kwajalein nostalgia through sharing photographs, stories and maintaining community connections.<sup>88</sup>

While much of Sims' memoir largely described how the "Kwaj condition" influenced men working on the island, fewer published documents have examined women's residential and worklife on Kwajalein. This dearth or archival materials certainly aligns with broader narratives marking the island a male space pervading Sims memoir, Kwajalein's personnel manuals and Robert Barclay's *Melal*, the sole novel written about the island. Among the few materials documenting women's experiences, some indicated women on Kwajalein worked to create a sense of community through volunteer activities linking Kwajalein to challenges across Micronesia. The island's women organized their own social groups with the most prominent being the Yokwe Yok Women's Club. This club worked on community projects and in 1963 opened a Micronesian handicraft shop at the Kwajalein air terminal to sell Micronesian handicrafts. Proceeds from the craft sales went to educational scholarships at schools throughout Micronesia. The Congress of Micronesia acknowledged the far-reaching impact of the club's work in 1975 through a House Resolution of appreciation honoring their contributions.89

While many women arriving to Kwajalein during the early missile installation era came as partners of employed husbands, some also worked. Jobs for women on Kwajalein during the 1960s and 1970s mirrored the kinds of common employment

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>88</sup> These include a Facebook "Kwaj Podge" group and the Kwajalein Community Web Site, "Shermie's Place" at http://www.wiehes.com/kwaj.html, among others.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> Cramer, Pat. "The Shop that Serves," in *Guam and Micronesia Glimpses*, Third Quarter 1990. And Congress of Micronesia House Resolution no. 6-2, H.D.1, H.D.2. Expressing Sincere Appreciation to the Yokwe Yok Women's Club of Kwajalein, Marshall Islands District. Sixth Congress of Micronesia, First Regular Session, 1975.

opportunities for women in the United States at the time, primarily secretarial and teaching positions. But exceptions included some contractor positions more closely connected to the missile-testing mission. A special October 1975 issue of the Kentron newsletter, the *Pacific Echo*, featured the lives of Kwajalein women and their work at Kentron. Celebrating the "International Year of the Woman," the newsletter interviewed Kentron employees' wives, including Yolanda Vernon who came with her husband to Kwajalein two years prior and worked as a secretary with Global Engineering. 90 Other interviews profiled some of the more than 35 female Kentron employees including Nancy Olson, a motion picture processor. The newsletter highlighted Grace Scheidegger, one the first chief telephone operators on Kwajalein who oversaw seven other employees. Kentron draftswoman Janine Cox offered her opinion on working women in the article, suggesting that despite employment at Kentron in a position she identified as interesting, she felt women still received unequal treatment across the board. She explained "Doors still remain closed for most women. And pay equality is still below wages of men as regards same occupation/same responsibilities." Ox failed to specify whether her opinions about the working world in general included her experiences at Kentron. But she did not cite Kentron as exceptional to her broader statements.

While the opinions among women working at Kentron and elsewhere on the island may have varied about work life, complaints about life outside of work on Kwajalein seemed less evident in documented materials on women's experiences. Oral history interviews, however, revealed grievances about gender dynamics on Kwajalein and some of the challenges women faced over the years. During casual conversations in

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup> *Pacific Echo*, Kwajalein Missile Range, a 10-page employee newsletter for Kentron Hawai'i Ltd., October 1975, TTA, reel no. 095., Pp.2.

May, October and November 2010 with women who had lived on Kwajalein for several years, many described their experience of living and raising children on island. A few explained that often on Kwajalein women worked in jobs for which they were overqualified. This pattern arose because historically families tended to come to Kwajalein through the husband's employment. Since the island remained limited on the range of skilled employment opportunities beyond engineering positions connected to missile testing, highly educated and trained women lacked work opportunities matching their degrees and skills. Thus, many ended up in jobs unaligned with their training. Others worked as full-time homemakers and/or volunteered. Some women told me that through today, Kwajalein continued to feel like the 1950s when it came to women's roles on the island. They described Kwajalein as ideal space for male work and recreation, but less fulfilling for women. The island's male oriented employment structure and continued promotion of traditional gender norms aligned with a 1950s portrait of hetero-normative nuclear family suburbia seemed to position men into positions of relative privilege over women on Kwajalein. While Kwajalein's historic patriarchal structure aligned closely with that of 1950s and 1960s suburban USA, the continuity of this sentiment through today echoing Betty Friedan's 1963 The Feminine Mystique seems noteworthy and perhaps exceptional.

This section has attempted to reveal a variety of employment, residential and leisure narratives positioning the American civilian community into expected relational roles on Kwajalein. Alongside narratives marking racial hierarchies between Americans and Marshallese and amidst the American community island, directives from army and civilian contractor manuals detailed what Americans could expect from their lifestyle as

workers and residents on Kwajalein. These narratives recruited civilians into their settler roles on Kwajalein while obscuring the colonial nature of this settlement by emphasizing Cold War national security imperatives and suburban luxuries both working to naturalize the island as part of the domestic United States.

## Narrating Labor on Ebeye: Positioning Marshallese in the Urban and the Foreign

The previous section revealed how Americans became narrated into hierarchical roles in relation to Marshallese and to each other on Kwajalein in ways helping to naturalize Kwajalein further as part of American suburbia. This next section examines how Marshallese began to be narratively positioned onto Ebeye's urban space in ways that dramatically diverged from Kwajalein's suburban portrait. As Kwajalein became understood as a space of suburban family life where security resided in domesticity amidst the insecurity of looming Cold War threats, Ebeye came to be understood by Americans as a space of urbanity and density. Americans narrated Ebeye as the place where labor resided, not families. Like Kwajalein, Ebeye also remained a site of threat. But the kind of threats characterizing life on Ebeye came through narratives of impoverishment and fear of disease and public health disasters. Kwajalein's spatial and cultural landscape teetered along contradictory lines of security and insecurity. Missile facilities dotted the island reminding of the ever-present risk of nuclear annihilation, while row housing framed by palm tree lined streets evoked the familiarity and security of a tropically tranquil suburban town. Contrasting this image, Ebeye's portrait appeared without contradiction; no security to counterbalance the island's insecurity. Americans largely understood Ebeye as comparable to a ghetto or a shantytown. For most living on

Kwajalein, the impoverished, insecure conditions marking Ebeye's atmosphere emerged from Marshallese cultural dysfunction. For many Americans, Marshallese struggles on Ebeye remained completely unrelated to American privileges on Kwajalein.

This section argues that U.S. narratives of Ebeye emerging from military, Trust Territory and media sources further naturalized Kwajalein as part of the United States by marking the island where Marshallese resided as a foreign space of labor. Where narratives of Kwajalein heavily focused on how the island supported a suburban family lifestyle, narratives of Ebeye positioned those on the island as outside the realm of families. In doing so, these narratives marked both Ebeye and those residing on island as further outside any space of domesticity, neither domestic to the United States like Kwajalein nor domestic to the Marshall Islands. Ebeye became positioned as something seemingly foreign to either territory and narrated by many as outside Marshallese culture. U.S. narratives marked Americans into place on Kwajalein naturalizing them as simply residing within another space of U.S. suburban domesticity. A simultaneous set of narratives marked Marshallese as out of place on Ebeye and Ebeye as out of place in the Marshall Islands. As this section details, however, many Marshallese living on Ebeye offered counter-narratives to this larger portrait of the island, sharing their own impression of the island's meaning to the Marshall Islands and Marshallese culture.

## **Populating Ebeye**

To understand how narratives of Ebeye emerged alongside those of Kwajalein in ways that obscured any relational connections between the two islands, this section first traced demographic changes occurring on Ebeye under U.S. administration. Trust

Territory and military policies influenced Ebeye's transformation over time into the most densely populated place in the Pacific. Narratives naturalizing Ebeye as a dense urban space built upon a combination of concrete (cement) changes to the island and a dramatic population growth over time. How U.S. administrators implemented these changes through infrastructure investment and planning contributed to the portrait of insecure life on the island. This built environment contribution will be further investigated in greater detail in chapter four. For this chapter's goal of understanding the discursive history of Ebeye as a space of insecure, foreign urbanity, this section begins with a brief look at the island's population growth over time.

As detailed in chapter two, the first population influx on Ebeye during the U.S. colonial period came in 1951 following the navy's removal of the Kwajalein labor village to Ebeye. Within one year of this removal, those analyzing life on Ebeye had already begun expressing concern about island density. In his *Ebeye Village: An Atypical Marshallese Community*, Marshall Islands District Anthropologist Jack Tobin footnoted a discussion of life on Ebeye indicating that by October 1952 a district ordinance had already passed attempting to control the population, but never became enforced. Tobin stated the ordinance "would be extremely difficult for Marshallese to enforce, their culture being what it is." While left open-ended, Tobin's identification of Marshallese culture influencing the absence of migration control presumably referenced Marshallese customs of welcoming and supporting extended family members already apparent on Ebeye. These customs would continue to come under Trust Territory and military

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> Tobin, Jack (District Anthropologist Marshall Islands). *Ebeye Village: An Atypical Marshallese Community*. Majuro, 1954. Pp. 21.

scrutiny in the coming decades as officials in these institutions continuously grappled with the challenge of addressing Ebeye's growing density.

In his *Remaking Micronesia: Discourses over Development in a Pacific Territory* 1944-1982, Historian David Hanlon traced Ebeye's population growth over time.

Hanlon's analysis included forced displacements as well as migrations among those motivated to find jobs on Kwajalein. Hanlon noted that before 1946, Ebeye housed fewer than 20 residents on 78.5 acres. Within the first year of the Kwajalein labor camp relocation, the population of Ebeye had increased by some 1,200 Marshallese laborers and their dependents, all housed within an area of less than 27 acres. 93 The land acreage available to those living on Ebeye amounted to 46 people per acre because during these early years, the navy retained rights to the northern half of the island to use for a transmitter. The coast guard also controlled 10.73 acres on the southern end of Ebeye. Thus, between the two military branch holdings, nearly two thirds of Ebeye's land remained inaccessible to residents. Available land for residency expanded in 1959 when the navy returned 39 acres to free up space for the increasing population. 94

Over time, Ebeye's population grew through a combination of labor demands on Kwajalein and military forced displacements. The descendents of these latter migrations, among those coming to Ebeye against their own will, have constituted a growing percentage of the island's population over time. Following the initial move of the Kwajalein labor camp to Ebeye in 1951, the army relocated another 372 Marshallese who had been living in what came to be called the Mid-Corridor of the Kwajalein Atoll during the 1960s. The army displaced the Mid-Corridor islanders to Ebeye to create an expanded

93 Hanlon, Remaking Micronesia, 191.

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missile impact zone in the central lagoon area.<sup>95</sup> In 1961 the military had also relocated more than 200 Marshallese from Lib Island to Ebeye to allow for Nike Zeus missile testing. This Lib islanders' displacement would be narrated in Bell Laboratory's welcome guide as a process aimed at ensuring the safety of Marshallese peoples. Bell employees learned about the Lib Islanders within the context of the exciting technological marvels of the Nike Zeus program that allowed for the tracking of an outgoing rocket "streaking into the heavens from Roi-Namur." The manual noted, "As a precaution, 234 native residents of the island of Lib, were repatriated to a new village on Ebeye. With their evacuation, the 'Zeus Corridor' was officially open for traffic." The employment of the term "repatriation" to describe the displacement, positioned Lib Islanders as returning to an original homeland rather than being forced to move to an island upon which many had no land rights or connections. The Bell narrative of "evacuating" Marshallese to open the area for "traffic" framed the process of uprooting people from their home islands as simply a logistical step along an inevitable path towards clearing space on the missiletesting freeway.

The relocated and "repatriated" Lib Islanders added to a growing number of displaced Marshallese on Ebeye, and to increasing population pressure on the island.

Because military and Trust Territory investments and infrastructure planning on Ebeye never kept pace with the continued population growth, serious problems began surfacing during the 1960s. As Ebeye's population continued exceeding the island's sustainable

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 192.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> A 104-page report/narrative on the experience at Kwajalein for Bell Laboratories employees between 1960 and 1975. Published circa 1975. Report is prefaced by C.A. Warren, Executive Director of SAFEGUARD Division of Bell Laboratories and was obtained at the Archive Repository National Register, National Historic Landmarks in a folder labeled "Kwajalein Island Battlefield," in Washington D.C. Pp.44.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> Ibid.

capacity, health crises emerged with epidemic outbreaks including polio and gastrointestinal diseases. In their attempts to address Ebeye's continuing congestion and impoverishment, Trust Territory representatives and military officials began scapegoating Marshallese culture for increasing the island's density. Officials referenced Marshallese customs of welcoming extended family members, pointing to households where one Kwajalein employee would be supporting dozens of people.

Kwajalein landowner and activist Ataji Balos addressed the issue of blaming
Marshallese culture for Ebeye's population density in his role as Congressman in 1969.
Balos wrote a letter to the Army Commanding Officer on Kwajalein on April 21, 1969
discussing the struggles of those Mid-Corridor peoples displaced to Ebeye in 1964. Balos'
letter, which also went to the Trust Territory High Commissioner and the U.N.
Trusteeship Council, noted that 669 Mid-Corridor peoples would likely return to their
home islands soon. While these islands remained off limits under army directive, Balos
asserted the Mid-Corridor islanders struggled to survive on Ebeye and planned to leave.

He explained how the lack of adequate compensation for their islands combined with
insufficient job opportunities on Kwajalein for displaced islanders made their situation
unbearable. Balos noted the displaced population comprised many elderly individuals,
students attending school and young children unable to work. He added that the MidCorridor peoples would have perished without the support of other Marshallese on
Ebeye.

Frankly our Marshallese custom helps them to survive. They depend

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>98</sup> Congressman Ataji Balos, "Communication from Congressman Ataji Balos, Ebeye, Marshall Islands, Concerning the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, to Army Commanding Officer, Kwajalein Missile Range Thru High Commissioner, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands circulated to the United Nations Trusteeship Council. April 21, 1969. This three page letter is located in T/COM.10/L.21 in the newspaper room at the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.
<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

on their relatives and their friends for food, clothing, and other needs." <sup>100</sup> Balos continued, "Obviously, if their relatives and friends would stop from supporting them, then they would be no different from a 'war prisoner' who wears a torn piece of cloth and dies gradually from starvation." <sup>101</sup> Balos continued on to state that to his knowledge, the "United States Government is very generous. It won't even allow its 'people' to suffer this way especially in time of peace."<sup>102</sup>

Balos' statements remained exceptional given his position as a Marshallese landowner and political elite affording him greater access to a wide political and public audience. Here, Balos constituted the lone voice actually pointing to the significance of Marshallese customs on Ebeye as helping displaced individuals struggling on island rather than simply causing density. Balos' conflation of life on Ebeye without Marshallese support with life as a "war prisoner" deserves attention for this rare divergence among a sea of U.S. discourse condemning Marshallese custom for causing Ebeye's problems. For Balos, the communal support foundational to Marshallese culture that U.S. officials would continually cite as contributing to Ebeye's poverty proved to be the primary safety net for Marshallese displaced to the island. He identified this support as the only way these potential "war prisoners" could survive. While Balos recognized the moment in which he wrote as a time of peace, his comparison to "war prisoners" seemed to aptly describe the varied "hot" impacts of the "Cold" War on colonized peoples. Balos' letter also asserted his perceptions of American generosity towards its "people" at a time when U.S. political leaders blamed those most impoverished in America's deindustrializing cities for their own racialized "culture of poverty." Balos may

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>100</sup> Ibid. <sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

likely have been aware of this fact that indeed the U.S. allowed its "people" to suffer this way in peacetime. Perhaps he strategically chose this narrative in an attempt to mirror back to the U.S. the nation's stated values and in so doing influence the country to recognize its U.N. sanctioned responsibilities in the Marshall Islands. While not possible to know his motivations, Balos' narratives offered a glimpse into the rare deployment of discourse on American culture in defending Marshallese culture on Ebeye against attack.

The population on Ebeye continued to increase through the 1960s and 1970s due to displacements, laborer migrations and family growth. Before shifting gears from tracing the island's population density to discourse on urbanization, this section briefly examines the long-term trajectory of Ebeye's population growth through today. A quick run through of the numbers offers an important context for better understanding the severity of problems that would emerge on Ebeye over time. From a population increase of 559 in 1951, swelling to 1,200 within the first year, Ebeye's density reached 8,000 by 1978. 103 To provide a picture of what this density looked like, American attorney Mary M. Kearney who had been working on behalf of Kwajalein landowners to help secure compensation for their land in 1978, described Ebeye's density as comparable to placing the entire population of the United States into the state of Connecticut. At the time, the U.S. population was 224 million people. Kearney added that Connecticut's resulting population "would be considerably less than that of Ebeye." <sup>104</sup> In some cases, up to 54 people lived in a single dwelling on Ebeye, with average occupancy for housing at 13.6 people in a unit design for a family of four during this time. <sup>105</sup> In 1978, approximately

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> Hanlon, Remaking Micronesia, 196.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>104</sup> Ibid, 196-197.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>105</sup> Ibid, 198.

700 Marshallese on Ebeye worked on Kwajalein accounting for 60.6 percent of Ebeye's labor force. 106

Placing Kwajalein and Ebeye's relative densities in context, the range in population on Kwajalein from the 1960s through to today has wavered between 1,200 to around 5,000. In contrast, Ebeye's population has consistently grown from the initial 559 displaced islanders in 1951 to today's residential population of approximately 15,000. 107 Kwajalein's size is approximately 900 acres; Ebeye is about 80 acres. One contemporary example of how Ebeye's density impacts Marshallese today came through an article published in July 2010 explaining how the island had run out of space to bury its dead. This predicament left some on Ebeye with little choice but to dig up existing graves and place new caskets on top of the remains of those previously buried. <sup>108</sup> The issue of burial space on Ebeye actually arose nearly 30 years earlier during a Kwajalein Inter-Atoll Community Relations Meeting. The committee formed in 1968 as an attempt to bring together representatives from Kwajalein and Ebeye to address tensions emerging between the two islands. The group's mission statement included a goal to "foster and promote projects of mutual interest to the residents of Kwajalein Atoll" and to relay those project ideas aimed at improving relations to Trust Territory and army officials. 109 During the May 22, 1980 meeting, Chief Secretary Marshalls Representative Larry Edwards explained that Ebeye had no more land available to bury its dead. 110 Edwards added that

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid, 199.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>107</sup> "U.S. Army deplores living conditions on Ebeye, The Marshall Islands atoll considered a slum," *Radio New Zealand International*. July 24, 2010.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>108</sup> Giff Johnson, "Marshall's Ebeye out of room for dead: Cemeteries are full on the tiny atoll," in *Marianas Variety*. July 16, 2010.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>109</sup> Minutes of the Kwajalein Atoll Inter-Island Community Relations Committee Meeting. Published February 14, 1969. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>110</sup> Minutes of the Kwajalein Atoll Inter-Island Community Relations Committee Meeting, May 22, 1980. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

Marshall Islands President Amata Kabua asked him to find out if the army would transport bodies to the Mid-Atoll Corridor Islands for burial. Haley said he did not believe the army could help in this area. He noted "We have no agreement of authority to do this. Deaths and burials cannot be planned, they just happen and could happen during range operations when the corridor is closed." <sup>111</sup> Edwards's statements reflected how over time the army's missile testing mission has become naturalized as the only priority in the region. Military entitlement to uninterrupted territorial access to test death-producing technology took precedent over Marshallese rights to cope with death on Ebeye in a humane and dignified manner.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>111</sup> Ibid.



Figure 22. Kwajalein from above. 112

<sup>112</sup> Satellite image of Kwajalein Island courtesy of Dr. Murray Ford, University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program. The northern area of the island showing a density of trees is the civilian residential area. Missile technology is located towards the southern portion of the island near the airstrip.



Figure 23. Ebeye from above. 113

## Narrating Ebeye from Within: Marshallese Reflections on Urban Culture

Having considered Ebeye's historic trajectory to becoming the most densely populated space in the Pacific, this next section turns to examine how individuals living on the island narrated their lives and their island community. Before delving into the array of military, Trust Territory and media narratives discussing Ebeye's urbanity and concerns over Marshallese culture, this chapter first considers how Marshallese individuals viewed the presumed impact of Ebeye's urbanity and density on their lives and their culture. As will be shown, much U.S. discourse categorized the island as a slum and a space devoid of Marshallese culture, hovering somehow outside the Marshall Islands. While some Marshallese voices echoed narratives of cultural loss on Ebeye,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>113</sup> Satellite image of Ebeye Island courtesy of Dr. Murray Ford, University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program. Figures 22 and 23 offer perspective on the relative densities of Kwajalein and Ebeye, with Kwajalein's current population of approximately 1,500 living on 900 acres compared with Ebeye's current population of about 15,000 living on 78 acres.

several individuals offered a different story positioning Ebeye less in relation to suburban Kwajalein and more on a continuum with Marshallese outer islands. Oral history interviews revealed how several Marshallese individuals living on Ebeye identified no distinctions between their lives in this urban space and on the outer islands. In so doing, these interviews positioned Ebeye as within the Marshall Islands and reflective of Marshallese culture contrasting U.S. discourse marking the island as seemingly outside these parameters.

While U.S. narratives tended to categorize Ebeye through a framework of urban blight nearby suburban luxury, Marshallese living on Ebeye situated the island in relation to outer islands. In the Marshalls, the outer islands remain spaces where Marshallese continue to live largely through sustainable fishing and agricultural practices, with minimal supplemental income from copra trade. The outer islands have been identified by Marshallese and Americans as spaces in which Marshallese cultural values emerged. This is because Marshallese customs practiced on the outer islands preceded the way of life characterizing urban and wage economy structures on Ebeye and the capital Majuro. Marshallese on Ebeye narrated the island outside urban and suburban comparative models partly because many had moved to Ebeye from outer islands. In addition, outside Kwajalein, no other island in the Marshalls had been transformed into a suburban space. Thus, while the suburban retained cultural meaning to Americans coming to Kwajalein, this spatial and cultural category resonated less among those Marshallese displaced from Kwajalein and others moving to the island for work.

For American narratives of Ebeye during the 1960s and 1970s, the island's urbanity became framed within similar urban and suburban cultural categories emerging

in the United States at the time. Americans primarily narrated Ebeye as a space of workers, not legitimate families; as a ghetto or a slum. While Ebeye's categorization along these lines foreclosed analysis from outside observers on the complexities of life on the island, Pacific Cultural Studies scholarship has recently offered insights broadening this portrait of the island. This next section contextualizes oral history interviews with Marshallese individuals on Ebeye amidst Pacific Cultural Studies Scholar Monica LaBriola's work interrogating culture on the island.

As LaBriola's work and my oral history interviews have illuminated, Marshallese individuals who have lived or spent time on Ebeye narrate the island's urban impact on Marshallese culture in distinctive ways from Americans in the region. As noted earlier in this chapter, U.S. Trust Territory and military officials often blamed Marshallese cultural values of familial and communal support as responsible for Ebeye's population density problems. Also cited above, Marshallese landowner Ataji Balos identified these same values of communal responsibility as among the only means of survival for those displaced to Ebeye. As will be shown later in the chapter, American journalists and social scientists narrated the island as a space destructive of Marshallese culture.

In her 2006 Pacific Islands Studies Master's thesis, *lien Ippan Doon (This Time Together): Celebrating Survival in an 'Atypical Marshallese Community*,' LaBriola confirmed Balos' assertion of the continuity of Marshallese relational culture on Ebeye. LaBriola positioned her research as responding to the history and continuity of "slum discourse" describing Ebeye over time and the identification of Ebeye as a space of cultural loss. Her work analyzed the negative impact of "slum discourse" on Marshallese on Ebeye and identified how this discourse worked to obscure the continuity of

Marshallese culture on the island. Her thesis specifically focused on the continuity of values supporting community survival and celebration. 114 While LaBriola acknowledged that her focus on moments of celebration tended to obscure some of the structural challenges characterizing life on Ebeye, her work constituted a significant intervention in Ebeye's historic narration. She showcased dignity and meaning making in a space much more frequently marked by commentators as lacking both. Her attention to Marshallese relational culture narrated through voices of women on Ebeye proved particularly inspiring for this dissertation.

Building upon LaBriola's insights, I conducted several oral history interviews on Ebeye as well as the outer island Namdrik among Marshallese individuals who had spent time on Ebeye during the 1990s. Spread over two research trips in 2010, these interviews centered questions of U.S. impact on Ebeye's spatial and cultural transformation. Interviews also probed the differences between life on Ebeye and life on the outer islands. Army design and investments had physically and culturally transformed the space of Kwajalein to align with American suburbia. Thus, one comparative focus for interviews considered narratives detailing the relationship between Ebeye's physical transformation under military and Trust Territory policies and Marshallese culture.

The diversity of Marshallese narratives of Ebeye challenged common U.S. assertions about the impact of urbanity and wage economy on Marshallese culture. Much U.S. discourse centered a colonial "fatal contact" narrative of modernity's influence on Marshallese culture. Native American Studies scholar Phil Deloria and Native Pacific Cultural Studies scholar Vicente M. Diaz have each analyzed how this Western narrative historically presumed a tragic story of cultural loss when natives came into contact with

114 LaBriola, "Iien Ippan Doon"

structures of modernity. On Ebeye, modernity manifested in capitalism and urbanity. Several U.S. narratives expressing concern about Marshallese culture on Ebeye naturalized deeply rooted Western perceptions of native culture as static and unchanging. Under this colonial discourse, once natives resided in spaces of modernity and participated in modern structured life, they lost their culture and thus ceased to be native. 116

While the fatal contact story infused much U.S. discourse about Ebeye,
Marshallese living on island narrated cultural continuities moving between outer island
spaces and Ebeye's urban realm. In fact, several interviewees who had moved from outer
islands to live on Ebeye cited minimal to no distinctions in their lifestyles on either
space. 117 One striking distinction between Ebeye's urbanity and that of U.S. urban spaces
remains the absence of homelessness on the island. In fact, homelessness does not exist
anywhere in the Marshall Islands, from impoverished urban centers to outer islands. This
unique phenomenon marks a significant continuity of Marshallese cultural values of
familial and communal support that came up during interviews. That many Marshallese
seemed to lack a concept of homelessness also signified important cultural differences
between urban poverty in the United States and the Marshall Islands. The idea of
allowing an individual to go without a home or food on Ebeye, Majuro or the outer
islands appeared to be simply beyond the cultural realm of possibility. Both Cinderella

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>115</sup> For more on this topic, see Phil Deloria's *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004) and Vicente M. Diaz's chapter "Fight Boys, 'til the Last...' in *Pacific Diaspora*, Paul Spickard et al.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>117</sup> Oral history interviews with Cinderella Silk, interpreted by Rachel Miller on May 15, 2010 on Ebeye, Marshall Islands; Telki Amon interpreted by Rachel Miller in May 2010 on Ebeye, Marshall Islands; Kenye Kobar interpreted by Rachel Miller in May 2010 on Ebeye, Marshall Islands; Getruth Clarence on May 18, 2010 on Ebeye, Marshall Islands; Stanley Lome on November 15, 2010 on Ebeye, Marshall Islands.

Silk and Julian Riklon, two Marshallese individuals whom had lived and worked on Ebeye for decades, identified important relational cultural values permeating Ebeye's presumed cultural and physical barriers. Each narrated values of familial and community responsibility as having moved freely between the outer islands and Ebeye.<sup>118</sup>

While no Marshallese interviewees echoed Western fatal contact narratives to describe Ebeye, some individuals identified greater distinctions between outer island and urban lifestyles. Liton Beasa, a 54-year-old canoe-building master living on the outer island Namdrik narrated differences between life on Ebeye and Namdrik. Beasa spent time visiting Ebeye during the 1990s and recalled notable distinctions between Ebeye's wage economy and Namdrik's sustainable fishing and agricultural practices. Beasa explained that Ebeye's higher wages and income came with higher costs and inflation making life more difficult for those on the island. He stated that because cash had not pervaded life in the same way on Namdrik, those on the Namdrik faced lesser challenges to survive than those on Ebeye.

Julian Riklon, who grew up on Ebeye and at age 64 works as the island's high school principal, echoed Beasa's contention that life on Ebeye proved more difficult than life in the outer islands. Riklon explained that "It is really hard for people here...the people here live on money, money is the economy here on Ebeye." He continued on to note that because not everyone on Ebeye had jobs on Kwajalein, one household may

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>118</sup> Oral history interviews with Cinderella Silk, interpreted by Rachel Miller on May 15, 2010. Ebeye, Marshall Islands and Julian Riklon on May 17, 2010. Ebeye, Marshall Islands.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>119</sup> Oral history interview with Liton Beasa, interpreted by Rachel Miller on May 9, 2010. Namdrik, Marshall Islands.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>121</sup> Oral history interview with Julian Riklon on May 17, 2010. Ebeye, Marshall Islands.

consist of one or two employees supporting 30 or 40 people. Riklon said, "They need to pay for tuition, they need to pay for electric, they need to pay for you name it, so these guys will have to live from day to day, from paycheck to paycheck." <sup>122</sup> In comparison, Riklon narrated outer island life as challenging but distinct from Ebeye in important ways. He explained that whereas Ebeye residents might struggle to eat each day, on an outer island "if you are hungry, you just go and climb the coconut tree and get some coconuts or go out and fish." 123 Despite the material and resource differences on outer islands and Ebeye, Riklon echoed the assertion that Marshallese relational values of communal support continued on Ebeye. He concluded, "people look after one another, they help each other, so you don't really see that some time they are poor." 124

While several Marshallese interviewed on Ebeve and Namdrik highlighted cultural continuities moving between outer island and urban divides, some interviewees narrated how they perceived Marshallese culture changing on Ebeye. One woman on Namdrik, who wished to remain anonymous, narrated Marshallese culture as most defined by the role Marshallese women played in maintaining family structures. She explained that during her visits to Ebeye during the 1990s, she came into contact with Marshallese women who she viewed as no longer carrying out traditional roles of caring for their families in the same way women did on Namdrik. This woman concluded that Namdrik therefore constituted a space more representative of Marshallese culture. 125

Madeline Balos, a 75-year old Marshallese woman who lived on Ebeye since the Kwajalein labor village removal in 1951 also identified Ebeye as a space of change for

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid. 124 Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>125</sup> Oral history interview with source wishing to remain anonymous, interpreted by Rachel Miller on May 9, 2010. Namdrik, Marshall Islands.

Marshallese relational culture. Whereas, the anonymous interviewee on Namdrik viewed changes coming through women's behavior, Balos narrated a shift in practices among young boy and girls. 126 Balos explained that young people on Ebeve respected Marshallese relational customs less and less and had stopped following certain gender protocols and restrictions. These included how youths dressed and spatial separations in certain cleaning customs between boys and girls. In addition to this change, Balos narrated a changing family structure on Ebeye. She noted in the past, "it would be one huge family would all cook in the same place and eat in the same place, all the extended family and neighbors and that kind of thing. And now it's just me and my family and that's it." A brother might eat separately with his family, she added, same with a sister. She concluded this shift seemed more comparable to American culture. <sup>128</sup> Balos characterized the change as negative because she believed certain customs protected culture and importantly protected the relationships between people within that culture. 129 Thus, with the loss of those customs came the loss of that relational protection. Balos' observations of a movement on Ebeye towards a nuclear family structure stood out in contrast to other interviews in which Marshallese individuals emphasized the continuing value of extended family support on the island.

Oral history interviews on Ebeye confirmed LaBriola's research on the continuity of Marshallese relational culture between urban and outer island spaces. Several interviewees revealed that despite the significant U.S. presence in the region many on Ebeye viewed Marshallese culture as very much alive and relevant to their daily life. Few

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>126</sup> Oral history interview with Madeline Balos, interpreted by Rachel Miller on May 20, 2010. Ebeye, Marshall Islands.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

addressed any detrimental changes in these values over time and all perceived a much wider gulf existing between Marshallese and American culture, than amidst an urban-outer island divide. In fact, those aspects interviewees identified as most distinguishing American and Marshallese culture centered on relational values.

Among those narrating American individualism as the primary contrast to Marshallese values of communal support, 84-year old Cinderella Silk had commuted to Kwajalein for two decades to work in laundry services on the island. During our interview, Silk narrated Marshallese culture on Ebeye alongside outer island life as both defined by the value of sharing. Silk offered an example stating, "if I didn't have any rice, I could go and say 'hey, give me some rice, give me some food'...in Marshallese culture everybody shares...Outer islands same thing...everybody's friendly and shares, so it's not hard to live like that." <sup>130</sup> But Silk perceived life on Kwajalein to be more difficult. She narrated the island as a space of diversity in which communal support seemed less evident. Silk said on Kwajalein, "there's so many different kinds of people so there's different cultures and languages and it's harder to live together. But on Ebeye, one language, one culture and everybody loves each other because that's Marshallese culture." 131 When asked if the diversity of outer islanders on Ebeye made communal support more challenging, Silk said this did not matter because Marshallese custom remained the same everywhere. She added that in "Marshallese culture everybody shares, but in American culture, you can't go to your neighbor and say give me food because I have no food." 132

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>130</sup> Oral history interview with Cinderella Silk, interpreted by Rachel Miller on May 15, 2010. Ebeye, Marshall Islands.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

Oral history interviews building upon LaBriola's pathbreaking scholarship narrated Ebeye in a way that largely positioned the island as continuous amidst the broader Marshall Islands region and culture. In contrast to U.S. discourse that framed Ebeye as foreign to the territorial and cultural space of the Marshalls, most interviews naturalized the island as less distinctive than urban appearances would suggest. Echoing LaBriola's findings, several interviews highlighted the continuity of cultural values of relational family and community support on Ebeye. These narratives in many ways reiterated Trust Territory discourse scapegoating this particular cultural continuity as responsible for the island's density problems.

As LaBriola's research and my oral history interviews have shown, Ebeye remains a space of change for many Marshallese individuals but also a place defined by relevant and meaningful cultural continuities. While the idea that any community populating a new space might experience both adaptation to that place and retain certain customs to help negotiate these changes might seem obvious and thus lacking explanation, colonial discourse has historically positioned native peoples as outside this capacity. Voices narrating Ebeye from within the island's residential community complicated Western discourse of native peoples and native culture as caught between some illusory dividing line of modernity. Within this colonizing narrative, native peoples defined by culture rather than history remain either "pure and uncorrupted" by modern influences or enter the realm of history and change, and in doing so no longer exist. This historic colonizing narrative lamenting the disappearance of natives conveniently coincided with the appearance of settlers naturalizing their presence in newly vacated spaces.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>133</sup> For more on this discourse, see Deloria's *Indians in Unexpected Places* and Diaz, "Fight Boys, 'til the Last...' in *Pacific Diaspora*, Paul Spickard et al.

As this next section reveals, a growing cohort of journalists and social scientists commenting on Ebeye's urban and demographic transformation produced their commentaries within these colonial frameworks for analyzing Ebeye's transformation. Seemingly infused with this fatal contact presumption of native culture as static and destroyed by modernity's corrupting influences through urbanity and wage economy, U.S. narratives positioned Ebeye as foreign to the space and culture of the region. This next section reveals continuities from patterns emerging in chapter two through naval discourse focused on protecting Marshallese against cultural loss. The persistence of this focus on native cultural loss from the navy period through the army administration on Kwajalein proved central to the colonial process of naturalizing Kwajalein as a U.S. space. By lamenting native cultural loss in the region, U.S. discourse further narrated a portrait of a "vanishing native" in a way that further naturalized the American settler presence on Kwajalein.

## **Condemning Ebeye's Urbanity: Narrating Native Culture and Modernity**

The previous section revealed how Marshallese individuals narrated Ebeye's urbanity as having complicated and varied impacts on Marshallese culture. These oral history narratives remain notable, as they represent a minority of voices amidst a sea of U.S. discourse historically painting a portrait of the island through much more confined colonial brushstrokes. Assessing the public health and social challenges accompanying Ebeye's increasing density during the 1960s, a cadre of observers and analysts descended upon the island and began narrating this space of Marshallese residency. In their analysis, many of these social scientists, Trust Territory administrators, military officials and

American journalists analyzed Ebeye's urbanity in relation to Kwajalein's suburbia. This final section considers how these narratives worked to mark Ebeye as foreign to any space of domesticity within the Marshall Islands. The narratives naturalized Ebeye as a space of urban, impoverished labor existing primarily to serve Kwajalein's missile testing mission. In doing so, these narratives separated Ebeye and those residing within the island from their place among the Marshall Islands, marking the island foreign through its urbanity and density.

Within the first few years of population growth on Ebeye during the early 1950s, those studying and analyzing the island's changes had already begun employing metaphors of "urban" and "city" to describe the transformations. Marshall Islands District Anthropologist Jack Tobin employed this discourse in his 1954 *Ebeye Village: An Atypical Marshallese Community* as he explained why more and more Marshallese continued coming to the island, despite inadequate facilities and infrastructure to sustain the growing population. He warned that building better facilities and accommodations would not necessarily alleviate the problems existing on the island in this early stage given the continued desire of Marshallese to migrate to Ebeye. He cited the primary attraction for Marshallese as economic mixed with a desire among those coming from outer islands to experience the excitement of the "Big City." 134

During the next fifty years following Tobin's early analysis of the island's "big city" appeal, Ebeye would come to be acknowledged as a notable urban space within the Marshall Islands and also amidst broader studies of Pacific urbanization. Ebeye gained notoriety on a broader Pacific analysis scale in part due to its designation over time as the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>134</sup> Tobin, Jack (District Anthropologist Marshall Islands). *Ebeye Village: An Atypical Marshallese Community*. Majuro, 1954. Pp. 20.

most densely populated space in the Pacific and among the most densely populated places on the planet. Over time Ebeye's characterization as urban drew accompanying negative qualifiers that in contemporary contexts also alluded to racializing descriptions like slum or ghetto, as well as shantytown. The latter of these descriptions seemed in other colonial contexts to have marked spaces located on the periphery of the urban rather than the central space. As this section shows, U.S. attempts to narrate Ebeye's spatial and cultural transformation remained riddled with these seemingly categorical contradictions. In some narratives, Ebeye constituted an impoverished urban center, while in others a space of peripheral suburban affluence.

Trust Territory reports and media coverage of growing health and housing problems on Ebeye during the 1960s and 1970s emphasized the island's urbanity. A brief survey of articles covering Ebeye from the 1960s through recent years illuminates this pattern. A 1966 series on Micronesia appearing in the *New Yorker* described the history of Ebeye's development, noting that up until recent improvements, the island constituted "a slum--a dingy agglomeration of shanties with a few run-down stores scattered among them...." The article's author E.J. Khan Jr. continued on to note that following a recent polio outbreak on Ebeye, the military wanted to relocate another 372 Marshallese to the island. Khan added the Interior Department balked at the idea as they already received several cutting remarks "about the slum" from U.N. critics. The following year an article appearing in *National Geographic* magazine described Ebeye as a space of

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136 Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>135</sup> Khan, E.J. Jr. "A Reporter at Large: Micronesia, I--The American Period," in *The New Yorker*. June 1966. Pp. 80.

"lightless, plumbingless, shanties...disease-ridden shacks." Through the 1970s, additional articles across U.S. and Pacific media headlined with titles designating Ebeye "The U.S. army's ghetto-islet in Micronesia," and raising the question "Ebeye: A Pacific Ghetto?" Many of these stories contrasted conditions on urban Ebeye with those on Kwajalein's suburbia. 138

By the 1980s and 1990s Ebeye's urban status came to be contextualized within articles covering broader Pacific urbanization trends. In 1987, Keith Lorenz wrote "Pacific Islands' Urbanization" for *Pacific Magazine* and noted both Ebeye and Majuro (the Marshall Islands capital) had earned the titles "'Slums of the Pacific." Lorenz narrated Ebeye's history as part of a broader pattern of Pacific urbanization. His piece cited expert concerns voiced across the region regarding the islands' sustainable capacities to manage the kinds of population growths in these urban centers. In 1993, David Robie wrote "Urban Nightmares: Pacific town planners face increasing environmental problems" for *The Review* and identified Ebeye as among the world's highest population densities. Robie explained that Ebeye suffered a shared fate across the Pacific that urbanization and impoverishment ushered in through overcrowding and services' deterioration. Echoing Lorenz' earlier article, Robie also cited experts voicing concern about health problems, infant mortality, marginalization of women and severe unemployment accompanying these Pacific urban transformations.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>137</sup> Boyer, David S. "Micronesia: The Americanization of Eden," in *National Geographic* magazine. May 1967. Pp.736.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>138</sup> Malone, Mike. "The U.S. army's ghetto-islet in Micronesia," in *Pacific Islands Monthly*, June 1976 and Paul Jacobs, "Ebeye: a Pacific ghetto?" in *Newsday*.1977.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>139</sup> Lorenz, Keith. "Pacific Islands' Urbanization," in *Pacific Magazine*. March/April 1987. Pp. 46.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>141</sup> Robie, David. "Urban Nightmares: Pacific town planners face increasing environmental problems," in *The Review*. November 1993. Pp. 62.

Even discourse appearing at the United Nations situated Ebeye's position within a broader urbanizing global trend. A U.N. visiting mission to the Marshall Islands report in May 1980 asserted the only real solution to Ebeye's problems as the closure of Kwajalein's missile range or the discontinuation of Micronesian employment. <sup>142</sup> The report's author, Chief Secretary Representative of Kwajalein Atoll Marshall Islands Government L.N. Edwards saw neither options happening in the near future. Edward's proposal presumed that if those living on Ebeye lost their jobs, they would have to return to their home islands freeing up space on the island for the remaining population. Edwards' assessment failed to note that many on Ebeye could not return to their home islands, which continued to remain off limits for missile testing purposes. Edwards concluded his plan would fail largely because Ebeye fit within a broader fated world trajectory. He explained, "No matter how many houses are built to relieve the population pressure and the overcrowding, people will crowd into Ebeye as they are crowding into urban centers throughout the world, and for much the same reasons. Ebeye is not an isolated case "143

Media articles and social science reports tended to narrate Ebeye's urbanity as problematic either within the context of comparison to Kwajalein's suburban luxuries or within the broader realm of a shared urbanization crisis across the Pacific. Relatively few commentators during this time focused attention on the relational development of Ebeye's urbanization to Kwajalein's suburbanization or to outer island life in the Marshalls. The rare individuals who considered these relational dynamics deserve close attention as their

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>142</sup> Report submitted by L.N. Edwards, Chief Secretary Representative, Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Islands Government at the request of the 1980 United Nations Visiting Mission to the Marshall Islands, 1980, TTA, reel no. 1351. <sup>143</sup> Ibid.

insights helped illuminate the broader impact of U.S. missile testing and colonial spatial policies in the region.

One article narrating Kwajalein and Ebeye's relational spatial developments appeared in the 1968 *Micronesian Reporter*, a quarterly publication aimed at a Trust Territory personnel audience. As noted in chapter one, the *Micronesian Reporter* began as a publication with a more conservative spin often applauding and reinforcing Trust Territory policies and agendas. But by the late 1960s, with the prospect of Micronesia's decolonization looming and more Micronesians taking up Trust Territory government positions and leveling critiques at U.S. colonial policies, the publication became more inclusive of voices challenging U.S. policies in the region. A 1968 article by Peace Corps Volunteer and writer P.F. Kluge constituted one of the more open critiques of Trust Territory and military policies in relation to Ebeye. <sup>144</sup> In "Micronesia's Unloved Islands: Ebeye," Kluge provided a lengthy analysis of Ebeye's historic development in relation to Kwajalein.

Kluge's article offers a lens into a 1968 moment when the categories of suburban and urban began appearing in U.S. and Pacific media outlets to explain the U.S. impact on the Marshall Islands. As an American moving through Micronesia during the 1960s, Kluge's extensive employment of these terms provides insights on how Americans may have perceived the varied incarnations of urban and suburban outside of the United States. Kluge contextualized his commentary by aligning the spaces of outer islands,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>144</sup> Since his two-year stint in the Peace Corps from 1967-1969, Kluge went on to contribute journalistic pieces (mostly travel writing) to several widely distributed publications in the U.S including *National Geographic Traveler*, *Rolling Stone*, *Playboy* and *Smithsonian*. In 1993 he published *The Edge of Paradise: America in Micronesia*, inspired in part by the suicide of his close friend, Republic of Palau President Lazarus Salii. Interestingly, his journalistic and novel writing also inspired two widely distributed movies, *Dog Day Afternoon* (based on an article he co-wrote for *LIFE* magazine) and *Eddie and the Cruisers* (based on his second novel). Kluge works today as Writer in Residence at Kenyon College in Ohio.

Ebeye and Kwajalein with his perception of the Marshall Islands' past, present and future respectively. In doing so, he marked Ebeye's position along an outer island to suburbia progressive narrative that found the island contemporaneously outside Marshallese and American historic frameworks. For Kluge, Ebeye remained a place hovering outside space and time.

Kluge's article began with a lengthy description of Ebeye's contemporary density and congestion. His narrative positioned the island between visions of future affluence on Kwajalein and nostalgia for a simpler past on the outer islands. He wrote Ebeye comprised,

"more than 4,000 Marshallese attracted by the wages, the luxuries, the atmosphere of the magical mini-California across the lagoon...An overcrowded limbo where one can glimpse wistfully--and with partial sincerity--at the days of easy subsistence living, fish and taro, on one's native islands. Or glance ahead at the luxuries and privileges of the snug, exclusive American enclave on Kwajalein, its stores and movies. But in the meantime the Marshallese live on Ebeye, live there for better of for worse, suspended indefinitely between a lost yesterday and a vague tomorrow?"<sup>145</sup>

This theme of limbo situating Ebeye as a place hovering between past and future pervaded the rest of Kluge's article. His narratives of outer island life continued to position the rural spaces as temporally past and simplistic. These depictions reproduced the historic Western caricatures of Pacific Islands as ahistorical spaces marked by leisure and tranquility; Gauguin's Edenic paradise. On Ebeye, this longing for days past alongside desires for Kwajalein's future left the island stuck with little historic or cultural meaning of its own.

Kluge's article continued on to note that while Ebeye had been described as the "Slum of the Pacific" as well as an "Island of Affluent Paupers," an additional term could

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>145</sup> P.F. Kluge, "Micronesia's Unloved Islands: Ebeye," in *Micronesian Reporter*. Third Quarter, volume XVI, no. 3, 1968. Pp. 32.

be added: "The Suburbia of the Pacific." <sup>146</sup> He qualified this label as appropriate because by 1968, the island had moved beyond the early 1960s designation as space of epidemics and squalor. According to Kluge, the Ebeye of 1968 constituted a space of "mediocrity," distinguished by rows of military housing, regular garbage collection and cars. Because Marshallese on Ebeye earned a seemingly adequate minimum wage on Kwajalein, Kluge noted that Ebeyeans came to represent "a moneyed elite, mak[ing] them Micronesia's first bonafide suburban commuters." 147 Kluge's designation of Ebeye as suburban contrasted other articles appearing prior and following his story. The island's concrete visual landscape, population density and poverty inspired most commentators over the years to apply the terms ghetto, slum or shantytown to Ebeye. Kluge's suburban descriptor drew upon Ebeye and Kwajalein's commute and wage dynamics alongside Ebeye's row housing and automobiles to mark the island as suburban. Kluge's exceptional discourse suggested the plethora of spatial analogs he and other U.S. commentators may have been drawing upon at the time. In addition to urban and suburban models, U.S. commentators' conflation of the terms ghetto, slum and shantytown in referencing Ebeye suggested varied spatial and cultural imaginings informing their analysis. For example, these commentators may have considered European models of migrant laborers residing in urban spaces peripheral to their workplaces or Brazilian favela-style residential and labor patterns.

Kluge's analysis also compared Ebeye's suburban commuters with those laboring and commuting in the United States. His article explained segregation between Kwajalein and Ebeye and the consequent commuting labor dynamic through a common narrative of

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

Ebeye's dependency on Kwajalein and Kwajalein's need for cheap labor. This manner of describing the two islands' relationship appeared in several other articles and worked to obscure and naturalize the continued structure of segregation between Kwajalein and Ebeye. Some journalists emphasized Ebeye's commute as the inevitable consequence of labor demand meets labor supply, rather than highlighting the historic and continuous policies of segregation separating labor and residency between the two islands. While Kluge also shied away from giving much attention to historic and continuous military policies fueling segregation between the two islands, he commented upon the resulting racialized structure.

Through his comparisons with U.S. labor dynamics, Kluge addressed race and labor segregation. In doing so, he complicated his portrait of Ebeye as a space of suburbia by comparing Ebeye's laborers to those living in racialized urban spaces in the United States. He wrote,

"just as early morning buses carry loads of maids down Fifth Avenue, from Harlem to the svelte apartments in Manhattan's sixties and seventies, a sepia ark of domestics about to spend a day scrubbing floors or pushing racks of clothing in the garment district, so the population of Ebeye drains out of its jerry-built housing at dawn, filing towards the dock where the *U.S.S. Tarlang* ferries them to another day's labor at Kwajalein." <sup>148</sup>

Kluge continued on to note that on Kwajalein each of these workers "wears a badge with a mug shot and a serial number and an occupational category." His "mug shot" inclusion alluded to how racialized laborers on Kwajalein tended to be criminalized similarly alongside those in the United States. Kluge's use of "sepia ark" also hinted at the shared racialized class system moving between the U.S. and the Marshall Islands, a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>148</sup> Ibid, 32-33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>149</sup> Ibid.

dynamic he further suggested when marking Ebeye the "ghetto island, Kwajalein's weak, dark sister."150

Kluge's racialized gendering of Ebeye appeared alongside commentary marking Kwajalein through labels of whiteness and masculinity. He contextualized Ebeye's poverty through the feminizing and racializing label of "weak, dark sister," contrasting Kwajalein's "light" and "white" militarized, masculine "strength." He described Kwajalein as the "alabaster city...with white roofs and pearly domes, sidewalks that area swept, roads that are washed, lawns that are groomed and sprinkled, gardens that are looked after." <sup>152</sup> Kluge narrated U.S. acquisition of Kwajalein following World War II in explaining why Marshallese did not live on the island. He added, "They only work there and at night its back up Fifth Avenue to Ebeye and make sure your purse doesn't look too heavy. At night they leave America and return to Micronesia..." Kluge's pairing of the "alabaster city" with America and the journey back to Harlem with the arrival to Micronesia is worth consideration. His discourse suggested both the whiteness and suburbanization naturalizing Kwajalein's position within the U.S. domestic, while simultaneously positioning Harlem alongside the foreignness of Micronesia. Kluge aligned Kwajalein with America in contrast to the Harlem-like Ebeye's connection to Micronesia. In doing so, he further alluded to the racialized class structure informing who was perceived as domestic to the United States and who remained foreign.

Amidst Kluge's varied references comparing Kwajalein and Ebeye with America and Micronesia, he further contextualized Ebeye in relation to the outer islands. In

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, 33. 151 Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

comparing Ebeye to the outer islands, Kluge further marked the island as suburban due to its perceived cultural blandness. Kluge's equation of Ebeye as bland and thus suburban echoed U.S. narratives at the time identifying suburbia's culturally homogenous dulling effect. 154 Kluge described Ebeye's commuters as "not an arrestingly bad community but a dull one. Not a grindingly poor citizenry, but a purposelessly affluent one." 155 His categorization of Ebeye as affluent presumably surfaced in comparison with perceived outer island poverty rather than Kwajalein's wealth.

Kluge's comparisons situating Ebeye between wealthy Kwajalein and poor outer islands went further to analyze how these distinct economies impacted Marshallese culture on Ebeye. He interviewed several Marshallese individuals on Ebeye who had lived on outer islands and concluded these individuals saw Ebeye as a place lacking meaning or value. His interviewees narrated Ebeye as a space of work, with their true homes and their emotional ties remaining in the outer islands. One Marshallese man, Eddie L. Balance, came to work on Kwajalein from the outer island Ailinglaplap fifteen years prior. He told Kluge that despite his long tenure on Ebeye, he viewed the island as his temporary residence. His real home remained on Ailinglaplap. For Balance, being on Ebeye meant saving money to offer his children a better future. Kluge concluded from his discussion with Balance and other outer islanders that Ebeye constituted a place "near the money, a convenient island from which they can nibble at the affluence of Kwajalein...a trailer camp."<sup>156</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>154</sup> For more on this topic see Becky Nicolaides' "How Hell Moved from the City to the Suburbs: Urban Scholars and Changing Perceptions of Authentic Community," in *The New Suburban History*, Kevin M. Kruse and Thomas J. Sugrue (eds) (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>155</sup> P.F. Kluge, "Micronesia's Unloved Islands: Ebeye," in *Micronesian Reporter*. Third Quarter, volume XVI, no. 3, 1968. Pp. 34. 156 Ibid, 36.

Kluge's article concluded with a fatalistic tone scapegoating Marshallese addiction to American consumerism as the primary reason Ebeye's population would continue to grow. He said he doubted domestics working in modern homes on Kwajalein would easily return to outer island life. He added, "Ebeye, freakish island that it is, is peopled by folks who want to be there. Consider it, then, a triumph, an incontestable triumph, for the American way of life, its tin cans and cars and bars." <sup>157</sup> By marking Ebeye's density as defined by Marshallese proclivity for all things American rather than the continuity of forced displacements and segregation informing Kwajalein and Ebeye's relational history, Kluge obscured the persistence of U.S. Empire in the region. He characterized the triumph of American culture as partial, however, given Ebeye's continued in-between status. He concluded Ebeye constituted a "slovenly compromise between two cultures and the people of Ebeye are suspended between the islands of the past, where they lived with little work and the island of the future Kwajalein, where they work but cannot live. Meanwhile they live on Ebeye, which is nowhere." <sup>158</sup> Kluge's narrative not only foreclosed alternatives to the inevitable continuity of segregation on Kwajalein, he also further marked Ebeye as culturally outside the Marshall Islands. Kluge did so by identifying Ebeye as a space temporally stuck between past and future; existing nowhere in the present. He described the island as, "suspended motionless between two ways of life and that its citizens can participate fully in neither." Pervading Kluge's entire article remained the message that Ebeye constituted a space of labor, not family residency and certainly not Marshallese culture. Instead, Ebeye proved a cultural wasteland; a space housing transient individuals whose presence on island disconnected

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>157</sup> Ibid. <sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

them from Marshallese culture residing in the outer islands and American culture nearby on Kwajalein.

Kluge's fatalistic read of Ebeye hovering between an outer island past and a Kwajalein future proved a precursor for later studies also analyzing and critiquing this spectrum of emerging spatial and cultural dynamics in the Marshall Islands. Less than a decade after Kluge's article appeared, studies arose primarily through the work of Anthropologist William J. Alexander focusing on the risks of Ebeye's urbanization and wage economy to Marshallese culture. Like Kluge's portrait of Ebeye, Alexander's reports narrated concern about Marshallese cultural loss in the face of exposure to structures of modernity, primarily through urbanity and wage economy. Alexander's discourse further illuminates how U.S. narratives focusing on Ebeye's urban and economic transformations during the 1960s and 1970s further positioned the island as foreign to that which would be defined as real Marshallese culture.

In contrast to Kluge's positioning of Ebeye in relation to Kwajalein and outer island life, Alexander introduced a third comparison for Ebeye through urban Majuro. Commenting upon similarities arising from urbanity and wage economies connecting this Marshallese capital to Ebeye, Alexander's argued a distinctive urban subculture had arisen in the Marshall Islands excluding outer islanders. Alexander presented his findings on this topic in March 1977 at an annual meeting of the Association of Social Anthropology in Oceania in Monterey, California. His paper, entitled "Asymmetry in Urban-Rural Relationships in the Marshall Islands: An Inquiry into the Relationship between Ebeye and Lae," traced how the outer island Lae represented the unreciprocal relationship between outer islands and urban centers in the Marshalls. Lae, which resided

outside Kwajalein Atoll, depended upon the urban centers of Ebeye and the capital Majuro to purchase Lae's copra. Whereas, the two urban centers had not depended on Lae in any equivalent way. While the urban centers purchased products like handicrafts, special foods and copra from the outer islands, Alexander explained the centers could materially survive without the outer islands.

Alexander's presentation continued on to note that where urban centers most depended upon outer islands remained in the realm of emotion, as the outer islands constituted the spaces where Marshallese culture resided. 160 He wrote "The people of Ebeye are Marshallese, and their definition of what that means derives from the outer islands. As time goes on, this identification weakens..."<sup>161</sup> After describing some commonalities shared between the two urban centers, which included access to televisions, bars, movies, electricity, refrigeration, washing machines, cars and wage labor, Alexander concluded the two urban centers of Majuro and Ebeye shared an urban subculture. This relationship between them sharply distinguished life from that of the outer islands. He marked this as "A special relationship based on commonality [that] has developed between these two urban centers which cannot exist between urban and rural sectors." Alexander's narrative of Marshallese culture remaining bound by spatial and material barriers separating outer islands from urban centers relied upon the continued colonial narrative categorizing native culture as static, incapable of persistence amidst changing circumstances. He argued that urban development and wage economy created a

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>160</sup> William J. Alexander, "Asymmetry in Urban-Rural Relationships in the Marshall Islands: An Inquiry into the Relationship between Ebeye and Lae." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association of Social Anthropology in Oceania in Monterey, California. March 1977. This 15-page paper is located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa. Pp. 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>161</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>162</sup> Ibid, 13.

seemingly impermeable boundary that excluded Marshallese cultural values originating in the outer islands. As noted earlier in this chapter, oral history interviews with Marshallese living on Ebeye challenged these conclusions by narrating how certain relevant and meaningful Marshallese values moved across space penetrating Alexander's presumed urban/outer island divide.

In addition to spatiality, Alexander's research identified consumerism within the context of a wage economy as a significant dividing line between Ebeye and outer island life. He published these findings two years later in *The Progressive*, highlighting what he perceived as dramatic examples of cultural change on Ebeye. In his piece, "The destruction of paradise: America's legacy in Micronesia," Alexander narrated the relationship between Kwajalein and Ebeye and identified the U.S. introduction of an alien economy as most significantly impacting the Marshall Islands. 163 Similar to Kluge, Alexander narrated Ebeye's lure as income, which induced residents to live in extreme density causing disease and cultural disintegration. For Alexander, the most striking symbol of the wage economy's impact on Marshallese culture appeared during his attendance of a Christmas pageant on Ebeye in 1975. Alexander described the pageant in which different groups performed with props to illustrate different holiday themes. He noted that one group focused on the theme, "God destroys all evil." This group showcased a prop consisting of an imitation bomb they suspended from the church ceiling. Alexander wrote, "As the group sang on Christmas Day, the bomb descended to the floor, bursting open and spewing forth God's power in the form of wads of dollar

Alexander, William J. "The destruction of paradise: America's legacy in Micronesia," in *The Progressive*. February 19, 1979. Pp. 46.
 Ibid.

bills."<sup>165</sup> Alexander's article ended with that statement, presumably leaving the reader to connect the dots in identifying the scene's significance in exemplifying Marshallese cultural deterioration in the context of Ebeye's wage economy.

Both Alexander and Kluge's discourse on consumerism, wage economy and urbanity on Ebeye stressed how the island's transformation impacted Marshallese culture. Their narratives characterized Ebeye's population as on the one hand relatively affluent compared to outer island counterparts, but on the other hand culturally impoverished. According to Alexander and Kluge, urbanity and wage economy constituted barriers to the open flow and continuity of Marshallese cultural values between urban and outer island spaces. By marking Ebeye as a space devoid of Marshallese culture, their discourse further positioned the island as foreign to the territory.

Kluge and Alexander's concern and condemnation of potential Marshallese cultural change echoed earlier naval and Trust Territory documents detailed in chapter two. That a seeming obsession with protecting Marshallese culture pervaded the focus of military officials, Trust Territory administrators, journalists and social science researchers suggests these Americans perceived Marshallese culture as quite fragile. Each of these commentators presumed the U.S. presence in the region marked a capacity to destroy Marshallese cultural values. Again, these presumptions seem rooted in deeper exceptionalist narratives marking native culture as static and thus vulnerable to deterioration upon the introduction of outside influences and change. As noted earlier, amidst settler colonial contexts this narrative of vanishing native culture historically naturalized settler entitlement to native lands as natives magically disappeared in the face of modernity. Alongside their narratives helping to further naturalize the U.S. settler

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presence in the region, U.S. commentators seemed to lack any concern about American exposure to Marshallese culture. Rather, American culture has long been narrated as capable of growing and evolving by exposure to change and outside influence. Alongside Western culture more broadly, American culture has been narrated as inherently malleable, rooted in the preeminence of a progressive history and the unmarking of the cultural self.

This chapter has examined an array of narratives marking peoples in place on Kwajalein and Ebeye to further inform an understanding of each island's historic and relational transformations. Contradictions seemed to pervade the array of stories identifying distinctive ways of life on each island. As the first part of the chapter detailed, some civilians on Kwajalein narrated the island as a space of exceptional inclusivity and community acceptance. But visual sources suggested limitations on this portrait of Kwajalein as a welcoming atmosphere for all Americans on island. Likewise, media and social science narratives marking Ebeye's population as residing within a space devoid of culture contradicted Marshallese narratives as well as Trust Territory and military arguments scapegoating cultural continuities on Ebeye as contributing to the island's density.

Kwajalein and Ebeye's relational spatial and cultural productions in some ways mirrored contemporaneous processes emerging in the United States. Stateside, suburban and urban policies began culturally producing suburbia as a site of family residency and urban America as a space of racialized labor, culturally foreign to that which defined American domesticity. While in many respects, Kwajalein's military imperial context marked the island's suburban development as historically exceptional, this chapter offers

some evidence of shared cultural narratives informing relational suburban and urban practices in the U.S. and the Marshalls. Suburbanization stateside and on Kwajalein emerged in a U.S. Cold War moment embracing domesticity by protecting the nuclear family from the communist threat abroad and proximate violent urban eruptions. Both threats became marked as foreign to suburban domesticity. The racialized foreign threat residing in urban spaces came to be analyzed under "culture of poverty" narratives stateside, while terms like ghetto and slum moved between these spaces and Ebeye. But Ebeye's foreignness from both the American domestic on Kwajalein and the broader Marshall Islands also seemed to center on narratives marking the absence of culture on the island; a notable distinction from stateside discourse. This distinction may be explained by stateside narratives of racialized urban spaces remaining within a nationstate framework. While the array of Americans narrating Ebeye seemed neither comfortable with categorizing the island as part of a national nor a colonial context. This further exemplifies the explanatory "rub" of American exceptionalist narratives obscuring the colonial nature of U.S. presence on Kwajalein and across Micronesia. As this dissertation reveals, the need to categorize these spaces that do not fit within a national narrative as somehow outside a colonial context seemed to perpetually produce and reproduce an unending array of ambiguities and contradictions.

Having explored how a range of American and Marshallese individuals narrated the spaces of Kwajalein and Ebeye in divergent ways, the dissertation shifts next to examine how the landscape of each island transformed under U.S. administration.

Chapter four builds upon these island narratives of people in space by interrogating the

narration of land on Kwajalein and Ebeye through the histories of contract and built environment.

## Chapter Four Producing Kwajalein and Ebeye through Contract and Construction

"The history of the Marshall Islands during the three decades of American rule has been the saddest history we can remember. History will show that it was we Marshallese who had the 'trust' while America had the 'territory.""--Ataji Balos, 1976<sup>1</sup>

Chapter three revealed how different narratives positioning Marshallese and Americans in relational roles informed the spatial and cultural landscape emerging to divide Kwajalein and Ebeye. These divergences also built upon varied histories of contract and construction mapping the space of each island. Chapter four examines these histories by first exploring how U.S. leasing and eminent domain practices on Kwajalein and Ebeye respectively worked to obscure the colonial nature of U.S. land control in the region. Trust Territory and military discourse on leasing helped legitimize a colonial land grab by showcasing the appearance of mutually agreed upon contracts. After analyzing U.S. land contract history in the region, chapter four examines the history of disparate investment and built environment planning on Kwajalein and Ebeye. U.S. colonial land management on Kwajalein and Ebeye involved contractually bounding the islands and erecting physical structures that guided the lives of those living and working in each place in dramatically divergent directions.

## Contracting Colonized Land: U.S. Leasing Practices on Kwajalein

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Statement of Hon. Ataji Balos, A Representative in the Micronesian Congress from the Seventh District, included in Hearings before the Subcommittee on Territorial and Insular Affairs on the Current Problems in the Marshall Islands held on Ebeye, July 13, 1976 and Majuro, July 14, 1976.

While chapter three explored how Kwajalein's introductory manuals narrated Marshallese and Americans into place, chapter four begins by examining how those same welcome guides narrated Marshallese land customs and land loss. The introductory manuals narratively erased U.S. colonial land acquisition in the Marshall Islands by describing Marshallese land loss as inevitable and beyond U.S. control. Incoming personnel learned about Marshallese land tenure practices through narratives legitimating U.S. control of Marshallese land and obscuring the colonial nature of that control.

An updated 1972 version of the Bell Laboratories guide to the Marshall Islands narrated the history of Marshallese land tenure situating U.S. "administration" as following two other colonial regimes in the region. The guide explained that under German and Japanese colonial rule Marshallese chiefly authority became weakened, particularly in control over land. The manual noted that while young Marshallese still strived for the privileges of being a chief, they were "not organized into any cohesive entity. That they ever will be is doubtful in the face of the transparent self-interest which dominates their thinking." The Bell narrative attributed a presumed loss in chiefly authority and control over land to events occurring under German and Japanese rule obscuring the contemporary history of U.S. land acquisition. The manual narratively defused the potential for any political threat to U.S. land control in the Marshalls by describing Marshallese as self-defeating due to an innate incapacity to think beyond themselves.

Another manual aimed at incoming personnel narrated the inevitability of Marshallese "land shortage" by celebrating American contributions to Marshallese health.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> A Guide to the Marshall Islands, Bell Laboratories, 1972. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa. Pp.53.

This 1968 U.S. Army Material Command guide to Kwajalein detailed the social importance of land to the Marshallese noting, "land is considered to be the most valuable asset to the Marshallese who are dependent on it for their day-to-day existence." The manual continued on to explain how land tenure customs provided for the needs of all in Marshallese society. The manual added, "due to rapid increase in population since the introduction of better sanitation and medical facilities, a shortage of available land will eventually result." In this military manual, land shortage became the unfortunate consequence of U.S. positive contributions to Marshallese health rather than linked with U.S. colonial policies to enable weapons development practices on Marshallese islands.

These personnel manual narratives obscured the complex and contested history of U.S. land acquisition policies in the Marshall Islands. This section continues on to explore how these policies worked to transform Kwajalein's landscape. As army officials began planning for Kwajalein's rebirth from naval base to militarized American suburbia, they also worked with Trust Territory administrators to formalize U.S. occupation of the island through leasing the land. Under the Trust Territory administration the system for negotiating lease agreements in the Marshall Islands involved three parties. These comprised representatives from the military, Trust Territory administration and Marshallese landowners.

Before exploring the most significant Kwajalein lease agreements signed during the 1950s and 1960s, this section turns first to consider Marshallese and American cultural distinctions in relation to land ownership. U.S. officials came to the bargaining table representing cultural approaches to land informed by imperial and settler colonial

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Kwajalein Test Site, U.S. Army Material Command, Kwajalein, Marshall Islands, 1968. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

histories of treaty negotiations for the acquisition and privatization of indigenous lands. Marshallese landowners arrived culturally informed by an entirely different historical relationship to land. With Marshallese society historically matrilineal, land passed from generation to generation through women. As detailed by anthropologist Holly M. Barker in her work *Bravo for the Marshallese: Regaining Control in a Post-Nuclear, Post-Colonial World*, in Marshallese society traditionally the eldest woman in the family passed land rights along to other family members. When she passed away, the land rights moved to her brothers and sisters in order of their age starting with the eldest. When all siblings died, the land rights passed to the next generation starting with the children of the oldest woman of the previous generation.<sup>5</sup>

Barker also explained how Marshallese lineage or clan lines called *bwij* provided land use rights for lineage members and how this organized resource use in the Marshall Islands. She noted members traditionally lived on and exploited the resources of their small land parcel, called a *weto*, the most typical type of inherited land. Each *weto* comprised a section of land extending from lagoon to ocean allowing for all resources within the range to be to utilized. Barker noted land claims to parcels depended upon each individual knowing the boundaries and history of that parcel. She added, "The power to recognize and validate land claims rest[ed] in the hands of customary authorities." Barker also explained that instead of any notion of "individual property ownership, Marshallese property rights system is premised on the notion that no single person owns the land."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Holly M. Barker, *Bravo for the Marshallese: Regaining Control in a Post-Nuclear, Post-Colonial World* (Belmont: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2004), 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Ibid.

Barker further detailed how Marshallese society revolved around a three-tier approach of reciprocal land use rights. The *iroij* (chiefs who maintained authority over clans and the land), *alab* (land managers) and *ri-jerbal* (workers) comprised the three major divisions in Marshallese society. The *iroij* remained responsible for taking care of the people and in turn the people provided food and labor for their chiefs. The *alab* oversaw day-to-day land maintenance and reported back to the chiefs while ensuring everyone was provided for. Barker explained that this symbiotic relationship in which workers cultivated the land and the chiefs and managers provided workers access to the land for survival constituted the foundations of Marshallese land organization and relational society.<sup>8</sup>

Marshallese land organization and relational culture began adapting to the presence of colonial administrators during the 1870s and 1880s under German rule. Barker explained how German traders came in the 1870s and introduced the wage economy through establishing a copra trade. During this period the first territorial contract likely came through Germany's retention of rights to a harbor in Jaluit Atoll and trading privileges with the Ralik chain (the Western set of atolls and islands comprising the Marshalls). Barker wrote Germany concluded "a 'treaty' with a powerful iroij in 1878." Barker detailed that many Marshallese identified the German period as the most significant shift from "communal self-sufficiency and family to individual income." Despite this "treaty" and Germany's influence on fixing clan relationships by demanding an end to inter-atoll warfare between clans for control over land, no other major land

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Ibid, 16. Since Barker did not foot note this quote in her work, it is not entirely clear if her quotation over the term "treaty" appeared in documentation on this agreement or if this remained Barker's own discourse on this seeming contract.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Ibid.

tenure practices appeared to have changed during this period.

As Anthropologist Julie Walsh detailed in her 2003 doctoral dissertation, the Marshallese system of land tenure remained largely undisturbed through the German period of colonial rule. German colonial administrators used Marshallese lands while largely retaining traditional Marshallese hierarchies in place. During this time, Marshallese continued to be primarily provided for through their clan relationships. Pollowing the World War I transition from German to Japanese rule through a League of Nations mandate, the Japanese instituted a settler colonial approach to the region. Thousands of Japanese and Korean laborers moved to Micronesia to build the islands' infrastructure supporting Japanese economic endeavors. Japanese administrators mandated Japanese language instruction throughout Micronesia and introduced the region to Japanese cuisine, dress and music.

While changes in specific Marshallese land tenure practice have received less analysis by historians of the Japanese period of settlement in Micronesia, Mark Peattie's 1992 study of Japanese imperialism revealed patterns of land dispossession by comparing Japanese colonial practices across the region. Peattie traced how the Japanese colonial administration took control of what they identified as unused communal and uncultivated lands. He noted, however, that early Japanese policy aimed to protect against Micronesian private land loss to Japanese land speculators and investors by banning the sale of Micronesian private lands to Japanese individuals or corporations. But he added this policy was reversed in 1931 to accommodate greater settlement in the region. Peattie's analysis did not offer specific examples of how these policies directly impacted

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> This latter section on land customs references Walsh Kroeker's *Imagining the Marshalls*, 125.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Peattie, *Nan'yo*, 96-100.

Marshallese land tenure practices, but he did detail how Japanese colonial efforts to determine and codify the boundaries of public and private lands led to a land survey and registration program across the region that concluded in 1937. Peattie noted that until the mid-1930s all Micronesian landholder titles remained protected by the Japanese colonial administration. But with increasing Japanese militarization prior to and during the war, these land protections diminished. While initial use of islands for armament involved some compensation from the Japanese colonial government, as islands came under attack and seizure during the last few years of the war this compensation disappeared.

Peattie suggested that land survey and registration under the Japanese colonial administration created mixed results for Micronesian land dispossession following the war. He explained that in some cases the programs helped individual Micronesians legitimize claims to their land while in others registration records remained lost in the destruction of the war. While Peattie does not specify where these records proved influential to influencing land tenure structure following the war, my archival research in Trust Territory records revealed evidence that American colonial administrators in the Marshall Islands had access to some of these records. But additional research on U.S. leasing practices on Kwajalein does not make clear the degree to which these records impacted that process. What does seem clear based on archival and oral history evidence is that leasing practices introduced during the U.S. period of colonial rule in the Marshall Islands constituted a divergence from prior colonial practices in the region. Marshallese landowners and political leaders narrated the U.S. act of placing a monetary value on land for leasing purposes as incongruent with Marshallese culture and historic Marshallese land practices.

In contrast to Marshallese approaches to land tenure, U.S. military commanders and American Trust Territory administrators understood land management through leasing as contextualized amidst a national narrative valuing land for the capitalist privatization of property. This national narrative of land control disavowed the colonial and imperial history that accounted for acquisition of that land. Marshallese District Administrator Oscar De Brum delineated these cultural distinctions between American and Marshallese conceptions of land through correspondence in 1971. De Brum wrote to the Chief of Lands and Surveys in Saipan responding to a proposal to register land parcels to individual owners in the Marshalls. His letter reflected on the impact of land negotiations during the previous two decades. De Brum wrote, "Historically and still today land tenure patterns of the Marshalls have been the very fabric of our communities, our families, and our individual lives." He added, "Our customs and our daily living patterns are in many and varied ways the product and the essence of our relationships to our lands."<sup>15</sup> De Brum continued on to note that he could not support a land registration system developed by people with little to no knowledge of Marshallese culture. He concluded, "The program is a product of another culture, which may or may not be beneficial to ours."16

In addition to significant cultural differences between Americans and Marshallese regarding the value of land, another challenge to the implementation of a lease system was the reality of leases being negotiated between parties of vastly unequal power to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> District Administrator Oscar De Brum to Chief of Lands and Surveys, Saipan, January 18, 1971, Trust Territory Archives (TTA), reel no. 0860. The three-page letter is part of a larger file labeled " General Correspondence on the Marshall Islands Land Agreement of 1955 Between Departments of Interior and Navy."

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Ibid.

influence these contracts. Marshallese landowners had little to no leverage to deny the occupation of their lands, a critical feature of the process of contractually producing the spaces of Kwajalein and Ebeye. What does it mean for Marshallese landowners to negotiate leases for their land with parties who have significantly greater power and authority to enforce or rescind those contracts? The first President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands Amata Kabua reflected on this power differential in an interview with the Associated Press in 1983. His interview spoke to the history of U.S. land occupation in his country and the continued presence of the U.S. missile development base on his lands for over two decades. Kabua told reporter Todd Carrol that he could not fully understand U.S.-Soviet missile politics, as he preferred people without guns. Carrol then asked Kabua how he reconciled his anti-militaristic views while continually allowing the U.S. to use Kwajalein for missile development. Kabua replied, "If I didn't let them use it, they would have taken it anyway." That Kabua made this statement when the Marshall Islands had greater leverage in negotiating with the U.S. as a newly forming nation suggested the degree of challenges facing Marshallese landowners during early lease negotiations when the Marshalls remained under Trust Territory control. In many respects, U.S. leasing practices in the Marshalls represented an obligatory performance for the United Nations. The leases enabled imperial land acquisition to be masked under the pretense of mutually agreed upon contracts, thus satisfying the Trusteeship directive obliging the U.S. to protect Micronesians from losing their land. 18

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Carrol, Todd, interview with Amata Kabua, July 19, 1983, TTA, reel no. 0613. The one-page transcript interview is part of a larger file labeled "News cables by Todd Carrol of Associated Press (AP) on Marshall Islands and Japan."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> I am thinking through my analysis of land contracts here inspired by the work of Amy Dru Stanley in her *From Bondage to Contract: Wage Labor, Marriage, and the Market in the Age of Slave Emancipation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998) in which she deconstructs the discourse on labor contracts to illuminate how these contracts obscure the continuity of unfreedoms in employment following slavery. I

While constituting one gesture communicating abidance to Trusteeship obligations, the leases offered a sticking point from which Marshallese landowners and political leaders over time could protest against U.S. colonialism at the United Nations. After signing leases in the 1960s, Marshallese leaders would bring these contracts before the United Nations to hold this entity charged with overseeing U.S. administration of the territory accountable to its stated mission. During the first twenty years of U.S. presence in the Marshall Islands, the military occupied Marshallese lands without recognizing or compensating landowners. As noted in chapter one, the 1947 Trusteeship Agreement ordered the United States to protect Micronesians from losing their lands. But, as also detailed in chapter one, the same agreement mandated the United States military to use the Trust Territory islands in whatever ways necessary to ensure national security and global peace. Thus, these contradictions foundational to the Trusteeship Agreement meant that U.S. occupancy of land throughout Micronesia for weapons testing and military basing exemplified a commitment to one Trusteeship directive. This land acquisition simply acknowledged the directive to support U.S. and global security as ranking higher than the directive to ensure Micronesians retain their lands. While Trust Territory administrators and military officials would enter lease negotiations informed by this hierarchy of imperatives, Micronesian leaders would spend decades thereafter challenging that hierarchy as U.S. land grabs expanded throughout the region.

The bureaucratic three-party land negotiation structure set in place by a 1955 land agreement made the efforts of Marshallese landowners struggling to gain leverage in preventing the U.S. from taking their lands additionally challenging. The Secretary of

am thinking with land contracts as a process that is obscuring the continuity of colonial land acquisitions in the Marshall Islands under the United States following the Japanese and German periods of colonial rule.

Interior and the Secretary of Navy signed the 1955 agreement, which laid out the process through which the U.S. Trust Territory and military would acquire use rights to Micronesian lands. This process positioned the Trust Territory government as the middleman in land negotiations between the U.S. military and Micronesian landowners. The Trust Territory government had already acquired all public lands in Micronesia, administering these lands "on behalf" of Micronesians. In dealing with private lands, the 1955 agreement stipulated that the Trust Territory government would represent Micronesian landowners in negotiations with United States "using agencies." These agencies comprised the departments of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard and the Atomic Energy Commission. The agreement stated that in cases where landowners remained unwilling to lease their land, the Trust Territory government had the authority and responsibility to acquire that land and offer fair compensation. The agreement of the acquire that land and offer fair compensation.

A 1959 executive order explicitly authorizing eminent domain in the region followed this earlier agreement on Micronesian land seizure. The order, issued by High Commissioner D.H. Nucker, entitled the Trust Territory to "condemn private property for public use, and to appropriate ownership of such property for public use upon paying the owner a just compensation."<sup>22</sup> The executive order defined public use as that which the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> "Land Agreement Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands," signed by Assistant Secretary of the Navy, R.H. Fogler and Assistant Secretary of the Interior, Wesley A. D' Ewart, September 15, 1955, TTA, reel no. 3849. This three-page land agreement is part of a larger file labeled "Attorney General File--Kwajalein and Ebeye Miscellany, Quarry Site, Snack Bar Sit-in, Power Plant, Interim Use Agreement, Bucholz Airfield Agreement, Post-Office, Housing Rehab, '64 Land Settlement, Agreement, more."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Executive Order no. 79, Subject: Addition of Chapter 20 to the Code of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, August 28, 1959, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Office of High Commissioner, Agana, Guam. This document is taken from the National Archives in Washington D.C., Record Group 126, Office of Territories: Land, Kwajalein.

High Commissioner determined to be a public use.<sup>23</sup> This threat of eminent domain would prove particularly damaging to U.S. efforts to garner trust among landowners on Kwajalein and Ebeye. The order revealed how contemporaneous policies for acquiring private land informing suburbanization in the United States moved through spaces of U.S. Empire in the Pacific.<sup>24</sup>

The 1955 agreement and subsequent eminent domain order placed the Trust
Territory government in a precarious position of balancing responsibilities to protect
Micronesian land rights while forcibly seizing Micronesian lands to lease to the military.
This contradictory position exacerbated the existing tensions underlying land
negotiations, pushing one Trust Territory administrator to caution his United States
superior about the risk to the Trust Territory government's reputation. A 1969 letter from
High Commissioner Edward Johnston to Secretary of the Interior Walter J. Hickel,
expressed concern about this predicament. In the letter, Johnston reflected on the land
acquisition structure's impact on weakening Micronesian trust. He requested the entire
approach to military land acquisition authorized by the 1955 agreement be reviewed and
reconsidered.<sup>25</sup> Johnston wrote about the challenge to inspire confidence among
Micronesians and incorporate them into a Trust Territory government that supported
them on the one hand while negotiating their land dispossession on the other.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> For more on the topic of eminent domain in the United States see Sugrue's *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, Matthew D. Lassiter's *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), and Eric Avila's *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> High Commissioner, Edward E. Johnston to Secretary of Interior, Walter J. Hickel, July 24, 1969, TTA, reel no. 3849. This three-page letter is part of a larger file labeled "Attorney General File--Kwajalein and Ebeye Miscellany, Quarry Site, Snack Bar Sit-in, Power Plant, Interim Use Agreement, Bucholz Airfield Agreement, Post-Office, Housing Rehab, '64 Land Settlement, Agreement, more."

Laden with tension and suspicion, the tripartite system of land negotiations moved forward in the late 1950s as the United States for the first time acknowledged the need to compensate Marshallese landowners for occupancy of Kwajalein Island. During negotiations in 1957 and 1958, the United States offered Marshallese landowners \$500 per acre for "indefinite use" rights to their land.<sup>27</sup> Presuming Marshallese naiveté in dealing with a cash economy, U.S. representatives presented the offer by placing \$300,000 in single dollar bills on a table in front of 192 landowners. 28 Marshallese landowners refused this initial offer and lacking faith in the United States as a fair negotiator, brought a petition to the United Nations Trusteeship Council. Landowner representative and Iroij (Chief) Amata Kabua addressed the Trusteeship Council on November 3, 1959, noting that after three years of negotiating, the U.S. came back with its same initial offer. He asserted Marshallese would not sign an indefinite use agreement.<sup>29</sup> Kabua explained that Marshallese landowners "will always believe that in principle a piece of land occupied on an indefinite use rights basis is no different from one that has been bought or annexed." The Kwajalein people consider the offer unfair and unjust and shall to the end seek the justice to which they are entitled under the Human Bill of Rights."<sup>31</sup>

Alongside his objections to indefinite use, Kabua explained to the Trusteeship Council the contrast in valuation of land versus money in Marshallese society. In doing

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Francis X., S.J. Hezel, *Strangers in Their Own Land: A Century of Colonial Rule in the Caroline and Marshall Islands*. Pacific Islands Monograph Series, no. 13. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995), 325.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Kabua, Amata, "Petition from Amata Kabua concerning the Pacific Islands," presented to the United Nations Trusteeship Council," August 25, 1959. This one page petitions is located in T/PET.10/30/Add.1 at the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.
<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

so, he stressed the degree of security held by a family with land. Kabua explained that a family could cultivate an acre of land and yield enough crops to care for their daily basic needs and those of all family members. A landless person could barely support himself let alone his entire family given the U.S. compensation offer, particularly since U.S. occupancy necessitated the importation of nearly all foods. Foreshadowing the challenges soon to face many landless Marshallese, Kabua predicted that if the U.S. forced Marshallese to lease their land for such little compensation, "a new class of paupers will be created overnight."

Five years after Kabua's plea to the United Nations, the Trust Territory government, the U.S. military and the Marshallese landowners signed a land agreement for Kwajalein. On February 9, 1964 the military began leasing Kwajalein Island for \$1,000 per acre for a duration of 99 years. While double the initial U.S. offer, the compensation still equated to less than \$10 per acre, per year to each landowner, marking the lease as little more than a "gesture," according to Pacific Historian David Hanlon.<sup>34</sup>

The lease included a clause for review and potential renegotiation at five-year intervals.

Trust Territory administrators characterized the 1964 land agreement a triumph after the many years spent negotiating on behalf of the military and Marshallese landowners. But not all Marshallese landowners drew the same conclusion from the lease signing.

Reaction among Marshallese landowners and political leaders exemplified their continued struggle to uncloak the illusion of a mutually arrived at contractual relationship between equal parties that masked a history of coercion and intimidation.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Hanlon, *Remaking Micronesia*, 192.

In 1968, Amata Kabua appeared again before the Trusteeship Council, this time representing the Marshall Islands Nitijela (legislature) with a resolution regarding U.S. land acquisition of Kwajalein. Kabua prefaced the resolution as one of the "first attempts by the peoples of Micronesia to cry out to the world for help in righting the unjust neocolonial situation under which we now exist."<sup>35</sup> Kabua's language gestured to the context of global decolonization and the subsequent increasing participation among recently decolonized territories in the United Nations. The resolution requested the U.N. reconsider the legal and political status of the Trust Territory and detailed the process by which the United States acquired Kwajalein. Kabua noted landowners were "forced to surrender" approximately seven hundred and fifty acres of land for a compensation of about ten dollars per acre per year in "an area where land is scarce and therefore precious beyond the comprehension of outsiders."<sup>36</sup> Kabua's resolution highlighted how the U.S. colonial presence in Micronesia went against the grain of the contemporary climate of international decolonization. In doing so, he challenged and further unsettled the Trusteeship Agreement's narrative supporting American exceptionalism, which marked U.S. administration in Micronesia as somehow outside the realm of colonialism.

Six years after Kabua's plea, the recently formed Congress of Micronesia passed a House Joint Resolution on the 1964 Kwajalein lease. The Congress of Micronesia constituted a political entity comprising Micronesian representatives with limited authority to write bills and resolutions subject to the Trust Territory government's veto. Introduced by Kwajalein landowner Ataji Balos, the 1974 resolution urged the Trust

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Kabua, Amata, "Petition from Marshall Islands Nitijela Concerning the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands," presented to the United Nations Trusteeship Council, October 22, 1968. This seven-page petition is located in T/Pet.10/46 at the Library of Congress, Washington D.C. <sup>36</sup> Ibid.

Territory High Commissioner and the Department of Defense to review the 1964 lease. Balos pointed to unfair compensation and the use of intimidation and manipulation to force Marshallese landowners to sign. In his letter to the Congress of Micronesia contextualizing the resolution, Balos described the lease as "unconscionable." <sup>37</sup> He identified the lease as a contract extracted under duress of Marshallese landowners not sophisticated in the ways of U.S. land negotiations. <sup>38</sup> The resolution stated, "During the negotiations for Kwajalein Island, the United States Government threatened to use eminent domain to acquire Kwajalein Island unless the landowners yielded to U.S. offers of \$1,000 per acre."<sup>39</sup> The resolution voiced the Congress of Micronesia's view that "the validity or legality of any lease agreement where landowners are coerced and compelled to sign in fear of loss of their lands without adequate compensation is highly improper."<sup>40</sup> The resolution demanded the High Commissioner and Department of Defense take immediate steps to review the lease and ensure fair compensation. 41 Despite pleas by landowners and the Congress of Micronesia resolution, the 1964 lease agreement held firm until 1979 when additional compensation came to landowners only after they staged several protests to re-occupy their lands. The protests forced the U.S. military back to the negotiating table out of concern about negative media coverage and interruption of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Landowner Ataji Balos to Senate of the Congress of Micronesia, March 4, 1974, TTA, reel no. 525. This two-page letter is part of a larger file labeled " Congress of Micronesia House Joint Resolution #123 urging HC and US Dept. of Defense to take immediate steps to review and renegotiate the lease agreement for Kwajalein atoll, and other islands that were included in the 1964 lease agreement."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> House Joint Resolution no. 123, Fifth Congress of Micronesia, Second Regular Session, 1974, TTA, reel no. 525. This two-page resolution is part of a larger file labeled " Congress of Micronesia House Joint Resolution #123 urging HC and US Dept. of Defense to take immediate steps to review and renegotiate the lease agreement for Kwajalein atoll, and other islands that were included in the 1964 lease agreement."

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Ibid.

scheduled missile launches. The history of those protests will be taken up in chapter eight.

Analysis of early land leasing on Kwajalein reveals the performative role leases played in obscuring the imperial land grab that enabled the U.S. to begin transforming the space of Kwajalein into a world-class missile testing range. The performative obligatory context of land leasing between groups of unequal power and incomparable cultural familiarity with land privatization under the Trusteeship Agreement reflected a continuity of more deeply rooted U.S. historic colonial practices. Kwajalein landowner Ataji Balos commented on these colonial practices in his address to the U.N. Trusteeship Council on May 21, 1982. Balos approached the Trusteeship Council to challenge the renewal of a 30-year lease on Kwajalein Atoll. In doing so, he commented on the similar histories of Marshallese land acquisition and Indian land dispossession on the U.S. continent. Balos noted the United States took twenty years to recognize and compensate Kwajalein people for its land usage. 42 Upon this realization, the U.S. offered a mere token amount to be paid for 99 years. 43 Balos concluded, "this unequal arrangement, which the United States continues to proclaim, is rather similar to the many unequal treaties the United States entered into with its own Indian tribes in the frontier days of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries."44

The 1964 Kwajalein lease agreement proved critical in setting the terms by which Kwajalein would be brought into the U.S. Empire. The forced leasing of Kwajalein

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Balos, Ataji as recorded in the verbatim record of the 49th Session at the 1529th meeting of the United Nations Trusteeship Council: "Examination of the Annual Report of the Administering Authority for the year ended 30, September 1981: The Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands." This transcription is located in T/PV.1529 at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

constituted an imperial act, but also provided an ongoing basis for challenging U.S. colonialism, one that lasted until Marshallese decolonization in 1986. This section has revealed how lease negotiations naturalized Kwajalein as a contracted space rather than a colonial outpost in a Cold War empire.

## Controlling Colonized Land through Eminent Domain on Ebeye

This next section examines how U.S. contractual land acquisition played out differently on Ebeye. As Kwajalein landowners faced challenges in attempting to retain control of their land and gain adequate compensation, Ebeye landowners met their own unique set of obstacles as their land became home to Kwajalein's service workers and displaced islanders. Instead of being displaced from Ebeye most landowners remained on island but gradually lost control over their land as the military marked Ebeye another space of U.S. entitlement. The military did not approach Ebeye as a place for American residency or weapons testing. They instead understood the island as a repository for its service workers and all additional islanders they displaced to expand its missile testing impact zone. Military policies framing Ebeye as an island existing solely to serve Kwajalein's missile base needs created distinct challenges for those landowners and their families living on Ebeye with nowhere else to go.

When the navy first displaced the Micronesian labor camp from Kwajalein to Ebeye in 1951 they did so in the absence of any formal lease with Ebeye landowners. But evidence suggests Ebeye landowners faced greater restrictions on access to their lands during these early years. A monthly activities report sent by Land Titles Officer W.C. White to the Marshall Islands District Administrator addressed this issue in 1954. In his

report, White expressed concern for Ebeye landowners and discussed the growing tension between landowners and the increasing population of non-landowners living on Ebeye and working on Kwajalein. White noted, "The landowners feel, and justly so, that they should be allowed to utilize their own land to suit their needs. Present regulations, which are the out growth of a working policy made between Navy and the Trust Territory Distad [District Administrator] Marshalls in 1952, have resulted in restricting these owners from planting or even building houses on the land they own."<sup>45</sup>

White continued on to describe Ebeye landowners as not particularly concerned about the extensive land being used by the navy on Ebeye, but rather resented those considered "outsiders." White categorized those viewed by the landowners as "outsiders," as Marshallese and other Micronesian workers living on Ebeye. While Ebeye's newcomers resided there because the navy prohibited these workers from sharing residency alongside Americans on Kwajalein, White's report positioned the navy as being perceived by Ebeye landowners as among the "insiders" in this context. White proposed a few solutions to these challenges. These included further segregating the labor village by demarcating boundaries that measured the length and width of two rows of worker houses within which to contain the labor camp. White explained that Ebeye landowners had already requested an evacuation of the whole operation adding, "They evidence much rancor over the situation as it is now." He concluded that in his opinion greater

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> September Monthly Activities Report submitted by W.C. White, Dist. Land Titles Officer to District Administrator Mr. Maynard Neas on September 1, 1954. TTA, reel, no. 106.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Ibid.

segregation of laborers would reduce the land area needed and serve to "settle the problem of Ebeve."48

As it would turn out, the "problem of Ebeye" would not disappear through attempts to further segregate laborers on Ebeye, as Marshall Islands District Anthropologist Jack Tobin revealed in his 1954 report. In Ebeye Village: An Atypical Marshallese Community, Tobin highlighted the challenges facing both landowners and displaced workers on Ebeye. He identified early on the kinds of problems that would become greatly exacerbated in the decades to come. Tobin explained that "Failing the drastic measure of replacing the Marshallese Navy employees with American personnel, either service or civilian, so that they may return to their home atolls, other measures may be taken to improve conditions on Ebeye." According to Tobin, these measures included returning Marshallese islands that had been alienated by Japanese and/or American forces during the war to their former landowners, many of whom lived on Ebeye. 50 At this early stage Tobin had begun to identify Ebeye's fundamental problems as directly linked to U.S. acquisition of Marshallese lands and policies displacing Marshallese to Ebeye. For Ebeye landowners, the struggle to retain control over their land as growing numbers of Marshallese and other Micronesians arrived to work on Kwajalein would become increasingly difficult over time.

How landowners would accommodate Ebeye's growing population became a significant challenge during 1960s as the population rapidly increased due to labor migrations and additional military displacements. Alongside the 1964 Kwajalein lease

<sup>50</sup> Ihid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Tobin, Jack (District Anthropologist Marshall Islands). Ebeye Village: An Atypical Marshallese Community. Majuro, 1954. Pp. 30-31.

agreement, the army also signed an agreement that year to account for lease payments and relocation funding for a group of Marshallese living on several islands in central portion of Kwajalein Atoll. The army labeled these islands as residing in the Mid-Corridor, and marked the space an expanded missile impact zone. The Nike X Project Office, the Army Material Command, Kwajalein Test Site and the Trust Territory Government signed a memorandum of understanding on December 11, 1964 laying out the conditions for military takeover of this territory. These conditions included the displacement of those residing within these Mid-Corridor islands to Ebeye. The army couched the language of forced removal within the discourse of military concern for the "safety" of those Marshallese living in the missile-impact area, which required their evacuation to Ebeye. The memorandum also noted the relocation would be funded by the Nike X Project, which would compensate those evacuated for loss of copra income. The Nike X Project would also provide subsistence payments of \$25 per month for those who had been deriving their livelihood from these islands.

Pacific Historian David Hanlon explored how the Mid-Corridor displacements and compensation impacted Ebeye landowners in his work *Remaking Micronesia:*Discourses over Development in a Pacific Territory, 1944-1982. In his analysis, Hanlon traced how Mid-Corridor residents received a stipend and paid no rent on Ebeye. He explained that the conditions for their removal gave them "relative privilege" over those on Ebeye who lost their land without adequate compensation. <sup>53</sup> By 1969, after struggling for five years to survive on their meager stipend, the Mid-Corridor peoples re-occupied

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Memorandum of understanding by and between the Nike X Project Office, Army Material Command and Trust Territory. December 11, 1964. TTA, reel, no. 846.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> Hanlon, Remaking Micronesia, 195.

their home islands in the Mid-Corridor forcing the cancellation of two scheduled missile tests. Their protest, which served as a precursor to several sail-in occupations to follow in the 1970s and 1980s, influenced the U.S. government to increase compensation to \$420,000 per year. Hanlon explained how "All of this unsettled the Ebeye landowners, who now felt considerably more disadvantaged and discriminated against than their uninvited guests."54

Increased crowding on Ebeye came not solely through forced displacements and labor migrations but also from navy and coast guard land control over two thirds of the island since World War II. These land holdings left Ebeye landowners and Kwajalein laborers and their dependents, who constituted a population of approximately 1,200 by 1951, residing on less than 27 acres.<sup>55</sup> In 1959, the navy returned 39 acres to the Marshallese landowners. But this increase in land access was quickly offset by the additional Mid-Corridor displacements noted above. <sup>56</sup> While the 1964 Kwajalein lease included a small portion of land on Ebeye being used primarily by the coast guard, a more encompassing acquisition of land came through a 1966 program. The program constituted a collaborative effort by the Trust Territory Government and the Department of Defense to improve living conditions on Ebeye.

As Ebeye's inadequate infrastructure continued to deteriorate and the island experienced epidemic outbreaks during the early 1960s, the Trust Territory increasingly put pressure on the Army to support new housing and infrastructure on the island. The Trust Territory administration identified the military as directly responsible for Ebeye's density problems due to their continued displacements and labor recruitment for

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Ibid, 191.

<sup>56</sup> Ihid.

Kwajalein. The Trust Territory therefore insisted the Department of Defense fund a renovation and development project for Ebeve.<sup>57</sup> The 1966 project entailed a military investment of \$7 million to support a variety of works including the construction of 77 additional residential units, water and electricity systems and sewage facilities. These projects failed over time in part because the military planned the housing and infrastructure to accommodate an underestimated population of 2,500 people when the actual population by 1966 had reached 4,500.58

The army improvement plan also ignored Marshallese land customs and political and economic autonomy as the Defense Department stipulated none of its funding would support structures and utilities on Marshallese controlled land. According to Hanlon, to appease the Department of Defense, the Trust Territory government acquired control over all land on Ebeye through long-term lease agreements retained under the threat of eminent domain.<sup>59</sup> The Department of Defense demanded the Trust Territory government demolish all existing structures on the newly leased land without compensating landowners for destruction of their buildings. The Trust Territory displaced individuals inhabiting these structures to temporary quarters in already congested spaces on Ebeye. Hanlon concluded this project offered an "ironic twist to an already perverse, badly distorted situation."<sup>60</sup> He explained that the Trust Territory required Ebeye landowners to pay rent for using any new structures built on their land after implementation of the new leasing arrangement. The policy spurred disdain from all major landowners on Ebeye. Hanlon added, "All but one of the major landowners agreed to lease their land rather than

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Ibid, 193. <sup>58</sup> Ibid, 193-194.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Ibid. 195.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

face confiscation through eminent domain, there were bitter complaints about the low rental payments and the length of the lease."<sup>61</sup>

Responding to the threat of eminent domain and unjust compensation for land on Ebeye, Congressman Amata Kabua wrote a letter to the Attorney General and Ebeye Landowners from his position in the Marshall Islands Congress on April 4, 1966. Kabua's letter detailed the frustration of Ebeye landowners. He suggested the problem on Ebeye be looked into by the Congress of Micronesia to "study and set the procedures for any land matter by law."62 Kabua noted Ebeve landowners received eight dollars per month per acre of land, a payment too minimal to subsist upon. His analysis of land payments on Ebeye further illuminated how unjust the Kwajalein lease offer remained as well. In regards to Ebeye, Kabua stated, "Not counting the many landowners who utilize their land for their livelihood, just one single landowner cannot live on such an amount of rental for his acre of land."63 Kabua requested a review by the Congress of Micronesia and noted his regret "very much that the Administration has resorted to condemning private land at Ebeye and Kwajalein Atoll by the process of eminent domain, which I consider to be a punishment for the landowners who frankly informed the Administration that they could not live on \$8.00 per month for the less of their acre of land."64 He continued, "If a piece of land on Ebeye could be conveniently seized from its owner by legal means, same will hold true for thousand other pieces of land elsewhere in the Trust Territory."65

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Letter to the Attorney General and Landowners of Ebeye written by Congressman Amata Kabua on April

<sup>4, 1966.</sup> TTA, reel, no. 3849.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

Two weeks after Kabua wrote his letter, Ebeye landowner Handel Dribo sent correspondence to Trust Territory High Commissioner Goding expressing his concerns about his land on Ebeye. Dribo also sent a copy of his letter to the *Marshall Islands Journal*. In his letter, Dribo detailed how the Trust Territory Attorney General had recently visited Ebeye and communicated to Dribo that his 6.213 acres would be taken for construction purposes. He was told his land would be leased for 25 years and he would receive \$8.00 per acre per month. Dribo noted he wrote on behalf of himself and 130 others who shared ownership with him of this land. He stated the \$8.00 payment would not be sufficient for the majority of landowners to live on, especially since many of their dependents included children, mothers, elderly persons, and students. Dribo noted he had already given much of his land for public use for the Ebeye hospital, a church, a school and hospital employee housing. He continued on to state his request to retain these last acres so he could rent his property out to support the 130 people depending upon him.

Dribo's letter also pointed out that Marshallese landowners had already given the U.S. government 111 acres of land between Kwajalein and other islands in the atoll for military and government needs. Dribo wrote, "My people and I are very proud that our land has been able to be used by newcomers to Ebeye. We are also proud that we were able to give larger pieces of land to the United States Government for constructing means to hold the world peace." Dribo's statements echoed U.S. military discourse on the significance of Marshallese lands for the maintenance of global peace, a narrative with a deeper history in the Marshall Islands. This discursive history began with the first

 $<sup>^{66}</sup>$  Letter to High Commissioner Goding written by Handel Dribo on April 18, 1966. TTA, reel, no. 3849.  $^{67}$  Ihid

removal of the Bikinians in 1946 to enable U.S. nuclear testing on their homelands.

During these tests, the military described to the Bikinians--and to the world through video footage--that their sacrifice would be made "for the good of mankind." <sup>68</sup>

Dribo's request to use his property for profit constituted an early expression of Marshallese efforts to operate their own businesses on Ebeye. As will be explored later in this chapter, within two years' of Dribo's letter Kwajalein's Commanding Officer would chastise Marshallese workers for relying too heavily upon Kwajalein's resources and not adopting the same entrepreneurial attitude of those Americans on Kwajalein. Dribo's statements showed how Marshallese landowners in a position to create businesses on Ebeye had their efforts thwarted by Trust Territory land control policies early on. Dribo concluded his letter explaining he "did not understand that [he] could be caught in this 'Eminent Domain' law." He asked, "Just what will my people do now? We have no education-we have no power. We pray that God will give us an understanding of the right direction which we should now follow. We also wait upon the mercy of you, Mr. Goding, in your position of authority. We know that you have the ability and wisdom to help and advise us."

Dribo reflected upon this moment of powerlessness in keeping control over his land again ten years later during his 1976 testimony before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Territorial and Insular Affairs. In his statement, Dribo described how he lost his land a decade earlier after signing the Trust Territory lease. He stated, "The reason I gave my signature was out of some fear. There was a word that was used which is more fearful than a sword in my hearing. This is what they talked at me. If I refused to sign, they could

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> Niedenthal, For the Good of Mankind

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> Letter to High Commissioner Goding written by Handel Dribo on April 18, 1966. TTA, reel, no. 3849.

claim it by eminent domain. This was their weapon."<sup>71</sup> Echoing statements appearing earlier in this chapter by Amata Kabua and Ataji Balos, Dribo used his testimony to mark the history of U.S. intimidation and coercion as exemplified through this "weapon" of eminent domain. In so doing, Dribo challenged the legitimacy of leasing discourse in the Marshalls, unsettling U.S. efforts to naturalize this process as outside the realm of colonial land acquisition.

Critiques against the use of eminent domain on Ebeye also surfaced in a local news publication within the first couple years of this U.S. land acquisition policy. In 1968, a letter to the editor appearing in the Ebeye Voice addressed concerns about land rights on Ebeye. In his September 1968 letter, Hermios Kibin wrote, "Our islands in a sense belong to the Americans but we are alien to them. They can do anything they want under the present eminent domain law...How long the Demon-Law will exist is a question of time."<sup>72</sup> Kibin continued on to address how this law impacted the children of Ebeye landowners. He noted, "The younger generation who have land rights on Ebeye, Kwajalein and other islands involved live in constant fear of what will happen in the future...How much land will be fed to this greedy law in order to satisfy its need and what do we get for our precious land in return?"<sup>73</sup> As Kwajalein landowners took action in protest during the 1970s and 1980s to increase their lease compensation, Ebeye landowners would be by their side protesting land control policies on Ebeye and the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Statement of Handel Dribo, Landowner, in Marshallese and Translated by the Interpreter included in Hearings before the Subcommittee on Territorial and Insular Affairs on the Current Problems in the Marshall Islands held on Ebeye, July 13, 1976 and Majuro, July 14, 1976.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Letter to the editor from Hermios Kibin appearing in the *Ebeye Voice* on September 2, 1968. TTA, reel, no. 991. <sup>73</sup> Ibid.

island's deteriorating living conditions.<sup>74</sup> That history will be traced further in chapter eight.

## Kwajalein's Built Environment: Erecting Missile Technology Amidst Suburbia

Having explored how discourse on leasing and eminent domain policies worked to obscure the colonial nature of U.S. land acquisition in the Marshall Islands, this next section shifts to investigate another element of Kwajalein and Ebeye's land development under U.S. administration. The first part of this section explores infrastructure and facilities built upon Kwajalein's newly leased lands. The second part considers divergences in the histories of investment and built environment planning on Kwajalein and Ebeye. I argue the initial displacement of Marshallese from Kwajalein to Ebeye and the continuity of the structure of segregation between the two islands allowed the military to take minimal accountability for how infrastructure evolved on Ebeye. By keeping Kwajalein an exclusive American space, the military could focus on investing in quality of life facilities and suburban planning alongside missile testing facility development.

While Ebeye's population grew in direct relation to the U.S. military presence on Kwajalein, the responsibility for planning and constructing infrastructure on Ebeye fell onto the Trust Territory government. Examining more closely this separation of responsibility for each island offers a concrete example of the incompatibility of the Trusteeship Agreement's articles five and six discussed in chapter one. As noted in that chapter, these two directives gave the military the freedom to use Micronesian islands for base development and the Trust Territory the responsibility to protect Micronesians from

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> The overlap in landownership across multiple islands throughout Kwajalein Atoll should be noted here. Some landowners retained land parcels on both the islands of Kwajalein and Ebeye as well as other islands throughout the atoll.

land loss and support them towards self-government. The separation of responsibilities offered in some ways a clever if not disgusting solution to the incompatibility of Trusteeship Agreement goals. That separation empowered the army to take on one responsibility; the Trust Territory government the other. The catch came however through the army's fulfillment of one goal creating a barrier for the Trust Territory government carrying out the other.

The military's lack of adequate investments on Ebeye over time also reflected the army's valuing its American labor force over its Micronesian service sector, both of which the military depended upon to maintain operations on Kwajalein. Since the end of World War II when the navy recruited Micronesians to help clean up Kwajalein through the next six decades to today, the Micronesian labor force has consistently comprised at least a quarter of those individuals working on Kwajalein. During this period, Micronesian labor numbers increased and decreased alongside those of the American workforce, and have remained an uninterrupted crucial component to the operation of civilian life and missile testing on Kwajalein. As Kwajalein Senator Tony de Brum noted in our May 2010 interview, Kwajalein needs Marshallese labor. He added he would like to see Kwajalein try to test its missiles without them.<sup>75</sup> A recent discussion with a civilian on Kwajalein who wished to remain anonymous further exemplified this dependency. She described how following 9/11, the military banned Marshallese laborers from coming to Kwajalein for security reasons. Within a day of the ban, the army reversed this decision given the detrimental impact of one day of life on Kwajalein without Marshallese workers. While many have argued that Ebeye and the lifestyles of Marshallese and other Micronesians on the island would not exist without Kwajalein, the

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 $<sup>^{75}</sup>$  Interview with Senator Tony de Brum in May 3, 2010. Majuro, Marshall Islands.

opposite is true as well. Kwajalein and American life on the island alongside missile operations could not exist without Ebeye. This fact has never been greatly acknowledged by the military and has remained downplayed in historic studies of the islands.

Kwajalein historically depended upon both labor from Ebeye and the island's space as a repository for all islanders the military displaced. While the military may not have expressed appreciation for Marshallese labor on Kwajalein--just as many Americans in the U.S. have historically devalued service labor in a manner also informed by the racialized nature of the service economy-- the military has never attempted to recruit other Americans to fill their service labor needs on Kwajalein. Despite this reality of *inter*dependence and the history of Kwajalein and Ebeye's relational development over time, the military has only begrudgingly on rare occasion acknowledged any responsibility for life on Ebeye. The final portion of this chapter explores military discourse and policies narrating their perceived relationship to Ebeye. The military narrated its responsibility towards Ebeye, or lack thereof, through Trusteeship Agreement discourse positioning the military's role in contrast to that of the Trust Territory government in Micronesia.

That the military depended upon the displaced Marshallese labor force and acted with no responsibility towards this service sector brought into focus the racialized class inequalities informing U.S. imperial policy across Micronesia. On the surface the pattern of segregation between Kwajalein's racialized service sector and the American family community suggested parallels with the history of racialized class systems in the United States, particularly as these structures took shape mapping the continent along urban suburban divides. This post-World War II racial and spatial pattern in the United States

built upon existing racialized class divisions to mark new patterns of suburban residency and family life in contrast to racialized urban centers of labor. On Kwajalein, the military painted this urban suburban portrait atop a colonial canvass linked to a structure of racialized inequality informing U.S. imperial power across Micronesia.

Kwajalein and Ebeye's divergent landscapes exemplified a spatial and cultural U.S. Cold War moment as the army designed Kwajalein for suburban family residency while both army and Trust Territory officials neglected to plan Ebeye's urban community. Kwajalein's thoughtful design and construction and Ebeye's lack thereof reflected contrasting employment recruitment strategies on each island. The army defended its investments in suburban design and various quality of life facilities on Kwajalein as necessary to recruit and retain the nation's top scientists and engineers to operate the island's missile range. The army did not view the same quality of life facilities or even sustainability of life amenities as essential for the recruitment or maintenance of service workers on Ebeye. Many Marshallese and other Micronesians came to Ebeye in search of work on Kwajalein without the lure of such luxuries and comforts. These workers remained excluded from residency on Kwajalein. The army narrated this labor presence on Ebeye as that of individuals not entitled to the same quality of life fitting Kwajalein's American workers. Instead, the army relegated its service workforce to a space just tolerable enough to enable those employed to continue their work duties on Kwajalein.

Because the military expressed little sense of responsibility for its service workers on Ebeye and thus invested minimally in their well being, tension developed over time between the Trust Territory government and the Department of Defense. Trust Territory administrators foot the bill for worsening conditions on Ebeye and often viewed Ebeye's

problems as directly caused by the presence of the military on Kwajalein. For the military, segregation between Kwajalein and Ebeye embodied one solution to the conflicting goals of the Trusteeship Agreement. These goals included the military directive to use Trust Territory lands for military base development to promote national and global security and the Trust Territory responsibility to support Micronesians towards self-government. By banning Micronesian residency from Kwajalein, the army could use the island to fulfill its military mission. Likewise, Ebeye could remain the space in which Trust Territory administrators could carry out their directive to support Micronesians toward self-government.

Designating the Trust Territory as responsible for Ebeye residents would constitute the army's first line of defense as they came under attack for the deteriorating conditions on Ebeye over time. When pressured by the Trust Territory to recognize their culpability in how life evolved on Ebeye, military officials often responded by comparing Ebeye's amenities and wages to what they perceived as the outer islands' relative deprivation. Many Marshallese had moved to Ebeye from these outer islands. When the army eventually offered minimal support to Ebeye, they did so in a way that stressed the charitable nature of these offerings. The military narrated its investments as acts of kindness from a friendly neighbor or sacred trustee, rather than entitlements for those displaced by the military and those providing Kwajalein's necessary service labor.

This chapter turns now to explore the history of military investment and planning on Kwajalein, to be followed by a comparative section on Trust Territory and military investment and planning on Ebeye. The military organized Kwajalein's planning and design to balance island space between missile technology and suburban family

by keeping their families comfortable and secure. The resulting built environment reflected a Cold War suburban model of security and surveillance. Kwajalein's suburbia resided within view of the towering structures of military radars and missile launch pads. This setting marked the island a unique space illuminating how Cold War suburban spatial transformations provided a frontier of security protecting insecure white Americans from dual threats of nuclear devastation and racialized urban contamination.<sup>76</sup>

The built environment on Kwajalein identified the looming threat of mutually assured destruction and the solution to this insecurity found in the maintenance of order through controlled suburban domesticity. By creating this familiar space of American familial domesticity in the Marshall Islands, the military designated Kwajalein as part of the national domestic as well. Americans arriving to work on Kwajalein came to a space marked as within the U.S. interior; a part of the national domestic residing amidst the Micronesian foreign. Cold War insecurity focused on the threat to the U.S. nation-state and emphasized the protection of legitimated U.S. families (white, heteronormative, middle class) to protect the nation-state.<sup>77</sup> Kwajalein represented one part of this national project backed by the nation-state and the imperial state's reinforcement of this domesticity abroad in a colonial domain. The military policed the borders of this

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> Here I am drawing upon the work of Elaine Tyler May who has explored the discourse of "containment" and how the suburban domesticity symbolized a space of retreat from Cold War threats through the protection of gender roles, alongside works in urban history by Thomas Sugrue and David Freund that have focused more on post-World War II suburbia reflecting spaces of property protection and retreat from racialized urban threats.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> Again here I am drawing primarily upon the work of Elaine Tyler May, but also in thinking about the relationship of the nation-state with the imperial-state, alongside the domestic and the foreign, I am drawing upon the work of Matthew Frye Jacobson and Sarita See who both have explored questions of foreign and domestic, through studies on U.S. imperialism.

colonized space, protecting Kwajalein against penetration by soviet missiles and Ebeye's racialized urban others.

In order to understand the broader history of Kwajalein's suburban built environment emerging during the 1960s, this next section first reviews World War II destruction and postwar construction on Kwajalein. As chapter one discussed, Kwajalein Island remained among the mostly heavily bombed wartime targets in the Pacific. Following the war, naval construction units and Micronesian laborers helped clear debris and ordinance from the island and built facilities like hospitals, barracks and storage and garrison units. Many buildings constructed in the postwar period would have been used to support military and scientist communities based on Kwajalein operating the nuclear testing campaign in the Northern Marshalls from 1946 to 1958.<sup>78</sup> During the first six years following the war, the United States military also physically expanded the island by filling in the shallow beach areas along the lagoon side to expand the original shoreline by 200 yards. <sup>79</sup> This first land expansion informed a practice that would continue for the next five decades. During this period the military continually enlarged the island's land mass by dredging the lagoon and blasting out coral rock from the reef.<sup>80</sup> As Pacific Scholar Gregory Dvorak emphasized in 2004 Master's Thesis, Kwajalein's built environment supporting missile operations and residential living on Kwajalein emerged alongside the physical production of more land on the island upon which these facilities could be constructed.<sup>81</sup> The majority of Kwajalein's initial support facilities were built

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Kwajalein Missile Range: Analysis of Existing Facilities, Ballistic Missile Defense System Command, U.S. Army, prepared by Production Engineering Control Department, Global Associates, 1982, TTA, reel no. 2197. Pp.4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> Sims, Kwajalein Remembered, 37.

<sup>81</sup> Dvorak, Remapping Home

between 1951 and 1956 when base activity surged due to the island's position along supply routes to Korea and continued support for the navy's atomic testing in the Northern Marshalls. 82 Construction during this period included family residential units, bachelors' quarters, swimming pools, tennis courts, the air terminal, a fire station, a mess hall and movie theaters. 83

In 1959, following the conclusion of atomic testing in the Marshalls, the military designated Kwajalein its newest missile-testing site. Upon this designation, construction on the island underwent a massive boom, encompassing what would become a multibillion dollar missile complex and expansive suburban residential and recreation facilities. For those fortunate enough to win construction contracts on Kwajalein, the development of the world class Nike Zeus missile facility would prove a lucrative endeavor. The Honolulu Engineering District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers captured the primary contract, which by June 1962 with a substantial portion of the Nike Zeus facilities complete totaled over fifty-five million dollars. Another construction contractor, Pacific Martin Zachary, won a fifteen million dollar contract to construct additional support facilities on Kwajalein that included fresh and saltwater systems, bachelor quarters and a school for the children of incoming scientists and engineers.

With the initial round of missile facility construction complete, Kwajalein made history by launching the first successful missile interception in July 1962. The Nike Zeus missile was fired from the island at an intercontinental ballistic missile launched from

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>82</sup> Kwajalein Missile Range: Analysis of Existing Facilities, Ballistic Missile Defense System Command, U.S. Army, prepared by Production Engineering Control Department, Global Associates, 1982, TTA, reel no. 2197. Pp.5.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

Vandenberg Air Force Base 5,000 miles away in California. The success of the Nike Zeus interception led to an expansion of the missile range as the Department of Defense quickly decided the Nike Zeus would no longer serve as Kwajalein's primary missile technology. Instead the Nike Zeus would function to inform the construction of a more sophisticated missile operation called the Nike X. See Alongside the decision to enhance missile technology strategies, the Kwajalein missile range transferred from naval to army administration in 1964. The expansion of Nike X missile facilities led to further displacements of Marshallese living within Kwajalein Atoll in areas marked as targets for incoming Nike X missiles. The army's displacement of Marshallese from Lib Island and the Mid-Corridor were discussed earlier in this chapter. The Army Military Command detailed the "evacuation of indigenous residents" from these areas of Kwajalein Atoll as necessary and assured the Trust Territory government that accommodations would be made for these islanders on Ebeye.

As Kwajalein's missile facilities expanded to include more advanced radars and satellites capable of tracking and targeting intercontinental ballistic missiles launched from within and outside the atmosphere, the residential and recreational landscape of the island simultaneously developed into an increasingly accommodating space. Between 1967 and 1968 construction on Kwajalein included more bachelor quarters, hospital additions, high school buildings and expansions on the elementary school, causing one military official to reflect on the island's miraculous transformation. The official noted,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup> "A Small Pamphlet on the Nike-X Project on Kwajalein Island, Marshalls," October 10, 1964, TTA, reel no. 993.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid

"from the scarred battleground of 1944, Kwajalein [became] a clean, modern, attractive, self-contained community closely resembling most small modern American cities." 89

With Kwaialein's initial phase of missile and residential facility construction underway in the 1960s, civilian contractor employees arrived with their families to settle on the island and support the Nike Zeus and Nike X operations. Military and civilian contractor manuals, alongside on-site tours, welcomed incoming personnel to the island, offering guidance on how to move through this unique military suburban space. The military implemented protective restrictions on missile facilities early on, including security fencing around radar transmitters with special tunnels built to secure personnel walking through the facilities. Some buildings even contained metal coverings built onto the outside to protect those inside from the impact of missile radars. 90 Despite the apparent risks involved in operating such facilities, enthusiasm for the sophistication of the Nike X missile technology abounded and came through in one introductory pamphlet published for incoming personnel in 1964. The pamphlet detailed how Nike X remapped space on Kwajalein stating, "with the advent of the Nike X-era in its history, Kwajalein is changing. Soon the shapes of new buildings will loom where before there was nothing but coral reef and water, or dense jungle." The pamphlet continued on to detail the missile system's capability to intercept missiles traveling at 17,000 miles an hour across 10,000 miles distance. The pamphlet added that the Nike X could attack multiple missiles deployed at one time and distinguish between accompanying decoys. 92

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

The army's naming of the missiles and its accompanying support structures after Greek gods exemplified the reverence accorded to the emerging complex of missile technology erected on Kwajalein. The Nike Zeus combined the names Nike, the Greek goddess of victory, and Zeus, the king of all gods. That Zeus resided over Mount Olympus in ancient Greek mythology, and Kwajalein's missiles launched from a 65-foot, man-made hill called "Mount Olympus" gestured to an emerging empire drawing upon narratives from an ancient one, and the god-like status given to this Cold War technology. <sup>93</sup> Earlier missiles preceding the Nike Zeus operation also drew upon ancient Greek names and included the missiles Spartan and Ajax. <sup>94</sup>

In addition to narrating Kwajalein's missile complex through the discourse of ancient Greece, the Nike X pamphlet drew upon Cold War science fiction narratives that feared and celebrated the role technology could play in either destroying or saving humankind. Through an anthropomorphic description of Kwajalein's missile testing structures, the Nike X pamphlet concluded by noting that "the eyes of the [missile radar] someday will sweep the skies above the Pacific and Sprint missiles will roar into the blue in quest of targets...It is our hope that someday an "X" in the sky above Kwajalein, as the paths of defensive and offensive missiles cross [will] signal the successful development of Nike X." The pamphlet's description conveyed a Marvel comic book like sequence in which the missiles themselves took on a superhero persona, patrolling the sky for targets, protecting those below and leaving in their path the mark of their identity for all to see.

Kwajalein's missile facilities dotted the island with a fantastical futuristic landscape where national and global security remained linked to the effective operation

94 Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

of these weapons. Likewise, Kwajalein's suburban structures marked the island with an atmosphere of security rooted in American domesticity. As missile structures militarily protected the national state from Soviet aggression, suburban structures also protected American families from foreign threats. Palm tree lined row housing insulated these families within a space of domesticity distancing them from all that remained foreign. 96 On Kwajalein, foreign threats included infiltration by the Soviets and Ebeye's racialized urban others. Kwajalein's role in missile technology development positioned the island as a potential target for comparable Soviet missile deployments. This fear would have been exacerbated during the 1960s amidst the broader context pressuring Kwajalein's engineers to quickly step up their game in the Cold War arm's race. Many contractors likely arrived to Kwajalein with the Cuban missile crisis fresh in their minds as well as the Soviet launch of Sputnik. Cold War discourse of mutually assured destruction informed regulations governing life on Kwajalein, contributing to a paradoxical setting promoted as secure suburban domesticity amidst overarching foreign threats.

While military and civilian contractor manuals narrated Kwajalein as a safe island suburb ideal for raising a family, in effect incoming employees and their dependents were sitting ducks. They settled into an environment only as safe and secure as the accuracy of those operating the missile range on Kwajalein and at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. The military chose Kwajalein to be the target of missile launches partly because the region was identified as having a small population, alleviating the problem of launching intercontinental ballistic missiles over large population centers in the United States. A 1994 military report on Kwajalein reflected upon this early decision to select

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> Again here I am drawing upon the work of Elaine Tyler May, Matthew Frye Jacobson and Sarita See through their studies of domesticity and the foreign and using their work to think more about these issues with the Cold War imperial context.

the island for the missile tests. The report noted that Kwajalein's "remote location with extremely sparse population [provided] a safe and secure environment for test operations." <sup>97</sup>

The identification of the Marshall Islands as militarily strategic due to its "sparse population" also informed the 1946 selection of Bikini Island to be the target of the nuclear testing campaign. These decisions comprised one part of a larger Cold War colonial logic that calculated potential loss of human life quantitatively and qualitatively. This mentality considered the sacrifice of the few for the benefit of the many as necessary. How this remained qualitative *and* quantitative is suggested by the fact that military decisions never seemed to locate "those few" in places like Washington D.C. Instead, the military selected lands of colonized and racialized populations relatively powerless to prevent U.S. encroachment into their territories to develop Cold War weaponry.

Those living and working on Kwajalein would have likely experienced both awe and admiration of the built environment of missile technology alongside an awareness of the risks involved in living among this "sparse population." Reminders of this dual reality came through in introductory manuals welcoming personnel to Kwajalein while informing them of the island's rules and regulations. One visitor welcome guide included a section entitled, "take cover," and indicated that during certain "technical operations on the island" all individuals, except authorized personnel, must "take cover." Other

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> United States Army Kwajalein Atoll, published by U.S. Army Space and Strategic Defense Command, 1994. Located at Gov. Docs, UH Manoa.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>98</sup> "A Guide to Kwajalein," Prepared by the Kwajalein Office of the Defense Information Office, Bell Telephone Laboratories, September 1, 1966, TTA, reel no. 993. This guide is part of a larger file labeled "A Publication on the Nike-X Kwajalein Test Site."

operations required "lights out." The manuals encouraged those visiting or living on Kwajalein to consult the island's daily newspaper to keep informed of all designated safe areas and rules to be followed during these various operations. 100

Kwajalein's scientists and engineers constituted an elite cohort given the opportunity to participate in these missile "operations" in a way that few of their counterparts could in the United States. They had the unique experience of witnessing and surviving the deployment and interception of missiles in close proximity. As noted in a Bell Laboratories retrospective report commemorating Kwajalein's employees, "by any conceivable standard, the Kwajalein experience was an extraordinary one." The report continued on to note that "in a defense program broadly concerned with what is referred to as the 'unthinkable,' many people worked exclusively with hypothesis and prediction-except at Kwajalein... [where] the countdowns were real, the engagements were live, and the results--far from being theoretical--were concrete and clear." The risks involved in these "concrete" operations would have placed unimaginable pressure on those operating the missile facilities, many of whose families resided in the island's supposedly safe suburban realm located in close proximity to possible missile testing errors.

In addition to unsettling fears accompanying the inherent risks of residing within a space of Cold War missile testing, employee guidebooks warned personnel of the risk of sabotage and espionage. Kwajalein's looming radars and missile structures alongside clean and orderly suburban housing characterized the island as a space of surveillance.

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>101</sup> A 104-page report/narrative on the experience at Kwajalein for Bell Laboratories employees between 1960 and 1975. Published circa 1975. Report is prefaced by C.A. Warren, Executive Director of SAFEGUARD Division of Bell Laboratories and was obtained at the Archive Repository National Register, National Historic Landmarks in a folder labeled "Kwajalein Island Battlefield," in Washington D.C. Pp.1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>102</sup> Ibid.

Introductory manuals identified the threat of espionage as one reason the military selected this isolated island for weapons development. One manual addressed this advantage by highlighting Kwajalein's "natural security provided by the deep ocean that surrounds the lagoon and prevents recovery of missile test debris by unauthorized sources." Kwajalein's security maintained through erected structures was reinforced by the depth of its lagoon offering further isolation and protection.

Welcome manuals also informed employees that they themselves embodied a potential threat within this space of risk and thus needed reminding of their roles in reinforcing the island's security. A Transport Company of Texas welcome guide informed incoming personnel of the importance of their role on Kwajalein in maintaining the confidentiality of the island's larger Cold War mission. The guide noted that personnel working at the missile facilities would be informed about upcoming firing dates and procedures or other classified information and they needed to keep this information secret. The guide added, "all missile operations are of a highly classified nature, and by repeating any information, no matter how seemingly unimportant, you could unwittingly aid a hostile espionage agent." Another military manual produced in the 1980s as a guide for incoming temporary employees stressed the importance of confidentiality on Kwajalein. The guide evoked a seemingly "big brother" like surveillance discourse. The manual stated that as personnel on Kwajalein, employees

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> United States Army Kwajalein Atoll, published by U.S. Army Space and Strategic Defense Command, 1994. Located at Gov. Docs, UH Manoa. Pp. 12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>104</sup> "Welcome to Kwajalein," Transport Company of Texas, published circa 1963-1964. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

could "overhear technical conversations of a sensitive nature," and warned employees against repeating these conversations to anyone other than authorized personnel.<sup>105</sup>

Having surveyed the discourse of fear and insecurity informing the built environment on Kwajalein, this section turns now to review some exemplary investment figures funding these structures. As documented by the U.S. Army Space and Strategic Defense Command, Kwajalein's value had reached \$4 billion by 1994. The island's suburban amenities had grown over time to include a golf course, two swimming pools, a bowling alley, two movie theaters, a youth center, softball fields, a skate park, racquet ball and tennis courts and a library stocked with over 10,000 books, among countless other quality of life facilities. 107 A 1988 design guide for the island applauded the benefits over time of continued investments and maintenance on Kwajalein. The guide laid out a plan for imagining innovative and exciting ways of continuing to improve on Kwajalein's remarkable visual landscape. This Kwajalein design guide produced by CH2M Hill and Belt Collins Associates for the Army Corps of Engineers in Honolulu highlighted the thoughtful consideration and creativity informing the visual landscape of Kwajalein over the years. The guide noted the plan to continue to this approach adding that "By improving the visual environment on Kwajalein the quality of life will also be improved." The manual described Kwajalein's existing housing area through "roadways [that] are tree lined with meandering walk and bikeways." 109

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>105</sup> General Information for Visitor and TDY Personnel Arriving Kwajalein Missile Range, prepared by EC Services Company, 1988. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>106</sup> United States Army Kwajalein Atoll, published by U.S. Army Space and Strategic Defense Command, 1994. Located at Gov. Docs, UH Manoa.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid

Design Guide Installation Exterior Design Theme and Guidelines, Pacific Ocean Division, U.S. Army
 Corps of Engineers, prepared by: CH2M Hill and Belt Collins and Associates. April 1988.
 Ibid.

The design guide for Kwajalein identified several areas to be upgraded, but also indicated the current planning greatly benefited from and built upon the years of continued attention to facility improvements that had prioritized the visual landscape. The guide stated, "The airport terminal, for example, has been replanted with coconut palms and several roadways are tree lined with grassed open areas. Buildings, street furniture, and signage are periodically upgraded by resurfacing and repainting." An additional theme designers planned to improve upon was the "downtown" area of the island. The guide detailed a "design theme for the commercial/downtown area... to create a more visually attractive environment based on the existing physical setting along with the development of the central business area into a 'mall-like' appearance." The inclusion of "mall-like" shopping on Kwajalein echoed the relationship between postwar U.S. suburbanization and the emergence of suburban "mall" style consumerism that scholars of suburban history and American consumerism have begun tracing in recent decades.

The Kwajalein design guide acknowledged the history of continued investments on the island that created a visually comforting experience for American families.

Investments in suburban luxuries on Kwajalein historically accompanied investments in military technology. Noteworthy among Kwajalein's early investments was the power capacity created on the island to operate cutting edge missile technology. A reference appearing in a 1964 pamphlet on the Nike-X project boasted this capacity. The pamphlet explained that "The ZAR and the Battery areas have separate power plants, which

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>112</sup> For more on this topic, see Lizabeth Cohen's A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America (New York: Vintage Books, 2003) and Michael Sorkin's edited collection Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space (New York: Hill & Wang, 1992).

together could provide enough power for a town of 22,000 people." These power plants exemplified the stark contrast between Kwajalein and Ebeye's investment histories. The striking technological feat of this 1964 radar operated within three miles of Ebeye, which has experienced frequent power outages since the 1950s through today. Where Kwajalein's history of investments provided Americans the privilege of access to sufficient clean water, Marshallese workers continue today to lug empty water jugs with them to work daily. These jugs enable workers to bring Kwajalein's water home to Ebeye, which has historically and continuously lacked the infrastructure to provide enough clean water for the island's population. The remainder of this chapter investigates how and why the investment, planning and design of Ebeye's built environment so dramatically diverged from that of Kwajalein's.

## **Ebeye's Built Environment: The U.S. Colonial Blame Game**

Having explored where multiple billions of dollars of investments went on Kwajalein, this chapter turns now to examine military responses to Trust Territory government requests to share Ebeye's infrastructure costs. As this final section reveals, Trust Territory and army officials historically engaged in a colonial finger-pointing game when it came to responsibility for Ebeye's infrastructure. Both arms of the U.S. Empire in the Trust Territory scapegoated each other for Ebeye's increasingly deteriorated conditions. In doing so, each allowed Ebeye's crumbling infrastructure to reach crisis levels exacting unnecessary challenges for those Marshallese trying to survive on the island.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>113</sup> "A Small Pamphlet on the Nike-X Project on Kwajalein Island, Marshalls," October 10, 1964, TTA, reel no. 993.

A December 1963 report from the Joint Kwajalein Study Group commissioned to analyze the Nike Zeus and Nike X projects' impact on Marshallese within Kwajalein Atoll included details on an Ebeye improvement program. Examining the Department of Defense response to Trust Territory High Commissioner suggestions on how the military could assist in this program illuminated the military's approach to its responsibilities on Ebeye. The response showed that despite millions of dollars being invested on Kwajalein for suburban quality of life facilities and defense technology, when it came to supporting mere sustainable living requirements on Ebeye the military's wallet remained tightly gripped. 114 This pattern of military penny pinching when it came to Ebeye's infrastructure could be traced back to the initial displacement of the Micronesian labor camp in 1951. The navy arranged the labor camp's removal as a cost-sharing endeavor between the Trust Territory and the navy. The removal project included the construction of five housing units, a cookhouse, and a barracks for single male laborers on Ebeye. This construction constituted a shared expense of approximately \$38,600, with \$15,000 coming from the Trust Territory. 115

Marshall Islands District Anthropologist Jack Tobin commented upon the apparent inadequacy of this dual investment in his 1954 *Ebeye Village: An Atypical Marshallese Community*. Tobin described the new labor camp as a "shanty town" in appearance given the seeming lack of investment in sufficient facilities for those displaced to Ebeye. Tobin detailed early construction as unmatched with population demands on the island. This construction included wooden houses that measured only 30'

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>114</sup> Report of Joint Study Group on the Impact of Nike-Zeus and Nike-X Planning on Marshallese Population on Kwajalein Atoll. December 6, 1963. TTA, reel, no. 512.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>115</sup>Richard, United States Naval Administration, 559.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>116</sup> Tobin, Jack (District Anthropologist Marshall Islands). *Ebeye Village: An Atypical Marshallese Community*. Majuro, 1954. Pp. 9-10.

x16' with a maximum height of 8' divided into two separate units. 117 Tobin's analysis continued also cited the limited finances available to the Trust Territory government, which was forced to "bear the burden of supporting Ebeye which is essentially the Navy Labor Camp for NOB [Naval Operating Base] Kwajalein." Tobin concluded his analysis asking, "Would it not be equitable for the Navy with their huge budget to at least underwrite the ground rent of Ebeye?"<sup>119</sup> By the time the 1963 Joint Kwajalein Study Group Report came out, appendices detailed the existing infrastructure conditions on Ebeye as continuing along this same vein of minimal investments from these earlier years. By 1963, the report detailed, "Existing housing on Ebeye consists mainly of small one or two room houses constructed from surplus materials with numerous small out buildings." 120 The report continued, "The walls on some are from old crating materials. Roofs are sheet metal or wood."<sup>121</sup>

As Ebeye's population density surpassed the bounds of the island's deteriorating infrastructure and crises level disease and illnesses spread across the island, tensions increased between the Trust Territory and the Department of Defense regarding their relative responsibilities to the island. An April 1964 conference in Honolulu attended by representatives from the Trust Territory, the Army, and the Marshall Islands Congress on the topic of Ebeye illuminated these tensions. Army Colonel Roedy chaired the meeting, while a Trust Territory representative recorded the minutes. The conference minutes revealed the Trust Territory critique of the military's unwillingness to adequately fund

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>117</sup> Ibid, 19. <sup>118</sup> Ibid, 29

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>121</sup> Report of Joint Study Group on the Impact of Nike-Zeus and Nike-X Planning on Marshallese Population on Kwajalein Atoll. December 6, 1963. TTA, reel, no. 512.

and take responsibility for problems on Ebeye. A Department of Interior representative echoed this concern stating the Department of Defense "must use standards of construction on Ebeye that will not introduce additional problems to the Ebeye people." The representative continued to note, "the Department of Defense must recognize its responsibility for properly supporting the Ebeye economy which is so closely tied to Missile Range activities on Kwajalein." The representative marked the military's role in contributing to Ebeye's existing conditions. He concluded, "The defense activities have caused the problem. Therefore, the defense activities should solve the problem, with money limitations as a secondary consideration." Ultimately, the military invested a total of \$7 million in a one-time improvement program in 1964. The program, detailed earlier in this chapter for its use of eminent domain on Ebeye, offered short-term improvement to island conditions due to an underestimation of population numbers.

A December 1965 meeting to discuss the details of the Ebeye Improvement Program exemplified further the military's frugality when it came to imagining how to fund improvements on Ebeye. Led by the Commanding Officer of Kwajalein Test Site Colonel M.D. Clark, the meeting also included representatives from the Trust Territory Government, the Nike X Project and the Honolulu Engineer District. While billions of dollars continued to be channeled towards improving quality of life facilities and instruments of mass destruction on Kwajalein, the military's stance when it came to Ebeye reflected a zero sum game mentality. As narrated by the military, if families on

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>122</sup> Report including excerpts from meeting minutes sent in correspondence from Attorney General R.K. Shoecraft to High Commissioner re: Conference at Honolulu Re Ebeye, sent May 4, 1964. TTA, reel, no. 486.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

Ebeye received kitchen cabinets in their homes from the army then they should forgo another housing amenity to keep costs down. This perspective came through in discussions on budgetary constraints at the meeting. Honolulu Engineer District representative Mr. Matthews addressed limited funding when he noted the improvement program's overall cost would be increased by a quarter million dollars if planners entertained the idea of including porches on Ebeye houses. He added that these and other housing luxuries proved very expensive and funding for such housing improvements would have to be obtained through reductions in other project areas. Kwajalein Lt. Col. Durham reinforced this zero sum mentality when he suggested eliminating kitchen cabinets in the homes, which cost \$200 each for 280 units, in order to save the military approximately \$56,000. 125 Lt. Col. Durham noted this resulting cost savings could then be applied to increasing electrical wiring capacity in the houses.

Concern about the military's inadequate funding in meeting Ebeye's pressing infrastructure needs came through in a letter from the Assistant Commissioner of Community Services on March 28, 1966. Coauthored by the Acting Assistant Commissioner in Administration to the High Commissioner, the letter condemned the Trust Territory and Department of Interior for signing off on the army's improvement plan for Ebeye. The letter described the plan as one that could "only result in exceedingly substandard housing which will, in effect, exchange the current Pacific slum for a Pacific tenement." The letter detailed specific concerns that included living units of 600 square feet considered adequate housing for families of up to twelve residents and only one fresh

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>125</sup> Meeting of 9 December 1965 on Ebeye Improvement Program included in file with Report on Ebeye Improvement Program, master construction plan 1963-1966. TTA, reel, no. 512.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>126</sup> Letter from Assistant Commissioner, Community Services and Acting Assistant Commissioner, Administration to the High Commissioner re: Ebeye planning written March 28, 1968. TTA, reel, no. 987.

water outlet in each unit located in the shower leaving no water outlet for the kitchen. The letter also identified kitchen plans having no waste water disposal system or sinks and limited electrical installation that would likely become overloaded in time. The letter explained, "The inadequacies of the housing...the inadequacy of the electrical power generation, is such that the Trust Territory is literally buying an exceedingly expensive maintenance problem for an indefinite number of years." The letter continued on to state, "We fully expect that the crowded conditions due to the inadequate size of the apartments and the shocking lack of sanitary disposal systems for waste water will contribute heavily to rapid spread of respiratory infections, as well as gastroenteric infections." 128 This lack of funding and foresight on Ebeye occurred three miles from where the same military was funding some of the most technologically sophisticated missile devices alongside construction and maintenance of a luxurious suburban setting.

The structural continuity of segregation between Kwajalein and Ebeye helped naturalize the military's lack of accountability to those Marshallese they displaced to enable missile testing and the workers fueling Kwajalein's service sector. This physical separation between these two groups of Kwajalein employees made it easier for the army to point the finger at the Trust Territory as responsible for the group living on Ebeye. On the rare occasion that military funds went toward improvements on Ebeye, the army characterized these investments as charitable contributions. The army couched its descriptions of investments on Ebeye in a language of gifts rather than entitlements. Army contributions to Ebeye constituted welfare to needy people rather than

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

compensation for colonial displacements or concern about living conditions within which a significant component of Kwajalein's laborers were forced to reside.

The army's welfare and charity discourse marked Micronesians as less deserving of the kinds of housing and family structures the army narrated as entitlements for Americans on Kwajalein. But in fact, if welfare implies subsidized living, then Kwajalein's American employees fit this category much more closely than the island's workforce living on Ebeye. Americans arrived to Kwajalein to live in subsidized housing, with access to tax-free food and other commercial goods as well as a host of free amenities and recreational activities. A recent discussion with a young woman living on Kwajalein, who wished to remain anonymous, indicated this subsidized lifestyle continued to lure younger Americans to work on Kwajalein today. She explained how the island's financial structure proved a quick way to save money and pay off debt. While Kwajalein's subsidized lifestyle could be categorized as a form of welfare, the army only framed contributions to Ebeye through this narrative.

Military leaders repeatedly framed investments and support on Ebeye as charity. Correspondence from Colonel Donald B. Millar to Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of International Security Affairs R. Earle II further revealed this pattern through Millar's listing of Kwajalein's annual support services offered to Ebeye. In the October 1968 correspondence, Millar prefaced this list by noting, "We have very close daily association with the Marshallese, which has developed mutual respect and admiration, appreciation of customs and tradition and possibly the best of all, a close bondage of personal

friendship."<sup>129</sup> He continued, "Our help and assistance is offered not by direction or out of cold necessity, but through genuine interest, brotherhood and humanity."<sup>130</sup> Millar's summary of support services provided to Marshallese by Kwajalein included "scheduled ferry boat service (Tarlang), twice daily, six days a week, between Kwajalein and Ebeye."<sup>131</sup> Identifying ferry service as among the army's "help and assistance" for Marshallese seems curious since Kwajalein's service sector could not perform their duties without transportation to the island. Because Marshallese remained excluded from living on Kwajalein, one wonders how else the Colonel imagined they would get to their jobs. Perhaps he perceived his Marshallese workers to be excellent swimmers. Millar's list also included Kwajalein community donations for Marshallese scholarships and limited medical services available to Marshallese on Kwajalein. Kwajalein's hospital services remained limited during epidemic outbreaks on Ebeye in the 1960s, even while Ebeye's hospital proved understaffed and undersupplied during this period.

Today Ebeye continues to struggle to maintain adequate medical staff and resources to meet the island population's needs. Those living on Ebeye not employed by Kwajalein who require emergency care today are first directed to Majuro (approximately \$300, 1-hour flight) or to Honolulu (approximately \$1,800, 5-hour flight). Most Ebeye residents cannot afford these options. After those distant and expensive emergency care options are exhausted, only then will Kwajalein make the rare exception of allowing an Ebeye resident to enter the island's hospital. Kwajalein's hospital resides three miles across the lagoon from Ebeye and entails a free twenty-minute ferry ride. The military's

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>129</sup> Letter from Colonel Donald B. Millar to Mr. R. Earle II, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of International Security Affairs written October 30, 1968. This correspondence is located in RG 126, Records of the Office of Territories: Land, Kwajalein at NARA, College Park.
<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

consistent lack of concern for medical emergencies on Ebeye can be traced historically to warnings as early at 1954, in District Anthropologist Jack Tobin's report on Ebeye. Tobin identified how a lack of adequate investments and planning on Ebeye placed a great risk on the public health of the island's growing population. He described early housing units on the island as overcrowded and cautioned their potential to act as "fertile breeding grounds for respiratory diseases and epidemics of various types."

By 1963, Tobin's warning proved tragically spot on as Ebeye's housing conditions and sanitation facilities had become wholly inadequate to sustain the growing population. As detailed in Dr. Greg Dever's 1978 *Micronesian Support Committee Report*, "Ebeye, Marshall Islands: A Public Health Hazard," the island suffered a polio outbreak in 1963. Dever's report detailed how "a military dependent on Kwajalein Island infected Marshallese workers who lived on Ebeye." The outbreak spread rapidly throughout Ebeye and resulted in severe paralysis in many cases. In his report, Dever noted Ebeye's polio outbreak occurred eight years after the polio vaccine had been made widely available. But neither the Trust Territory nor the military on Kwajalein had chosen to immunize the population on Ebeye. Ebeye's polio catastrophe was followed by epidemics of gastroenteritis and influenza, with mortalities occurring in each instance. 

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One Trust Territory justification for limiting investments on Ebeye surfaced through comparisons of Ebeye to the rest of the Trust Territory and a desire to avoid having to invest elsewhere. The High Commissioner's representative unveiled this underlying concern in a March 10, 1967 letter detailing the master plan for housing on

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>132</sup> Tobin, Jack (District Anthropologist Marshall Islands). *Ebeye Village: An Atypical Marshallese Community*. Majuro, 1954. Pp. 19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>133</sup> Dever, Greg, M.D. "Ebeye, Marshall Islands: A Public Health Hazard." A Micronesian Support Committee Report, 1978. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa. Pp. 9-10. <sup>134</sup> Ibid.

Ebeye. In his letter, the representative questioned the Trust Territory government's inadequate investments in infrastructure across Micronesia. The representative noted, "Arguments against permanent, modern buildings for the Trust Territory usually refer to the lack of such facilities in other parts of Micronesia with the implication that we can't do for one what we can't do for all." He continued to note, "This is a specious argument, which, if acted upon, will retard progress in Micronesia for another few decades." His letter addressed the presence of Ebeye's wage economy making the island distinct. He noted Ebeye's population held "strong aspirations to advance toward the high standards of living that exist within 2 1/2 miles of the island and that with proper planning, the people of Ebeye will eventually be able to support a large part of the services it wants." 137

While the High Commissioner's representative compared Ebeye to Kwajalein to argue the importance of greater investments on Ebeye, the army tended to compare infrastructure on Ebeye to a lack of these amenities on outer islands. This relative comparison enabled the army to justify its lack of investments on Ebeye and to applaud its minimal funding already given. A 1977 Army Fact-Finding Report illustrated how the army employed this comparison of relative privilege and affluence to deflect media and Trust Territory critiques against the army for Ebeye's deteriorating conditions. The army produced the report following 1976 senate hearings in which Ebeye residents and Marshallese leaders voices grievances about discrimination on Kwajalein and dire conditions on Ebeye. The report explained that on Kwajalein the "quality-of-life"

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>135</sup> Memorandum from the High Commissioner's Representative sent to the Chief Engineer through ACCS re: Housing program for Ebeye, written on March 10, 1967. TTA, reel, no. 511.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid

facilities on the island are those believed by the Army, and developed over some 12 years of experience, to be those appropriate for maintaining a high standard of performance and effectiveness from a small, concentrated, well-educated, affluent community." The report continued on to identify profits from the island department store, the snack and beverage store and other service facilities as funding many recreational activities and facilities on Kwajalein. The report also noted many of these activities could be found throughout various military establishments. 139

Comparing Kwajalein's quality of life facilities with those on other military bases, the army's report emphasized the importance of investing in an atmosphere that inspired and retained productivity from its American workforce. Even though Ebeye's workers comprised a significant component of Kwajalein's labor, the military did not view Marshallese productivity as linked to their quality of life on Ebeye. Where Kwajalein's American workers required enticements for recruitment and suburban amenities to keep them productive, workers living on Ebeye would work on Kwajalein regardless. The mobility of Americans on Kwajalein contrasted that of Marshallese working on the island and influenced the contours of life on both Kwajalein and Ebeye. Americans came out of choice and thus could leave anytime. Many Marshallese arrived to Ebeye with no choice through displacements and had no home to which they could return. Others came in hopes of finding a job on Kwajalein. Unlike American workers on Kwajalein, Marshallese workers came without the lure of these quality of life facilities. The army knew its service labor would remain consistent whether or not they invested in improvements on Ebeye. Thus, the army seemed to view these workers as seemingly

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139 Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>138</sup> Final Report of Kwajalein-Ebeye Fact Finding Team, Department of the Army. January 28, 1977. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

dispensable or less in need of sustainable infrastructure, let alone anything beyond this minimal level. And yet, as dispensable as this labor force may have appeared, the military never actually dispensed of them. Instead, the army has continued to rely upon Ebeye's labor pool through today.

To help justify the investment disparities between Kwajalein and Ebeye, the 1977 Army Fact Finding Report framed Ebeye's living conditions in relative comparison with those on the outer islands. The report concluded that while Ebeye's schools and medical facilities were hardly up to par with American standards, "Ebeye facilities represent a significance in quality of life compared to the almost non-existent medical facilities and (comparatively) extremely limited school facilities on most other islands."<sup>140</sup> To explain how conditions of congestion and poverty developed on Ebeye over time, the report described the history of forced displacements as necessary evacuations. The report also contextualized these "evacuations" as one factor at the end of a list that included attraction to wages on Kwajalein, better social services and shopping on Ebeye and the Marshallese custom of supporting family members as the primary lures.

After tracing the many ways in which the army already supported and invested in Ebeye, highlighting the \$7 million investment in 1964, the report concluded with suggestions for how the army should proceed in future contributions to the island. The report qualified any future investments by noting, "it must be remembered that Congress appropriates RDTE [Research Development Test and Evaluation] funds specifically for the operation and maintenance of the National Range at Kwajalein." <sup>141</sup> The report

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

continued to note, "The monies must, by law, be spent for the purpose appropriated, and cannot be used for other purposes such as improvements on Ebeye or care for Marshallese." This passage ignored the usage of these funds for the missile range's American labor residential infrastructure. The statements also subtly worked to obscure the military's dependence on Marshallese labor for the successful operation and maintenance of the Kwajalein missile range. The army relied upon Ebeye as the repository for displaced Marshallese and to fill Kwajalein's service labor needs.

As noted earlier, the separation of military and Trust Territory responsibilities detailed in the Trusteeship Agreement's articles 5 and 6 worked alongside Kwajalein's structure of segregation to enable the army to dismiss its dependency on Ebeye. The army instead narrated the relationship as a one-way street; Ebeye dependent upon Kwajalein. This further enabled the army to applaud any investments on Ebeye as charitable rather than essential to maintaining the operation of its base on Kwajalein. The army's fact-finding report highlighted this perception of Kwajalein's support for Ebeye as charitable in its concluding pages. The report detailed the Kwajalein Women's Club volunteer activities and their contributions to Ebeye. The army applauded the club for giving an annual allotment of \$30,000 in donations as well as offering inexpensive clothing for sale, particularly for Marshallese children. The military recommended the continuation of these charitable offerings.<sup>143</sup>

The 1977 Army Fact-Finding Report also offered suggestions on how the Trust Territory government could continue to work towards improving conditions on Ebeye.

These recommendations included an "aggressive approach to build up the private

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

business community to a point where Ebeye residents can purchase all the consumer goods they desire at reasonable prices and develop laundry facilities on the island." <sup>144</sup> If implemented, both suggestions would have eased pressure on Kwajalein as the island command had come under attack prior to this report after banning Marshallese access to stores and laundry facilities on the island. In discussing further development on Ebeye, the report also addressed a Trust Territory suggestion to use the 12 acres the coast guard had recently given back to Ebeye for the construction of a high school. The report noted this would not be prudent due to the likelihood of the school further increasing the population on Ebeye. The report stated, "the pressure of large numbers of teen-agers so close to Kwajalein and its resources and attractions (mostly forbidden fruits) could cause social problems."<sup>145</sup> The report explained that since the coast guard space constituted the only grassy area on the island, the space could be used instead for a public park, playground, recreational area or additional water storage facilities. 146

A close look at this army recommendation illuminates the disturbing logic informing military policies regarding life on Ebeye. In this report, the army suggested the importance of keeping Ebeye in a state that would lack appeal for further migrations. The army discouraged the idea of the Trust Territory providing adequate educational infrastructure on the island due to the risk of luring more teens to Ebeye and thus creating a threat to Kwajalein through these teens living closer to the island's "forbidden fruits." The report ignored the fact that the existing teen population on Ebeye had few if any opportunities to attend high school. The expense of sending these kids away to school on

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>144</sup> Ibid. <sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>146</sup> Ibid.

Majuro or in the outer islands proved prohibitive for most parents, and teens on Ebeye continued to be excluded from Kwajalein's school.

The army's report worked to again avert attention from disparities between Kwajalein and Ebeye by denying the reality of family life or adolescent needs on Ebeye. The military understood Ebeye as a space for laborers, not families or teens needing education. The army did not perceive Ebeye families' needs as equivalent to needs of American families, which included Kwajalein's school and recreational facilities for teens: the island's "forbidden fruits." The report concluded that "Any radical improvement in facilities or capabilities to improve quality of life must be considered carefully to insure that such improvements do not further increase the desirability of immigrating to Ebeye." 147 The report added, "A deliberate, go-slow policy should be followed with attempts to assess the long term social consequences of each considered measure prior to its being put into effect."<sup>148</sup>

The army's cautionary against improving life for Marshallese on Ebeye alongside its simultaneous defense of investing in quality of life facilities on Kwajalein deserves careful consideration. The report offered these statements amidst a broader context of military concerns about growing population density on Ebeye, a process the military initiated but quickly lost control over. The army's effort to keep Ebeye an undesirable space barely capable of sustaining life speaks to its perception of those living on the island. Rather than considering alternatives to improve life for those on Ebeye by possibly expanding where that increasing population could live by offering residency on Kwajalein, the army opted instead to keep life intolerable enough to dissuade others from

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

coming to Ebeye. This approach dismissed the struggles facing those Marshallese already living on the island.

This disparity between investments on Kwajalein and Ebeye would garner heightened attention during the 1970s and 1980s as Marshallese landowners, political leaders and workers began vocalizing their concerns over Ebeye's worsening conditions. These individuals would challenge Kwajalein's apartheid like policies through petition writing to the United Nations, through U.S. senate testimonies and eventually formal sailin protests to reoccupy islands throughout the Kwajalein Atoll. Their occupations delayed missile-testing operations and left the military no choice but to take notice of their concerns. While these events will be chronicled in greater detail in the second half of the dissertation, I conclude this chapter with an early Micronesian voice calling the United Nations' attention to Kwajalein and Ebeye's disparate investments. In a letter written to the United Nations Trusteeship Council on March 19, 1968 from Honolulu, the anonymous author who signed the letter as "A TRUE MICRONESIAN" took the opportunity to note his letter constituted an individual protest against the use of Kwajalein as a testing ground for missiles. The author explained that the U.S. had signed the Trusteeship Agreement 21 years prior indicating a commitment to help the people, but had done little to date. The author stated, "Billions of dollars have been spent in the Trust Territory for military purposes, yet a few million dollars have been spent by the United States toward the fulfillment of the agreement." The author continued, "On Ebeye, which is only a couple of miles away from the multi-billion-dollar military complex on Kwajalein, Micronesians live among rats. On Kwajalein the U.S. warlords

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>149</sup> Petition Concerning the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands to the President of the Trusteeship Council signed "A True Micronesian," March 19, 1968. TTA, reel, no. 166.

live like gods."<sup>150</sup> The letter concluded by demanding the Trusteeship Council and the United Nations urge the United States to use "at least some of that billions of dollars that is being used for military armament to improve my islands, before it all goes for military equipment which someday might wipe out you and me and the rest of mankind from this earth."<sup>151</sup>

This chapter has revealed the relational histories of Kwajalein and Ebeye's spatial and cultural production by examining how each island's land was acquired under U.S. contractual agreements and further layered with diverging built environments. The chapter has argued that the contradictions foundational to the Trusteeship Agreement that placed military and Trust Territory responsibilities at odds most tragically played out in negligent approaches to Ebeye's infrastructure. Chapter five continues analysis of Kwajalein and Ebeye's historic cultural and spatial production by turning attention to how U.S. officials regulated movement between and within the two islands.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>151</sup> Ibid.

## Interlude Naturalizing Kwajalein as an American Space Through the Visual

Locating Kwajalein in Space and in the U.S. Cold War Mission

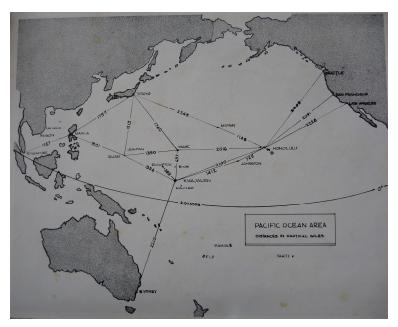


Figure 24. Map of the Pacific, 1968 (Army Kwajalein Test Site manual). 152

Figures 24 through 26 reveal how the army communicated Kwajalein's geographic and militarily strategic location to incoming military and civilian contractors hired to operate the missile range. The maps position Kwajalein's spatiality in reference to U.S. military needs.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>152</sup> Image taken from the publication "Kwajalein Test Site," U.S. Army Material Command, Kwajalein, Marshall Islands, 1968. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

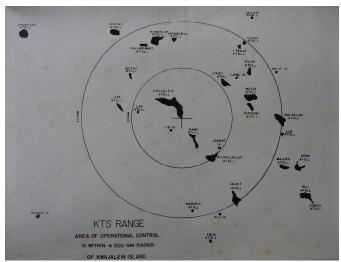


Figure 25. Map of the Marshall Islands, 1968 (Army Kwajalein Test Site manual). 153

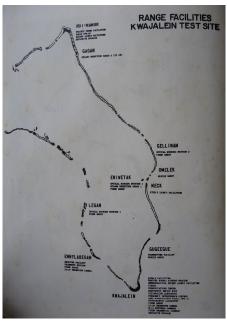


Figure 26. Map of Kwajalein Atoll, 1968 (Army Kwajalein Test Site manual). 154

<sup>153</sup> Ibid. 154 Ibid.

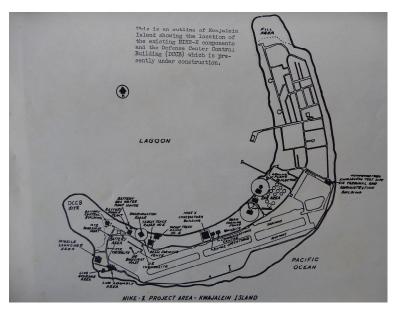


Figure 27. Map of Nike-X project, 1968 (Army Kwajalein Test Site manual). 155



Figure 28. Arial view of Kwajalein Island, 1968 (Army Kwajalein Test Site manual). <sup>156</sup> Figures 27 through 34 each appeared in army manuals and informational guides

instructing American employees about their role in the military mission on Kwajalein. The images naturalize Kwajalein as a space existing to serve U.S. national security and display a seemingly futuristic setting landscaped with cutting edge missile technology.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.



Figure 29. Arial view of Nike-X complex, 1968 (Army Kwajalein Test Site manual). 157

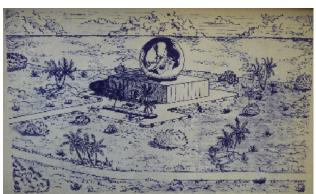


Figure 30. Illustration of Target Track Radar on Kwajalein. 158

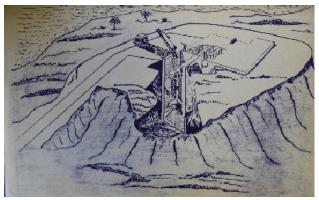


Figure 31. Illustration of Nike-Zeus missile being lowered into cell on Kwajalein. 159

<sup>158</sup> Sketch taken from Open House Nike Zeus Facilities, Public Tour of Kwajalein publication distributed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on November 20, 1960, Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa. The publication detailed how the radar was built to track attacking missiles and pass their position information to the Battle Computer enabling the Zeus missile to be launched at an intercept point.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>159</sup> Sketch taken from Open House Nike Zeus Facilities, Public Tour of Kwajalein publication distributed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on November 20, 1960. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.



Figure 32. Image of pre-launch missile. 160



Figure 33. Image of Nike-Zeus missile launch on Kwajalein. 161



Figure 34. "Peacekeeper" lights up the sky over Kwajalein. 162

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>160</sup> This image also appeared in the Open House Nike Zeus Facilities, Public Tour of Kwajalein publication distributed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on November 20, 1960.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>161</sup> This image appeared in the "Kwajalein Test Site," U.S. Army Material Command, Kwajalein, Marshall Islands, 1968. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

This image appeared in United States Army Kwajalein Atoll U.S. Army Space and Strategic Defense Command; Public and Governmental Affairs publication, 1994. The accompanying caption reads, "Incoming *Peacekeeper* re-entry vehicles light up the sky over USAKA," revealing how military discourse characterized weapons of mass destruction as weapons of "peace" during the 1990s.

#### Missile Testing Meets Suburban Lifestyle on Kwajalein



Figure 35. Image of life on Kwajalein, 1992 (Ekatak yearbook). 163

This collage of images depicting the "Kwajalein Lifestyle" appearing in 1992 *Ekatak* yearbook reveals how Kwajalein's setting was layered by the dual realities and almost fantasy-like settings of the missile-testing mission alongside tropical suburban luxury. Note the image included in the bottom left corner is of both the U.S. and Republic of Marshall Islands flags. This image, which suggests dual national narratives on Kwajalein, is examined more closely in figure 49.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>163</sup> Ekatak Kwajalein High School Yearbook, 1992.

#### Mapping Suburbia onto Kwajalein

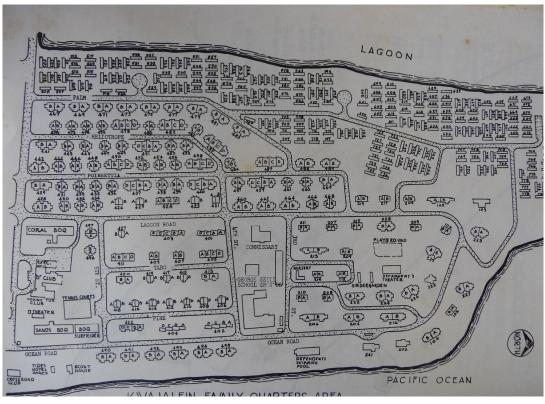


Figure 36. Army illustration mapping Kwajalein's residential space, 1968. 164

Figures 36 through 40 illuminate the ways in which Kwajalein's setting was mapped as a space of suburban family residency. The illustrations in figures 37, 38 and 39 further reveal how this suburban mapping worked to naturalize the island as a space of heteronormativity aligned with U.S. Cold War suburban models of nuclear family protection. On Kwajalein, the nuclear family was protected from the proximate and presumably "predatory" bachelor male figure through segregation of island facilities marking bachelor and family access, as revealed in the images.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>164</sup> Image taken from the publication "Kwajalein Test Site," U.S. Army Material Command, Kwajalein, Marshall Islands, 1968. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

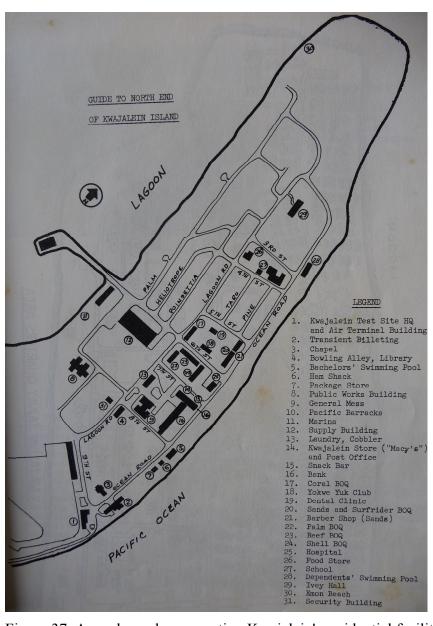


Figure 37. Army legend enumerating Kwajalein's residential facilities. 165

165 Ibid.

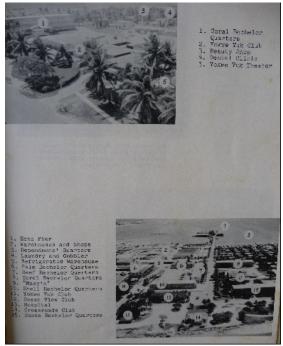


Figure 38. Army map (1) of Kwajalein's residential facilities, 1968. 166



Figure 39. Army map (2) of Kwajalein's residential facilities, 1968. 167

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>166</sup> Ibid. This gendered mapping of space that comes through in figures 38 and 39 often appeared in army manuals alongside an extensive list of rules and regulations about how to move through the island along gendered routes. <sup>167</sup> Ibid.

## Cold War Consumption on Kwajalein



Figure 40. Department store on Kwajalein, 1968. 168



Figure 41. Grocery store on Kwajalein, 1968. 169

Figures 41 and 42 appearing in the 1968 army guide to Kwajalein aimed to help incoming personnel get acquainted with life on the island, and reassure those relocating thousands of miles from home that they would not want for U.S. goods on the island. The images depict Cold War consumption on Kwajalein by highlighting the abundant supply of department store goods and familiar American foodstuffs that might be found in any American grocery store. The images work to familiarize Kwajalein as an American space by depicting a culture of consumption on the island.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>168</sup> Image taken from the publication "Kwajalein Test Site," U.S. Army Material Command, Kwajalein, Marshall Islands, 1968. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.
<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

## Domesticating Kwajalein: American Families Locate Home in the Marshalls



Figure 42. Image of Kwajalein kitchen, 1968. 170



Figure 43. Image of Kwajalein living room, 1968. 171

Figures 43 and 44 showcase images appearing in the 1968 army guide for incoming personnel that drew upon the Cold War context of suburban domesticity as an introduction to life on Kwajalein. The images communicated to incoming Americans the ease through which they could comfortably make a familiar home for themselves on Kwajalein. Images of the kitchen, and particularly that of a shiny immaculate one stocked with consumer appliances, represented Cold War consumer abundance in the U.S. The kitchen became an iconic Cold War image, politicized through Vice President Nixon's debate with Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev at a kitchen exhibit at the American National Exhibition in Moscow in 1959, where Nixon argued the merits of capitalism over communism.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>171</sup> Ibid.

## A Safe Suburban Space for America's Children



Figure 44. Image of George Seitz Elementary School on Kwajalein, 1968. 172



Figure 45. Image of Kwajalein Atoll Preschool, circa late 1980s. 173

Figures 45 and 46 come from two army publications showcasing Kwajalein's schools to Americans during the 1960s and 1980s. The images depict safe, clean educational settings for American children. The pre-school photograph includes an image of the American flag further demarcating Kwajalein an American space.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid

<sup>173</sup> This image appeared in a publication from the U.S. Army at Kwajalein Atoll Public Information Office, circa late 1980s. The introduction to Kwajalein's pre-school resided in a section entitled "Welcome to Kwaj."

#### Raising Future Kwajalein Missile Personnel



Figure 46. "New Heights Attained Over Kwajalein," (The American Pacific, 1977). 174

This image accompanied a 1977 article by Harry Hargett appearing in *The American* Pacific magazine, entitled "New Heights Attained Over Kwajalein." The article detailed the story of a missile launch. Hargett began his piece by describing the looming threat of a potential Soviet vessel approaching Kwajalein's three-mile security zone. He continued on to describe radar technicians taking their positions, anticipating up to 30 missile and rockets to be fired upon the island, while launch technicians readied for lift-off following a 5-second countdown. He wrote that as the technicians launched their weapons, all faces turned toward the sky to follow the ascending rocket. Hargett added, "From the determined look on the faces of these dedicated young men, America need never fear of being overtaken in the arms race with other nations. 'I hope this project will be a success!' quipped one of the technicians. 'We worked night and day on this. Even our parents helped." At this point in his narrative, Hargett described the background of the young boys involved in this "model rocket derby," their Cub Scout affiliations and their resulting scores. That Hargett narrated these boys as America's future hope in the arms race through their emergent rocket skills may have intended to be read satirically but his piece can also be read as a foreshadowing event given the Cold War context and the reality of these boys lives on Kwajalein. The production and reproduction of weapons development technicians as imagined through this article and photograph, naturalizes and in some ways neutralizes the military imperial growth of the United States as that of a family affair on the island.

<sup>174</sup> Image photographed by Harry Hargett appeared in *The American Pacific* magazine, Vol. 2., No. 2 (April 1, 1977).



Figure 47. Ebeye's "commuter culture." <sup>175</sup>

Figure 48 showcases an image appearing in the 1994 U.S. Army Kwajalein Atoll guide for incoming personnel that depicting Ebeye's workers as part of a "commuter culture" on Kwajalein. The image caption reads, "Marshallese workers and school children are ferried to USAKA each weekday." Compared to earlier manuals, the suggestion that Marshallese children are free to attend Kwajalein's schools is striking, although admission would have been highly competitive, open to only five Marshallese students from Ebeye each year. The image normalizes the colonial dynamic of Marshallese exclusion from living on Kwajalein by naturalizing the workers as part of a familiar American "commuter culture" dynamic. This guide narrates the Marshallese American relationship as one of "working together" describing the U.S. as a "welcome neighbor" in the region while simultaneously reassuring incoming personnel that the intimacy of a working relationship ends at work. The guides reads, "the community of 3,000 Americans [live] side by side with their Marshallese neighbors." The guide continues on to note that the 1,200 Marshallese employees on Kwajalein "commute" daily as residency on Kwajalein is restricted to U.S. citizens.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>175</sup> Image appears in guide for incoming personnel, United States Army Kwajalein Atoll, published by U.S. Army Space and Strategic Defense Command, 1994. Located at Gov. Docs, UH Manoa.

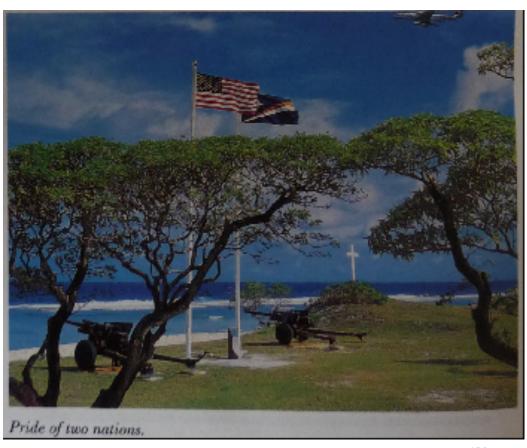


Figure 48. "Pride of two nations," (U.S. Army at Kwajalein Atoll, 1994). 176

This image also appearing in the 1994 U.S. Army Kwajalein Atoll guide and captioned "Pride of two nations," narrates a dual patriotism on the island presumably drawing upon the World War II legacy on Kwajalein (suggested by the cannon and cemetery cross included in the image). The image shows the flags of both the United States and the Republic of the Marshall Islands flying side by side on Kwajalein. The page upon which this image appears is titled "A Great American Community," and includes a greeting employing Marshallese language, "Yokwe Yuk: Welcome to Kwajalein." The page's text continues on to refer to Kwajalein as "an Island community...similar to any small American town." The depiction of the two flags flying on a Marshallese island where the vast majority of Marshallese cannot reside, layers Kwajalein's neocolonial context with the facade of equal sovereign nationalisms.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>176</sup> Ibid.

# Chapter Five Naturalizing Kwajalein and Ebeye's Segregation: Disciplining Movement through Space

As discussed in chapters three and four, the relational identification of Kwajalein as a suburban space of family residency alongside Ebeye as an urban space of service labor and repository for displaced peoples impacted investments, planning and construction on each island. Army perceptions of each space through exclusionary categories of families versus workers and suburban versus urban informed another simultaneous process developing between both islands during the Cold War. That process involved monitoring and controlling access, mobility and movement within and between Kwajalein and Ebeye. In addition to narrating people into respective hierarchical roles on Kwajalein and Ebeye and transforming each island's landscape through contract and construction, U.S. attempts to regulate movement and access constituted another layer of colonial control over each island.

This chapter explores U.S. regulations on movement in these colonized spaces by first examining historic efforts to control migration to Ebeye. As noted in chapter four, Ebeye's historic migrations built upon the history of military forced displacements of Marshallese to Ebeye to carry out naval and army objectives on Kwajalein. The first section of this chapter investigates a program initiated to limit access to Ebeye once inward migrations seemed no longer under U.S. military or Trust Territory control. After reviewing U.S. attempts to control access to Ebeye, the remainder of the chapter will

examine the simultaneous and relational history of military strategies for controlling access to Kwajalein. This analysis considers military regulations on movement within the island among American residents and Marshallese workers and visitors. Finally, chapter five concludes by looking at a set of more stringent military rules controlling Marshallese access and mobility on Kwajalein initiated during the mid-1960s. These regulations illuminated further how military practices of othering Marshallese workers helped naturalize American family presence on Kwajalein as within a space of U.S. domesticity. While narrating U.S. family presence on Kwajalein as residing within the nation, the army marked Marshallese as foreign on Kwajalein by criminalizing any instance of their unregulated movement on the island.<sup>1</sup>

### **Controlling Access to Ebeye: Criminalizing Marshallese through Operation Exodus**

Military displacements of Micronesians to Ebeye during the 1950s and 1960s alongside movements of Marshallese seeking employment on Kwajalein represented an era of inward migration to Ebeye with minimal control. As public health conditions worsened on Ebeye due to increasing population density, both Trust Territory and military officials on Kwajalein made attempts to control this movement. The most striking example of these attempts to reverse the consequences of uncontrolled migration to Ebeye came through a program called "Operation Exodus" in 1966. This section explores the Trust Territory program in depth examining how the program created new

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> This chapter builds upon both the work of Gregory M. Dvorak and Sandra Crimson in their distinct considerations of movement on Kwajalein and security access to the island respectively. Dvorak's *Remapping Home* deconstructed military regulations guiding American movement on Kwajalein in gendered ways, while Crimson's *Negotiating the Borders of Empire* explored Kwajalein's restricted access through a borderlands framework. This chapter hopes to contribute further to these discussions of movement and access on Kwajalein by considering the broader racializing context of these restrictions on island while also considering analysis of access to Ebeye alongside that of Kwajalein.

categories of legitimate residency on Ebeye. By defining Ebeye residents as legitimate either through their displaced condition or their labor on Kwajalein, Operation Exodus revealed how Trust Territory and army officials continually perceived Ebeye as existing solely to support Kwajalein, not as a home for Marshallese families. Through Operation Exodus, Trust Territory officials naturalized Kwajalein's nuclear family structure as legitimate while marking Ebeye's extended family structure as illegitimate and ultimately illegal. Doing so amidst the islands' suburban and urban divides simultaneously reinforced Ebeye's urbanity as a space of work in contrast to Kwajalein's suburbia as a space of domestic family life.

The concept of a nuclear family structure would have held little relevance in Marshallese culture during the 1960s for how living arrangements had been historically and spatially conceived and practiced in the Marshall Islands. Operation Exodus tended to ignore and devalue this historic Marshallese family structure. Through the program, Trust Territory administrators began criminalizing Marshallese family structure by creating the category of illegal residency on Ebeye. As will be detailed later in this chapter, this U.S. pattern of criminalizing Marshallese in their own islands would carry through to policies punishing Marshallese for "trespassing" on Kwajalein. The Trust Territory's designation of an "unlawful resident" category through Operation Exodus solicited no input from Marshallese who suddenly became marked as "illegal" in their own islands. Likewise, army policies emerging on Kwajalein during the 1960s identified Marshallese workers who stayed beyond their work hours as "trespassers." This criminalizing discourse raises questions for thinking further about how controlling access and movement through space seems core to both the project of colonialism in the

Marshall Islands and suburbanization on Kwajalein and in the U.S. Both projects seem partly informed by efforts to label and prevent a foreign racially criminalized other from moving freely through space without consequence.

As noted above, Ebeye's population growth during the 1950s and early 1960s came through policies marking the island a repository for Marshallese displaced by the military alongside those recruited to work on Kwajalein. Operation Exodus demonstrated how the Trust Territory attempted to curb this rampant growth by limiting access and sending people away from Ebeye to embark on a presumably biblical journey. The program did not constitute the first time U.S. colonial administrators would couch their request for Marshallese evacuations by drawing upon the bible. The navy first demonstrated this practice in 1946 when naval officials told Bikinians their evacuation of their islands would enable the U.S. to conduct nuclear tests for the good of mankind. The navy narrated the Bikinian sacrifice as part of a larger Christian mission.<sup>2</sup> In his Remaking Micronesia, Historian David Hanlon described Operation Exodus as "One of the most ironic, perhaps racist episodes in the nuclear history of Kwajalein Atoll." He continued to explain how the program "sought to reduce the population on Ebeye through the forced repatriation of 'unnecessary' people to their home atolls and islands."<sup>4</sup> Hanlon added that the program was advertised as one "necessary to ensure the health and welfare of all concerned." He detailed the program's goal to remove approximately 25 percent of Ebeye's population of 6,500 in 1967. The Trust Territory High Commissioner attempted to achieve this reduction by issuing Executive Order 101 on November 8, 1967 making

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Niedenthal, For the Good of Mankind

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Hanlon, Remaking Micronesia, 201.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Ibid

illegal any further migration to Ebeye from areas outside of Kwajalein Atoll. The order included a clause allowing temporary visitations.<sup>6</sup> The order also called for the forced eviction of those unemployed or unable to pay their rent. While temporarily removing 1,500 people, the program ultimately failed to meet population reduction goals due to Marshallese protests and the logistical challenges of identifying and removing residents.<sup>7</sup>

The history of Trust Territory attempts to evict Marshallese from Ebeye revealed how Trust Territory administrators gave little consideration to the foundational causes for Ebeye's population growth nor the continuity of structures contributing to the island's density. These structures constituted the history of military displacements and continued employment opportunities on Kwajalein alongside Kwajalein's segregation policies preventing Marshallese workers from living on island. Instead of acknowledging these factors, the Trust Territory identified primary causes of population congestion on Ebeye through "pull" factors rather the "push" of displacements. District Administrator and High Commissioner Representative William V. Vitarelli offered a list of reasons why Marshallese migrated to Ebeye in his 1967 report on the program. The list included "Relatively high income from Global jobs, Excitement of urban life, Movies, bars, social life, churches, hospital and access to the big city, Kwajalein."8 Vitarelli's report noted the goals of Operation Exodus in decreasing the population while increasing per capita income on Ebeye by maintaining full employment. Vitarelli also cited another program goal of establishing "a practical method of family planning through voluntary educational

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Ibid, 202.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Memorandum from Distad-Hicom Rep William V. Vitarelli to District Administrator with report on Operation Exodus, Marshall Islands written June 16, 1967. TTA, reel, no. 614.

methods." Despite the continuity of military displacements marked by the continued prohibition of Marshallese from returning to their home islands in Kwajalein Atoll, the Trust Territory framed Ebeye's congestion as caused by Marshallese choice. This choice involved Marshallese uncontrolled reproduction and Marshallese cultural values of supporting extended family members.

Trust Territory officials determined who could stay and who needed to vacate Ebeye by creating a list identifying various factors to distinguish a new category of illegal resident on the island. Vitarelli's 1967 report on Operation Exodus detailed how following consultation with local leaders, Council members, Headquarters personnel and District personnel the Trust Territory determined who would be evicted from Ebeye. Vitarelli noted the first to go would be residents who came to the island after the Trust Territory implemented Executive Order #101, thus violating the directive. <sup>10</sup> Next on the list would be "Residents selected by the traditional leaders and Council who are considered a detriment to the welfare of the community...include[ing] chronic alcoholics, children unaccompanied by parents or guardians, the unemployable and chronic law breakers." The report explained that these individuals would be carefully screened and given the opportunity to defend their case to stay. The report also noted they would be dealt with according to Marshallese custom. Following this category of evictees, the Trust Territory would evict those individuals on Ebeye who came from islands outside of the Marshalls and who remained unemployed or comparatively recent immigrants. The

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Memorandum from Distad-Hicom Rep William V. Vitarelli to District Administrator with report on Operation Exodus, Marshall Islands written June 16, 1967. TTA, reel, no. 614.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>Ibid. As noted by Suburban Historian Matthew Lassiter, "children unaccompanied by parents" was among the ways racialized urban youths in the United States became funneled into the juvenile justice system as delinquents between the 1930s and the 1950s.

memorandum indicated the Trust Territory would contact these immigrants' home islands to try and gain cooperation in their repatriation. The program would also financially support those wanting to return to home islands but without the means to do so. The program offered free transportation and subsistence funds for the return.<sup>12</sup>

The manner through which Trust Territory officials determined whom had a right to live on Ebeye ignored relationships on the island that diverged from the U.S. nuclear family model. For example, the category of "children unaccompanied by parents" may have been less common within the context of emerging nuclear family structures in the picture of suburban America. But in Marshallese society, and commonly across the Pacific, family members besides parents often raised children and retained very close bonds through these relationships. Operation Exodus also marked Marshallese individuals as entitled to residency on Ebeye through their employed or employable status. In doing so, the program further narrated Ebeye as a space for housing labor and serving the economic needs of Kwajalein. Operation Exodus ignored how those slotted into each category of potential evictee could have also been defined through their familial or communal relationships on Ebeye. Given Ebeye's economic reality and the limited number of jobs on Kwajalein, the majority of island residents could not survive without these significant familial or communal connections.

To notify the first group on the list of evictees, Vitarelli issued a letter informing these individuals of their newly determined illegal status. He wrote them stating their noted date of arrival placed them into the category of "unlawful resident" on Ebeye. <sup>13</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Letter template from Hicom Rep. William V. Vitarelli included in Memorandum from Distad-Hicom Rep William V. Vitarelli to District Administrator with report on Operation Exodus, Marshall Islands written June 16, 1967. TTA, reel, no. 614.

Vitarelli's letter continued on to defend the evictions as necessary to address health concerns arising on Ebeye. He added that the High Commissioner would assist the individuals in "repatriating" home, funding their passage and providing a subsistence allowance of \$5.50 per day for as long as they remained in transit. His letter concluded by acknowledging that if the individual thought they could not return home, they could explain their case in an interview with Vitarelli. 15

Vitarelli's report detailed Trust Territory efforts to separate out those "illegals" from lawful residents, which included registering all residents on Ebeye. Trust Territory officials would determine legal status and issue identification cards to all "legal, permanent residents." 16 Vitarelli demonstrated some awareness that creating this category of "illegal" may have been viewed as extreme or contradictory. In a June 1967 report, he qualified that the method for carrying out Operation Exodus would not be so stringent as the term "illegal" implied. He wrote, "Although legal means will be used to effect Operation Exodus when necessary, the approach will be <u>cooperation</u> and not coercion."<sup>17</sup> Vitarelli's attempt to soften the term "illegal" emphasized that as long as Marshallese "cooperated" there would be no need to employ legal punishments. This statement echoed the earlier Trust Territory policies regarding land acquisition on Ebeye. As noted in chapter four, these policies similarly indicated that as long as Marshallese landowners willingly signed contracts to give their land to the U.S. for indefinite usage and unjust compensation, the U.S. would not need to employ the tool of eminent domain. These discursive gestures suggested a need among U.S. officials to reinforce the American

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Memorandum from Distad-Hicom Rep William V. Vitarelli to District Administrator with report on Operation Exodus, Marshall Islands written June 16, 1967. TTA, reel, no. 614.
<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

exceptionalist narrative in the Marshalls by buttressing the idea of a "national" system of international relationships, rather than bluntly acknowledging the U.S. colonial position in the region. This new category of "unlawful" or "illegal resident" continued to show up in Operation Exodus reports marking those "repatriated" to their home islands. The criminalization of Marshallese in their own lands would become a sustained pattern infusing Trust Territory and army policies on Ebeye and Kwajalein.

While Vitarelli attempted to downplay the severity of legal implications for those identified as "unlawful" on Ebeye, he also addressed the need for support and funding to control this newly criminalized population. In his March 27, 1968 letter to the Assistant Commissioner for Administration, Vitarelli requested funding to support the manning of posts to expedite the removal of "illegal residents" when ships were in port. In his letter, Vitarelli explained he had already been approved by the Director of Public Safety to deputize those men he needed to man the posts. 18 In another letter requesting support a few months prior, Vitarelli positioned Operation Exodus as central to the future of Ebeye and the future of the Trust Territory relationship with the army. On January 1, 1968, he wrote to the Assistant Commissioner for Administration requesting a vehicle for Jinna Keju, Vitarelli's contact on Ebeye presumably deputized to track down illegal entrants. Vitarelli prefaced his vehicle request by noting, "The future success of our housing program, the health of the people, the economy of the island and our relationship with the Army are dependent upon our ability to remove people from Ebeye and to keep people from entering the island." Vitarelli concluded his letter by linking the fate of Kwajalein

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Letter from Hicom-Distad Rep, Ebeye, William V. Vitarelli to Assistant Commissioner for Administration re: Support for Ebeye written on March 27, 1968. TTA, reel, no. 987.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Letter from Hicom-Distad Rep, Ebeye, William V. Vitarelli to Assistant Commissioner Administration on January 1, 1968. TTA, reel, no. 987.

and Ebeye's continued relationship to the success of the program. He stated that as long as the relationship between Kwajalein and Ebeye continued, Operation Exodus would have to remain in force.<sup>20</sup>

The Trust Territory acknowledged that Operation Exodus constituted a potential infringement on Marshallese rights supposedly protected under the 1947 Trusteeship Agreement ensuring freedom of migration and movement. The Deputy High Commissioner worked around this conflict, however, by stating, "The policy to stabilize the population of Ebeye does not conflict with the right to free travel, for Micronesians everywhere will be free to visit Ebeye for a period of 30 days..."<sup>21</sup> The statement continued, "However, the right to visit Ebeye will not give a visitor the right to settle on the island as a permanent resident."<sup>22</sup> The Trust Territory administration eventually removed this visitation clause as the program became increasingly more restrictive over time in an attempt to curb its failures. In a November 1967 amendment to Executive Order 101, High Commissioner W.R. Norwood stated that in "the interest of public order" the original order allowing temporary visits had been changed. He explained that the clause allowing people to stay for 30 days had been "subject to abuse." <sup>23</sup> The new order stated, "Temporary visitations, for a limited period of time, may be permitted in the discretion of the District Administrator's Representative, Ebeye for compellingly urgent

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Trust Territory Policy Letter, Office of the Deputy High Commissioner, December 29, 1947. Located on microfiche D70197 in the Hamilton library at the University of Hawai'i, Manoa, and The Plan and Strategy for Operation Exodus included in Memorandum from Distad-Rep, Ebeye William V. Vitarelli written June 1967. TTA, reel, no. 0196.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Executive Order No. 101 March 22, 1966 (As amended November 3, 1967) by W.R. Norwood, High Commissioner for the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. TTA, reel, no. 987.

humanitarian reasons such as serious illness or death in the family of a resident of Ebeve."<sup>24</sup>

In his March 30, 1968 letter to High Commissioner Norwood, Marshallese Likiep Magistrate Alfred Capelle expressed concern about how limits on Ebeye visitations would impact Marshallese freedom of mobility and Marshallese family customs. Capelle wrote that the new amendment went against the Trusteeship Agreement's article seven that ensured freedom of movement. He stated, "more serious than this is the violation of a very revered custom of the Marshallese people; that of visiting their loved ones."<sup>25</sup> Capelle added, "You must understand that these people desiring passage to Ebeye go there not for the purpose of taking up residence on that crowded little island but to visit with their very close relatives and return home."<sup>26</sup> Capelle said he wrote on behalf of Marshallese with relatives on Ebeye. He cited one reason many people stayed on Ebeye past the visitation time range was due to a lack of reliable transportation off the island when their visit time expired. Capelle said many who stayed longer than 30 days did so because Trust Territory ships supposedly in place to return them home after their time expired had not shown up, leaving them stranded.<sup>27</sup> Capelle's letter identified the Trust Territory's role in logistically dropping the ball in enforcing its own program. His letter also highlighted the reality of familial networks on Ebeye. He marked the island as a space of important family relationships rather than simply a space of "lawful" or "unlawful" individuals. Operation Exodus ignored the reality of Marshallese community

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Letter from Alfred Capelle, Likiep Magistrate to Honorable Norwood High Commissioner, Trust Territory, Pacific written on March 30, 1968. TTA, reel, no. 987.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Ibid.

and family connections on Ebeye by attempting to keep the island limited to Kwajalein's workers by removing those who did not fit this category.

The first Operation Exodus program proved unsuccessful at reducing the population of 6,000 in the late 1960s due to problems in identifying which residents on Ebeye resided there lawfully or illegally. Operation Exodus reincarnated in 1976, when the Trust Territory again attempted to curb Ebeye's population growth. By this point, the island's population had reached 8,000. The February 1976 issue of the Trust Territory publication *Highlights* described this sequel plan to remove 3,000 people from Ebeye as unsuccessful because of Kwajalein's continued employment lure. The article added that both Operation Exodus programs in the 1960s and the 1970s failed because they had "always been hampered by the TTPI [Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands] 'freedom of movement' provisions in the Bill of Rights of the territory." This nagging reality of "rights" for Micronesians constrained how Trust Territory officials could proceed on Ebeye. As will be detailed later in this chapter, the army did not seem to feel quite as "hampered" by these same constraints to acknowledge Micronesian rights.

#### **Controlling Access to Kwajalein: Delineating and Monitoring Borders**

Having examined how Trust Territory efforts to control access to Ebeye worked to criminalize Marshallese in their own lands, this chapter turns now to explore military policies controlling access to Kwajalein. As discussed in chapter four, Kwajalein remained a space of American residency; an island narrated as a secure suburbia. The island's safe suburban setting sat alongside towering radars and missile launch pads

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> "Exodus Underway on Ebeye," in *Highlights*, Office of the High Commissioner, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. February 15, 1976. TTA, reel, no. 166.

reminding everyone on Kwajalein of looming Cold War threats. The island's dual environment of security amidst insecurity came through most prominently in military discourse regulating access to and movement within Kwajalein. The remainder of this chapter considers this history of controlled access and movement as these army policies regulated the mobility of Americans living on Kwajalein and Marshallese commuting to work there.

To better understand how Kwajalein's access policies emerged over time, this section begins by tracing Kwajalein's earliest border regulations under the military. Before naturalizing Kwajalein as part of a national setting through land leasing, the military marked the island as within U.S. control by delineating and policing the island's borders. Beginning with naval regulations following World War II, the military identified who could enter Kwajalein and instructions for those requesting entry. Policies informing entry into both the Trust Territory and Kwajalein illuminated how discourse on national security and military efficiency justified varying degrees of restrictions on access. While Trust Territory officials would narrate uncontrolled migration to Ebeye as threatening the health of those on island, the military narrated uncontrolled movement to Kwajalein as threatening the security of the island and the United States more broadly.

Under 1950s naval regulations, those attempting to gain access to the Trust

Territory belonging to certain groups could bypass lengthy application procedures. These
groups included military personnel and civilian employees of the U.S. Armed Forces
stationed in the territory and their dependents. The groups also included civilians
contracted with the U.S. Armed Forces traveling in accordance with specific orders
issued by the Armed Forces and permanent residents of the territory traveling between

islands in the Trust Territory.<sup>29</sup> The navy located its authority to ensure Trust Territory security clearance as stemming from the territory's status as a "'strategic trusteeship' in which security is the overriding factor."<sup>30</sup> Those not listed in the approved entry groups could apply to obtain clearance through a security check from the Chief of Naval Operations or the Commander in Chief of the U.S. Pacific Fleet. Separate security check procedures existed for U.S. nationals and foreign nationals. After being cleared by navy commanders, applicants then had to retain permission from the Trust Territory High Commissioner.<sup>31</sup> According to a letter from the Secretary of Interior to the Secretary of Navy, Trust Territory entry guidelines comprised a combination of naval security considerations and existing U.S. immigration policies. These guidelines constituted an effort to "ensure that the entry standards for the Trust Territory were generally consistent with those established by the United States itself."<sup>32</sup> In 1962, by order of the U.S. President, entry restrictions relaxed slightly to allow U.S. citizens to gain an entry permit through the Trust Territory High Commissioner without naval clearance. Foreign nationals seeking entry still remained subject to naval review in addition to meeting entry requirements set by the Trust Territory law.<sup>33</sup>

While regulations on entry for U.S. citizens into the broader Trust Territory relaxed somewhat over time, access to Kwajalein following its designation as a missile

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> "Travel in the Pacific and adjacent areas; clearance for," directive from Commander in Chief U.S. Pacific Fleet, November 10, 1952, TTA, reel no. 563. This nine-page directive is part of a larger file labeled "Policies and Procedures for Security Clearances for Entry to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and Kwajalein Missile Range."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Secretary of Interior to Secretary of Navy correspondence circa April 10, 1967 (as attached to correspondence of that date from Director of the Office of Territories to High Commissioner of the Trust Territory), TTA, reel no. 554. This three-page letter is part of a larger file labeled "Security restrictions and procedures for entrance of individuals into Kwajalein, Guam and the Trust Territory."

Discussion Outline of Access to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, April 3, 1967, TTA, reel no. 554. This three-page outline is part of a larger file labeled ""Security restrictions and procedures for entrance of individuals into Kwajalein, Guam and the Trust Territory."

range has remained highly restricted to this day. Similar to broader discourse regarding Trust Territory access, the language narrating Kwajalein's border control focused on the island's strategic status and U.S. national security. In both entry regulations, the U.S. military conflated the U.N. mandate to use the Trust Territory to ensure international peace during the Cold War with a mission to ensure U.S. national security. On Kwajalein, this mission meant excluding anyone from the island not directly contributing to the secure and efficient operation of the missile range. Kwajalein's Entry Authorization Procedure Manuals produced between 1965 and 1970 revealed the structure underlying border control on Kwajalein. By 1965, the army had taken over entry regulation responsibilities for the island. The U.S. Army Command noted entry authorization would be issued only after the Army Entry Control Commander determined that "the presence of the person, ship or aircraft [would] not under existing or reasonably foreseeable future conditions, endanger, place an undue burden upon, or otherwise, jeopardize the efficiency, capability or effectiveness of the military installation."<sup>34</sup> When evaluating whether or not an individual entering Kwajalein could cause harm, the army considered the "purposes of entry, personal history, character and present or past associates of the individuals involved, the possible burdens or threats to defense facilities which the presence of the individual involved impose or might reasonably expect to impose."<sup>35</sup> By 1970 the manual added the caveat that authorization for entry would also include

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> The Department of the Army was given charge of regulating entry to Kwajalein Test Site by the Department of the Interior, via Executive Order 11021 on May 7, 1962. "Entry Authorization Procedure, Kwajalein Test Site," produced by U.S. Army Material Command, Nike-X Project Office, March 15, 1965, TTA, reel no. 540. The manual is part of a larger file labeled "U.S. Army and Air Force Security Regulations Regarding the Entry in Kwajalein and Eniwetok."

evaluation on whether or not entry would be "inimical to the purposes of U.S. national defense." <sup>36</sup>

Like the naval entry regulations to the Trust Territory more broadly, the army justified its authority to impose strict regulations on entry to Kwajalein by citing the island's strategic status within the Trust Territory. The manuals indicated that regulations "were imposed for defense purposes because of the unique strategic nature of the area...control of entry...is to protect fully the physical security of and insure the full effectiveness of bases, stations, facilities and other installations within Kwajalein Missile Range."<sup>37</sup> Authorization for entry went through appeals to the Nike X Project Manager of the U.S. Army Material Command based in Redstone Arsenal, Alabama. The 1970 entry authorization guide detailed Kwajalein's restricted territorial range, which encompassed both land and sea space. The area comprised all "lands in the Kwajalein Atoll, including airspace and territorial sea, to which the U.S. Government has use rights by agreements with the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands." Territorial sea space encompassed "the part of the sea comprehended within the envelope of all arcs of circles having a radium of three marine miles drawn from all points of the barrier reef, fringing reef, or other reef system of the Trust Territory."<sup>38</sup> By delineating restricted borders around Kwajalein Island that included both land and sea boundaries, the army further isolated Kwajalein. This isolation helped mark the island as a U.S. space and one increasingly closed off from outside influences.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> "Entry Authorization Procedure for Kwajalein Missile Range," produced by Kwajalein Range Directorate, U.S. Army Safeguard System Command, June 15, 1970. This manual is taken from the National Archives in Washington D.C., Record Group 126, Office of Territories: Land, Kwajalein. <sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> "Entry Authorization Procedure for Kwajalein Missile Range," produced by Kwajalein Range Directorate, U.S. Army Safeguard System Command, June 15, 1970. This manual is taken from the National Archives in Washington D.C., Record Group 126, Office of Territories: Land, Kwajalein.

Similar to broader Trust Territory regulations, the army created separate rules to control entry of foreign nationals. The army prohibited this group from entering Kwajalein for employment or residency unless their presence served the interests of national defense. Even under such circumstances, they could only stay for controlled periods of time under prescribed conditions.<sup>39</sup> Foreign national dependents of U.S. citizen employees could be granted entry authorization while the sponsored U.S. citizen remained on duty or resident on the island. 40 Certain groups could enter Kwajalein at the discretion of the commanding officer without individual authorization. These groups included those traveling with official orders and possessing minimum security clearance that either worked for the Department of Defense or as Civil Service government employees. The latter included U.S. ambassadors, elected government officers and government contractor personnel traveling on official orders and with a cleared personal history statement. Trust Territory employees could also transit through Kwajalein's airport without staying on the island and Trust Territory citizens could stop through Kwajalein if sponsored by the Trust Territory. Anyone not covered within these categories had to apply for individual authorization to the Nike X Project Manager at Redstone Arsenal.41

Alongside regulating who could enter Kwajalein, army restrictions also controlled who among the resident population could travel to other islands in the Marshalls and throughout the Trust Territory. A 1966 Bell Laboratories Guide for incoming employees

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> "Entry Authorization Procedure, Kwajalein Test Site," produced by U.S. Army Material Command, Nike-X Project Office, March 15, 1965, TTA, reel no. 540. The manual is part of a larger file labeled "U.S. Army and Air Force Security Regulations Regarding the Entry in Kwajalein and Eniwetok."
<sup>40</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> "Entry Authorization Procedure for Kwajalein Missile Range," produced by Kwajalein Range Directorate, U.S. Army Safeguard System Command, June 15, 1970. This manual is taken from the National Archives in Washington D.C., Record Group 126, Office of Territories: Land, Kwajalein.

laid out island policies noting Kwajalein employees "may not visit other islands in the Trust Territory, or even in the Kwajalein Atoll (with the exception of regular work visits to facilities on other islands), without specific permission to do so."<sup>42</sup> The manual added that employees wishing to visit other islands could submit formal requests to the army and the Trust Territory for approval.<sup>43</sup> The exception to this regulation involved travel to Ebeye, which did not require authorization if undertaken during daylight hours. An overnight stay on Ebeye, however, required official permission. Those planning to travel to Ebeye had to sign out with Kwajalein's Island Security. The Bell guide encouraged Kwajalein residents planning to visit any nearby island to determine the local customs on the island and to avoid violating them during their visit.<sup>44</sup>

Army restrictions regulating access to Kwajalein built upon precedent naval regulations on Trust Territory entry and helped inform the broader process of Kwajalein's narration as an American space. Infusing the language of these regulations, the discourse of national security justified tight control over island entry. These regulations combined with Kwajalein's leasing narratives to obscure Marshallese entitlement to entry into and residency on their own islands. The regulations further positioned Marshallese as foreign to Kwajalein's U.S. domestic space. Military guidelines restricting entry to Kwajalein did so through emphasizing the Cold War national defense imperative that justified expansive military control throughout Micronesia. A 1988 general information guide to Kwajalein directed at temporary visitors exemplified the long-term impact of marking Kwajalein an American space through this array of rules and restrictions. The guide

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> "A Guide to Kwajalein," Prepared by the Kwajalein Office of the Defense Information Office, Bell Telephone Laboratories, September 1, 1966, TTA, reel no. 993. This guide is part of a larger file labeled "A Publication on the Nike-X Kwajalein Test Site."

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

stated "*Our* island is beautiful and a wonderful place to visit or live, we ask that you help us keep it that way through your actions as our guest."<sup>45</sup> This guide revealed how by the late 1980s, those informing incoming visitors about rules and restrictions for entering Kwajalein had come to naturalize U.S. possession of the island.

#### Disciplining Mobility on Kwajalein: Gendering American Movement

If a perceived national security threat governed historic policies on controlling access *to* Kwajalein, another narrative informed regulations governing movement *within* the island. Movement within Kwajalein has and continues to be guided by a militarized suburban landscape and army policies regulating mobility in racializing and gendering ways. While the latter part of this chapter will explore the army's racializing segregation policies that have controlled Marshallese movement on Kwajalein, this next section explores how the military guided civilian mobility on the island through regulations to protect the American hetero-normative nuclear family structure.<sup>46</sup>

Amidst several oral history interviews with Marshallese on Ebeye who described Kwajalein as a space of control, one interviewee offered insights into how she perceived this regulated atmosphere as a reflection of American culture. Eighty-one year-old Getruth Clarence, who worked as a domestic on Kwajalein for several years, identified controlled movement and sociality as that which most distinguished American culture from Marshallese. When I asked Clarence what she found most different between American and Marshallese culture, she appeared visibly uncomfortable to respond. Her

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> General Information for Visitor and TDY Personnel Arriving Kwajalein Missile Range, prepared by EC Services Company, 1988. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa. (My emphasis added).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> This chapter section is particularly inspired by and builds upon Gregory M. Dvorak's analysis and personal reflections on having grown up gay amidst Kwajalein's gendering landscape disciplining a heteronormative nuclear family structure in his *Remapping Home* 

discomfort may have been due in part to what my interpreter identified as a Marshallese value of not criticizing others. This may have been at least one factor since Americans were asking and interpreting these questions. Clarence continued on in her response hesitantly. She stated, "In Marshallese culture there's no restrictions on going to talk to people, going in people's houses, eating with people." She continued, "In American culture, you need to either have a reason to go see somebody or you need to have money to go do something... There's no restriction like that in Marshallese culture, while in American culture there's a lot of restrictions on interacting with other people."

Clarence's narrative offered a glimpse at how one Marshallese worker who spent significant time positioned to observe American practices on Kwajalein translated these observations into perceptions of American culture. Her observations of American culture from her proximate and frequent contact with that culture on Kwajalein suggested how army regulations may have impacted perceptions of American sociality. It is not entirely clear whether Clarence's insights pointed most towards limitations on sociality between Marshallese and Americans or more between Americans themselves. The remainder of this chapter will reveal, however, that military restrictions impacted both areas of social exchange.

Army policies and Kwajalein's militarized suburban landscape guided mobility in a way that regulated hierarchical social relationships on the island. Being a member of a

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Oral history interview with Getruth Clarence, interpreted by Rachel Miller on May 18, 2010. Ebeye, Marshall Islands.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Employing Clarence's insights here to critically analyze American culture offers one opportunity to disrupt a historiographic pattern in studies of colonialism that has tended to limit analysis of colonialism's culture to the voices of those in positions of colonial power who comment upon their own culture and more often upon the culture of the colonized subject. Thomas' *Colonialism's Culture* positions the cultural spotlight onto the colonizer offering significant contributions to understanding this culture. But his work does so largely without discourse from colonized subjects offering observations of that culture.

group that could move more freely around the island meant falling into a higher position on a social structure divided along lines of gender and racialized colonial status as well as military and civilian divisions. In addition to regulations monitoring movement around missile testing operations on Kwajalein, army policies buttressed the order created by the suburban built environment to police movement in a way that protected employees' nuclear families.

A letter to visitors from Kwajalein Test Site U.S. Army Command during the mid-1960s revealed how the military regulated movement in Kwajalein's residential spaces. The letter marked a variety of areas off limits noting that "it is the policy of this command to allow the greatest possible latitude consistent with the security and safety requirements of the island."<sup>50</sup> The letter continued on to list areas with limitations on entry. These included "any fenced areas where guard posts are placed, any or all shop areas, office buildings or work centers except in normal performance of an individual's business."<sup>51</sup> Reflecting Clarence's observations, the list also designated an expansive range of island space as off limits for any non-purposeful movement defined as either a work necessity or a contained social visit. The letter indicated that socializing in the dependents' housing area remained restricted to residents. All others could only enter with a valid reason and needed to proceed directly to and from their destination without loitering. Non-residents could only visit the housing area by invitation from a resident. Those desiring to move from the dependents housing area to the beach or reef for shelling needed to proceed by direct route to the destination and return without stopping along the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Directive to all visitors to Kwajalein Test Site, prepared U.S. Army Material Command, circa 1966, TTA, reel no. 993. This guide is part of a larger file labeled "A Publication on the Nike-X Kwajalein Test Site."
51 Ibid.

way. Any repairmen or others carrying out business errands could enter the residential area but not unattended quarters unless working in pairs or if the occupant gave specific written permission on the repairman's work order.<sup>52</sup>

The commander's letter included an attachment for Bell Telephone Laboratories employees instructing incoming personnel on Kwajalein's social club regulations. The Bell guide illuminated the island's gendered spatial divisions created through restrictions on certain recreational and social areas as open to families or women with other spaces restricted to bachelors. Some social clubs contained restricted access based on military or civilian status. While the Crossroads Club (named for the 1946 atomic test Operation Crossroads) remained open to all personnel and dependents, the Yokwe Yok Club (named for the Marshallese greeting) was restricted to officers and their dependents. Only male civilian personnel could socialize at the Ocean View Club. The MZC Kwajalein Country Club was a private club for Martin-Zachary employees and their guests.<sup>53</sup> Another way the military regulated space in recreational areas came through gendering seating at movie theaters. The island's oldest outdoor theater, the Richardson, remained open to all, but seating divided attendees by yellow seats for bachelors and white for dependents.<sup>54</sup> The Roxy movie theater located in the dependents housing area exclusively served families.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Ibid, covering the remaining details from the letter in this paragraph.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> "A Guide to Kwajalein," Prepared by the Kwajalein Office of the Defense Information Office, Bell Telephone Laboratories, September 1, 1966, TTA, reel no. 993. This guide is part of a larger file labeled "A Publication on the Nike-X Kwajalein Test Site."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> "Welcome to Kwajalein," Transport Company of Texas, published circa 1963-1964. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa. "A Guide to Kwajalein," Prepared by the Kwajalein Office of the Defense Information Office, Bell Telephone Laboratories, September 1, 1966, TTA, reel no. 993. This guide is part of a larger file labeled "A Publication on the Nike-X Kwajalein Test Site."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> "Welcome to Kwajalein," Transport Company of Texas, published circa 1963-1964. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

Swimming pools served as another site for spatially organizing the island upon gendered lines. Kwajalein's dependent pool remained open to families and visiting female personnel. While the bachelor pool exclusively served males living in barracks, bachelor's quarters or just transiting through Kwajalein. These social club and recreational facility divisions mirrored the ways in which housing divided on Kwajalein through the separation of families from bachelors. The island contained three types of housing available during the early years of the missile range in the 1960s. These consisted of bachelor officers' quarters, dorm style military barracks for non-officers, and family quarters, which served civilian and military families. The island contained three types of the missile range in the 1960s.

One of the most profound examples of military attempts to regulate movement in gendering ways on Kwajalein came through a street sign warning bachelors from entering the family housing area. While this rule could not be located in archival materials detailing other army regulations, former civilian Robert Barclay described the sign to me during a December 2010 oral history interview. Barclay said the sign had been up during the 1960s and indicated bachelors were not permitted to move beyond 6th street, the intersection separating family housing. Barclay said he recalled the sign being taken down sometime during the mid-1970s. Other civilians confirmed the sign's existence during casual conversations on Kwajalein. Alongside the army's various regulations separating bachelors from women and children in recreational areas, the street sign further revealed how Kwajalein's suburban insecurity remained distinct from that of most U.S. Cold War suburbs. On Kwajalein, in addition to the presumed threats to suburban domesticity posed by Soviet infiltration and nearby racialized urban others, the military

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Oral history interview with Robert Barclay on December 23, 2010. Kaneohe, O'ahu.

had to control potentially predatory bachelor men from penetrating the island's nuclear family structure.

While Kwajalein's spatial layout came through gendering separations between bachelor and family housing, the island's residential setup also illuminated class distinctions. The relationship between housing and employment on Kwajalein historically worked to pair class status with family protection, meaning those with specialized training and higher pay grades received accompanied status and family housing. These individuals, largely engineers, could bring their partners and families to live on the island. Those not hired with such high rank and elevated salaried positions came with unaccompanied status. This meant, whether or not they had partners or families, they could not bring them to live on Kwajalein. For many this equated to sustaining long-distance relationships, sometimes partners living thousands of miles away from families stateside and sending money home. Children who grew up on Kwajalein needed to vacate the island upon graduating high school unless they found employment. The army administrations' privileging of the hetero-normative family model also prevented gay or lesbian partnerships and families from obtaining accompanied status.

Army housing policies linking class and hetero-normative family protection remain in place today on Kwajalein and continue to spatially divide the island. Army efforts to preserve a hetero-normative nuclear family structure by locating families in suburban housing while keeping bachelors segregated to dormitory style accommodations have made family breakdowns particularly challenging to negotiate.

During my first trip to Kwajalein in May 2010, I learned how family deterioration played out under army policies pairing class and family status alongside historic policies

segregating families from bachelors. While on island, I heard the story of a married couple that came to Kwajalein years prior through accompanied status and thus received family housing.<sup>59</sup> When the couple divorced, the spouse whose job ranking gained him accompanied status and thus family housing continued caring for their children in his suburban home. The now ex-wife, who worked in an unaccompanied status position and only received family housing through her husband's job, had to move into bachelor's quarters. Because bachelor housing excluded any individuals under the age of 18, the wife's young children could not visit or stay with their mother in her new accommodations. She thus had to conduct all visits either at her place of work, or at the island's public dining facilities or other recreational areas.

While this Kwajalein mother presumably would not have been viewed as a predatory bachelor preying on other wives or children in Kwajalein's suburban space, her predicament exemplified how these early military policies rooted in this concern persisted in informing the island's contemporary housing segregation. While bachelors remained segregated away from families, the rules governing their accommodations also attempted to prevent any engagement with minors in their dormitory rooms. Both policies suggested a continued fear surrounding Kwajalein's suburban landscape having to accommodate the presence of suburbia's less traditional and presumably suspicious resident: the bachelor.

Several former and current Kwajalein residents have compared Kwajalein to a "Leave it Beaver" small town family feel during our discussions. Learning the story of a mother prevented from having her children enter her home on island suggested to me a potentially dysfunctional twist on this "Leave it Beaver" atmosphere. However, given

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> I chose here to keep this source anonymous at her request.

further thought, I concluded that her story potentially reinforced this atmosphere by how she embodied a cautionary tale to those considering disrupting the sanctity of the nuclear family structure on Kwajalein. As long as families maintained the June and Ward Cleaver appearance, island rules remained in their favor. Those who diverged from this portrait needed to derive their own strategy for navigating the island's hierarchical class and family structure alongside rules keeping bachelors away from the island's precious Wallys and Beavers.

Policing movement through residential and recreational spaces on island was made easier by Kwajalein's unique transportation environment. The army prohibited private vehicles so bicycles provided the main form of transportation and came with strict rules and regulations. In addition to curfew regarding the hours acceptable for riding a bicycle, the army created fines for riding a bike at night without a light. A set of military ordinances published for incoming visitors detailed bicycle regulations. The ordinances asserted no person could "operate a bicycle, tricycle or similar vehicle powered by human activity" on the island between a half hour after sunset to a half hour before sunrise, or any other time lacking sufficient light to discern who was operating the vehicle. The ordinances continued to note that anyone riding a bicycle, tricycle or other comparable vehicle needed an operational lighting device that emitted continuous light at a distance of 200 feet or risked paying a fine of more than 100 dollars. The army ordinances also identified island curfew for those under the age of 18 as midnight to 5:30 a.m. The army ordinances also

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> General Information for Visitor and TDY Personnel Arriving Kwajalein Missile Range, prepared by EC Services Company, 1988. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

Civilian movement on Kwajalein was guided through a militarized suburban surveillance structure. While the presumed proximate threat of predatory bachelor men distinguished this environment from most other U.S. suburbs, Kwajalein's setting shared some commonalities with the historic development of stateside suburban spaces worth considering. In City of Quartz, Mike Davis examined the militarizing surveillance system emerging throughout Los Angeles and into adjacent suburban residential areas.<sup>63</sup> Davis' work uncovered a variety of panopticon surveillance structures pervading malls, libraries and other public spaces throughout urban and suburban L.A. reflecting a broader policy of containment. <sup>64</sup> Police policies aimed to regulate the movement of homeless and "underclass Others," who Davis identified as primarily poor Latino families, young Black men, or elderly homeless white women within these urban and suburban spaces. 65 While some of Kwajalein's spatial segregation and surveillance aimed to police potentially predatory bachelor men on island, another set focused on controlling the nearby racialized urban population commuting to work on the island from Ebeye. This section has examined the military policies regulating American movement on Kwajalein through gendered and classed distinctions. Before exploring the army's racializing policies controlling Marshallese movement on Kwajalein, this next section briefly diverges to examine one more largely American group excluded from access to Kwajalein: journalists.

Controlling Information from Moving Beyond Kwajalein: Spinning the Media

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<sup>63</sup> Davis, City of Quartz, 248.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 226.

In addition to Kwajalein's surveillance structure monitoring those living on island and border regulations controlling access for those desiring entry, the island's atmosphere of control also extended to regulating information leaving the island. As detailed in chapter four, "Big Brother" style warnings reminded employees privy to missile testing information of their responsibility for keeping tight lipped on island. But efforts to control information also extended through the 1960s to limit outside news coverage of the island. Army regulations specifically focused on controlling media narratives on relations between Kwajalein and Ebeye. Military policies emerged over time to control media access to both islands. Evidence of these policies came through 1960s exchanges between military and Trust Territory administrators expressing concerns about media access to Kwajalein and Ebeye. These communications voiced divergent ideas about the value of controlling information on the two islands' history and contemporary relationship. This section examines army efforts to control media coverage of its segregation policies structuring life between Kwajalein and Ebeye. Those efforts, which ultimately proved futile, revealed army attempts to further isolate the island from outside influence.

As Kwajalein emerged as a key Cold War missile range, the Department of Defense set in place restrictions prohibiting any press visits under the Nike X project operations between June 1962 and January 1967. According to a January 1967 letter from Colonel J.W. Walters to High Commissioner W. R. Norwood, these policies prevented access for reporters from NBC and *Life* magazine. A month after Walters updated High Commissioner Norwood on this policy, letters exchanged between Norwood and Ruth

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> Letter from Colonel J.W. Walters to Honorable W.R. Norwood, High Commissioner, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands written on June 27, 1967. TTA, reel, no. 174.

Van Cleve, the Director of the Office of Territories in the Department of the Interior expressing concern about military policies controlling media access. In February 1967, Van Cleve wrote to Norwood acknowledging the High Commissioner's frustration about these issues. She noted, "We certainly share your concerns about the effect of the Army policy of denying entry and on several occasions the Department had made a major effort to obtain Defense Department permission for visiting journalists to visit Ebeye." Van Cleve continued on to add that the Secretary of Interior's office had tried on behalf of journalists from the *New Yorker*, *National Geographic* and *Life* magazine as well as NBC, "all uniformly without success." Van Cleve said she felt the Defense Department would be faulted for its actions, but that neither the Interior nor Trust Territory would be found accountable.

This exchange followed an earlier letter from Norwood to Kwajalein's Commanding Officer Colonel Frank C. Healy on behalf of *Life* magazine's request to access Ebeye. In his December 22, 1966 letter, Norwood expressed his opinion that allowing media access to Ebeye would be a beneficial move. He wrote, "There will be a number of occasions in the future, I am sure, when we will have requests from the press to have a look at Ebeye. I feel that it will be to our advantage usually to encourage people to see what is happening on Ebeye because I think we now have a good story to tell and nothing to hide." Norwood continued, "Ebeye is one of our most difficult problem areas in the Trust Territory and that fact is well known to the Congress of the United States, to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Letter from Ruth G. Van Cleve, Director of the Office of the Territories to Honorable William R. Norwood, High Commissioner of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands written on February 9, 1967. TTA, reel, no. 174.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> Letter from W.R. Norwood High Commissioner to Col. Frank C. Healy written on December 22, 1966. TTA, reel, no. 174.

the United Nations and to the various news media which are interested in what is happening in the Territory."<sup>71</sup> Norwood suggested the Department of Defense allow Trust Territory High Commissioner representative Dr. Vitarelli to act as a liaison in communicating with the press about Ebeye.<sup>72</sup>

Presumably, additional pressure to open the two islands to the media came after one major publication gained access to Ebeye by getting around the army's policies and then critiqued these regulations in 1967. In the May 1967 issue of *National Geographic*, journalist David S. Boyer wrote broadly about Micronesia and included a section entitled "Tight Little Islands Shun Publicity." In this portion of his article, Boyer described the Defense Department as trying to keep news about its military bases on Eniwetok and Kwajalein in the Marshalls hidden. He stated, "No journalist may visit Kwajalein Island. But I did get to Ebeye Island--part of the giant Kwajalein Atoll." Boyer explained that he reached Ebeye by sailing from Majuro, landing him "a mere mile from the secrets of the missile base."

By June 1967, under pressure from the Trust Territory and the Department of Interior alongside publicity criticizing military attempts to control media access, the army finally acknowledged the need to open access to the press. A letter sent from Colonel Walters revealed, however, a simultaneous awareness that press access meant the military would need to provide the media with the right story about Kwajalein and Ebeye. In his letter to the High Commissioner, Colonel Walters indicated that a decision had been

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> David S. Boyer, "Micronesia: The Americanization of Eden," in *National Geographic* magazine. May 1967. Pp. 736.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

made to allow newsmen to come to Kwajalein. He qualified this open access by writing, "It is believed that it is mutually agreed that such visits can be very beneficial if conducted properly and if all information given the news representatives is accurate and fairly portrays the efforts to help the Marshallese..."<sup>76</sup> Walters added, "It is also hoped the newsmen will observe that both the Trust Territory Administration and the Army are attempting to act in the best interests of the Marshallese people to off-set any difficulties caused by the operation of the nationally vital Kwajalein Test Site."<sup>77</sup> Three months later Colonel Walters provided specific materials to High Commissioner Norwood to help brief the media on Kwajalein and Ebeye. Norwood's response to these briefing materials revealed his concern about Walter's efforts to gloss over tensions between Kwajalein and Ebeye. Walters then responded to Norwood by acknowledging that the original briefing materials may have sounded, as the High Commissioner put it, "too glowing." He continued on to state, "We know that in hard reality there are difficult situations which result from the Army's involvement in the area; nevertheless, we feel that with effort we are able and willing to iron out these problems to our mutual satisfaction."<sup>79</sup> He added, "A part of the briefing, as we see it, is to explain the efforts we are making in this direction."80

These scrutinized media briefing materials constituted a public relations statement on the history of Kwajalein and Ebeye's relationship. Communicated by the Kwajalein Test Site Liaison Officer, the eleven-page briefing traced Ebeye's population density back

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> Letter from Colonel J.W. Walters to Honorable W.R. Norwood, High Commissioner, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands written on June 27, 1967. TTA, reel, no. 174.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Letter from Colonel J.W. Walters to Honorable W.R. Norwood, High Commissioner, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands written on September 28, 1967. TTA, reel, no. 174.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid

to the original labor camp displacement. The liaison officer described the removal as necessary for the establishment of the "first class Naval base." The briefing statement continued on to address disparities between Kwajalein and Ebeye as the natural progression of rising consumer desires on Ebeye. The statement noted that Ebeye's "commuter" work force included Marshallese domestics who over time became exposed to Kwajalein's modern household devices, like vacuum cleaners and washers and expressed a desire for such things. The statement explained that while this exposure proved "educational," ensuring these luxuries in Marshallese homes remained "beyond the scope and authority of the Army command at Kwajalein." The briefing stated that while this may suggest a disparity between the two islands, Ebeye houses did not even have running water prior to the army's redevelopment program on the island. Covering the history and continuity of the military's forced displacements over the years, the briefing described the removals of Lib islanders and those from the Mid-Corridor as "voluntary evacuations" carried out "to insure the safety of the inhabitants."

In the final pages of the army's media briefing, the liaison officer narrated a close community relationship existing between Kwajalein and Ebeye. The statement highlighted the role of the Kwajalein Women's Club in managing the Micronesian Shop where profits from handicraft sales went towards helping Marshallese. The briefing added that more important than Kwajalein's charitable acts remained "the individual rapport that has been established between the two communities." The liaison officer

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>81</sup> Relation of Kwajalein Test Site with the Trust Territory and the People of Micronesia (press briefing) included as enclosure with letter from Colonel J.W. Walters to Honorable W.R. Norwood, High Commissioner, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands written on September 28, 1967. TTA, reel, no. 174. <sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

said he considered that rapport to be excellent. 86 Further emphasizing Kwajalein's benevolent position towards Ebeye, the briefing statement noted, "In furtherance of humanitarian interests and welfare of the Marshallese people, the Army has an arrangement with the Trust Territory government whereby such things as food stuffs, medical supplies, and building materials will be sold to the Marshallese people when not available from their own sources."<sup>87</sup> The media briefing discourse suggested a military suspicion that once access opened for journalists to report on Kwajalein and Ebeye, the litany of critiques concerning army policies on Kwajalein would explode. The briefing's attempt to pre-empt this potential public relations catastrophe with a neatly packaged narrative of community rapport and humanitarian charity would fail to divert journalists from the real story behind the two islands. Upon gaining access, the media became a key player in the historic events that would unsettle U.S. colonial control over Kwajalein and Ebeye during the 1970s and 1980s.

## Regulating Marshallese Movement on Kwajalein: Naturalizing Segregation

The army's concern about controlling media access to Kwajalein and Ebeye during the 1960s likely exemplified an awareness that military policies increasingly disciplining Marshallese movement on Kwajalein would evoke negative press. As noted in earlier chapters, the control of access and mobility of Marshallese workers on Kwajalein followed a strict policy of segregation originating in 1951 with the initial labor camp removal of Micronesian workers to Ebeye. The structure of residential segregation between Ebeye and Kwajalein continued unaltered for decades with no Marshallese

86 Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

workers from Ebeye living on Kwajalein until the 1990s. From the mid-1960s forward, Kwajalein became a space of increasing restriction and control over Marshallese access and movement. This chapter turns now to explore army efforts to control access and mobility of Marshallese working on and transiting through Kwajalein over the past five decades. This section argues that army policies regulating Marshallese mobility on Kwajalein worked to further mark Marshallese as foreign in their own islands, criminalizing any of their movements that diverged from military rules.

Addressing the history of segregation between Kwajalein and Ebeye, Marshall Islands Journal editor Giff Johnson identified the lack of a causeway as one key factor keeping the islands separated over time during a recent oral history interview. Johnson noted that controlling Marshallese access to Kwajalein constituted a structural continuity for decades originating with the initial Marshallese labor camp displacement in 1951. He added the military never appeared to have any long-term plans for how life would evolve on Ebeye, and consistently rejected suggestions over time to bring the two islands into closer contact. Johnson stated that from the 1960s through today, the military had continuously chosen to avoid implementing plans that would have opened access between Kwajalein and Ebeye; plans that could have saved the Department of Defense millions of dollars.<sup>88</sup> According to Johnson, this avoidance centered on opportunities to connect the two islands by a causeway. Johnson stated, "If you look at the decision over the years to not build a causeway, [this] tells you something about the psychology of the army. They want, they've always wanted to be separate from Ebeye."89 Johnson continued on to highlight how this decision contrasted military budget consciousness.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>88</sup> Interview with *Marshall Islands Journal* Editor Giff Johnson on May 13, 2010. Majuro, Marshall Islands.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

Johnson noted, "they are very cost conscious and so they are gonna evaluate and say what the most cost effective way to deliver this service? Well you think over the years how many tens of millions of dollars they've put into boats, ferries, gas..."90

Johnson continued during our interview to lay out the financial and logistical benefits that could have come from creating a causeway between Kwajalein and Ebeye. He explained that the three- mile distance between the islands made the project fairly straightforward and cost efficient. 91 Johnson asserted causeways and bridges had already been built in other areas of the Marshalls through military investment, connecting islets in the capital atoll of Majuro. He noted that for Kwajalein and Ebeye this would have been a one-year or less project; a one-time capital investment of likely a few million dollars. Had the military done this, they could have wiped its hands of the costs of transporting Marshallese back and forth, he added. They could have left the issue of getting to Kwajalein up to the Marshallese workers themselves to either walk, bike, or take a vehicle. Johnson continued, "So that tells you something about the army and the navy and the army's thinking that even though there have been many times when the Marshall Islands leaders have said 'well why don't we just put a causeway in and you just solve the problem," they have consistently chosen against this option. 92

Johnson added that a causeway connecting the islands would have offered opportunities for Marshallese to sell power to Kwajalein and vice versa. He said for the military, "it's like 'no we're a separate entity...Kwajalein is here, Ebeye is there." <sup>93</sup> Kwajalein Senator Tony de Brum confirmed the history of Marshallese leaders

90 Ibid

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

suggesting a causeway over the years in our May 2010 interview in Majuro. De Brum identified the most significant contemporary problem in the region as continued discrimination on Kwajalein. He said he had always pushed for integration and still hoped to see a bridge built between Ebeye and Kwajalein that would allow for greater integration between workers on Kwajalein.<sup>94</sup>

The idea of a causeway connecting Kwajalein and Ebeye also arose among the civilian community on Kwajalein. The possibility came up during a recent oral history interview with two former Kwajalein civilian residents Cris Lindborg and Ray Wolff who both lived on Kwajalein for several years. When discussing the disparities between life on Kwajalein and Ebeye in October 2010, Lindborg explained how she never understood Kwajalein's segregation policies. She said she felt a causeway would have allowed the two communities to mingle further. If the military felt concerned about security issues they could have just fenced off the island's missile technology area, she added. Lindborg said, however, this remained "just our little dream," a prospect the military would never consider. 95 Wolff said he felt the civilian community would have "grown into" the change. 96 But he also quickly identified the problem of Marshallese wanting to tap into Kwajalein's water supply if a causeway were in place. To which, Lindborg snapped back "So let them! Why not?" She explained Ebeve's power plant and water supplies were always failing and she saw no reason for such disparate worlds to exist between the islands. She said Americans on Kwajalein had more than enough water for themselves, so she could not see any big deal in sharing. Lindborg said over the years she and her

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<sup>94</sup> Interview with Senator Tony de Brum in May 3, 2010. Majuro, Marshall Islands

<sup>95</sup> Oral history interview with Cris Lindborg and Raymond Wolff, October 16. Big Island, HI

<sup>96</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> Ibid.

husband had discussed the causeway idea with their friends Marshallese landowners Michael Kabua and Tony De Brum. She said Marshallese leaders had been trying for years to make it happen to no avail.<sup>98</sup>

Lindborg and Wolff's statements hinted at an interesting pattern of discursive absence in military archival materials documenting policies regulating Marshallese mobility on Kwajalein. Amidst the array of army manuals, correspondence and directives in the archives, none that I found addressed the continued structure of segregation between Kwajalein and Ebeye, beyond simply noting the initial labor camp removal in 1951. Perhaps this suggests how segregating Marshallese from Americans had been so embedded in military approaches to the region, this policy remained unremarkable and unremarked upon. Amidst these military documents detailing greater control over Marshallese workers' mobility on Kwajalein, none identified security as a major impetus. This absence seems striking since the military would come under significant scrutiny for discriminatory segregation policies on Kwajalein during the 1960s and 1970s. Under such attack, concerns about security would seem a fairly obvious and defensible stance to identify in explaining these policies.

This absence of security discourse in defending regulations on Marshallese movement on Kwajalein suggests a perception of Marshallese workers as so foreign to the space that the security question remained simply a given. Perhaps the military perceived and marked Marshallese workers, in contrast to American personnel on island, as just as foreign as any other outside visitor. Or perhaps this absence suggests that security may not have been the main concern informing military policies of segregation and exclusion of Marshallese. Rather, as was identified in several military documents,

98 Ibid.

concerns about resource constraints on Kwajalein and keeping island amenities geared toward only the American workforce seemed preeminent. Ray Wolff's quick defense of Kwajalein's water supply, noted above, expressed a presumption about American entitlement to resources in the region and a sense of scarcity in which sharing those resources with Marshallese constituted a zero sum game. This logic reflected discourse analyzed in chapter four which naturalized military penny pinching towards Ebeye and Marshallese workers despite the multiple millions of dollars invested in missile testing and quality of life facilities for Kwajalein's American workers.

That Marshallese working on Kwajalein over the years found the island's restrictive atmosphere constraining and perhaps even culturally unintelligible came through in several oral history interviews on Ebeye. Getruth Clarence, cited above for narrating Kwajalein's controlled sociality, also said she felt life was easier on her outer island of Jaluit than on Kwajalein. She explained that on Jaluit, "she can do whatever she wants, she doesn't need things like security clearance to go places, so life is easier out there." Kenye Kobar, an 83-year old Marshallese woman who worked as a maid and in laundry service on Kwajalein for several years identified the biggest difference between Kwajalein and Ebeye as the "security clearance...to get onto Kwajalein." Eighty-six-year-old Neilat Zackhrias had moved to Ebeye from the outer island Ailinglaplap in 1961 and had worked as a domestic on Kwajalein for several years. She also recalled her experience with the island's restricted access over the years. She stated, "it's very

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>99</sup> Oral history interview with Getruth Clarence, interpreted by Rachel Miller on May 18, 2010. Ebeye, Marshall Islands

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>100</sup> Oral history interview with Kenye Kobar, interpreted by Rachel Miller May 2010. Ebeye, Marshall Islands.

strict...[you have] to get all this permission and make ID cards...to get on."<sup>101</sup> When I asked Zackhrias how many times she had been to Kwajalein when not working, she responded with a laugh potentially implying the ridiculous nature of this question. She then proceeded to say, "No times," adding that if she was not working at the home, she would be working in other places like the laundry. When work finished, she went home to Ebeye; "didn't stay."<sup>102</sup> An impression of the island's restricted atmosphere informed outer islander narratives of Kwajalein as well. Liton Beasa, a 54-year old canoe building expert living on the outer island Namdrik, noted that during his visits to Ebeye and Kwajalein he observed Kwajalein's restrictions directed at Marshallese on island. He stated, "It was always that the people on Ebeye really respected the Kwajalein rules, because if they didn't they would get in so much trouble, like if they spent the night there, they didn't check out, you know...go to jail."<sup>103</sup>

## **Policing Intimacy between Americans and Marshallese**

While most military regulations detailed in civilian personnel manuals delineated the hourly restrictions on Marshallese coming and going for work, Beasa's observation suggested another army effort to control Marshallese by preventing overnight stays. Hinted at in Beasa's narrative of the legal ramifications for "spending the night," this army attempt would have primarily aimed to regulate intimacy between Marshallese and Americans. While less abundant than other documents addressing access and movement on Kwajalein, some archival materials revealed control over Marshallese women and

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>101</sup> Oral history interview with Neilat Zackhrias, interpreted by Rachel Miller on May 14, 2010. Ebeye, Marshall Islands.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> Oral history interview with Liton Beasa, interpreted by Rachel Miller on May 9, 2010. Namdrik, Marshall Islands.

girls to be a pressing issue for military and civilian communities on Kwajalein and Ebeye. Chapter three briefly touched on this through civilian contractor manuals informing incoming American personnel that while no Marshallese could stay overnight on Kwajalein, Americans wishing to stay on Ebeye could do so by requesting military approval. While this policy alluded to a more common U.S. military base sexual economy existing on Ebeye, other policies controlling access to overnight stays on Kwajalein pointed to a more complex realm of intimate relations between Americans and Marshallese. These documents also illuminated some of the challenges facing individuals maintaining intimate relations across these regulated and segregated islands. <sup>104</sup> This section examines efforts to regulate intimacy between Americans on Kwajalein and Marshallese on Ebeye. The section reveals how despite the segregation structure separating the two islands and army policies attempting to keep the communities distant, Americans and Marshallese established an array of significant connections over time.

Kwajalein Atoll Inter-Island Community Relations Committee meetings provided one space where Americans and Marshallese voiced concerns about Marshallese girls and women staying overnight on Kwajalein. The committee formed in 1968 as an attempt to bring together representatives from Kwajalein and Ebeye to address tensions emerging between the two islands. During the June 8, 1979 meeting, the Kwajalein Missile Range Trust Territory Liaison Robert E. Haley summarized a discussion centering on what he described as "problems" generated by Ebeye women staying overnight in Kwajalein's

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>104</sup> Prostitution on Ebeye was also discussed in William J. Alexander's "The Destruction of Paradise: America's Legacy in Micronesia," appearing in the February 19, 1979 issue of *The Progressive*, in which Alexander wrote that on Ebeye "Marshallese women from pre-teens up sell their bodies to men from the Missile Range." Prostitution on Ebeye was again alluded to in Robert Barclay's 2002 novel about Ebeye and Kwajalein, *Melal*, in which he wrote how his main character Rujen knew something about the man who had taken his seat on the ferry over to Kwajalein. He knew "about how Caleb's house had been a place where his American and Filipino coworkers could visit and drink with him and screw young Marshallese *kokan*--whores--who Caleb found for them." Pp.17.

bachelors quarters. He noted the topic had been addressed as well in previous meetings. Haley cited concern from the Ebeye Women's Club representatives who requested the B.Q. maids from Ebeye be given a separate area where they could do their washing and ironing. The representatives continued on to suggest that Kwajalein prevent the women from working weekends to help reduce the "trouble" Marshallese girls were getting into at the B.Q.s. Haley added that KMR [Kwajalein Missile Range] security personnel assured the group no maids would be allowed on Kwajalein after 1730. KMR security also stated no Ebeye residents would be granted visiting privileges in the bachelor quarters, nor would anyone under 18 be allowed. KMR security added that "a list of female residents charged and found guilty on the B.Q.s of trespass will be furnished Chief Magistrate Ebeye."

Following this security assurance, Haley's minutes described how Marshallese leadership on Ebeye could help control intimacy between American men and Marshallese women and girls on Kwajalein. Haley wrote that the Iroij (Chief) Lejolan Kabua requested he be given the names of any Marshallese girls found trespassing in bachelor quarters. Haley's minutes also cited a group suggestion for an exchange badge system for domestic employees to ensure no domestics could remain on Kwajalein overnight without the knowledge of Kwajalein and Ebeye security personnel. The Kwajalein community representative Mrs. Alice Buck suggested that the "problem of Ebeye girls in B.Q.s" could be solved by greater involvement by Ebeye parents. <sup>107</sup> She noted parents could give the Ebeye Magistrate their daughters' names so the Magistrate and police

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>105</sup> Kwajalein Atoll Inter-Island Community Relations Committee meeting minutes, March 7, 1980. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

could make sure these girls received no passes to get to Kwajalein. Concluding the minutes, Haley noted a final suggestion from the group to have the Ebeye girls' softball team practice discontinued on Kwajalein. 108

About nine months after this discussion, the topic of controlling Marshallese girls on Kwajalein again surfaced during a March 7, 1980 meeting. Haley began his meeting minutes' summation by noting that a "lengthy discussion opened on the problem of Ebeye girls entering Kwajalein bachelor quarters and related morally bad results." 109 Again during this meeting, the 1730 departure for Marshallese personnel was reiterated. Haley added that those Americans wishing to have people stay for social affairs needed to submit an application for passes to KMR security 48 hours prior. These requests would be submitted to the Chief Magistrate to prevent girls from coming to Kwajalein for questionable reasons. Haley wrote, "Further discussions concluded that again this is an Ebeye community problem that must be solved on Ebeye." Both of these meeting discussions on the "problem" of Ebeye girls revealed discourse almost criminalizing domestics and presumably underage "girls." None of these discussions addressed the role played by American men residing in the bachelor quarters contributing to these "morally bad results." The meetings narrated the issue as an "Ebeye community problem" where solutions resided on Ebeye. These solutions meant controlling girls coming to Kwajalein rather than controlling American men on Kwajalein.

While these meeting minutes suggested the presence of potentially coercive relationships existing between underage Marshallese girls and presumably older American men (not an uncommon pattern throughout Micronesia), the committee also

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>108</sup> Ibid. <sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

discussed other kinds of relationships emerging between the two islands. During the June 8, 1978 meeting Haley summarized a discussion on Kwajalein civilians married to Marshallese and living on Ebeye. 111 The discussion arose because of concerns among Marshallese committee members as to why KMR residents could buy building materials for new homes on Ebeye at prices lower than Marshallese paid. The discussion concluded with a suggestion to make costs equivalent for all those living on Ebeye. 112 As serious relationships developed between Marshallese and Americans, these meetings provided one venue for addressing the varied privileges and costs associated with where couples cohabitated. With rare exception, couples lived on Ebeye because the American partner hired to work on Kwajalein arrived with unaccompanied status. This meant if individuals were single when arriving to Kwajalein they could not have an American or Marshallese partner move to live with them on island. As revealed by the labor camp removal in 1951 and military segregation policies thereafter, partnered residency on Kwajalein would not come through Marshallese employee status for several decades.

Despite Ebeye's continuing population density crisis, archival sources and oral histories rarely revealed any concern about Americans moving to the island. One exception came through a letter from High Commissioner W.R. Norwood to Ebeye's High Commissioner Representative William V. Vitarelli. Norwood sent the letter in November 1967 during the Trust Territory's first Operation Exodus program to reduce Ebeye's population. In his letter, Norwood acknowledged reading Vitarelli's recent notes documenting a significant increase in marriages between Kwajalein employees and

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112 Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>111</sup> Kwajalein Atoll Inter-Island Community Relations Committee meeting minutes, June 8, 1978. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

"Ebeye girls," where these Americans requested permission to live on Ebeye. 113 Norwood noted he did not anticipate this "surge" in marriages and could not approve of allowing Kwajalein men to establish residency on Ebeye. He wrote, "We cannot be in a position of forcing Marshallese off the island and permitting non-Marshallese to establish residence there." 114 That Norwood's efforts to prevent Americans from living on Ebeye would fail alongside the failure of Operation Exodus in the late 1960s came through in the 1978 meeting noted above. The meeting minutes clearly identified Americans cohabitating with Marshallese spouses on Ebeye, pointing to their unjust purchasing privileges rather than their problematic residency status.

A June 24, 1980 Kwajalein Atoll Inter-Island Community Relations Committee meeting alluded again to the reality of serious relationships developing between Americans and Marshallese despite continued segregation between the islands. In this meeting, Haley documented the Chief Secretary Marshalls Representative "Mr. Edwards [saying] he had received several questions about common-law marriages...[and] made it clear that the Marshallese only recognize common-law marriages between Marshallese." Edwards also noted, "There are no common-law marriages between U.S. personnel and Marshallese." Edwards' statements suggested the reality of couples trying to have their relationships recognized in a more formal manner that presumably would have offered them a more privileged or protected status. Negotiating through the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>113</sup> Letter from High Commissioner W. R. Norwood to Dr. William V. Vitarelli written on November 30, 1967. Located in RG 126, Records of the Office of Territories: Land, Ebeye at NARA, College Park. It is worth pointing out in this excerpt that it is unclear if Norwood used the term "girls" to communicate the age of those on Ebeye or rather if this was a condescension towards Marshallese women. This term likely encompassed both possibilities.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>115</sup> Kwajalein Atoll Inter-Island Community Relations Committee meeting minutes, June 24, 1980. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.
<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

material and residential restrictions governing relationships between Kwajalein and Ebeye undoubtedly proved challenging for many of these partnerships.

The Kwajalein Atoll Inter-Island Community Relations meetings offered one site for discussing relationships between Americans and Marshallese crossing Kwajalein and Ebeye's segregated divides. The meetings revealed how military attempts to control access and movement between these two islands remained unsuccessful in controlling these more intimate aspects of individual lives. How this complex array of relationships operated in reference to Kwajalein's rules and regulations came through as well in Robert Barclay's 2002 novel *Melal*. Barclay, an English professor who grew up as a civilian on Kwajalein, commented upon the complicated lives of those Marshallese and Americans navigating through Kwajalein's segregated space in *Melal*.

While Barclay's novel centered on his main character Rujen Keju, a Marshallese man working at Kwajalein's sewage treatment plant, Barclay's supporting character Lazarus provided a lens into the challenges complicating intimate relationships between Americans and Marshallese. Barclay introduced the reader to Rujen's cousin Lazarus as Rujen headed to work. En route, Rujen encountered Lazarus coming from the home of his American girlfriend on Kwajalein. After bragging to Rujen about his sexual exploits, Lazarus launched into a description of all the luxuries he had been enjoying while staying in this American girl's place. He detailed the big T.V., a puffy comfortable couch, air conditioning and endless bubble baths. Lazarus added, "and when we get married then I'll be living over here as an American, and you--all my family--can visit anytime you like!"<sup>117</sup> After Lazarus asked Rujen not to say anything until he had become American, Rujen promised he would not. But he added, "I hope you know that because you are the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>117</sup> Robert Barclay, Melal: A Novel of the Pacific (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 110.

man, that when you marry your American wife she will become a Marshallese, not the other way around."<sup>118</sup> To which Lazarus responded, "You lie!" Then Rujen replied, "I'm joking--of course if you marry an American then you become one, I think."<sup>119</sup>

Barclay's inclusion of this passage highlighted the way in which relationships between Marshallese and Americans always existed in reference to the kinds of segregating policies governing movement, access and privileges between Kwajalein and Ebeye. His depiction of neither Lazarus nor Rujen as particularly sure about how it would work with a Marshallese man and an American woman spoke to the ways in which army policies pervaded and complicated the most intimate realms of social interactions between these two populations. Barclay's decision to narrate American and Marshallese intimacy through the dynamic of a Marshallese man with an American woman seemed curious since this dynamic proved far less common than American men with Marshallese women and girls. Had Barclay chosen the latter, he may have been able to prod more deeply into some of the more coercive patterns that have historically developed in the Marshall Islands and throughout Micronesia under such relationships. When I recently asked Barclay why he decided to go with this less common dynamic for *Melal*, he acknowledged these relationships indeed were exceptional. But he said he based Lazarus' relationship on a couple he knew while living on Kwajalein. 120 He added that American men on Kwajalein seeking Marshallese women on Ebeye proved much more common.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>118</sup> Ibid, 111.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>120</sup> Follow up questions through email with Robert Barclay on February 1, 2011. These questions followed our oral history interview on December 23, 2010. Kaneohe, O'ahu.

He said sometimes these men would keep them on Kwajalein in their bachelor's quarters for the weekend; "against the rules of course." 121

## Increasing Surveillance on Kwajalein: Criminalizing Marshallese Movement

While one set of Kwajalein's segregation policies made Marshallese and American intimate relationships challenging, another set of army restrictions surfacing during the 1960s pervaded the realm of Marshallese and American friendships by attempting to control gift giving practices. These army policies resided within a broader range of new regulations that also prohibited Marshallese shopping privileges on Kwajalein and more greatly restricted Marshallese movement on island. The new rules also prevented Marshallese workers from bringing any commercial items back to Ebeye. This last section examines the introduction of these army policies and their implications for further marking Marshallese as foreign to Kwajalein's space of American domesticity. This section also explores how these policies worked to criminalize Marshallese through increased surveillance over their movement and their removal of any non-approved items from the island.

On January 18, 1968 the army introduced this new set of policies primarily couching them within a framework of regulating Micronesians' purchase and removal of goods from Kwajalein. The army outlined the new regulations in two documents produced in December 1967 and January 1968. These documents identified the primary reasons for the new policies as the prevention of "interference with Trust Territory tax revenue sources and unfair competition with local Trust Territory merchants, and to

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

provide a reasonable basis for retail for stock control." The documents did not specify why regulations were implemented in these exact moments. However, given their discourse focusing on protection of Trust Territory businesses on Ebeye, one can hypothesize that Ebeye's growing population and presumably emergent business community spurred the military to take action regarding increasing consumer competition between Kwajalein and Ebeye stores. No archival documents I found indicated an exact event responsible for these changes. Thus it seems likely concerns among business leaders may have been emerging over time and culminated in the 1967 and 1968 regulations. According to the army, the policies intended to address the problem of commercial items on Kwajalein being cheaper than those on Ebeye because the U.S. government subsidized Kwajalein's transportation costs. The army concluded that Kwajalein's lower prices created unfair competition for Ebeye merchants. The inclusion of concern about stock control addressed preferences among Kwajalein businesses wishing to only account for the needs of Americans when ordering commercial goods. These businesses had asserted their desire to avoid the hassle of catering orders to meet the less predictable needs of Marshallese workers.

The lengthy list of new regulations governing purchasing rights, access privileges and free exchange of goods included controls on both Americans residents and Marshallese workers. These regulations noted that all purchases by Kwajalein residents from Kwajalein stores had to be for personal use or gifts only given to immediate family members. The army instructed Kwajalein residents to only purchase gifts for residents of other islands if those gifts valued at fifteen dollars or less. The army included the

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123 Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>122</sup> "Purchase and Removal of Goods--KTS," Global Associates Procedure 4520-1, December 1967 and January 1968. TTA, reel, no. 987.

caveat that these lower valued gifts could only be given during the Christmas season between December 22 and January 2. None of these gifts could include alcohol. 124 The regulations continued on to note that Micronesian citizens could only purchase and remove goods from Kwajalein from the Macy's pre-Christmas sale. The army prohibited the sale of food and intoxicants to anyone other than Kwajalein residents. But Micronesians could purchase beer for on premise consumption. One exception to the army policies allowed Micronesians to make a one-time purchase from Macy's with written authorization from the Trust Territory Representative at the Kwajalein Test Site. Micronesians could also purchase from the island thrift store, the Bargain Bazaar, as long as they kept their receipts required to take their purchases off island. Micronesians not working on Kwajalein but transiting through could make small purchases while on island as long as they received written authorization from Kwajalein's Trust Territory representative.

The new regulations also addressed the issue of American and Micronesian marriages attempting to regulate the extent of gift giving under these circumstances. The policy noted that those Americans working on Kwajalein married to Micronesians and or for other reasons living on Ebeye could buy from Kwajalein stores only for personal use or to give to their immediate family members. As noted earlier in the chapter, the terms nuclear or immediate family would not have held much relevance in Marshallese social structure at this time. Therefore, implementing a policy to limit gift-giving practices in these mixed marriages would have proven a significant challenge, especially given the importance of generosity and gift giving in Marshallese culture. The 1968 regulations

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid, all above.

included another caveat indicating that Americans could give gifts to Micronesians as long as those gifts had no commercial value and constituted their own items that would otherwise be discarded. Even these gifts, identified pretty much as American trash, needed to receive clearance in writing by the Security Department Chief. Micronesians who received these gifts of discarded American goods could only transport these items back to Ebeye on Wednesdays. The army prohibited Kwajalein residents from bringing any food or alcohol items with them when visiting Ebeye (including beer), or any other packages or items not approved through a special Security Department authorized pass.

In addition to these specific regulations on removing items from Kwajalein, the army's new policies prohibited former freedoms on when and where Micronesian workers could eat on Kwajalein. Under the new guidelines, Micronesians could consume at the island snack bar as long as they did so outside the hours of 11:30 to 12:30. They could eat at the Crossroads Club from 11 to 12, Monday through Saturday. The 1968 document delineating these policies also outlined how new rules regulating goods removals would be enforced. The document noted that a system to record items given to Micronesians would be maintained and all items removed by Micronesians without proper authorization would be confiscated. All violations would be reported to the "Police Blotter" and those abusing purchasing privileges would undergo investigation.

Consequences for proven violations would include the impoundment of goods and fourteen days of suspension of entry authorization for Micronesians in violation, which could seriously jeopardize Micronesians' employment status. Consequences also included written advisement of the violation to the violating worker's sponsoring company or

agency and a police report.<sup>126</sup> Curiously, none of these rules and regulations listed any consequences for Americans violating these policies by selling or giving items to Micronesians.

Despite this lack of documented consequences, the army did communicate to Americans living on Kwajalein the expectation that each would abide by these new rules and regulations. Colonel Frank C. Healy expressed this need for Kwajalein residents' support in "An Open Letter to All KTS Residents" published in Kwajalein's daily newspaper. In the January 12, 1968 issue of the *Hourglass*, Healy outlined the regulations explaining the policies intended to help Trust Territory merchants on Ebeye stay in business and compete against Kwajalein's tax-free and subsidized goods. 127 He noted that the Trusteeship Agreement prohibited Kwajalein Test Site from competing with Trust Territory merchants on Ebeye. Healy also explained that Micronesians purchasing items on Kwajalein deprived the local Ebeye government of an important sales tax revenue that could be gained for schools and other services on the island. Finally, Healy's letter described the logistical problem of ordering items for Kwajalein when acknowledging consumer preferences on both Kwajalein and Ebeye. He stated Kwajalein's population of 4,300 alongside the "the less predictable desires of some 4,000 Micronesians residing on Ebeye," made stock maintenance extremely difficult and caused Kwajalein residents "to suffer "128

While army operations on Kwajalein continued *because of* the role Ebeye played as a repository for displaced islanders and home to a significant segment of Kwajalein's

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128 Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>126</sup> Ibid, all in paragraph.

<sup>&</sup>quot;An open letter to all KTS residents," written by Colonel Frank C. Healy published in the January 12, 1968 issue of the *Hourglass*. TTA, reel, no. 987.

laborers, any impetus to subsidize goods on Ebeye seemed beyond the realm of possibility. Marshallese earning far less than their American counterparts on Kwajalein continually struggled on Ebeye to survive amidst the costs of unsubsidized housing and consumer goods priced much higher than those on Kwajalein. The army naturalized this continued struggle as a matter of protecting Trust Territory private enterprise on Ebeye and avoiding the logistical hassle of ordering goods to satisfy the needs of all Kwajalein employees.

Healy ended the *Hourglass* letter by emphasizing that army policies did not intend to ban the rewarding of good work and in so doing marked controlled consumption as a bonus for a job well done. He explained that the army put the regulations in place to benefit Kwajalein and Ebeye residents. He concluded, "KTS [Kwajalein Test Site] is not attempting to prohibit the rewarding of a good employee for a job well done. If either a one-time job or consistently good employment warrants it, a cash reward would certainly be appropriate." He continued, "The only restriction KTS is imposing is that this money must be spent in the local Trust Territory economy, not at KTS." Healy's statements naturalized and further concretized the hierarchical divisions between Americans and Marshallese on Kwajalein. He did so by recruiting American residents into the role of "rewarding good work" with cash that came at the price of further limiting Marshallese freedoms by controlling where they could spend that cash.

As army policies attempting to control intimacy between Americans and Marshallese proved not entirely successful, the two communities also found ways to skirt around the 1968 rules regulating the exchanging of goods. Several oral history interviews

129 Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

with former Kwajalein residents revealed individual stories of Americans sneaking items over to Ebeye throughout the years. These interviews also indicated that during the 1960s and 1970s these "subversive practices" proved less risky for Americans than during the 1980s and thereafter when army security heightened following the Marshallese sail-in protests. As will be detailed further in chapter eight, Americans attempting this behavior during and following the protest years more commonly faced the threat of being banned from Kwajalein.

While some Americans worked around these rules during the early years of the new army policies, the broader impact on Marshallese workers commuting to Kwajalein each day is worth further consideration. The military's dehumanizing and degrading methods for implementing these policies came through in a 1968 photograph in the *Micronesian Reporter*. The photograph appeared during the first year of the new military regulations and revealed the army's approach to criminalizing Marshallese workers. The image showed up in P.F. Kluge's article, "Micronesia's Unloved Islands: Ebeye." The photograph documented Marshallese workers sitting orderly on the *Tarlang* ferry that took commuters between Ebeye and Kwajalein daily. As the workers sat, an older woman who appeared to be knitting captures the gaze as the most prominent figure in the left center portion of the image. Beside her stood a white American guard, peering over the Marshallese workers almost like a human panopticon keeping watch over these potential brown criminals. The caption read, "The guard is tired. He works the night shift and the morning boat is the end of his day. But for the hundreds of Marshallese who jam the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>131</sup> These included oral history interviews with Robert Barclay on December 23, 2010 in Kaneohe, O'ahu and Cris Lindborg and Raymond Wolff on October 16, 2010 on the Big Island, HI.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>132</sup> Photograph appeared in "Micronesia's Unloved Islands: Ebeye," written by P.F. Kluge for the *Micronesian Reporter*, Third Quarter, Volume XVI, no. 3, 1968. Pp. 33.

decks of the Tarlang, the day is just beginning. And other guards will scan their comings and goings on Kwajalein." Kluge's photograph further illustrated the military's degradation and lack of respect for Kwajalein's Marshallese workers. The image exemplified how the army designated this population, without whom Kwajalein could not operate, as criminals needing surveillance.

133 Ibid.

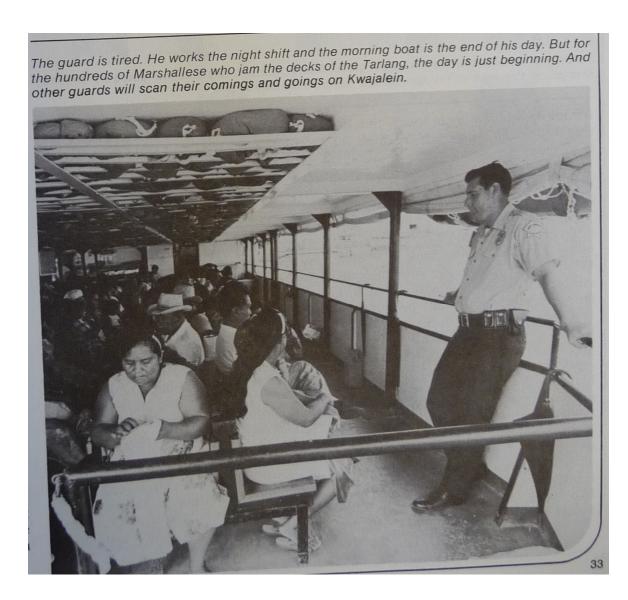


Figure 49. Surveillance of Marshallese workers on Kwajalein. 134

Robert Barclay's novel *Melal* offered an additional portrait of how Marshallese workers' daily humiliations of commuting to and moving through Kwajalein under such extreme controls may have been experienced. While historic fiction, *Melal* seemed to capture certain truths of these experiences through Barclay's main character Rujen Keju and his family. Barclay's readers could glimpse most directly at what the army's

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

segregation policies may have felt like and may continue to feel for those most directly targeted by these restrictions. As *Melal* began with Rujen on Ebeye boarding the *Tarlang* ferry to work on Kwajalein, one could easily imagine Rujen sitting next to the woman knitting in Kluge's photograph amidst the "other hundreds of Marshallese who jam the decks of the *Tarlang*." Barclay introduced Rujen as father to sons Jebro and Nuke. The latter's name of which was not accidental, nor should it be lost on the reader that Jebro had six fingers on one hand due to his deceased mother's exposure to nuclear radiation.

Themes of trespassing infused *Melal's* pages. Barclay offered the reader a sense of Kwajalein's security measures early on when he described Rujen as heading to work after securing a position for his son Jebro as a waste worker on Kwajalein. Barclay wrote,

"Like his father and all Marshallese who worked there, Jebro would need to catch the *Tarlang* to Kwajalein in the morning and then back again before six in the evening (unless specifically authorized for overtime) or be fined for trespassing--a fine more than twice his daily pay. He would not be allowed in the American stores or restaurants, and he would be searched at a checkpoint before leaving. Not even a Pepsi bought from a machine was allowed on the boat back to Ebeye. Jebro wondered, when he went for his orientation on Wednesday, if a sign outside of one of the American clubs was a joke, a mistake, or a serious warning. It read, in Marshallese but not English: NO MARSHALLESE ALLOWED ON THESE PREMISES. ANYBODY CAUGHT WILL FACE IMPRISONMENT AND WILL BE RUINED."

Barclay continued on to write that while this sign angered Jebro and made him want to act out, he remained aware that the money he could earn on Kwajalein was the best opportunity around. I include this passage at length here to illustrate how Barclay's novel offered insights into potential psychological impacts of the 1968 policies outlined above. Barclay's 2002 publication date for *Melal* also suggested the policies' potential long-term impacts for Marshallese and for this American civilian who had observed these practices and was partly trying to unveil the island's discriminatory history through his novel.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>135</sup> Barclay, *Melal*, 7-8.

Concerns about trespassing and restricted access remained a constant burden for Rujen throughout the novel. As *Melal* neared conclusion, the reader would find Rujen receiving a ticket for being on Kwajalein after hours following a series of unexpected events. As Rujen waited at Kwajalein's dock to head back to Ebeye, he read the line on his ticket marked "VIOLATION: "Trespassing." Barclay wrote Rujen "suddenly saw how incredibly backward it was, how it made no sense. How could a Marshallese be trespassing on a Marshallese island?"<sup>137</sup>

In addition to Barclay's efforts to reveal this contradictory reality of Marshallese individuals barred from access to their own islands, his novel also touched on the theme of controlled mobility within Kwajalein. Through Rujen, Barclay detailed what the experience of trying to move through such confinement may have felt like for Marshallese workers. Barclay suggested how Kwajalein's surveillance setting guided movement on the island in a way that Marshallese workers trying to navigate through this space potentially internalized. He did so in a passage in which Rujen arrived on Kwajalein to find his usual bicycle vandalized leaving him with no transportation to work. Rujen decided to take another bike and felt compelled by some unknown force to ride freely throughout the island, veering away from his routine path to work. Upon taking this bold and unexpected step, Rujen reflected upon the fact that, "In all his years of working on Kwajalein, he had always gone from place to place with a purpose, never as he did now, just going no place at a slow pace without any sense of consequence." 138

*Melal* provided a compelling picture of how Rujen's divergence in simply riding a bike aimlessly through Kwajalein could be experienced by him and possibly any other

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>136</sup> Ibid, 270. <sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>138</sup> Ibid, 56.

Marshallese or American observer who had internalized the island's confining landscape of control as reckless or rebellious. Barclay wrote that as Rujen rode on, he began to wonder if someone had already reported his deviant behavior, his criminal act. Rujen gradually moved through the American residential section on the island and began reflecting on the privileges enjoyed by those living in this space. Barclay wrote, "The people of Pine Street could view the ocean from their second floors, and that would be nice to do in the morning, he thought, to sit up high in the air-conditioning and behind a pane of glass, watching the breakers and the rise or fall of the tide." Rujen's experience of Kwajalein's panopticon surveillance structure continued as he crossed the street on the bicycle toward the elementary school and "looked quickly both ways to see if he was being watched as he rode." 140 Through Rujen's character, Barclay seemed most able to convey potential truths of experiences for Marshallese workers who were and continue to be treated like suspected criminals or deviants under Kwajalein's surveillance structure. Kwajalein's restrictions on access, mobility and purchasing rights for Marshallese workers most dramatically increased during the 1960s but continue through today.

Barclay's 2002 novel can be read as offering one contemporary reflection disparaging the dehumanizing military policies of surveillance on Kwajalein. In launching this critique, Barclay was not alone. The army's 1968 policies garnered several immediate responses decrying the potential impact on Marshallese. Before exploring these various critiques it is important to recognize that the 1968 policies not only proved degrading and dehumanizing but also directly violated the original bylaws of the 1947 Trusteeship Agreement. Section five of the agreement ensured "Protection Against

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

Unreasonable Search and Seizure."<sup>141</sup> This section identified the right of Micronesians "to be secure in their persons, houses, papers and affects, against unreasonable searches or seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and persons or things to be seized."<sup>142</sup> Army search and seizure practices that would follow the 1968 regulations on removing items from Kwajalein conflicted with these supposed protections for Micronesians. Clearly, given that the Trusteeship Agreement also claimed to protect Micronesians against loss of their land, the new army policies simply represented another example of how some of the agreement's directives carried little weight on the ground.

Responses to the 1968 regulations came from both Americans and Marshallese. Trust Territory High Commissioner W.R. Norwood expressed immediate concern about the new regulations in a letter to the Army Commanding Officer on Kwajalein, Colonel Healy. In his February 3, 1968 letter, Norwood explained that Marshallese on Ebeye found the new policies and their tone offensive and demeaning. He added that if he was Marshallese he would feel the same way. Norwood said he regarded the new restrictions "as offensive to the Trust Territory Administration and as seriously encumbering our ability to deal effectively with the already difficult Ebeye problems which are almost entirely the result of the KTS [Kwajalein Test Site] programs." Norwood continued on to state he understood a need to control purchases and limit laundry usage given the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>141</sup> Section Five of the Trust Agreement guidelines included in the Trust Territory Policy Letter, Office of the Deputy High Commissioner, December 29, 1947. Located on microfiche D70197 in the Hamilton library at the University of Hawai'i, Manoa.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>143</sup> Letter from High Commissioner W.R. Norwood to Colonel Frank C. Healy, Commanding Officer, Kwajalein Test Site, written on February 3, 1968. Located in RG 126, Records of the Office of Territories: Land, Ebeye at NARA, College Park.

explanations offered by the army. But he added, "the new regulations are unreasonably restrictive and discriminatory and place unacceptable restraints on our Ebeye administrative personnel." 144

While Norwood's concerns may have focused on the army policies' impact on those working for the Trust Territory, others expressed concern on behalf of all Marshallese on Ebeye impacted by Kwajalein's increased restrictions. In the November 12, 1968 issue of the island publication *Ebeye Voice*, Lomes McKay expressed concerns about Marshallese being discriminated against by the army and Trust Territory office on Kwajalein. In a letter to the editor letter, McKay described visiting the Trust Territory office on Kwajalein to get permission to shop at Macy's. McKay noted being treated with suspicion and being asked to confirm if he was indeed a teacher multiple times. McKay expressed frustration at being asked "foolish questions" and noted that previously he had assumed the army was discriminatory but this experience proved the Trust Territory office shared this quality as well. 145 McKay concluded by noting, "If we need something but our stores here on Ebeye don't have them, we would like to use Macy's. Because of discrimination against Marshallese, we cannot shop there. 1146

Reactions against the new army policies also came from former Kwajalein residents condemning how these regulations infringed upon Marshallese rights. Former Kwajalein teacher Mary. E. Russell sent a letter to the United Nations in October 1970 expressing concern about discrimination on Kwajalein. She wrote that she had worked on the island between 1968 and 1969 and asked the U.N. to explain a series of

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>145</sup> Letter to the Editor, written by Lomes McKay appearing in the November 12, 1968 issue of *Ebeye Voice*. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa. <sup>146</sup> Ibid

discriminatory conditions on the island. Russell demanded the U.N. answer questions including, "why [Americans] must only give items of no commercial value to the Marshallese when we leave and break up our trailer home on Kwajalein?" John D. Beall of Ventura California wrote to his senator, George Murphy, also expressing concern about Kwajalein's discriminatory policies. In his April 24, 1970 letter, Beall noted that while working on Kwajalein he had been "disgusted with the American treatment of the natives." He noted, "they cannot buy in the white man's stores on this island and are being robbed on their own islands by a monopoly that sells bread for 80 cents a loaf, \$1.05 for a can of spam & etc. You vote for foreign aid to communism how about diverting some of it to help these poor natives?" 149

Alongside the army policies controlling purchase and removal of goods on Kwajalein, another new set of rules restricting the freedoms of Marshallese domestics on Kwajalein also ignited critical responses from Marshallese and Americans. These rules began in December 1967 when the Kwajalein Test Site gave a directive to Kwajalein logistics contractor Global Associates that Marshallese maids could no longer use radio-dispatched taxis unless accompanied by Kwajalein residents or on official business. This increased effort to control maids on Kwajalein also included prohibiting domestics' usage of laundry facilities on island. The military defended the laundry policy as necessary because Kwajalein's facilities had come under strain due to an influx of American employees on island. According to the army, the increased population meant

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>147</sup> Letter from Mary. E. Russell to the Director of Marshallese Affairs, United Nations Building written October 21, 1970. Located in RG 126, Records of the Office of Territories: Land, Ebeye at NARA, College Park.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>148</sup> Letter from John D. Beall to Senator Murphy written April 24, 1970. Located in RG 126, Records of the Office of Territories: Land, Ebeye at NARA, College Park.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>150</sup> "Purchase and Removal of Goods--KTS," Global Associates Procedure 4520-1, December 19, 1967. TTA, reel, no. 987.

Kwajalein's laundry facilities could no longer sustain both American and Marshallese workers. The new army policy exacted particular hardships on Marshallese women because Ebeye lacked laundry facilities as well as sufficient water for drinking and hand washing clothes. The policies also prohibited Marshallese women from bringing laundry or any other packages or bundles onto Kwajalein aside from their lunches. The army identified bundles as potentially enabling Marshallese workers to hide items retrieved on Kwajalein and illegally transport them back to Ebeye.

On January 19, 1968, one day after the new policies went into effect, Kwajalein's Colonel Healy received a letter from twenty representatives of the Marshallese Magistrate, Council, Congress, Medical officers, and those Marshallese working on Kwajalein. This cohort also forwarded their letter on to several governmental representatives including the Trust Territory High Commissioner, the Congress of Micronesia and the District Administrator of the Marshall Islands. The letter indicated the representatives wrote on behalf of the people of Ebeye. The authors began by expressing regret that Colonel Healy had rejected a request to meet in person with those on Ebeye most affected by this policy. The letter noted those writing could not understand how Healy's excuse of "Army regulations" could prevent such a meeting. The letter continued on to describe the difficulty in communicating to workers on Ebeye that privileges they formerly enjoyed on Kwajalein no longer existed. The letter stated, "We want to emphasize how important the laundry facilities are to us. Most of our people leave our homes every morning at 6 a.m. to go to Kwajalein to participate with your

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>151</sup> Letter to Colonel Healy written by representatives from the Kwajalein workforce, Kwajalein Atoll Congress, Council Members, Medical Officers and Distad Representatives on January 19, 1968. TTA, reel, no. 987.

important mission." The letter continued, "Many of our people work side by side with Americans and it is important that we wear clean and nicely-ironed clothes. Now that we cannot use the laundry most of our people have to do our own by hand." The letter explained that this required many more hours of work following a full day on Kwajalein due to lack of services and lack of water on Ebeye. The letter stated, "We feel strongly that this rule will bring great hardship for our people who participate with your important mission."154

In emphasizing the importance of Kwajalein's mission, the letter's authors seemed to be echoing back to the military the kind of discourse the army continually used in implementing policies. Perhaps the writers did so in an attempt to reassure Colonel Healy that while they expressed grievances about army policies, they still recognized the importance of the military mission on Kwajalein. In addition to expressing concerns about the laundry regulations, the letter challenged the army's regulations on gift giving between Americans and Micronesians on Kwajalein. The letter cited a hypothetical example of an American wanting to share a gift with a Micronesian friend. The authors noted, "This is a wonderful practice and fits in well with our own customs of exchanging gifts. We also like to share some of our handicraft or other items with our American friends. We cannot understand what is wrong with such a simple and beautiful expression of friendship."155

The letter concluded by expressing disappointment not only with the nature of the regulations but also the haste with which the army implemented them. The authors wrote,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>152</sup> Ibid. <sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

"We are not yet set with our own laundry, and we know that someday we will have some of these nice things and so will not have to bother you. For the present we should like the Army to realize that it is because of your influence and presence that we now need these things so that we can work and live among you in a more congenial manner." The letter concluded, "We thank you for teaching us but we also would like you to give us more time to catch up." In these final words the authors potentially expressed one tactic for influencing the military by illuminating hardships brought on by army policies while simultaneously echoing back a message to the military that would be familiar and recognizable. These statements may have worked to potentially massage the military's ego by acknowledging its own presumption of American cultural superiority.

While this discourse exemplified one effort to influence the army amidst a limited range of options, another letter sent to Colonel Healy on the same day employed a different tactic. This letter, signed by the "Marshallese Maids," expressed concern about the new laundry regulations while threatening that maids would leave their jobs if these regulations did not change. The letter also detailed the difficulties Marshallese maids already faced in balancing their work schedule. The letter described the maids' nearly 12-hour day on Kwajalein that left limited time to care for their own families, prepare dinner and finish house work without the extra burden of doing their own washing on Ebeye. The letter also pointed out that restricting maids from using laundry machines in Kwajalein homes made little sense when the families they worked for communicated a willingness to let them use their laundry machines. The letter noted the maids understood the restriction on using the general laundry on island given Kwajalein's growing

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>158</sup> Letter to Colonel Healy from "Marshallese Maids," written on January 19, 1968. TTA, reel, no. 987.

residential population. But they could not understand why the army would regulate laundry machines in homes. The "Marshallese Maids" concluded by stating they would hate to guit their jobs but conditions had become very difficult and they wanted an explanation as to why they could not use these machines. 159

A close look at how Colonel Healy chose to respond to the maids' concerns illuminates some of the gendered perceptions informing army policies on Kwajalein. Healy's response revealed the influence of mythical presumptions about Marshallese and American family and work life informing these regulations. Healy sent his response a week after the maids' letter to Ataji Balos, Acting Assistant District Administrator Representative. Healy acknowledged Balos as having sent the earlier letter on behalf of the maids. Healy began his letter to Balos by reiterating the reasons he restricted access to public laundry facilities on Kwajalein given the increasing residential population on the island and lack of facilities to accommodate everyone. His letter continued on to specifically address the use of laundry machines in Kwajalein's private homes. Healy prefaced his explanation by noting,

"since many of the residents have undertaken to make a comparison between the Ebeve and Kwajalein communities, let me continue this comparison to encompass the portions of American work and home life which are not readily seen on the surface. An American wife or mother must also make the important decision of whether to work or stay at home. If she cannot manage her household and keep her family healthy and happy, and work at the same time, she does not go to work. On the other hand, if the family needs the income badly enough, she will sacrifice her leisure and personal convenience in order to work and bring in additional income. No matter where an American woman works, she is not allowed to spend her working time doing her own laundry or other personal chores. This is true on Kwajalein as well as back in the United States. If she is being paid to do an hour's work for an employer, then it is the employer's work which should be done during that hour. If the Marshallese Maids are striving to

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

meet American standards of living, then they must accept the fact that to earn a day's pay a day's work must be done in return."<sup>160</sup>

I quote Healy at length here to illuminate the degree to which Kwajalein had become naturalized as an American space by 1968. Healy's prefacing statements also revealed many assumptions about Marshallese culture on Ebeye and American culture on Kwajalein and in the United States. His response represented a platform for producing and reproducing a set of myths about all of these places that deserves close examination. This passage shows how by obscuring the history and continuity of colonial displacements, segregation and lack of investments on Ebeye, Healy could narrate American working women and Ebeye's working women as somehow in the same boat. According to Healy, the presumably shared circumstances facing all of these women offered equivalent opportunities to make the right choices. Healy presumed a desire among Marshallese workers to emulate American family and work life, while simultaneously narrating a mythical picture of American women's lives. In his portrait, American women easily balanced work and family by simply making the right "decisions" or having the right priorities.

Healy's letter continued on to assert that when the army had not regulated laundry usage on Kwajalein, domestics looking for work on the island could leverage this in deciding who to work for based on which families offered their machines. Healy identified this practices as hindering the free market model Americans so deeply valued. He noted, "This forcing of an employer to pay a premium is bribery in its truest sense, and is morally wrong. It certainly is not in the American tradition, nor is it part of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>160</sup> Letter from Colonel Frank C. Healy to Mr. Ataji Balos, Acting Assistant DISTAD Representative written on January 25, 1968. TTA, reel, no. 987.

American way of life." Healy continued on to discursively criminalize Marshallese maids by accusing them of using their previous freedom to do laundry on Kwajalein as an excuse for carrying bundles onto Kwajalein that could conceal illegally purchased goods. 162 Thus, according to Healy this laundry usage restriction acted as a deterrent to these "illegal" acts (acts made illegal by the army) because it prevented the women from carrying bundles onto Kwajalein and therefore regulated their deviant behavior.

Healy concluded his letter with the familiar American bootstraps myth as he emphasized that army regulations had not intended to be arbitrary or unduly restrictive, but instead aimed to benefit Marshallese as well as Americans. He stated, "it is hoped that they [the Marshallese] will be encouraged by it to build up private enterprise of their own on Ebeye, and concentrate more fully on improving their situation by hard work and initiative as have these Americans whose ways they are striving to emulate, rather than by taking advantage of the easiest solution to every problem." Healy's encouragement of Marshallese individual entrepreneurship again worked to discursively obscure the history and continuity of U.S. colonialism on Kwajalein. His letter further naturalized Kwajalein as part of a national narrative. Any grievances or concerns addressed by Marshallese pointing to disparities in resources or access under the U.S. colonial arrangement became categorized as merely the voices of those trying to take the "easy way out." In Healy's narrative, the Americans on Kwajalein enjoyed privileges because of hard work not because they arrived to a U.S. colonial space in which their housing, shopping and even laundry remained heavily subsidized by the army.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>161</sup> Ibid. <sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

Healy's exceptionalist narrative and broader army efforts to obscure the colonial and discriminatory nature of the U.S. presence on Kwajalein would continue to be challenged by Marshallese workers and leaders and American residents on Kwajalein through the 1970s and thereafter. In addition to voicing their concerns about these policies, Americans and Marshallese would challenge army regulations by simply ignoring them. Oral history interviews with several Marshallese women who worked as domestics on Kwajalein after the implementation of these policies indicated that the families they worked for all allowed them to do laundry in their homes. <sup>164</sup> Thus, while the army attempted to control the most intimate spaces of civilian households on Kwajalein by instructing Americans to prohibit their domestics from laundry usage, many Marshallese and Americans made their own choices to follow or reject these policies.

The 1968 army policies illustrated an effort to recruit civilians into enforcing discriminatory practices on Kwajalein. Presumably some Americans, if not many, played along. But clearly, oral histories identified these efforts to have been thwarted in several instances. These instances suggest the military may have overestimated its ability to intimidate all on Kwajalein to follow its orders. These laundry-inspired subversive acts also revealed the instability of the army's control in this colonial environment. The Army attempts to control movement between Kwajalein and Ebeye detailed in this chapter would continue to be challenged through the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s as Marshallese and Americans became increasingly vocal and active in protesting the colonial policies governing these two islands. To those stories we now turn.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>164</sup> This was confirmed during oral history interviews interpreted by Rachel Miller with: Neilat Zackhrias (May 14, 2010), Getruth Clarence (May 18, 2010), Cinderella Silk (May 15, 2010), Kenye Kobar (May 2010), Madeline Balos (May 20, 2010) all conducted on Ebeye, Marshall Islands.

## Part III Ruptures and Violences on Kwajalein and Ebeye

As chapter five revealed, military policies on Kwajalein became increasingly restrictive over time. During the late 1960s, the army increasingly monitored Marshallese movement throughout the island, excluding Marshallese from stores and laundry facilities and regulating what items Marshallese brought off the island. Chapter five examined these strict policies during periods of relative calm. The chapter interrogated army discourse detailing rules and regulations articulated as preventive rather than reactive. Military regulations focused on monitoring movement between Kwajalein and Ebeye, policing human interactions and consumer privileges. Having explored U.S. military and Trust Territory policies that laid foundations of expectation between Kwajalein and Ebeye during decades of relative calm in parts one and two, part three shifts to examine challenges to these expectations during moments of rupture and violence.

The first half of this dissertation traced various iterations of U.S. entitlement to Kwajalein emerging over time to naturalize the island as part of a U.S. domestic space. Chapters one through five offered analysis of this multi-layered process. Chapter six marks the first of three chapters to begin tracing the history of the most disruptive challenges to U.S. narratives marking Kwajalein as part of the national space. Chapter six focuses on Marshallese and American challenges to army and Trust Territory policies of segregation, exclusions and discrimination on Kwajalein as these emerge in testimonies

during the 1976 U.S. senate hearings on Ebeye. Marshallese and American allegations of U.S. colonial apartheid-style domination infused several testimonies and unprecedented accompanying media coverage of U.S. policies on Kwajalein. The increased scrutiny of military practices on Kwajalein placed pressure on the army to defend its presence and policies on the island.

Part III explores how military and Trust Territory officials worked to maintain an exceptionalist narrative of U.S. national entitlement to Kwajalein during moments when this narrative came under extreme duress. Building upon chapter six's focus on allegations of U.S. structural violence on Ebeye, chapter seven examines narrative ruptures emerging through increased attention to U.S. foundational violences in the region. This chapter explores increasing vocalization from Marshallese nuclear refugees and American journalists condemning U.S. nuclear testing in the region. Chapter seven explores allegations of U.S. intentional harm towards Marshallese irradiation victims that emerged alongside Marshallese senate testimonies about Kwajalein and Ebeye in 1976 and the accompanying media coverage. Finally, chapter eight provides one further platform for exploring ruptures to U.S. narratives of national entitlement to Kwajalein and the violence accompanying these challenges. Chapter eight does do by focusing on the 1982 Marshallese sail-in protest to Kwajalein. The chapter analyzes U.S. violent responses to the protests that built upon a deeper history of U.S. violence to contain peaceful demonstrations within the United States as well.

By examining three distinctive moments of rupture and violence in the Marshall Islands through overlapping connections between chapters six, seven and eight, part III also provides a window into Marshallese, American and international counter-narratives

to longstanding discourse of U.S. entitlement in the region. U.S. violence in the region helped ignite these challenges and also worked to quell and silence the most direct rejections of U.S. entitlement to Kwajalein emerging during the 1970s and 1980s. These events marked moments in which the process of producing Kwajalein as a U.S. space became most directly challenged. Cultural narratives naturalizing U.S. presence in the Marshalls as something outside an imperial history also seemed most open to either reproduction or change during these moments of contingency. Part III highlights these instances of rupture and examines how certain U.S. narratives and policies changed while others became further concretized. All three chapters meditate on the broader implications of these changes and continuities for U.S. imperialism in the Marshall Islands. Taken together, all three identify a spectrum violence, both systematic over time and event-marked, infusing the U.S. relationship to the Marshall Islands. These violences remain linked to deeper roots of U.S. historic violences moving through settler, national and imperial spaces. Moments of rupture have historically marked these U.S. violences. Within these moments the potential for hegemonic cultural shifts can and sometimes do occur.

## Chapter Six Challenging U.S. Structural Violence on Ebeye and Discrimination on Kwajalein

While the first half of this dissertation traced several instances in which Marshallese leaders vocalized challenges to the U.S. colonial presence in their islands over time, chapter six introduces a moment when these challenges culminated in the most widely publicized crisis to the U.S. narrative of control over Kwajalein. Chapter six explores this moment by focusing on the 1976 U.S. senate hearings on Ebeye. These hearings provided a venue for Marshallese and American testimonies countering U.S. U.S. military and Trust Territory narratives naturalizing their control in the region. The hearings also ignited unprecedented national and international media attention that focused on new information about U.S. practices on Kwajalein and Ebeye emerging during these testimonies.

As the testimonies provided a space for airing grievances about discrimination on Kwajalein, Marshallese and American representatives highlighted U.S. violences on Ebeye that came through Kwajalein hospital exclusion policies. Testimonies detailed how Kwajalein security guards denied Marshallese access to medical care on island during emergencies on Ebeye. Witnesses revealed how these exclusions, some coming during epidemic outbreaks on Ebeye, resulted in death and long-term disabilities for Marshallese babies and children. Chapter six situates these health care exclusions within a broader context of U.S. discrimination on Kwajalein. Chapter seven offers further analysis linking

U.S. disregard for Marshallese health and welfare on Ebeye during this period to the earlier nuclear testing campaign. Chapter six sets the broader framework for part III by considering how violence as culturally narrated. This chapters suggests U.S. violences in Marshalls emerged along a spectrum in which hospital exclusions connected to radiation contamination examined in chapter seven and police brutality against protestors explored in chapter eight. All of these dehumanizing practices highlighted examples of U.S. disregard for Marshallese lives, bodily integrity and security. Chapter six meditates on how violence on Ebeye emerged structured by the impoverished conditions linked to U.S. military presence and segregation policies on Kwajalein.

## The 1976 U.S. Senate Hearings: Challenging U.S. Colonial Policies on Kwajalein and Ebeye

As chapters three, four and five revealed, the process of cementing segregation and exclusionary policies between Kwajalein and Ebeye took place through various modes of spatial and cultural production that normalized relational hierarchies between Americans and Marshallese. These military and Trust Territory practices included narrating people into space, implementing leases and divergent infrastructure investments and creating regulations controlling movement and access between the two islands. As Kwajalein became a space of increased suburban segregation through the 1970s, Ebeye's deteriorating conditions and Kwajalein's exclusionary policies gave rise to more vocal challenges against the U.S. presence and administration in the region. A significant series of critiques surfaced during the 1976 U.S. Senate Hearings on Ebeye. This first section explores the broad array of allegations of discrimination against Marshallese on

Kwajalein emerging during these hearings. Examining discourse detailing varied U.S. discriminatory policies on Kwajalein, this section intends to offer a broader framework of structural segregation contextualizing the violences of hospital exclusions to be detailed later in the chapter.

Before considering how the senate hearings provided a platform for challenging U.S. military narratives of entitlement and Trust Territory benevolence in the region, this section begins with some context informing the hearings. The hearings, entitled "Current Problems in the Marshall Islands," took place on Ebeye on July 13 and on Majuro July 14, 1976. Representative Patsy Mink (D-Hawai'i) led the program and opened the first day of testimonies by describing the impetus behind the hearings. Mink noted the call for the hearings responded to a recent presentation at the United Nations Trusteeship Council in New York City by members of the Marshallese Political Status Delegation. The delegation presented its case before the council on why the Marshall Islands should be allowed to negotiate their political future separately with the U.S. rather than being lumped in with the other island regions under Trust Territory administration. Mink noted this presentation made clear the urgent need for a congressional representative to take interest in the political discussions occurring in the Marshall Islands. She also explained how she and fellow Congressman Won Pat came to Ebeye to hear and record Marshallese perspectives on the matter to bring back to the capitol.<sup>2</sup> Soliciting Marshallese input on their preferences for political status negotiations provided the initial impetus for the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> "Current Problems in the Marshall Islands: Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Territorial and Insular Affairs of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs House of Representatives." Ninety-Fourth Congress, Second Session: Oversight Hearings on the Marshall Islands District Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Hearings on Ebeye, July 13, 1976, and on Majuro, July 14, 1976. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa. Pp. 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ibid, 2.

hearings. But the invitation for Marshallese and Americans to voice concerns about the current state of affairs in the islands ended up serving as a significant forum for addressing conditions on Kwajalein and Ebeye. The senate hearings ultimately highlighted the centrality of Kwajalein and Ebeye to the political negotiations, linking the fate of U.S. policies in the atoll to the future of the entire nation.

During the 1976 hearings, Marshallese and Americans voiced concerns about U.S. policies revealing patterns of discrimination and exclusion on Kwajalein. Many individuals testifying alleged that racial prejudice informed U.S. practices on the island. Accusations of American apartheid pervaded several testimonies with individuals questioning the legitimacy of policies excluding Marshallese from access to facilities and resources on Kwajalein. Some testimonies detailed discrimination in Kwajalein's hiring practices and wage differentials for Marshallese working on the island. Addressing issues of discrimination in the workplace, landowner Mike Kabua testified that he detected discrimination against all Micronesians working on Kwajalein. At the time of the hearings Kabua worked for Kwajalein's logistics contractor Global Associates. He cited Micronesians receiving only two weeks vacation time compared with Americans getting four. He also stated Micronesians received less pay for equal job duties and were denied opportunities for further training to advance in their jobs. Addressing the history of residential segregation, Kabua stated, "We don't understand why it is that we cannot live on Kwajalein in housing on Kwajalein, attend the Kwajalein schools and purchase at Kwajalein facilities for buying goods."<sup>3</sup> He concluded by noting he had never been convinced of any good reason for denying Micronesians these privileges.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Ibid. 40.

Anthropologist William Alexander's testimony contextualized Kabua's personal observations of workplace discrimination amidst an array of Micronesians' shared experiences working on Kwajalein. Alexander conducted research on Ebeye and explained to the senate representatives that he came to the hearings to voice the concerns of these Micronesian workers. Alexander testified that 90 percent of workers he interviewed said they felt discriminated against in their jobs for being Micronesians. He added that 75 percent of the people he spoke with could provide the names of non-Micronesians doing their exact same job but receiving significantly higher pay. Micronesians on Ebeye also told Alexander they were concerned by the lack of Micronesian supervisors on Kwajalein despite the fact that some had been working on the island since 1944. Some Micronesians even told Alexander they had trained Americans who were getting paid more than them. Alexander added that workers told him the logistics contractor Global Associates posted two different sets of job titles and descriptions for hiring, one for Americans and the other for Micronesians. The postings for Micronesians contained lower pay scales even when job descriptions included the same work requirements. They also told Alexander that when good jobs opened up on Kwajalein, Micronesians received no official announcement. Following Alexander's testimony the senate committee representatives noted they would share his findings in Washington and suggest examining potential affirmative action policies on Kwajalein.<sup>4</sup>

While Kabua's and Alexander's testimonies gained the attention of senate representatives at the hearings, their concerns did not represent the first accusations of workplace discrimination on Kwajalein. Three years earlier the issue came up during a March 27, 1973 Kwajalein Atoll Inter-Island Community Relations Committee meeting.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid 24-27

During this meeting, Micronesian Employee Representative Mr. Jobel Enos aired his grievances concerning Global Associates' employment practices. Enos expressed concern about Global's sick leave policy as it pertained to Micronesians. Detailed in KMR (Kwajalein Missile Range) Trust Territory Liaison Officer Robert E. Haley's meeting minutes, Enos wanted to know why Marshallese employees at Kwajalein could only accumulate 200 hours sick leave. Enos also alleged that Global Associates terminated Marshallese employees immediately prior to their achieving first year of employment, which prevented many employees from getting their ten days annual leave. As the Committee's organizing mission indicated a goal of opening communication among Americans and Marshallese to address concerns between Kwajalein and Ebeye, Haley noted he would bring Enos' concerns to Global. But as Alexander and Kabua's testimonies illustrated three years later, Global's employment practices continued to raise concern among both Americans and Micronesians regarding discrimination.

Kabua's and Alexander's 1976 testimonies on employment discrimination fit within a broader pattern at the senate hearings addressing issues of segregation and discrimination on Kwajalein. As Representative Mink detailed in the hearings' preface, presentations addressed to the Trusteeship Council in New York City also prompted her trip to the Marshalls to learn more about conditions in the region. Part of her urgent response likely came in connection to both George Allen's and Ataji Balos' statements in New York. Allen, who acted as Legal Counsel for the Marshall Islands Political Status Commission, spoke before the U.N. Trusteeship Council on June 30, 1976. His presentation on behalf of the people of Kwajalein Atoll centered the history and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Minutes of the Kwajalein Atoll Inter-Island Community Relations Committee Meeting of 27, March 1973. Published April 2, 1973. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.
<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

continuity of segregation and discrimination and connected the future of Kwajalein's people to that of the future political status of the Marshall Islands. In his presentation, Allen explained why a Free Association status would have a disproportionately negative impact on the people of Kwajalein. He argued that continuing a relationship with the U.S. under the discriminatory nature of segregation on Kwajalein would not be in the best interest of Marshallese. He explained that the U.S. had demonstrated the ability to "furnish not only adequate, but lavish, housing, health care facilities, schools and recreational facilities, all of which exist for American citizens who work for Americans contractors at Kwajalein." Allen added that Marshallese continued to be denied access to any of these luxuries except in rare cases.

Allen's presentation before the U.N. Trusteeship Council also detailed the history of land dispossession in Kwajalein and contrasting living conditions on Kwajalein and Ebeye. He identified this divergence as "dramatic" with Kwajalein's swimming pools, tennis courts, air conditioned housing contrasting Ebeye's housing, which lacked adequate sanitation, plumbing and toilet facilities. Allen noted Ebeye had an insufficient supply of clean water and no telephones. He told the Trusteeship Council that Ebeye's deteriorating infrastructure contributed to recent health crises on the island. He described how Ebeye experienced repeated epidemic diseases, citing a polio outbreak in 1962 that swept through the region. Allen cautioned that a crisis of such magnitude could happen again due to Ebeye's poor sanitation and failing health care under Trust Territory

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> "Current Problems in the Marshall Islands: Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Territorial and Insular Affairs of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs House of Representatives." Ninety-Fourth Congress, Second Session: Oversight Hearings on the Marshall Islands District Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Hearings on Ebeye, July 13, 1976, and on Majuro, July 14, 1976. Appendix. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa. [Hereafter referenced as "Current Problems in the Marshall Islands"]

8 Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Ibid.

governance. Allen also detailed Ebeye's more recent influenza outbreak in early 1976 that led to many cases of spinal meningitis, leaving twelve dead and two children with severe permanent brain damage. Voicing concern about Kwajalein's apathy towards Ebeye's medical emergencies, Allen pointed out that during this medical crisis, "the seven American doctors employed by a U.S. Army contractor at Kwajalein Island did not come to Ebeye to assist Ebeye's lone health officer." Allen's condemnation of Kwajalein's neglect for Ebeye's health crises before the Trusteeship Council foreshadowed several testimonies emerging within weeks at the senate hearings.

Allen's presentation before the Trusteeship Council also characterized the relationship between the Marshall Islands and the U.S. as one of Marshallese second-class citizenship. He alleged that Marshallese lived "under conditions of racial discrimination comparable only to apartheid in South Africa." Allen traced the contemporary conditions on Ebeye to U.S. failure to meet promises made in the 1947 Trusteeship Agreement. He explained that the U.S. had agreed to offer the Trust Territory peoples the same protection of the laws afforded to U.S. citizens. Allen continued on to detail Kwajalein's conditions of racial segregation in contrast to the history of racial discrimination stateside. He narrated a difference between legal segregation and segregation in practice noting that "In 1947, racial segregation was widespread in the United States. Today, it is permitted under the claimed sanction of American law only at Kwajalein." Allen continued, "In 1947, some parts of the United States segregated such facilities as stores, swimming pools, schools, and housing. Today, Kwajalein, with its 'jab drelon,' or do not enter, signs, is the only place under American jurisdiction where

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

segregation is still practiced."<sup>13</sup> Allen's comparisons between presumed distinctions of de facto and de jure segregation in Kwajalein and the United States offered an interesting text for thinking about how these categories obscured the continuity of racial segregation in the U.S. as well during this period.<sup>14</sup> By arguing that Kwajalein remained the only space under U.S. control where segregation persisted, Allen diminished the impact of diffuse segregation practices stateside.

Echoing Allen's statements before the Trusteeship Council, landowner and Micronesian Congress Representative Ataji Balos offered testimony at the 1976 senate hearings that also marked U.S. failures in meeting Trusteeship Agreement obligations. In his testimony, Balos stated that the 1964 lease agreement for Kwajalein also committed the army and the Trust Territory to help the people of Ebeye with social and economic problems. Balos noted that not only were those promises ignored, but the current Kwajalein Missile Range command appeared "enthusiastic" in proclaiming the right to disregard problems plaguing the Marshallese on Ebeye. Further illustrating his claims, Balos described how the U.S. celebrated the year's July Fourth festivities on Kwajalein. He noted, "only a matter of hours after Trust Territory Acting High Commissioner Peter Coleman had finished telling the United Nations Trusteeship Council there was no segregation at Kwajalein (a statement he would not dare make here on Ebeye), the command of Kwajalein Missile Range celebrated the American Bicentennial by closing

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> For further analysis on this issue within a U.S. nation-state framework, see Matthew Lassiter's "De Jure/De Facto Segregation: The Long Shadow of a National Myth," in *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism* (Oxford University Press, 2009), coedited with Joseph Crespino.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> "Current Problems in the Marshall Islands," 6. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

Kwajalein Island to any Marshallese."<sup>16</sup> He added the military carried out the order by sending the Trust Territory Marshall Islands Administrator Representative for Kwajalein to Ebeye to enforce. He concluded, "So American independence was celebrated at Kwajalein Atoll by enforcement of all-out and total segregation."<sup>17</sup>

Through his explanation before the senate as to why Marshallese deserved separate political status negotiations with the U.S., Balos asserted individual Marshallese identity and culture and challenged U.S. discrimination in the region. He placed Marshallese history, culture and indigenous claim to the islands on a par with U.S. claims to the region. Balos stated the Marshallese had proven to be good friends to the United States and remained willing to continue a relationship with Americans. He added, however, the Marshallese were "not willing to be discriminated against on their own lands." He continued, "The people of the Marshalls must be treated with dignity and equality and with respect for their unique culture, customs, and traditions before there can be any hope of a successful future political relationship between the people of the Marshalls and the United States." To achieve this relationship, Balos added, the U.S. needed to recognize the Marshallese for their separate identity and their right to self-determination. He asserted this included the right to form their own government and through this government make new agreements with the U.S. for any continued military

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Ibid. Peter Tali Coleman's individual story proved a fascinating trajectory of mobility within the circuitry of U.S. colonial power in the Pacific. In addition to his administrative role in the Marshall Islands during the Trust Territory era, Coleman became the first individual of Samoan descent to be appointed Governor of American Samoa. He was the only U.S. governor whose service spanned five decades and was the second longest serving governor in U.S. history. Coleman also did his secondary education in Hawaii and Washington D.C., and served as a U.S. army captain in World War II.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Ibid.

presence in their islands.<sup>20</sup> Balos' testimony undermined U.S. narratives of entitlement to the region and did so by asserting Marshallese humanity and dignity as equivalent to that of Americans and deserving of recognition and respect.

Balos' demand that Americans respect Marshallese identity and culture also came through in other senate testimonies and particularly through the words of Ebeye Municipal Court Magistrate Togo Langrine. Langrine echoed Balos' desire to allow Marshallese to negotiate their political future as an independent entity and also used his testimony to address the significance of Marshallese people in broad terms. In tracing the historic emergence of his people Langrine stated, "My understanding...from as far back as we can understand or know, we were an entity. We are the Marshall Islands. We have our own customs, our own culture and administration or government. We were a people. We were not just nobody, a small group of insignificant people."<sup>21</sup> While the need to assert the importance of an entire people may seem unusual in other contexts, the history of U.S. relations with the Marshall Islands and Micronesia more broadly made Langrine's assertion tragically necessary. This is in part because Micronesians dealt with a level of dehumanization from U.S. military and government officials most poignantly and infamously exemplified through the words of Henry Kissinger in 1969. During a meeting at the Office of the Secretary of State William P. Rogers, Kissinger, who at the time was President Nixon's Assistant for National Security Affairs, expressed his support of the Defense position that Micronesia could not self-govern and should not control their land. At the meeting Secretary of Interior Walter Hickel challenged the necessity for using eminent domain in the region, asserting that the U.S. established bases in Turkey and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> "Current Problems in the Marshall Islands," 18. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

Spain without eminent domain. Kissinger responded stating, "There's only 90,000 people out there; who gives a damn?"<sup>22</sup>

Given the political context and colonial framework under which Marshallese and all Micronesians had to negotiate, Langrine's senate testimony insisting on the worth of Marshallese people constituted a profound statement. His assertions not only challenged Kissinger's infamous words but they addressed a pervasive rationale that informed the primary basis upon which the U.S. relationship to the Marshall Islands was founded. In 1946, U.S. military officials identified the region as ideal for nuclear testing because the Marshalls constituted a space far enough away from large population centers to reduce the risk of endangering large numbers of people.<sup>23</sup> One can read this logic as transparently stating the fact that U.S. military officials knew their weapons development plans posed a serious threat to the safety and security of humans. Thus, a logical hypothesis would be that these same officials did not view Marshallese individuals as human enough to deserve the same safety and security as others. As detailed in chapter four, the military chose Kwajalein as the target for missile tests largely because they identified the island as having a small population, thus alleviating the problem of launching intercontinental ballistic missiles over large population centers in the United States. A 1994 military report on Kwajalein reflected upon this early decision to select the island for the missile tests as Kwajalein's "remote location with extremely sparse population [provided] a safe and secure environment for test operations."<sup>24</sup> The same identification of the Northern Marshalls as militarily strategic due to its "sparse

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> McHenry, Micronesia, Trust Betrayed, 98.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Barker, *Bravo for the Marshallese*, 19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> United States Army Kwajalein Atoll, published by U.S. Army Space and Strategic Defense Command, 1994. Located at Gov. Docs, UH Manoa.

population" during the nuclear testing campaign informed this larger Cold War colonial logic that calculated potential loss of life quantitatively. But this calculation proved qualitative as well, since the army would never have pointed these missiles at a comparable number of people in Washington D.C. While Americans involved with weapons testing came to the Marshall Islands to willingly partake in this Cold War mission, the Marshallese did not have the luxury to opt out of this mission. Thus, those Marshallese asserting their peoples' worth during the 1976 senate hearings constituted a powerful statement speaking back to years of dehumanization that linked up to the contemporary crisis on Ebeye.

This section has offered a broad outline of senate testimony discourse framing challenges to the U.S. presence on Kwajalein and the discriminatory and colonial nature of that presence. Several individuals detailed the structure of segregation under military control of Kwajalein marking resultant inequalities emerging on Ebeye. As this next section reveals, amidst this broader structure of inequality and segregation detailed in these testimonies arose stories marking U.S. violences of denying health care on Kwajalein to sick and dying Marshallese individuals. These stories of hospital exclusions and broader medical neglect towards Marshallese would be condemned by Marshallese leaders and American journalists for years following the senate hearings.

The Senate Hearings and Ebeye's Health Catastrophes: Marking the Violence of Kwajalein's Exclusionary Policies

Among the most urgent crises on Ebeye addressed during the senate hearings involved public health and medical care on the island. Both Marshallese and American

testimonies charged Kwajalein officials with enforcing exclusionary policies that could be held responsible for consequent Marshallese long-term physical impairment and death. This next section considers these narratives detailing medical exclusions on Kwajalein as sitting along a continuum of historic U.S. violence and disregard for Marshallese health and well being in the region.

In addition to addressing segregation on Kwajalein and asserting the need for independent political negotiations, Ataji Balos' testimony also spoke to public health concerns on Ebeye. Balos noted that while Ebeye had 5 percent of the Trust Territory's total population, the island accounted for 12.2 percent of the recorded cases of ameobiasis and 14.4 percent of the recorded cases of hepatitis. He stated that several years prior, an official Trust Territory government report identified Ebeye's lagoon as having a bacteria count 25,000 times dirtier than minimum safe standards determined by U.S. Public Health Services and the U.N. World Health Organization. He told the Senate Committee that epidemics on Ebeye proved near impossible to contain, particularly given the constant water shortages and lack of adequate sewage treatment.

Balos' testimony echoed District Anthropologist Jack Tobin's earlier 1954 warning of potential health catastrophes on Ebeye when the island first emerged as Kwajalein's new labor camp. In his *Ebeye Village: An Atypical Marshallese Community*, detailed in chapter four, Tobin identified how a lack of adequate investment and planning on Ebeye placed a great risk on the island population's public health. He described Ebeye's early housing units as overcrowded and cautioned their potential to act as "fertile"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> "Current Problems in the Marshall Islands," 4. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Ibid.

breading grounds for respiratory diseases and epidemics of various types." By 1963, Tobin's warning proved tragically on target as housing conditions and sanitation facilities had become wholly inadequate to sustain the growing population. In this year, the island suffered a polio outbreak, followed by epidemics of gastroenteritis and influenza, with mortalities occurring in each instance. In his 1976 testimony, Balos explained that Marshallese on Ebeye continued to suffer preventable public health crises because the U.S. neglected the Trusteeship Agreement commitment to develop a viable economy in the islands and excluded Marshallese from living on Kwajalein. Balos noted, "Since the Marshallese people are not permitted to live on islands which are rightfully ours, we are forced to live in very small apartments which may be shared by as many as 10, or even 20 people, in extreme cases." Balos added that some units on Ebeye shared space with up to 40 individuals. He explained that both health and social problems arose on Ebeye due to congestion and lack of economy. Balos said he was sure this did not constitute the kind of social development the U.N. had in mind under the Trusteeship Agreement.

While Balos' assessment of Ebeye health problems highlighted U.S. neglect of Trusteeship Agreement obligations to develop a viable economy on island, other testimonies cited U.S. failure to fulfill the promise of ensuring Trust Territory inhabitants' health and welfare. One of the more poignant testimonies came from Dr. Konrad P. Kotrady who had been working as a physician with the Brookhaven Institute. Kotrady came to Ebeye in 1975 to study the long-term impact of nuclear testing in the Northern

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Tobin, Jack (District Anthropologist Marshall Islands). *Ebeye Village: An Atypical Marshallese Community*. Majuro, 1954. Pp. 19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> "The Ebeye Housing Problem," by Dr. William Vitarelli. Located in RG 126, Records of the Office of Territories: Land, Ebeye, pt. 2 at NARA, College Park.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> "Current Problems in the Marshall Islands," 4. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

Marshall Islands amidst the displaced and irradiated islanders living on Ebeye. He addressed the senate committee as "a concerned physician" prefacing his statements by denoting that he neither spoke on behalf of Brookhaven nor the Trust Territory.<sup>32</sup> During his year on Ebeye, Kotrady often volunteered seven days a week at the Ebeye hospital alongside the one physician employed. He told the senate hearings committee, "The picture I would like to paint for Kwajalein regarding Ebeye's health care system is that Kwajalein has an attitude of indifference and apathy to what occurs at Ebeve."<sup>33</sup> He continued, "The general attitude toward Ebeye's health problem seems to exist both on an official military level and on the level of the personnel at the Kwajalein Hospital."34 Kotrady added that the Army's position had been summed up to him one day when a high-level command officer "remarked that the sole purpose of the Army at Kwajalein is to test missile systems. They have no concern for the Marshallese and that it is not of any importance to their being at Kwajalein."<sup>35</sup> Kotrady stated that in the Kwajalein Hospital this attitude extended among personnel aware of major medical problems on Ebeye but who all considered these beyond their interest or responsibility. Kotrady contended medicine to be a human profession not bound by "racial, political, military, or any other interests. The sole interest should be the supreme care of a human being." <sup>36</sup> He concluded that the attitude of some Kwajalein physicians seemed unethical and immoral in that they often denied any concern for what happened on Ebeye.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Ibid, 33.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Ibid, 33-34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Ibid.

Kotrady continued in his senate testimony to describe Kwajalein's regulations allowing entry to the hospital for those on Ebeye only on an emergency basis. He detailed the personnel resource discrepancies between the two islands noting that Kwajalein employed seven American trained and licensed physicians for a population of about 3,000 while Ebeye had only one Trust Territory physician and one volunteer physician trying to care for a population of 7,000-8,000.<sup>38</sup> He stated he had been told that Trust Territory requests for an additional American physician to help on Ebeye were denied repeatedly over time. Kotrady added, "Only until the past few weeks have I seen an American doctor from Kwajalein even visit Ebeye to assess the situation." Kotrady testified he knew two Kwajalein physicians wanting to assist on Ebeye on a volunteer basis who were prohibited from doing so by the chief of staff and by army regulations. Kotrady explained he only had permission to help on Ebeye because he worked under Brookhaven examining patients through the Atomic Energy Commission.

In addition to detailing significant disparities in resources and personnel, Kotrady shared stories of the Kwajalein Hospital refusing care to Ebeye patients even when Kwajalein's physicians had greater expertise in areas ailing those patients. He recalled one case involving a Marshallese boy suffering from tuberculosis meningitis. The boy's physician on Ebeye requested he be treated on Kwajalein due to better care offered on the island. Kotrady noted the request was denied, the boy was treated on Ebeye and recovered slowly but retained severe mental retardation. Kotrady stated, "The Marshallese people living in Kwajalein are denied medical care in many ways, oftentimes

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Ibid. 34.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ihid.

very subtly but I contend in very accurate ways."<sup>41</sup> Kotrady said Kwajalein required that Marshallese maids working in American homes on the island have yearly examinations by Kwajalein physicians. If these physicians found any problems they referred the maids to therapy on Ebeye. Kwajalein prohibited the maids from work until being treated on Ebeye often for ailments like syphilis or yaws, both common to the region. Kotrady noted that Kwajalein physicians would provide no inoculation or penicillin for any of these afflictions.<sup>42</sup>

Kotrady also offered examples of distinctions between medical benefits for Kwajalein's American and Marshallese employees. He noted that medical care for Kwajalein's American employees extended to their dependents but Marshallese working under the Global contract on Kwajalein received only coverage for themselves. Kotrady stated he witnessed medical duress on Ebeye when Kwajalein's medical staff offered no support or assistance including times when Ebeye's patients needed vaccines or additional personnel support from Kwajalein. After Kotrady testified, the senate representatives asked what he thought would help the situation on Ebeye. Kotrady felt that allowing Kwajalein physicians to help on Ebeye, even for just one day a week, would significantly contribute toward improving medical care. When senate representatives asked Kotrady why he thought doctors were denied from helping out he stated the only explanation he received on a third-hand basis noted concern about medical malpractice for Kwajalein physicians. He added he was unsure if this constituted sufficient reason to deny medical

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Ibid, 35.

<sup>43</sup> Ihid.

help on Ebeye as his company never seemed concerned enough to deny him permission to work on the island.<sup>44</sup>

Kotrady's testimony on medical exclusions alongside other testimonies on Kwajalein's discriminatory policies inspired senate committee members to write several letters following the hearings to U.S. government and military officials. Representative Mink wrote a letter to Chairman Phillip Burton of the Subcommittee on Territorial and Insular Affairs expressing her concern about the medical care situation on Ebeye. She described several challenges facing Marshallese ranging from conflicting opinions on the political status negotiations to requests for international surveillance of radioactivity on Bikini and Enewetok. Mink asserted that "of all these problems, the most grievous, bordering on patent violation of simple basic human rights is the unmet medical needs of the people of Ebeye Island, located only minutes away from the first-class modern Kwajalein hospital evidently maintained only for U.S. citizens."<sup>45</sup> She added, "It is not even open for the Marshallese wives of U.S. citizens, or to the children of such marriages."46 Mink continued on to describe examples given at the hearings detailing health care denials to Marshallese during epidemic outbreaks and refusal to allow Kwajalein physicians to volunteer on Ebeye. Mink concluded that she believed the situation violated U.S. "commitments to the United Nations that the people of the trust territory would be protected under the laws of the United States, and beyond that it violates our simply human obligation to provide help to a fellow human being."<sup>47</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Ibid, 37.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Ibid.

Mink also coauthored a letter with Subcommittee on Territorial and Insular Affairs Representatives Philip Burton and Antonio Borja Won Pat to Secretary of the Army Martin R. Hoffman highlighting inequalities between Kwajalein and Ebeve. The letter detailed congestion on Ebeye and divergences in quality of life amenities between the two islands, citing Kwajalein's manicured lawns and adequate sanitary facilities.<sup>48</sup> The letter qualified their concerns by stating they had not offered these details "to assign or imply Department of Army responsibility, but, rather, to provide the background of contrasting conditions of population, living, availability of professional services, etc., which prevail on Kwajalein and Ebeye."<sup>49</sup> The letter contended certain questions arising during the hearings could not be ignored. These included why Kwajalein's physicians could not volunteer their services on Ebeye and why Kwajalein's hospital denied services for dependents of Micronesian workers living on Ebeve. 50 The committee demanded strong, corrective and expedient action to resolve these issues. The trick of demanding corrective action on Kwajalein while limiting military responsibility would prove quite the conundrum in the years following the hearings.

Two years after the senate hearings, the most egregious accounts of Kwajalein hospital exclusions surfaced in Dr. Greg Dever's 1978 *Micronesian Support Committee Report*, "Ebeye, Marshall Islands: A Public Health Hazard." Dever's report included

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> "Current Problems in the Marshall Islands," Appendix. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa. <sup>49</sup> Ihid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Ibid.

The Micronesian Support Committee formed following the 1975 Nuclear Free Pacific conference to support Micronesia towards self-government and self-determination of future political and economic status. The organization provided information in the U.S. and Micronesia through a newsletter and acted as liaison between Micronesia and American/international groups during the 1980s. By the early 1980s the all volunteer, non-profit Committee was sending the Micronesian Support Committee newsletter to approximately 1,600 people in Micronesia, Hawai'i, the U.S. mainland and abroad. Further information can be found in the Micronesian Support Committee mission statement in the Micronesian Support Committee file. (1970s-1980s). Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, reel no. 1172.

testimony from Dr. William Vitarelli who worked on Ebeye as the District Administrator Representative from 1967 to 1969. In his statements, Vitarelli attested to witnessing military apathy towards medical disasters on Ebeye. He recounted an episode of a gastroenteritis epidemic on Ebeye. Vitarelli explained how prior to the outbreak he had pleaded with the Kwajalein Army Colonel charged with overseeing construction of the water catchment systems on Ebeye to cover the catchment tanks. Vitarelli noted he had been concerned about the potential for contamination given the "filth" on Ebeye. 52 Vitarelli said the Colonel refused despite the fact that Vitarelli himself and others on Ebeye offered to build the covers themselves if the army simply supplied the materials. Vitarelli noted the outbreak was ultimately traced back to the contaminated water tanks. According to Vitarelli, during the outbreak the Ebeye hospital ran out of intravenous fluids needed to sustain Marshallese children suffering from severe dehydration and profuse vomiting and diarrhea. Vitarelli said he took one of these very sick children on a skiff boat over to Kwajalein in order to try and get her treatment at the Kwajalein hospital and to secure more intravenous fluids to bring back to Ebeye to help the other children. When he and his accompanying nurse arrived to Kwajalein with the child an American guard stopped them and prevented the child from entering the island. Vitarelli added, "She was Marshallese." <sup>53</sup> The nurse begged the guard to allow them on island indicating the child was dying and she could not receive adequate treatment on Ebeye. The guard refused to allow the child onto Kwajalein. Vitarelli stated, "She died on her way back to Ebeye," adding that many witnessed the incident.<sup>54</sup> Vitarelli said he continued on to the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Dever, Greg, M.D. "Ebeye, Marshall Islands: A Public Health Hazard." A Micronesian Support Committee Report, 1978. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Ibid.

Kwajalein hospital where he asked the American doctor at the hospital for intravenous fluids to help those Marshallese dying on Ebeye and the doctor refused. Vitarelli stated he then proceeded to the Kwajalein medical warehouse and stole several cases of intravenous fluids to bring back to Ebeye. He added that five children died during the epidemic.<sup>55</sup>

Vitarelli offered a scathing critique of the army ten years earlier in P.F. Kluge's 1968 Micronesian Reporter article. While chapter three focused on Kluge's analysis of the suburban and urban dynamics emerging between Kwajalein and Ebeye, another component of his article focused on Vitarelli's lambaste against army policies on Kwajalein. Given that the article appeared within the date range of the gastroenteritis epidemic on Ebeye, it is possible (and likely given his vitriol) that the impressions he shared with Kluge connected to this event. In the article, Vitarelli expressed shock that neither the army nor the Trust Territory seemed to "give a damn" about the gruesome conditions in which those on Ebeye lived.<sup>56</sup> Vitarelli blamed the military for Ebeye's continued poverty noting that he felt Ebeye was "completely dependent on a monster...a force of destruction."<sup>57</sup> He added that he had "hoped that the Army would realize its responsibility to the people who sweep its floors and cook its meals...But the responsibility goes as far as paying money. After that, it's get the hell out and don't take anything with you."58 Vitarelli's outrage towards the Trust Territory and the army for shirking their responsibility to Ebeye foreshadowed the slew of critiques that would grab media headlines following the senate hearings.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> P.F. Kluge, "Micronesia's Unloved Islands: Ebeye," in *Micronesian Reporter*. Third Quarter, volume XVI, no. 3, 1968. Pp. 34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

## The Senate Hearings Spur Unprecedented Media Attention to Kwajalein and Ebeye

The array of allegations launched during the 1976 senate hearings identifying U.S. policies alongside those of apartheid South Africa accompanied media coverage of the increasingly dire conditions on Ebeye. The hearings also provided additional materials upon which investigative journalists informed articles thereafter detailing increasing tensions between Kwajalein and Ebeye. This next section examines a range of articles appearing during this period. These investigative stories further revealed how the mid- to late-1970s marked a moment of duress for U.S. narratives of military entitlement to Kwajalein and Trust Territory benevolence in the region.

Appearing in the June 1976 issue of *Pacific Islands Monthly*, Mike Malone's article "The US army's ghetto-islet in Micronesia," discussed many of the issues that would later surface during the senate hearings. Malone described Kwajalein as similar to "any suburban community in southern California" with modern air-conditioned housing, sprinkled lawns, marinas, golf course, sidewalks and schools. He noted, however, that unlike the typical suburb, Kwajalein constituted a high security missile range that American taxpayers paid more than \$700 million in defense appropriations to support.<sup>59</sup> In contrast, Malone described Ebeye's most striking features as a lack of trees and plants, "depressing overcrowded conditions, and the smell of human excrement."<sup>60</sup> His article cited the World Health Organization report on Ebeye's lagoon bacteria count that would also be addressed at the hearings. Malone described a water shortage crisis on Ebeye following the breakdown of the military's installed desalination plant necessitating

 $<sup>^{59}</sup>$  Mike Malone, "The US army's ghetto-islet in Micronesia," in *Pacific Islands Monthly*. June 1976. Pp. 27.  $^{60}$  Ibid

delivery of 180,000 gallons of water a week from Kwajalein, with drastic ration measures in place. Also preempting the senate hearings' testimonies, Malone addressed challenges to containing diseases on Ebeye. He described a 1975 flu epidemic that claimed the lives of 10 youngsters on the island and identified Ebeye's polluted lagoon as cause for several illnesses (vomiting, diarrhea, fever) and even deaths among Marshallese children who swam there. Malone attributed the lagoon pollution to the Trust Territory administration's failure to install a much-needed new sewage treatment plant years earlier. Each of the series of th

While Malone's article appeared shortly before the senate hearings, several articles directly followed the hearings marking discriminatory treatment on Kwajalein often citing testimony statements. The senate hearings ignited an unprecedented media campaign covering conditions on Kwajalein and Ebeye that would only be matched by coverage of Marshallese protests on Kwajalein during the 1980s. Some of the post-senate hearings articles warned that U.S. policies in the region threatened to taint the U.S. image around the world. A November 10, 1976 editorial in the *Pacific Daily News*, entitled "Time to do Something about Ebeye," emphasized the risk to the U.S. international reputation. The article stated that "Numerous letter and article writers have brought the problems of Ebeye to the attention of the world in recent weeks. The picture the writers paint is not a good one: "<sup>63</sup> The editorial situated the crisis on Ebeye along a continuum of U.S. failures in the region. The article identified U.S. displacement of Bikinians, destruction of their islands and radiation of the peoples in Rongelap and Utirik during the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Ibid. It should also be noted that Marshallese continue to have to transport water from Kwajalein to Ebeye daily through to today due to continued lack of clean water on Ebeye.

Mike Malone, "The US army's ghetto-islet in Micronesia," in *Pacific Islands Monthly*. June 1976. Pp. 27.
 Editorial, JCM. "Time to do Something About Ebeye," in *Pacific Daily News*. November 10, 1976. Pp. 19.

nuclear testing campaign as all seeming "bad enough." 64 The editorialist noted, however, that "all that was done many years ago, and we cannot change the past. But we can and should think about doing something right in the future. And we mean Ebeve."<sup>65</sup>

While the Pacific Daily News editorial offered a broader historic context to situate the contemporary crisis on Ebeye, the author foreclosed any possibility of remedying these other histories of displacement and radiation contamination. The editorialist identified other U.S. failures and violences in the region through their past-ness, compared with Ebeye's present crisis. The article demarcated the violences as having discrete beginning and endpoints, rather than being structurally continuous. In so doing, the editorialist obscured any real possibility for demilitarization and decolonization in the region and silenced the grievances being expressed at the time by displaced and irradiated Marshallese. As chapter seven will further reveal, during the 1970s and 1980s Marshallese became increasingly vocal in expressing their right to return to their homelands and entitlement to compensation and medical support to address health repercussions from nuclear fallout. By identifying Ebeye's crisis as contemporary in comparison to other U.S. failures as historic, the editorial obscured the continuities of violence connecting all U.S. weapons development practices in the region.<sup>66</sup>

In addition to local Pacific media covering the senate hearings and conditions on Ebeye, these developments also appeared in widely read U.S. national publications. Journalist Giff Johnson's article, entitled "Ebeye: Apartheid, U.S. Style," appeared in the December 25, 1976 issue of the Nation. Johnson would become the most prolific of journalists covering Ebeye and Kwajalein during the 1970s and 1980s. He began his

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

Nation article linking Kwajalein's segregation practices to South Africa. Johnson noted that while Henry Kissinger had recently visited South Africa to "solve' the problems of apartheid there, the United States was maintaining that same system as part of the military establishment of the American empire in the Pacific." Similar to earlier articles, Johnson's piece characterized Ebeye by its slum-like appearance, congestion and odors. He offered as well a contrasting portrait of Kwajalein's lush parks, baseball fields, swimming pools, air-conditioned houses and quality medical facilities and schools. Johnson wrote that while Kwajalein's children played in the abundance of recreational space on their luxurious island, Ebeye's children "play on the sewage of outfall pipe above the narrow beach, where the outhouses crowd between high-water mark and shabby housing."

Johnson's article highlighted not only the physical differences between Kwajalein and Ebeye, but also the contrast in freedom of mobility and access. He noted that no Marshallese could live on Kwajalein or shop at the island's discounted PX stores. He mentioned that even for Marshallese to go to the airport or post office they had to fill out an application and receive a permit. Johnson detailed how the apartheid-like system that kept Kwajalein's schools off limits to Marshallese impacted Ebeye's children. He wrote that the preschool and elementary schools offered barely enough space for half of the children on Ebeye. He added "hundreds wander the island in aimless groups during the day." Johnson noted that Ebeye workers who wanted their older children to attend intermediate school sent them away to Majuro (\$53.80 one way). But he also pointed out that many parents on Ebeye could not afford to send their kids away to school, so often

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Giff Johnson, "Ebeye: Apartheid, U.S. Style," in *The Nation*. December 25, 1976. Pp. 677.

<sup>1</sup>bid, 678.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> Ibid.

12 to 16-year olds simply hung around the island drinking beer for lack of anything better to do.<sup>70</sup>

Building upon Malone's earlier article and the senate hearings findings, Johnson's piece also heavily focused on Ebeye's public health concerns. Referencing Dr. Kotrady's senate testimony, Johnson explained that Ebeye had only one physician caring for 7,000 people, while Kwajalein's policies forbade their doctors from volunteering on Ebeye. He also noted the U.N. report that characterized Ebeye as a "a biological time bomb waiting to go off."<sup>71</sup> Acknowledging the influence of economic dependency in the region, Johnson concluded that Ebeye was "South Africa in the Pacific, but not yet Soweto. With the Marshallese totally dependent on dollars spent by the U.S. military, complaints about health conditions are rarely heard."<sup>72</sup> Like the *Pacific Daily News* editorial Johnson referenced U.S. obligations under the Trusteeship Agreement to protect the rights of Micronesians without discrimination. Also echoing the *Pacific Daily News* editorial, Johnson positioned the contemporary struggles on Ebeye along the spectrum of unjust American policies in the region. In doing so, however, Johnson's narrative contrasted the earlier article by keeping the continuity of U.S. weapons development together in the present through a focus on the culminating economic situation. He wrote "Thirty years of destructive American action in the Marshall Islands, from the Bikini bomb tests to apartheid on Ebeye, have forced the Marshallese into dependence on this degrading source of income, with what Senator Kabua calls 'all the ills of the ghetto' and no chance for economic development."<sup>73</sup> Emphasizing the relationship between economics and

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

politics, Johnson concluded the Marshalls would never achieve self-government or independence as mandated under the U.N. agreement if their only opportunity remained cleaning up after the military on Kwajalein.<sup>74</sup>

In addition to Johnson's article appearing in the widely read *Nation*, an article published in the February 1977 issue of New York's *Newsday* also referenced the senate hearings in detailing the crisis on Ebeye. In his article, entitled "The Natives are Forbidden to Shop On a U.S.-Administered Pacific Isle," journalist Paul Jacobs detailed the struggle to survive on Ebeye given the island's extreme congestion and poverty. He noted Marshallese working on Kwajalein ferried over, went through security checks and remained prohibited from shopping at the island's stores. Jacobs also detailed Kwajalein's policies excluding Marshallese from the island's restaurants. He stated that Marshallese could neither attend movies on Kwajalein nor send their kids to high school there even though Ebeye lacked a high school. He added that if Marshallese got caught on Kwajalein after work hours they could be jailed for trespassing.

Like Johnson's article, Jacobs also compared Kwajalein to South Africa. He explained that although the American flag flies high on Kwajalein, "the conditions under which the 8,000 residents of Ebeye live remind one of the apartheid of South Africa."

Also echoing a common Kwajalein identifier, Jacobs likened the island to a Southern California middle-class suburb. The reference to Southern California appeared often in several articles about Kwajalein. But Jacobs' analysis of South African apartheid alongside references to Southern California offered an interesting context for exploring

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Paul Jacobs, "The Natives Are Forbidden to Shop On a U.S.-Administered Pacific Isle," in *Newsday*. February 13, 1977.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

how these two settings may have been perceived as potentially sharing characteristics, or at the very least not diametrically opposed. Presumably, journalists likened Kwajalein to a Southern California suburb primarily due to both regions' sunny climates, oceanic settings and large military presence. But one can speculate as well that the segregated nature of a Southern California suburb may have been partially aligned with comparisons to apartheid South Africa. While the extremes of violence and surveillance in South Africa exceed those of suburban California, underlying fears of racial integration seemed to characterize both spaces.

Jacobs' *Newsday* article also addressed job and wage discrimination on Kwajalein by referencing William Alexander's senate testimonies detailing Micronesian workers' grievances. Building upon Alexander's insights, Jacobs filled in a broader picture of employment discrimination by tracking the salary differentials between workers. He detailed how most Micronesians working on Kwajalein earned from \$2.10 to \$2.40 an hour, with maids getting \$5 to \$6 per day, plus lunch money. In comparison, American civilians earned an average yearly income of \$18,000.<sup>78</sup> Jacobs wrote that almost all Micronesian workers he interviewed believed racism informed the differences between their lives and those of American workers. Building upon Alexander's senate accounts on job and wage discrimination, Jacobs' article also solicited input from those individuals accused of these discriminatory acts. He interviewed the logistics contractor Global Associates that controlled all hiring of Micronesians and held a \$30 million per year contract on Kwajalein. Jacobs asked the Global Associates representative why

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>459</sup> 

limited any chances for promotion even though many were fluent in English.<sup>79</sup> The Global Associates official told Jacobs, "We don't have too many U.S. hires working for \$2.40 an hour...We do everything we can to reserve those jobs, what we call beginning jobs, for our Micronesian friends, and we've started a program that hopefully in three or four years will bring them into the \$4- and \$5-an-hour jobs."

In addition to addressing issues of work discrimination with Global Associates, Jacobs also spoke with the Trust Territory High Commissioner Peter Coleman about why there were no Micronesian supervisors on Kwajalein. Coleman told Jacobs that, "While some of the Micronesian workers at Ebeye may have the technical ability to warrant promotion, they do not have the ability to be in charge, to supervise people, particularly Americans." Jacobs' article seamlessly weaved together various senate hearings' findings while also offering readers an opportunity to learn about U.S. Trust Territory and contractor rationales for supporting discriminatory conditions on Kwajalein.

Coleman's insights, in particular, offered a glimpse into how colonial perceptions dehumanizing and infantilizing Micronesians moved from Henry Kissinger's lips on down to those of the Trust Territory High Commissioner. This colonizing discourse marked Marshallese as incapable of controlling their lands, their political future and, in this case, job leadership responsibilities.

Jacobs' lengthy expose also quoted Dr. Kotrady's senate testimony as he focused on Ebeye's health conditions. He described how overcrowded conditions led to respiratory infections, flu epidemics, and skin diseases and added that parasitic conditions spread rampantly on the island. Jacobs also described the recorded hepatitis rate on Ebeye

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ihid.

as three times higher than on any other Micronesian island. <sup>82</sup> Jacobs emphasized how Ebeye's apartheid conditions significantly impacted children in particular, noting the lack of adequate school facilities on Ebeye left many with nothing to do on the island. Illustrating the lack of accountability among those responsible for overseeing the Trust Territory islands, Jacobs concluded his article with a quote from High Commissioner Peter Coleman explaining the cause of Ebeye's problems. Coleman stated, "Ebeye is the bright lights area...As long as Kwajalein exists, there'll always be some employment opportunities there....I feel the problem of Ebeye must be approached in as comprehensive a fashion as possible...Right now we have formed a committee to study it." This "committee forming" bureaucratic approach would surface in future articles.

By January 1978, *TIME* magazine had picked up the story of U.S. failures in Micronesia and ran an article broadly covering U.S. policies throughout the region. The article, entitled "Paradise with Rough Edges: Welcome to dropouts, bureaucrats and bone pickers," briefly touched on Ebeye and identified Kwajalein as one of the islands in which passengers traveling through could not deplane. *TIME* correspondent David DeVoss stated that Kwajalein exemplified one island in the Pacific that had "a flavor of 19th century colonialism." The article continued on to detail that "On Kwajalein, 500 natives often perform jobs of equal status with those of the 3,000 Americans, but are forbidden access to the golf course, swimming pool, free movies and subsidized food available to the outsiders." DeVoss cited security explanations defending the island's exclusive American residency, adding that every night native workers commuted three

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85 Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> David DeVoss, "Paradise with Rough Edges: Welcome to dropouts, bureaucrats and bone pickers," in *TIME*. January 16, 1978. Pp. 18.

miles back to Ebeye, which he characterized as a slum where 7,000 people lived segregated on 73 acres.<sup>86</sup>

The range of articles moving from Pacific media to some of the most widely read publications in the United States during the mid- to late-1970s revealed the extent to which Ebeye's deteriorating conditions and the army's segregation policies on Kwajalein had begun garnering greater scrutiny. This critical mass of investigative reporting challenged U.S. narratives working to naturalize Kwajalein as a space of national security entitlement and a tropical suburban paradise for American contractors. Instead, these articles, working in conjunction with many senate testimonies, unveiled the truths of colonial discrimination and segregation defining the U.S. presence on the island.

## The Military Responds to Media Scrutiny: The 1977 Army Fact-Finding Report

Following heightened attention to the contentious relationship between Kwajalein and Ebeye exposed through the 1976 hearings and the unprecedented media coverage appearing in Pacific and U.S. publications, the U.S. military issued a response. This next section analyzes that response and reveals how the army's fact-finding report represented early evidence of military awareness that it would be held accountable for its policies and practices on Kwajalein. This early report primarily revealed that accountability would be aimed at quieting media scrutiny. But the report seemed to also reflect partial awareness of Marshallese influence in the region by sharing grievances about Kwajalein through political venues and media outlets. As the report indicated, alongside media articles that followed, the army's response at this early moment of rupture did not include any major changes in segregation policies on Kwajalein nor greater investments on Ebeye.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

However, the report still marked a significant origins moment of a growing awareness that the army could not simply act on Kwajalein without broader public relations repercussions. An expansion of these consequences would come to fruition during the Marshallese sail-in protests in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Addressing the various allegations of discrimination on Kwajalein, the army produced a fact-finding report in 1977. The report defended army policies on Kwajalein and situated responsibility for Ebeye's problems with the Trust Territory administration. Historian David Hanlon detailed how the army prefaced its report by identifying recent discrimination charges within the context of a media conspiracy tied to a carefully orchestrated plan to secure separate political status negotiations for the Marshall Islands. The army characterized the Marshall Islands Political Status Commission as backing both a separatist movement and puppeteering this media campaign. 87 Hanlon described this interpretation of the media's disparagement of military policies as an "institutionally selfserving understanding of public criticism as politically motivated."88 This perception, he continued, "worked to downplay the severity of conditions on Ebeye and thus to minimize the army's responsibility for those conditions."89 The fact-finding report began by acknowledging that in recent years more than 100 newspaper articles deplored living conditions on Ebeye in comparison to Kwajalein's luxuries. The report marked the media's influence by noting, "The emotional qualities of the articles and their inference that the Army was and is responsible for the disparity in quality-of-life conditions between the two islands raised question as to whether continued use of Kwajalein as a

<sup>87</sup> Hanlon, Remaking Micronesia, 204.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid

<sup>89</sup> Ihid.

National Range might be jeopardized."<sup>90</sup> The preface hinted at the fact that while concern about the U.S. military's reputation may have played a part in instigating the fact-finding report, a larger concern centered on the potential threat this tainted image posed for the army's ability to continue operations on Kwajalein.

Army concerns about the media tarnishing the military's reputation on Kwajalein and potentially hindering the missile testing mission surfaced years prior to the factfinding report. As detailed in chapter five, the army attempted to keep journalists out of Kwajalein and Ebeye through the early 1960s and only began allowing reporters to enter during the late 1960s. This allowance carried the caveat that the media first be briefed with information illuminating all military contributions made to the Marshallese. As will be explored further in chapter 8, the military instituted a media blackout as relations between Kwajalein and Ebeye erupted in 1982 during the Marshallese sail-in protests. But even earlier, the military expressed concern about local media during a 1973 Kwajalein Atoll Inter-Island Community Relations meeting. As noted in chapter three, the group's membership comprised representatives from Kwajalein and Ebeye across civilian and Trust Territory divides with the goal to address concerns between Kwajalein and Ebeye. During the March 1973 meeting, the group welcomed a military representative as a guest participant. This representative attended the meeting to voice concern about negative media coverage of Kwajalein.

Army Colonel Jesse L. Fishback joined the 1973 community relations meeting to describe what he viewed as the inappropriate use of local newspaper the *Micronitor*. 91

Recounted in the meeting minutes, Fishback said he felt discouraged by several articles

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup> Final Report of Kwajalein-Ebeye Fact Finding Team, Department of the Army. January 28, 1977. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> The *Micronitor* was the predecessor to the Majuro newspaper the *Marshall Islands Journal*.

appearing in the paper critical of the Marshallese and American communities. He added that the *Micronitor's* letters to the editor reflected a complete misunderstanding of "the most effective way for Marshallese and American community members to communicate with respect to island problems."92 Rather than airing their grievances to the media, he reiterated his expectation that individuals would take advantage of the community relations group, which existed to provide the forum for addressing these concerns. Colonel Fishback continued on to acknowledge certain Kwajalein procedures as unpopular with the Marshallese but emphasized these procedures served to meet Trust Territory objectives, especially in the case of protecting Micronesian merchants on Ebeye by prohibiting shopping on Kwajalein. 93 He also noted that the *Micronitor* letters reflected a perception that Americans on Kwajalein had no interest in Marshallese people or treated the Marshallese more harshly than Americans. Fishback claimed, "This is not true, and it would be quite easy to dispute these stories."94 Perhaps insinuating the army would take the high road on this issue, Fishback noted the military would not be airing their position through the Micronitor. 95

While in 1973 Colonel Fishback chose to avoid any public response to allegations appearing in the local media, by 1977 the military had little choice. Soon after the 1976 senate hearings and accompanying increased media attention to Kwajalein and Ebeye, the Assistant Secretary of Defense in International Security Affairs issued a memorandum to the Secretary of the Army expressing concern about the military's reputation on Kwajalein. The September 1976 correspondence stated, "The contrast in living standards

<sup>92</sup> Minutes of the Kwajalein Atoll Inter-Island Community Relations Committee Meeting. Published March 7, 1973. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa. <sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

is too great; in time, this will affect our ability to use Kwajalein as a base for the Ballistic Missile Defense Command." The Assistant Secretary's letter included an article indicating the attached story had aroused concern in the Marshalls, the news media, the U.S. Congress and the U.N. Trusteeship Council. While communicating that conditions needed to change between Kwajalein and Ebeye, the Assistant Secretary also evaded complete military responsibility. The Assistant Secretary noted, "Not all of the blame belongs in the Department of the Army, but people do expect us to handle the Kwajalein-Ebeye situation with the same sort of skill and imagination that we devote to other defense problems." The memorandum instructed the Department of the Army to form a working group to examine the situation, how it developed, what had already been done to prevent conditions from getting worse and potential solutions for the future. The Assistant Secretary's request led to the publication of the 1977 Army Fact-Finding Report.

As noted by Historian David Hanlon, the fact-finding report discredited the validity of allegations appearing in numerous articles that deplored disparities between Kwajalein and Ebeye. The 1977 report preface began, "Other than to recognize that a campaign exists which is exploiting the Ebeye conditions as an emotional issue, including some factual distortion, the fact-finding team attempted to strictly limit itself to answering the four questions above," which consisted of those areas outlined by the Assistant Secretary plus an overall assessment of the situation. <sup>99</sup> Following the report's

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> Final Report of Kwajalein-Ebeye Fact Finding Team, Department of the Army. January 28, 1977.
Correspondence from Assistant Secretary of Defense, International Security Affairs written September 1976 attached. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>99</sup> Final Report of Kwajalein-Ebeye Fact Finding Team, Department of the Army. January 28, 1977. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa. Pp.1.

preface laying out the specific areas of focus and dismissing the severity of allegations by accusing the media of a conspiratorial campaign, the report explained army policies towards Micronesians on Kwajalein. Amidst other topics, the report addressed the accusations of wage discrimination as well as comparisons made between Kwajalein and Ebeye's hospital and education facilities and resources. As they had done in the past, the army again identified Ebeye's inferior conditions as the Trust Territory administration's responsibility. The report reminded readers that in 1951 the Trust Territory administration and the army reached an agreement that Ebeye would be overseen by the Trust Territory with an indigenous government on island to manage conditions in a self-sufficient manner.<sup>100</sup>

Consistent with the army's earlier explanations for Ebeye's deteriorating conditions, the fact-finding report drew upon relative comparisons throughout the Marshall Islands and Micronesia to defend against disparity charges between Kwajalein and Ebeye. The report noted that while conditions on Ebeye seemed inadequate when compared with Kwajalein, a relative view of these conditions compared to outer island life showed many improvements. The report also addressed accusations of discrimination based on income differentials between Americans and Marshallese working on Kwajalein. The report showed that Americans working in upper grade technical and administrative positions with accompanied status earned close to \$27,000 per year. Those with unaccompanied status earned about \$15,400. The Marshallese workforce on Kwajalein averaged a salary of \$6,000 per year. But, the army pointed out, Marshallese wage rates remained protected under the 1966 Fair Labor Standards Act, which increased hourly rates from 45 cents to \$1.25. On Kwajalein, wages ranged between \$2.42 and

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, 5.

\$6.66, with the 500 full-time Marshallese workforce averaging \$6,000 per year. Marshallese domestics brought in an average of \$1,500 per year. After detailing these figures, the report compared Kwajalein wages with that of Trust Territory government employees who earned \$4,700. Those working for the 52 private businesses on Ebeye earned an average \$2,400 per year. Thus, the report concluded that given this context the relatively high wages offered on Kwajalein compared favorably with the rest of Micronesia.

While army evidence revealed higher incomes for those on Ebeye contrasting earnings in the outer islands, the relative comparisons failed to take into account the differing economic conditions in each place. In the outer islands sustainable fishing and agricultural practices constituted the primary means of family support alongside supplementary copra trade income; practices not possible on Ebeye. Marshallese on Ebeye could not depend upon fishing because of pollution nor could they grow enough food as the majority of the island remained covered in concrete with minimal space outside housing and other buildings. Alongside these barriers to sustainable agricultural and fishing practices, the dependence upon imported foods and other products made the cost of living significantly higher on Ebeye than on Kwajalein. The relative wage increase compared to outer island wages offered little relief to those paying more for food and housing than their American counterparts on Kwajalein who earned significantly higher income, lived in subsidized housing and shopped in tax free military stores. Paul Jacobs revealed the extreme differentials in food prices on Kwajalein and Ebeye in his 1977 Newsday article. He explained that "While Americans can buy whole chickens for

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, 2-3.

prices in the range of 50 cents a pound, the Micronesians must pay \$1.55 a pound for gizzards. A small can of tuna that costs 45 cents on Kwaj sells for 85 on Ebeye."<sup>102</sup>

Explaining the contrasting conditions between hospitals and schools on Kwajalein and Ebeye, the army report acknowledged these did not compare well. The report attributed Ebeye's lower hospital standards to a lack of adequate medical staff and insufficient maintenance. The report added that conditions were improving following increased Trust Territory funding and a medical staff increase from one to three doctors. Again citing relative comparisons, the army applauded the hospital as a step up from outer island resources. The report noted, "Ebeye facilities represent a significance in quality of life compared to the almost non-existent medical facilities and (comparatively) extremely limited school facilities on most other islands. The Naturalizing the continuity of segregation between the two islands, the army report explained that conditions on Ebeye developed out of the necessity to displace Marshallese for military needs following the war. The report added that the subsequent attraction of high wages lured migrants to work on Kwajalein alongside Marshallese custom of supporting extended family members.

The army limited any real discussion of accountability for conditions on Ebeye by identifying overpopulation as the primary cause of Ebeye's challenges and ignoring allegations of apartheid on Kwajalein. The report also made no mention of senate testimonies questioning Marshallese exclusions from Kwajalein's hospital. The report

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>102</sup> Paul Jacobs, "The Natives Are Forbidden to Shop On a U.S.-Administered Pacific Isle," in *Newsday*. February 13, 1977.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> Final Report of Kwajalein-Ebeye Fact Finding Team, Department of the Army. January 28, 1977. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa. Pp.4.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid. 5.

concluded with a brief list of actions the army agreed to continue doing to help improve life on Ebeye and suggestions for further Trust Territory participation. Many suggestions benefited Kwajalein as well by easing pressure on the island's resources. Suggestions included having the Trust Territory begin an aggressive approach to building private enterprise on Ebeye so Marshallese could purchase all consumer goods there and conversely not on Kwajalein. The army also suggested the Trust Territory develop laundry facilities on Ebeye, again alleviating pressure on Kwajalein to provide any of these services. The report applauded the Kwajalein women's volunteer fundraising work for raising \$30,000 for Micronesian educational scholarships and welfare. The report highlighted these and other charitable works, like Kwajalein's practice of offering inexpensive clothing to Marshallese or providing Marshallese individuals with a sales outlet for their handicraft.<sup>106</sup>

The 1977 fact-finding report revealed how the critical mass of grievances condemning military practices on Kwajalein and Ebeye forced a public response from the army, albeit meager, to account for its policies in the region. The report stood out as the most extensive formal response from the army to such charges during this period. As the report suggested and the next section confirms, however, the army's quasi-accountability in words did not equate to any major changes in policies or investments in the region. Those changes would not come until Marshallese protestors brought the missile testing mission to a temporary halt during the late 1970s and 1980s.

What Changed Following the 1976 U.S. Senate Hearings? Not a Whole Lot

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>106</sup> Ibid, 7-8.

The 1976 senate hearings and the accompanying media coverage of conditions on Kwajalein and Ebeye represented a critical mass of discursive rupture within the U.S. narrative of entitlement to Kwajalein. The army's 1977 fact-finding report represented an attempt to downplay the impact of segregation on Kwajalein and maintain a narrative of entitlement by implicating the Trust Territory administration as responsible for conditions on Ebeye. While the Trust administration remained charged with the task of ensuring Micronesian's economic development, adequate public health and protection from discrimination and land loss, the common Trust Territory response to Ebeye's crises pointed the finger back at the army. Trust Territory officials argued that without Kwajalein, Ebeye would not exist in its contemporary state. These officials pointed out that the military, with its significantly larger budget as evidenced through Kwajalein's luxurious landscape, should be held largely responsible for supporting change on Ebeye. This dual evasion of responsibility and the accompanying lack of oversight to enforce any immediate change on Ebeye from the Trust administration, the military or the U.N. meant that despite the critical mass of voices expressing concern at the senate hearings and through the media, not much improved for Ebeye during the 1970s.

One response to the critical mass of concern came through plans to organize committees to look into the "situation" on Ebeye. In addition to the army's fact-finding report, the Trust Territory began organizing a working committee detailed in the 1977 *Pacific Islands Monthly*, article "US plans to defuse Ebeye 'time-bomb." The article noted the Trust Territory was taking steps to improve conditions on Ebeye by organizing a planning committee made up of high power representatives. This committee included the High Commissioner, Congress of Micronesia representatives, Marshallese traditional

leaders, the District Administrator, District Legislature, Defense Department officials, Interior Department officials, Redstone Arsenal officials, the U.S. Commander in Chief, and Pacific and Kwajalein missile range officials. The article situated Ebeye's problems within the broader Cold War context. Seemingly martyring Ebeye as a sacrifice enabling international peace, the story identified Ebeye's dire situation as the result of "programmes conducted in the interest of the national security of the US and perhaps the free world."

While the *Pacific Islands Monthly* article identified representatives from the highest positions of governmental and military authority being organized to plan solutions to Ebeye's problems, one year later little had changed. Dr. Greg Dever's 1978 Micronesian Support Committee Report, "Ebeye, Marshall Islands: A Public Health Hazard," highlighted the continued challenges facing Marshallese on Ebeye. Dever's report cited Dr. Kotrady's and Marshallese landowner Ataji Balos' senate testimonies alongside a factsheet and photo essay comparing conditions on Ebeye and Kwajalein.

Dever introduced the report noting its intention "to be a reminder of the human suffering that--in trust--occurs [on Ebeye]." Emphasizing the continuous nature of problems on Ebeye, Dever said he published the report in hopes that the U.S. government and non-Ebeye Marshallese would remember those struggling on Ebeye as they haggled over U.S. monies to be given to the new Marshallese government for continued use of Kwajalein. 110

An article appearing in the July/August 1978 *Micronesian Support Committee Bulletin* further substantiated no major changes underway on Ebeye despite the supposed

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>107</sup> "US plans to defuse Ebeye 'time-bomb," in *Pacific Islands Monthly*. February, 1977. Pp. 53.

Dever, Greg, M.D. "Ebeye, Marshall Islands: A Public Health Hazard." A Micronesian Support Committee Report, 1978. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

high officials' working group. The article's title illuminated the nature of Ebeye's problems as a continuation of issues unaddressed. The article, "Foul Odors, Visible Pollution Part of the Normal Environment, T.T. Ebeye Study Again Shows Critical Conditions," stated that in April 1978 the Department of Interior published a report that contained "frightening statistics" about the conditions on Ebeye. 111 Explaining that Ebeve remained one of the most densely populated places in the world, the report described the 588 housing units on the island as deteriorating. The Department of Interior report cited houses averaging 13.6 persons per unit and in some cases up to 40. 112 The report also addressed continued problems with health and sanitation citing a water shortage and lack of adequate sanitation facilities continuing to induce high rates of sickness on the island. 113 The following year, journalist Giff Johnson published another article on apartheid between the two islands for the *Progressive*, entitled "Ebeye and Kwajalein: A tale of two islands." In this piece, Johnson compared Ebeye's growing population density to that of placing 400 million people in Hawai'i. 114 As the journalist most prolific in covering Kwajalein and Ebeye, Johnson's persistence in reiterating the same stories and examples about Ebeye's continued problems in this 1979 article attested to a lack of dramatic change in the region.<sup>115</sup>

Among the most poignant sources illuminating the continuation of struggles on Ebeye after the senate hearings, media reports, and supposed efforts to organize high powered officials into a working group came through a letter written by a Marshallese

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>111</sup> "Foul Odors, Visible Pollution Part of Normal Environment': T.T. Ebeye Study Again Shows Critical Conditions," in *Micronesian Support Committee Bulletin*. Vol. 3, #5, July/August 1978. Pp. 34. Located in the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau 447.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>114</sup> Giff Johnson, "Ebeye and Kwajalein: A tale of two islands," in *The Progressive*. February 1979. Pp. 47. Ibid

man named Jinna Keju. Keju lived on Ebeye and was a representative in the Marshall Islands Congress. Keju testified in the 1976 senate hearings, at the time as a resident of Likiep Atoll. During his testimony Keju shared his personal experience with hospital exclusions on Kwajalein. Transiting through Kwajalein in 1974 while experiencing severe abdominal pain, Keju attempted to gain help at the hospital but was told he could not receive treatment there. He testified he "had to go out and just lie under a tree."

By 1979 Keju again felt compelled to address issues of discrimination on Kwajalein and voice concern about continued struggles on Ebeye. He wrote to Juan Alcedo of the Committee on Civil Rights in San Francisco on September 15, 1979, noting he understood Alcedo's department had jurisdiction over the Trust Territory. He indicated he was writing as a concerned Marshallese "about serious human rights violations in the Marshall Islands." Keju wrote that in addition to being an elected representative, he owned a store on Ebeye since the early 1950s. He described the island's congestion and explained that even though he had lived on Ebeye for almost thirty years, the health and living conditions on the island continued to shock him. He described a recent situation in which his son had gone to the Ebeye hospital to get stitches after cutting his hand. Once the doctor stitched him up, he told the boy he had no bandages of any kind and that he needed to find one at home. Keju emphasized the Ebeye hospital served 8,000 residents who had the highest disease rate in the Trust Territory and they constantly ran out of the most basic items like Band-Aids and aspirin. Keju added that "Every year"

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<sup>116 &</sup>quot;Current Problems in the Marshall Islands," 39. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>117</sup> Three-page correspondence from Jinna A. Keju to Mr. Juan Alcedo, Committee on Civil Rights written September 15, 1979. Located in the Giff Johnson Marshall Islands Resource Materials, Pacific Manuscripts Bureau 1172.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid

many children die of influenza and diarrhea epidemics that sweep the island because they cannot get adequate treatment at the Ebeye Hospital. And the Kwajalein hospital is not open to Marshallese on a general basis. You have to be nearly dying before they will admit you and usually it is too late by then."<sup>120</sup>

Describing his own personal connection to Kwajalein's hospital policies, Keju continued on in his letter to recount the story of his recently deceased child. He wrote, "My 29-year-old daughter died five months ago shortly after giving birth because of problems at the Ebeye hospital and the lack of coordination to handle emergencies between the Ebeye and Kwajalein hospitals." A May 2010 oral history interview with long-time Ebeye resident Julian Riklon echoed Keju's story, emphasizing the tragedy of so many parents on Ebeye having buried their children. Riklon told me that in order to understand how bad things were on Ebeye during the early 1980s [four to six years *after* the senate hearings, media campaign and organization of high powered committees] one simply needed to visit the Ebeye graveyard. He said, "you will see the mark of so many small child, small kids buried there in the early 1980s...because life was not good." 122

Keju's 1979 letter further exemplified the continuity of failing infrastructure on Ebeye that in some instances appeared worse than problems cited during the senate hearings three years prior. He described a catastrophic situation occurring six months earlier when the Ebeye sewer system deteriorated to the point where waste came through sinks and showers every time someone on the island flushed a toilet. Keju noted the public works director warned the Trust Territory administrator of sewage system

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>122</sup> Oral history interview with Julian Riklon on May 17, 2010. Ebeye, Marshall Islands.

problems the previous year but received no response. 123 Keju stated Ebeye had also been plagued by broken generators creating power outages for half the island for four hours at a time. With no electricity, the water pumps failed so people had to retrieve well water before using the toilets. Keju continued on to identify the lack of schools and recreational facilities on Ebeye. He wrote, "It is ironic that we are only 3 miles from 'Uncle Sam' at Kwajalein, with first rate schools, excellent sports and recreational facilities and a decent hospital. But for all practical purposes we might as well be 1,000 miles away, because we have very limited use, if any, of these facilities."

Citing the dual evasion of Trust Territory and military responsibility for Ebeye,
Keju described the Marshallese as caught between Trust Territory bureaucracy and the
army where nothing on Ebeye gets done. He added, "It can hardly be said that the U.S. is
'protecting the health of the inhabitants' here--as the U.N. says it must--when one looks at
the poor condition of the Ebeye hospital and the long list of epidemics that have claimed
the lives of hundreds over the years." Keju continued on to reference Representative
Patsy Mink's statements made during the 1976 hearings. He noted that while Mink
described the situation in 1976 as "'a patent violation of basic human rights," the
problems still continued. Keju invited Alcedo and his department members to visit
Ebeye so they could understand the situation first hand. He stressed that Marshallese on
Ebeye needed help and he hoped Alcedo's department could assist in assuring their basic

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>123</sup> Three-page correspondence from Jinna A. Keju to Mr. Juan Alcedo, Committee on Civil Rights written September 15, 1979. Located in the Giff Johnson Marshall Islands Resource Materials, Pacific Manuscripts Bureau 1172.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

rights and freedoms, supposedly protected by the U.N. agreement, were no longer forgotten. 127

An August 1982 Marianas Variety article by Giff Johnson revealed that even three years after Keju's desperate plea, conditions on Ebeye remained unchanged. In his piece, entitled "Marshallese Treated as Second Class Citizens," Johnson detailed how Marshallese continued to live in crowded conditions in dilapidated houses on Ebeye. He also referenced the 1979 sewer system breakdown that gushed human waste into kitchen sinks. 128 Johnson noted that even by 1982, three years after the sewage system broke down, it had "yet to be satisfactorily fixed. Many people, however, have no running water or toilets." By 1982, Marshallese children still attended school in split shifts given the inadequate education facilities. They still had no high school options on island but remained excluded from Kwajalein's high school. 130 Johnson's article catalogued the same conditions detailed in various articles since 1976 exemplifying the continuity of structural violence on Ebeye despite concern expressed at the senate hearings, through investigative reporting and through the supposed organizing of top officials charged with addressing these problems. But one significant difference characterized Johnson's most recent article. By August 1982, Johnson wrote during the middle of what would become the most significant Marshallese protest against U.S. colonial land policies and Kwajalein's segregated structure. His article appeared two months into Operation Homecoming, a four-month protest in which 1,000 Marshallese sailed-in to reoccupy

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>128</sup> Giff Johnson, "Marshallese Treated as Second Class Citizens," in *Marianas Variety*. August 20, 1982.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

their islands throughout Kwajalein Atoll. Chapter 8 will explore more closely the violences emerging against Marshallese during this historic event.

Before turning to Operation Homecoming, chapter 7 takes a slight detour to consider another form of violence informing political negotiations and various media articles alongside the coverage of Operation Homecoming. At the same time journalists condemned apartheid conditions on Kwajalein and the denial of public health care to Marshallese suffering on Ebeye, they also covered the public health consequences emerging from the legacy of the U.S. nuclear testing in the Northern Marshall Islands. These articles investigated the long-term impact of radioactive contamination plaguing Marshallese, Americans and Japanese following the 1954 Bravo test of the hydrogen bomb. Many victims of radiation fallout ended up displaced to Ebeye following the contamination of their home islands. Their personal stories and the broader legacy of violence emerging from this foundational story of weapons development in the Marshalls pervade the histories of violence on Kwajalein and Ebeye.

Chapter six has offered an introductory lens into examining the range of violences infusing the U.S. colonial presence in the Marshall Islands. This chapter began exploring these violences through analysis of military and Trust Territory economic and infrastructure neglect on Ebeye alongside discriminatory and exclusionary policies on Kwajalein. The combination of these policies and practices coming from two arms of the U.S. colonial administration in the region resulted in countless unnecessary deaths and illnesses among Marshallese on Ebeye. As this chapter revealed, these violences ignited challenges from Marshallese leaders and workers alongside American journalists voicing concern and creating ruptures to U.S. narratives of entitlement and benevolence in the

region. Chapter seven turns now to explore simultaneously emerging discourse marking U.S. foundational violence in the region through the historic nuclear testing campaign.

## Chapter Seven Violence and the U.S. Nuclear Testing Campaign: The Bravo Legacy

"Don't Americans realize that every life is precious?"
---Marshallese woman on Rongelap interviewed in
Dennis O'Rourke's 1991 documentary film *Half Life* 

The army's indifference to Marshallese health and welfare exemplified by chapter six's senate testimonies and media coverage of Kwajalein's hospital exclusions remained rooted in a deeper history of U.S. military disregard for Marshallese safety and well being. To fully contextualize structural violence on Ebeye and military apathy towards the sick and dying on the island, one must also understand the longer history of U.S. violence in the Marshalls carried out in the name of national security and global peace. Chapter seven traces these foundational roots of violence in the region by partially exploring the legacy of the U.S. nuclear testing campaign in the Northern Marshall Islands. I emphasize partially here because this topic warrants greater attention than the primary focus of this dissertation allows. Research on the impact of U.S. nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands has filled the pages of several dissertations, books, reports, articles and documentary films in the past few decades with most recent and illuminating studies including Giff Johnson's 2009 Nuclear Past, Unclear Future, Holly M. Barker's 2003 Bravo for the Marshallese: Regaining Control in a Post-Nuclear, Post-Colonial World and Jack Niedenthal's 2001 For the Good of Mankind: A History of the People of

Bikini and their Islands. My discussion of the nuclear testing campaign focuses primarily on those aspects of the campaign that help illuminate the broader context of violences on Kwajalein and Ebeye and emphasizes voices of those most closely tied to the history of these two islands. That said, on a broader level this chapter argues that the dehumanization of Marshallese through policies of segregation and exclusion evident on Ebeye during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s can be understood as the continuation of a pattern of dehumanization founding the U.S. relationship to the Marshall Islands since 1946. This dehumanization marking dying babies on Ebeye as insignificant and a burden to the broader mission of U.S. national security on Kwajalein echoed earlier policies informing the selection of the Northern Marshall Islands as a region for nuclear testing.

As discussed in chapter six, the navy chose Bikini Island to test atomic bombs in part because of its "sparse" population whose homes and personal security they presumed to be easily dispensable. Military officials testing bombs first and missiles later narrated the Marshall Islands as remote and containing a small enough population to avoid risking harm that could accompany testing in more populated territories. As will be detailed in chapter eight, once a few of those sparsely populating individuals challenged this narrative of their insignificance and actually halted the U.S. missile testing mission, the Kwajalein command reacted with disproportionate violence and aggression. Chapter eight will argue that part of the impetus fueling such a violent reaction to a nonviolent demonstration can be found in the way protestors challenged U.S. perceptions of Marshallese insignificance. When a population considered small enough to be easily controlled became seemingly uncontrollable and capable of influencing the world's most

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See also Jane Dibblin's *The Day of Two Suns: U.S. Nuclear Testing and the Pacific Islanders* (New York: New Amsterdam Books, 1990), and Jonathan M. Weisgall's 1994 *Operation Crossroads: The Atomic Tests at Bikini Atoll* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1994).

powerful military, the army became a bit irate. Working together, these three chapters comprising part III attempt to explore discursive ruptures to the U.S. narrative of entitlement in the region and the many violences accompanying and in some cases informing these ruptures.

In addition to analyzing the nuclear testing campaign's legacy to provide a broader context for understanding violences on Ebeye and Kwajalein, chapter seven also traces the simultaneity of scrutiny about these violences emerging publicly across the Marshalls, the Pacific, the U.S. and the world. While the nuclear testing campaign ceased in 1958, new evidence about the impact from the 1954 Bravo detonation's radioactive fallout emerged at the same time senate testimonies, articles and speeches voiced concerns about Ebeye in the 1970s and 1980s. This chapter examines this new evidence surfacing in Atomic Energy Commission reports, witness and victim testimonies and medical reports and statistics attesting to the long-term impacts of U.S. nuclear testing. These findings offer a crucial lens for understanding how the "Cold" War arms race has lived on through tragedy and loss for many Marshallese never given a choice on participating or opting out of this national security mission. This chapter argues the preeminence of the nuclear testing legacy in Marshallese history must be addressed alongside any attempt to understand broader U.S. violences in the region and American and Marshallese responses to these violences.

Why Attention to the Nuclear Testing Legacy and Ebeye's Struggles Emerged
Together

As new information emerged during the 1970s regarding the nuclear testing campaign's long-term impact in the Marshall Islands, journalists and Marshallese political leaders discussed the travesty and tragedy of the tests alongside concerns about conditions on Ebeye. Journalists often marked these issues along a continuum of analysis of the broader history of U.S. policies in region over time. Likewise, many Marshallese and Americans expressing concern about U.S. abuses on Ebeye advocated for Marshallese radiation victims within a context linking these grievances together. In addition to the timing of newly emerging evidence inspiring an array of articles on nuclear testing alongside those covering Kwajalein and Ebeye, journalists also connected these topics because Ebeye housed many Marshallese victims displaced by the tests. Some of those displaced suffered the health consequences of radiation exposure. While most Marshallese displaced by the initial 1946 nuclear test ended up on the island of Kili (from Bikini) with some later relocating to the capital Majuro, many also ended up on Ebeye. As Holly Barker narrated in her 2003 Bravo for the Marshallese: Regaining Control in a Post-Nuclear, Post-Colonial World, many Marshallese impacted by the radioactive contamination on Rongelap were displaced to Ebeye abruptly with no real preparation for the transition from subsistence living to wage-earning positions.<sup>2</sup>

Marshallese leaders and American journalists also linked concerns about

Kwajalein and Ebeye to the nuclear testing legacy during the 1970s and 1980s because
these two issues became the most significant bargaining chips in the Marshallese political
negotiations for sovereignty with the United States. For example, many Marshallese
leaders demanding greater compensation for medical support and health care for victims
of radioactive contamination in the political status negotiations also worked on

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Barker. Bravo for the Marshallese. 69.

negotiating new lease agreements for Kwajalein's continued use. The shared experiences of Marshallese displacement in the name of U.S. national security pervaded discussions of how to justly compensate those earlier displaced for nuclear tests alongside those later displaced to test those missiles that would deliver those nuclear warheads. One of the most influential Marshallese political negotiators during the 1970s and 1980s explained these links further to me in a recent May 2010 interview on Majuro. During our discussion, Senator Tony de Brum said the biggest impact on Marshallese culture has been the displacements caused by both of these weapons development campaigns. De Brum identified Kwajalein as inseparable from the earlier nuclear testing campaign because Kwajalein emerged in the postwar period to support those earlier tests. Where the early nuclear campaign tested the bombs, Kwajalein merely continued this campaign by serving to test the vehicles for those bombs.<sup>3</sup> While the political context of these discussions will be addressed further in chapter nine, it is useful to consider that context here as one factor contributing to the shared timing of these topics informing media headlines, political speeches and U.N. petitions.

While as De Brum noted, the shared impact of displacements constituted one major grievance connecting the nuclear testing campaign to Kwajalein landowners, the issue of U.S. neglect for Marshallese health and well being remained another significant factor linking concerns about Ebeye to the nuclear testing legacy. Marshallese health repercussions resulting from U.S. weapons development constitutes another example along the continuum of U.S. violence informing the relationship between the U.S. and the Marshall Islands. Many Marshallese suffering from cancers, miscarriages and birth deformities as a result of nuclear testing live on Ebeye amidst those suffering

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Interview with Senator Tony de Brum in May 3, 2010. Majuro, Marshall Islands.

malnutrition and epidemic diseases resulting from Trust Territory and military neglect for Ebeye's infrastructure. Thus, it is not surprising that many expressing concern about U.S. negligence and Kwajalein's hospital exclusions on Ebeye would also remain attentive to those suffering the consequences of radiation exposure.

## Contextualizing the 1954 Bravo Shot

Having considered explanations as to why concerns about Ebeye captured headlines on the same pages as those focused on the nuclear testing legacy, this chapter turns now to offer broader context on the Bravo detonation that caused the greatest health consequences in the region. This section provides a framework for understanding the heavily researched, recorded and published historic events of the Bravo detonation alongside some U.S. official narratives of this test. This context offers an important preface to later sections in this chapter, which examine discourse alleging U.S. intentional irradiation of Marshallese during the test. This section also considers the U.S. immediate response to the Bravo detonation's irradiating impact and what that response suggests about the broader U.S. approach to Marshallese health and welfare. Broadly, the rest of this chapter considers how U.S. approaches to Bravo's radiation legacy potentially influenced Marshallese impressions of the nation over time.

The U.S. began its nuclear testing campaign in the Marshall Islands at Bikini Atoll in 1946. The campaign would span twelve years within which time the U.S. military would conduct 67 nuclear detonations. The navy did not detonate the hydrogen bomb on Bikini until March 1, 1954 after the Soviet Union demonstrated its development of that same bomb the previous year. The navy anticipated the hydrogen bomb to be 250

times more powerful than the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. The Bravo detonation turned out to be 1,000 times more powerful than the bomb that destroyed the Japanese city in 1945. In 1946, the U.S. had evacuated Bikini and all nearby islands to test atomic bombs presumed to be 250 times less powerful than the hydrogen bomb. In 1954, for some undocumented reason, the U.S. military decided against evacuating Marshallese in the surrounding islands prior to detonating Bravo. Not only did the military fail to evacuate these populations, they also gave the Marshallese living on nearby islands no warning about the test. What tragically, or criminally (depending upon one's impression of U.S. intentions) ensued was the irradiation of hundreds of Marshallese living in these nearby islands where radioactive fallout contaminated their bodies, their land, their food and their water. With no warning identifying the white powder that rained over their islands, with no instruction to remain inside their homes, many Marshallese consumed contaminated food and water. The exposure to lethal doses of radiation would plague these Marshallese bodies and the bodies of their progeny for generations thereafter.

The destructive and contaminating violence marking Bravo has been recounted in several articles, books and reports in the past several decades. Politics and International History scholar Stewart Firth detailed the Bravo detonation in his 1987 *Nuclear Playground*. Giving a sense of the magnitude of the bomb, Firth explained the blast lifted hundreds of millions of tonnage of sand, soil and coral upwards into the atmosphere. Parts of reef simply disappeared and ten minutes after the blast the mushroom cloud stood 30 kilometers high above Bikini Island where it was detonated, reaching a size more than 100 kilometers across, an expanse larger than most major cities. In the wind, radioactive fallout moved east covering a boat of Japanese fishermen, American task

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Firth, Nuclear Playground, 15.

force ships, U.S. servicemen surveying the weather on Rongerik Atoll and Marshallese in the atolls of Rongelap and Utirik.<sup>5</sup> Most recently, in *Nuclear Past Unclear Future*, Giff Johnson identified more than 20 other atolls and single islands exposed to fallout in addition to Rongelap, which received the greatest exposure.<sup>6</sup>

Alongside statistics and figures, Firth's *Nuclear Playground* captured Bravo's horrific impact through lived experiences as he interviewed several Marshallese survivors. Billiet Edmond, a Marshallese man teaching on Rongelap at the time recalled the morning of the Bravo detonation. He noted that by 10 a.m. the island had been blanketed in a fog of ash that some islanders thought was a powder dropped by the U.S. to kill mosquitoes because none had been warned of the detonation or potential radioactive fallout. Edmond recalled,

"The once innocent and unviolent ashes took effect on the islanders in a sudden and most suffering incident. An unusually irritating itching punished the islanders in a most agonizing situation. The grown-ups were too old to have cried, but the kids were violently crying, scratching and more scratching; kicking, twisting and rolling, but nothing more we could do."

Firth documented as well that immediately following the detonation "An American radiological safety team visited Rongelap, finding it to be dangerously radioactive and warning the people not to drink the water, but the Task Force craft did not evacuate the small Rongelapese population of 82 until more than two days after the blast at Bikini."

Journalist Giff Johnson provided an hour-by-hour account of Bravo in the most recent work on the subject, his 2010 *Nuclear Past Unclear Future*. Johnson traced Bravo's 15-megaton detonation beginning at 6:45 a.m., which followed earlier weather

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Johnson, Nuclear Past, 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Firth, Nuclear Playground, 16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Ibid.

reports indicating wind blowing in the direction of the inhabited islands. Within a few hours, 23 members aboard the Japanese fishing vessel, the Lucky Dragon, became exposed to radiation 80 miles east of Bikini. At the same time, children on Rongelap and Ailinginae atolls further east played in the powdery ash that fell over the islands as none of the populations received any warning of the danger. Also within a few hours of the detonation, American servicemen monitoring the weather on Rongerik Atoll became exposed but had received warning to remain indoors and avoid eating or drinking anything.<sup>9</sup>

Raising questions about U.S. concern for Marshallese health and welfare, Johnson continued on to detail the varied evacuation plans for each population exposed. He noted that 30 to 36 hours following the detonation the military evacuated the 28 U.S. servicemen from Rongerik; 50 to 54 hours after detonation the military evacuated 64 Marshallese on Rongelap and 18 on Ailinginae to Kwajalein (with four pregnant women). Finally, 78 hours following detonation, the military evacuated 159 people from Utirik (with 8 pregnant women). Johnson noted that the U.S. directed those from Utirik and Rongelap to bathe in the lagoon and wash the radiation off their bodies. Three days after the detonation, the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission issued a press statement about this "routine atomic test." The statement noted, "U.S. servicemen and people from Rongelap, Ailinginae and Utirik were taken to Kwajalein 'as a precautionary measure."

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Johnson, Nuclear Past, 9-10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

radioactivity. There were no burns. All were reported well."<sup>14</sup> Johnson's *Nuclear Past, Unclear Future* further indicated that the Atomic Energy Commission press statement followed two days of documented evidence of physical harm exemplified by Rongelapese vomiting, nausea, diarrhea, itching skin and eyes.<sup>15</sup>

In addition to detailing the differentiated evacuation timing for Americans and Marshallese alongside public statements denying any physical harm, Johnson raised the question in *Nuclear Past Unclear Future* as to why the U.S. military decided against evacuating the nearby islands prior to the test. He explained that for the original Bikini tests in 1946, the military evacuated Marshallese from Rongelap, Enewetak, and Wotho ahead of time for bombs with a strength of about 20 kilotons. But for Bravo, Marshallese received no warning nor evacuation for a detonation expected to be 250 times the size of the 1946 tests that ended up being 1,000 times as powerful. According to Johnson, given the anticipated magnitude of Bravo, the rationale for not evacuating nearby islanders remained a question the military never seemed able to answer.

### Media Coverage of the Bravo Legacy and the Suggestion of U.S. Intentionality

Johnson's 2010 work questioning why the U.S. failed to evacuate Marshallese during the Bravo detonation built upon more than three decades of Marshallese and American accusations of U.S. intentionality in irradiating the nearby islanders. This section examines that discourse and the way in which these accusations moved from local media sources through international publications. This section begins considering the

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Ibid.

historic violence of radiation in the Marshall Islands and what the presumption of U.S. intentionality may have meant for Marshallese. During the 1970s, the Marshall Islands continued to remain under U.S. colonial control through the Trusteeship Agreement. As detailed in the last chapter, those Marshallese living on Ebeye remained vulnerable to Trust Territory and military policies directly impacting their health and well being. This section tries to imagine the position of Marshallese under this colonial power that many grew to believe intentionally poisoned their bodies and the bodies of their loved ones.

One of the earliest individuals to publicly hurl accusations of intentionality, Kwajalein landowner and political leader Ataji Balos spoke out in 1972. Around the same time Balos addressed the legacy of nuclear radiation, he also delivered speeches and petitions against U.S. abuses on Ebeye. Balos would continue to voice grievances against the United States as a leader in the 1980s sail-in protests to Kwajalein. Prior to the sailins, Balos published a speech on nuclear testing in the February 15, 1972 *Micronitor*. An editorial preface to Balos' speech qualified that the *Micronitor* published his words following Micronesian News Service attempts to suppress them. Balos addressed his speech generically to "the Congress" (presumably the Congress of Micronesia) in an attempt to get Congress representatives to support greater compensation for Marshallese radiation victims. He also asked that Congress representatives encourage the U.S. to allow Japanese doctors to provide medical attention to these victims. Balos stated he traveled to Japan the previous year to find people interested in helping Marshallese suffering radiation contamination. He said he extended an invitation to Japanese doctors to come to the Marshall Islands but the Trust Territory administration cut its visit short. Balos explained how the American medical team sent to study the people on Rongelap

and Utirik seemed highly questionable. He said he believed the Trust Territory neglected the health of these radiation victims by obstructing efforts of others wishing to help.

Balos added that the Japanese medical team shared this perception but were 
"unceremoniously" deported by High Commissioner Johnston and Acting Attorney

General Bowles following their arrival the previous December. 
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Why the Micronesian News Service suppressed Balos' speech may be explained by the severity of Balos' accusations and the manner in which he expressed them. He questioned the United States' genuine interest in helping Micronesian people and then asked, "Who in the hell do they think they are to turn down the wishes of our people?" Balos continued on to explain the source of his anger and mistrust. He stated that he was

"convinced that the United States knowingly and consciously allowed the people of Rongelap and Utirik to be exposed to the 1954 fallout. This was done to the Rongelapese and Utirikese so that the United States could use them as human guinea pigs in the development of its medical capabilities to citizens who might be exposed to radiation in the event of war with an enemy country. This is a crime unmatched in peacetime. It is not 18 years since this beastly crime against all humanity and the people of Micronesia was committed but the sinner who professed to be the most decent nation on the earth has conveniently and successfully swept it under the rug...Simple justice begs for the truth."

Balos continued on to acknowledge the U.S. explanation of irradiation being accidental. But he added he was unsure who the U.S. intended to fool with such a statement. He explained the reason the U.S. initially chose Bikini, which appeared in several official U.S. documents, being that "few people would be affected." He added this statement acknowledged the U.S. "knew that these people would be exposed to the fallout...this

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Speech by Ataji Balos appearing in the *Micronitor*. February 15, 1972.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

was a "planned accident."<sup>22</sup> Balos said he saw "the whole affair tainted with racism."<sup>23</sup> He continued, "The United States chose to make guinea pigs out of our people because they are not white but some brown natives in a some remote Pacific Islands."<sup>24</sup> To further exemplify U.S. othering of Marshallese, Balos described the initial compensation differentials for varied groups exposed to radiation. He noted that Marshallese compensation remained "pitifully small" with 80 Rongelapese paid \$800,000 and 159 Utirikese promised a meager \$16,000. In comparison, the 23 Japanese fisherman exposed on the Lucky Dragon boat received \$2 million. Balos asked, "Are Micronesian lives worth less than those other people?"<sup>25</sup>

Balos' 1972 speech accompanied reports emerging detailing U.S. awareness of a wind shift prior to the Bravo detonation and Marshallese grievances about the scientists examining them following their irradiation. In 1972, the Congress of Micronesia reproduced a report, entitled "Radioactive Fallout and It's Effects on Man," to inform an additional report on Rongelap and Utirik that included a pre-detonation weather assessment. The assessment identified U.S. awareness of upper winds moving towards the inhabited atolls. Additional reports and articles began emerging during the 1970s and 1980s alleging on one end of the spectrum incompetence and neglect for Marshallese health and welfare. The other spectral end echoed Balos' tone in accusing the U.S. of intentional human experimentation with Marshallese as guinea pigs. During the early

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> "Radioactive Fallout and It's Effect on Man." Reproduced in the 1972 Congress of Micronesia Report on Rongelap and Utirik, appearing in the June 26, 1981 issue of the *Marshall Islands Journal*.

came out revealing more information about long-term consequences. Some of these reports came from Brookhaven National Laboratory whose scientists had been visiting the Marshall Islands since 1954 to study the impact of Bravo radiation on Marshallese exposed. A 1976 Brookhaven report indicated that 69 percent of the Rongelap children who were under the age of 10 when exposed had developed thyroid tumors. By 1980, Brookhaven's "Review of Medical Findings in a Marshallese population 26-Years After Accidental Exposure to Radioactive Fallout" showed that 66 percent of the children on Rongelap and Ailinginae under age 10 at detonation time had developed thyroid tumors. For both of these islands, 34 percent of the entire populations had developed thyroid tumors, with Brookhaven's control group showing a 6 percent thyroid tumor rate. By these reports and the second second

Victim interviews and testimonies marking the legacy of health problems plaguing Marshallese, Americans and Japanese exposed to radioactive fallout appeared in increasing numbers of articles and reports during the early 1980s. These stories captured headlines alongside articles deploring conditions on Ebeye and the ensuing Marshallese sail-in protests. Many articles and reports revealed new findings suggesting U.S. awareness of the wind change that blew radiation over the inhabited islands prior to detonation. These articles and reports also accused the U.S. military and government of offering inadequate medical attention to those suffering from radiation after the fallout. Journalist Giff Johnson discussed the history of Bravo and included interviews with the exposed U.S. weathermen in the June 26, 1981 issue of the *Marshall Islands Journal*. Johnson's article also included statements from Dr. Robert Conard, head of the Atomic Energy Commission between 1954 and 1978. Conard had published a 22-year

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Johnson, Nuclear Past, 18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Ibid, 20.

retrospective report in which he stated, "An unpredicted shift in winds caused deposition of significant amounts of fallout on four inhabited atolls to the east of Bikini." <sup>29</sup>

The U.S. weathermen appearing in Johnson's article refuted Atomic Energy Commission claims of the military being unaware of shifting winds prior to detonation. Two U.S. weathermen exposed on Rongerik pointed out the military command knew about winds blowing towards the inhabited atolls and decided to detonate the hydrogen bomb despite this warning. Arriving on Rongerik six weeks prior to the detonation, serviceman Gene Curbow stated he and his fellow weatherman worked with normal weather station tools giving them the capability to make observations up to and including 100,000 feet above sea level. 30 Air Force Radio Operator Donald Baker said the job of the weathermen on Rongerik was to provide this weather information to ensure conditions were absolutely right before any atomic weapon exploded.<sup>31</sup> Curbow added that despite their reports communicating that winds threatened to blow radioactive fallout onto the inhabited islands east of Bikini, the Bravo test went ahead on schedule. Curbow concluded, "Whether as many Marshall Islands people think, the U.S. intended to use the Marshallese as guinea pigs in their nuclear experiments, or the U.S. simply had no concern for the lives and health of either the Marshallese or their own military people, the well being of these people on the endangered islands was clearly a low priority."<sup>32</sup>

Curbow's statement in the *Marshall Islands Journal* hinted to the fact that many irradiated Marshallese victims perceived their exposure as intentional and the study of their suffering as comparable to that of guinea pigs in a U.S. laboratory. An article

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Giff Johnson, "Rongelap not accident: ejab juon jidrilok," in the *Marshall Islands Journal*. June 26, 1981. Pp. 13.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

appearing in Michigan's *The Herald-Palladium* a few years later also attested to this reality. On February 18, 1984, the article "Marshall Islanders N-Test 'Guinea Pigs'?," covered a local presentation made by journalist Giff Johnson and his wife, Darlene Keju-Johnson. At the time of the article, Keju-Johnson had several tumors she believed developed through exposure to nuclear radiation as a child.<sup>33</sup> Keiu-Johnson grew up on Ebeye and became one of the youngest voices of rupture to U.S. narratives of Kwajalein when as a four-year old child she was documented as asking who owned Kwajalein. A Marshallese individual responding to her question answered, "We do," to which Keju-Johnson replied, "Then why can't we go there?"<sup>34</sup>

Johnson and Keju-Johnson arrived at the Lake Michigan College Community Center in Michigan while touring the United States to raise awareness about the nuclear testing impact in the Marshall Islands. Staff writer Steve Pepple documented their talk on radiation exposure and particularly the effects of radioactive fallout on Marshallese women. In addition to disproportionately high rates of thyroid cancer reported among the Marshallese exposed, many women experienced increased miscarriages and birth deformities among those babies making it to term.<sup>35</sup> Pepple noted that "Mrs. Keju-Johnson said there are a lot of stillbirths and incidents of 'mutant babies' being born. She said women have had what the islanders called 'jellyfish babies' with no arms, legs or eyes." Keju-Johnson also recounted hair loss, skin burns, and poisoning of fish and plants throughout the region that followed the detonation. She stated, "We believe these

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Jack Swanson, "Islander Arrives to Protest U.S. Nuclear Missile Tests," in the Seattle Post Intelligencer. January 8, 1983, Keju-Johnson since the time of this accusation passed away from breast cancer in 1996.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Giff Johnson tribute to Darlene Keju Johnson at http://www.yokwe.net/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Steve Pepple, "Marshall Islanders N-Test 'Guinea Pigs?," in *The Herald Palladium*. February 18, 1984. Pp. 28. 36 Ibid.

the testing."<sup>37</sup> Johnson and Keju-Johnson also discussed their suspicion of the U.S. government's sincerity in wanting to address the catastrophe because of the inadequate medical care offered to those exposed. Both claimed the U.S. government provided limited medical assistance through a program aimed more at researching the impact of radiation than offering adequate treatment. They stated the Marshallese needed doctors and nurses independent from the U.S. government. Keju-Johnson asserted that in observing the medical researchers in the region she believed, "'they're using us as guinea pigs...They're coming there to experiment on human beings."<sup>38</sup>

Keju-Johnson's identification of the scientists studying radiation victims as seeming less concerned about providing adequate medical care echoed a testimonial given by Dr. Konrad Kotrady seven years earlier. In a 1977 report on his experience with Marshallese patients, Kotrady detailed the incompetence of work carried out by his sponsoring institution, the Brookhaven Institute. Giff Johnson detailed Kotrady's report in his 2010 *Nuclear Past, Unclear Future*. Johnson wrote that in 1977, Kotrady explained how the U.S. government's contention that low doses of radiation remained safe was not only wrong but had prevented the laboratory from providing health care to all populations exposed. Kotrady discussed one of these populations in the report. He wrote that on Utirik, "'For twenty-two years, the (Utirik) people have heard Dr. (Robert) Conard (head of the Brookhaven medical program) and other doctors tell them not to worry, that the dose of radiation received at the island was too low to cause any harmful effects. Hence, the program examined the Utirik people in detail only once every three years, no control

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

group was established, and the people received only minimal compensation."<sup>39</sup> Kotrady added that within the previous year the low-dose theory proved inaccurate. The scientists thus discovered medical impacts attributable to radiation on Utirik with comparable thyroid cancer rates to those found on Rongelap. Kotrady added, "The people ask if this thyroid problem has suddenly occurred, is it not possible that the experts have been wrong for so many years and that more problems will occur in the future?" 40 Johnson detailed how even though Kotrady's report detailed Brookhaven's dangerous incompetence in 1977, the institute continued to control the medical program responsible for assisting Marshallese victims on Rongelap and Utrik for another 21 years. Despite continued complaints from Marshallese radiation victims dealing with Brookhaven, the institute's 43-year tenure in controlling their medical care would not cease until 1998.<sup>41</sup>

Concerns arising during the 1970s and 1980s about long-term impacts from radiation exposure headlined alongside information surfacing about the premature resettlement of displaced Bikinians back to their home island. As discussed in chapter two, the navy first displaced the Bikinians in 1946 at the start of the nuclear testing campaign. Many ended up on Kili island, while others resettled on Majuro and Ebeye. For more than two decades following their displacement, Bikinians continuously voiced their desire to return home. In 1968, the U.S. government resettled Bikinians back on their home island after carrying out an extensive cleanup program to ensure the island no longer posed any risk of radioactive exposure. Bikinans moved home during the early 1970s. But as Giff Johnson detailed in *Nuclear Past*, *Unclear Future*, despite reports

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Johnson, *Nuclear Past*, 4. <sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Ibid, 3.

beginning in 1973 indicating that Bikinians were absorbing increasingly high doses of radiation, the U.S. did not remove them again until late in 1978.<sup>42</sup>

U.S. failure to competently monitor the levels of radioactive exposure on Bikini aligned closely with the lack of oversight and inadequate medical care for Marshallese exposed during the Bravo detonation. Both cases of negligence exemplified the tremendous gap between military and government resources and attention invested in the tests compared with their approach to taking responsibility for the tests' repercussions. The U.S. limited research efforts and medical attention to Marshallese exposed on Rongelap and Utirik and denied any impact on several other nearby islands also contaminated by fallout. More than twenty years after the Bravo detonation, a 1978 Department of Energy report indicated 10 other atolls impacted with 1,400 more Marshallese individuals contaminated. 43 U.S. medical neglect also extended beyond those Marshallese impacted by radiation. The 1981 Marshall Islands Journal article cited above also detailed how the U.S. failed to offer adequate medical attention to the U.S. weathermen exposed. One of these men, Gene Curbow, claimed that aside from his initial examination in 1954 he received no treatment or compensation for health problems emerging since the test.<sup>44</sup>

Similar to media coverage of Ebeye's struggles and the ensuing sail-in protests, articles investigating the long-term impact of nuclear testing in the Marshalls reached global audiences. One article appeared during the early 1980s detailing the impact of nuclear testing alongside the history of deteriorating conditions on Ebeye and the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Giff Johnson, "Rongelap not accident: ejab juon jidrilok," in the *Marshall Islands Journal*. June 26, 1981. Pp. 13.

Marshallese ensuing protests. The article spoke to an audience quite familiar with the history of U.S. atomic weaponry. The June/July 1982 issue of the Japanese newsletter Han-Genpatsu News, No Nuke News Japan featured an interview with Nelson Anjain, one of the Marshallese individuals living on Rongelap during the Bravo detonation. Interviewer and Editor Arakawa Syunji described Anjain's radiation exposure alongside the experience of the exposed Japanese fishermen on the Daigo-Fukuryu-maru, the Lucky Dragon fishing boat. 45 In his interview, Anjain explained how Marshallese were dying from leukemia, a disease they never knew before. Anjain stated he found it useless to talk to the Americans about these sicknesses as they tended to dismiss his concerns, telling him it was natural to get sick. He contended, "But, you see, the kinds of disease we have are not natural. We saw a baby born with no mouth, no head. Another baby came out in a fruit-like shape."<sup>46</sup> Anjain described how he used to work with an American scientist who told him the poison in the atoll would only increase. He recalled the man saying, "'You may not see the effect now, but you'll see it in the children of your children. You'll see the babies born with no heads, no hands." Anjain added, "His words came true." 48 Anjain continued on in the interview to detail how the Americans told the islanders their home was safe but when the doctors came to examine them they conducted their exams from boats. He said he suspected they would not stay on the island with the Marshallese because they knew it was dangerous.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Arakawa Syunji, "Report from the Marshall Islands: The Number of 'Hibakusha' is Growing (an Interview with Mr. Nelson Anjain)," in *Han-Genpatsu News*, *No Nuke News Japan*. June/July 1982. Located in the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau 1172, Giff Johnson Marshall Islands Resource Materials. <sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Ibid.

Similar to Keju-Johnson, Anjain believed the U.S. intentionally radiated the Marshallese and noted his experience with U.S. doctors influenced his perception. He told Syunji, "I have a suspicion that those American doctors come to us not to care but to examine us. They want to know how we are effected by the radiation...I wonder if they would have done the same thing if this place was in America. I think they know radiation was actually not safe." Anjain contextualized his suspicions further by telling a story of working on Roi Namur just prior to the Bravo test. While there, he watched as Americans sent a pilot plane to examine Bikini after they had detonated a bomb. The plane carried pigs, dogs and chickens. When the plane came back, those on Roi-Namur were told not to go near it and those scientists approaching the plane did so wearing gas masks. He noted this happened three months prior to the Bravo detonation. Anjain added, "Maybe I am bad to think this way, but, I have the suspicion that the real reason why they have done this test is to examine the effect of radiation on people."

This section has examined a range of discourse emerging from Marshallese victims, American doctors, scientists and journalists centered on suspicion that the U.S. intentionally radiated Marshallese through the Bravo detonation in 1954. This allegation continues to be debated today among those victimized by and familiar with this history. This section in part attempted to reveal the depth of pain connected to such suspicions of intentional violence in the region that emerged alongside charges of U.S. apathy towards Marshallese health and well being on Ebeye. The following section explores how these accusations continued through the 1980s culminating in one of the most compelling and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

comprehensive accounts of the Bravo detonation through the 1986 documentary film *Half Life*.

# Considering *Half Life* in the Marshall Islands: Marshallese and American Responses

Following several years of media attention and public statements from Marshallese political leaders and radiation victims, the most comprehensive and emotive accusation of U.S. intentionality in irradiating Marshallese surfaced in the 1986 documentary film, Half Life: A parable for the nuclear age. Australian director and producer Dennis O'Rourke released the award winning film in the Marshall Islands during the same year as the emerging nation's vote on its future political status with the United States. The film examined the Bravo detonation, the radioactive fallout aftermath and the history of U.S. medical examination and study thereafter. Through circumstantial evidence, the film suggested the U.S. knew radiation would fall on Rongelap and Utirik, failed to evacuate the islands' communities ahead of time and immediately after the detonation, and spent years gaining scientific information from the intentional exposure. O'Rourke relied on archival footage of the detonation and his own interviews with the American weatherman exposed as well as U.S. scientists and Marshallese victims of radiation. Because the film gained such an enthusiastic reception in the Marshall Islands and received international attention while garnering critique from U.S. officials connected to Bravo it is worth exploring in depth before examining the film's impact. The film is a richly layered text capturing an array of voices and experiences connected to

Bravo not found in any other comparable text I have encountered. Thus, analysis of the film's narratives and the film's reception will largely comprise the rest of this chapter.

Half Life's persuasive argument of U.S. intentionality in exposing Marshallese individuals to radiation for human experimentation emerged through the power of the film's contemporary interviews and U.S. official statements contained in archival footage. The film began by tracing the U.S. decision to detonate Bravo in 1954 following Soviet success in proving its possession of the hydrogen bomb. Early in the film, O'Rourke included interviews with several of the U.S. weatherman discussing their task on Rongerik in communicating wind patterns prior to the detonation. Attesting to the continued pervasive influence of Cold War paranoia, weatherman Gene Curbow prefaced his statements by attempting to prove his U.S. loyalty. Curbow presumably anticipated his critique of U.S. practices could mark him a Communist sympathizer and began his interview by pointing out his U.S. affiliations. He opened his wallet for O'Rourke and thumbed through several membership cards, including the Veterans of Foreign Wars, National Association of Atomic Veterans, American Legion, National Association of Radiation Survivors, Disabled American Veterans, National Rifle Association and the Moral Majority. He concluded this exercise by stating, "I'm about as American as Apple Pie and Motherhood."<sup>51</sup>

Throughout the film, O'Rourke employed Curbow and the other weathermen as among the strongest evidence pointing to U.S. intentionality in exposing Marshallese to radioactive fallout. Their testimonies remained the most compelling because these individuals observed and communicated the wind patterns to those U.S. officials deciding to detonate Bravo and attested to the fact that their warnings went unheeded. In *Half Life*,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Half life: a parable for the nuclear age. (Documentary film) Directed by Dennis O'Rourke. 1986.

radio operator and weatherman Don Baker, who worked on Rongerik Atoll, challenged the official narrative that winds shifted after detonation. He noted that U.S. official Lewis Strauss indicated the detonation was followed by a sudden wind shift in the easterly direction, but said he did not believe this. He stated, "It is my firm belief that the wind was already blowing in the easterly direction and that they intended to use Marshallese natives as guinea pigs."<sup>52</sup> He explained that the controlled environment supporting people who intended to live there indefinitely offered an ideal space within which to evaluate the short- and long-term impacts of radiation.<sup>53</sup>

The weathermen in the film further complicated the official U.S. narrative of accidental harm to the Marshallese by questioning U.S. failure to immediately evacuate the irradiated Marshallese following the detonation. O'Rourke contextualized their interviews with text detailing how naval ships stationed at Rongelap to measure radioactivity could have easily rescued exposed Marshallese right away but the ships were ordered to sail away. 54 One of the unnamed weatherman interviewed reflected that he found it, "a fascinating situation to think about years later...certain movements of certain ships in the immediate area of Rongelap on the night of March 1...and any of these ships would've been more than capable to pick up and evacuate the natives off Rongelap."<sup>55</sup> He added the U.S.S. Gypsy passed right by Rongelap and Rongerik on the night of the detonation and could have easily helped the people. 56 The weatherman continued on in his interview to pull out a map showing the radioactive impact patterns on Rongelap and Utirik. He explained this map had been produced ten minutes after the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Ibid.

Bravo detonation to show fallout patterns over Rongelap and Rongerik. He emphasized that in order for these patterns to have been made up so quickly a model needed to exist in the computer ahead of time in which the raw data could be fed to illustrate the fallout patterns. He concluded this map fully indicated the U.S. government knew the day and night before detonation that wind patterns would blow radiation directly over these nearby inhabited islands.<sup>57</sup>

As the film progressed, several more interviewees and testimonies directly alleged the U.S. of engaging in human experimentation and intentional harm towards the Marshallese. Weatherman Lamont Noley discussed his initial skepticism in believing the U.S. capable of such a horrific crime, but continued on to charge just that. He stated, "It would be just difficult for me to even consider the idea that they would do it, you know...deliberately. But from what information you know...you're not left with a whole lot of choice to base your opinion on. You can only come to one conclusion."<sup>58</sup> Noley continued on to explain why he found the accident explanation unbelievable. He claimed "there was no way that they could not have been aware of the prevailing winds there...because we had been there for months, you know. And they had, no doubt, had records from previous operations out there."<sup>59</sup> The unnamed weatherman who had discussed the radiation maps earlier in the film added, "They knew what the fallout patterns would be, they knew where the radioactive fallout was gonna go. And they took that risk and went ahead and detonated the bomb knowing full well which way it was gonna go."60 He continued on to emphasize the U.S. still had the opportunity to evacuate

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

the Marshallese the day of the detonation but did not. He concluded, "it only leads one to believe that number one, the United States needed some guinea pigs to study what the effects of radiation would do."61

Driving the crux of the accusations of intentionality home within a legal framework, O'Rourke featured lawyer for Marshallese radiation victims Jonathan Weisgall's testimony against the United States. In 1994 Weisgall would publish a historic account of U.S. nuclear testing in the region in his *Operation Crossroads: That Atomic* Tests at Bikini Atoll. Half Life featured Weisgall arguing the case of U.S. intentional radiation in court. He asserted, "the *crime* of Bravo and I do not use that term lightly, is that the United States government knew in advance of the shot that the winds were headed in the wrong direction. The explanation of the unpredicted wind shift is a lie."<sup>62</sup> Weisgall continued on to quote recently released Defense Nuclear Agency documents on the Bravo detonation detailing the weather briefings prior to detonation. He noted, the weather briefing at 11 a.m. the day before the shot predicted no significant fallout for the inhabited islands, but by 6 p.m. indicated winds less favorable. Weisgall added that despite this evidence, the decision to detonate was reaffirmed with the caveat that another wind report would be scheduled for midnight. He said the midnight briefing showed less favorable winds at the 10,000 to 25,000 foot levels with winds at 20,000 feet headed for Rongelap to the east. Weisgall emphasized the Defense Nuclear Agency documents stated their recognition that both Bikini and Enamon islands in Bikini Atoll would likely be contaminated. Weisgall concluded that the "United States detonated the Bravo Shot

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Ibid.

with full knowledge that it would be contaminating lands and people entrusted to its care by the United Nations."<sup>63</sup>

In addition to employing the weatherman's and Weisgall's statements on U.S. intentionality, O'Rourke infused the film with archival footage following American government official statements downplaying radioactive impact in the region. O'Rourke included a televised statement from the U.S. Representative to the United Nations in 1954 immediately following the detonation assuring the U.N. that all Marshallese and Americans exposed to radiation regained full health with no casualties, no serious injury and no destruction of homes. The film showed the representative asserting that the U.S. could not conduct these important tests with less danger any other place in the world, echoing the "sparsely populated" dehumanizing logic. Revealing the period's pervasive Cold War McCarthyist context, the film also showcased the representative arguing that anyone opposing this mission to prevent Soviets from overrunning the free world must be currying favor with the Communists.<sup>64</sup>

The U.N. representative's 1954 reassurance of Marshallese health and well being preceded several clips of archival footage in *Half Life* showing both the immediate medical examinations of sick Marshallese as well as years of studies thereafter. O'Rourke included footage of informational pamphlets given to Marshallese on Rongelap to help explain the different levels of radiation and presumed risks of exposure. The viewer watches as Marshallese families sit together attempting to make sense of pamphlets written in English about radiation. One mother whose son died of cancer described the burns she experienced following the test and noted how she felt problems in her body but

63 Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

did not know the medical terms to explain these. She stated that "in [her] life [she had] no way of understanding this thing called radiation."65 Later the viewer watches the same woman reading a pamphlet presumably given to her by the American doctors that described people with cancer in the Marshall Islands as no different from people with cancer in other parts of the world. The pamphlet read, "When a cancer occurs in a person no one can tell if the cancer came from radiation or not."66

O'Rourke paired scenes of Marshallese reading information about radiation and cancer alongside text describing the continued exposure of Marshallese to radioactive conditions following the 1954 detonation. The text noted the U.S. sent the Utirik people back to their home island within three months of the detonation. At home, the Utirikese consumed radioactive food and poisoned water and the amount of radiation in their bodies increased rapidly. The Rongelapese returned after 3 years. <sup>67</sup> O'Rourke paired this information next to a quote from the Atomic Energy Commission stating, "The habitation of these people on the island will afford most valuable ecological radiation data on human beings."<sup>68</sup> O'Rourke's text also noted that every year since the 1954 detonation Atomic Energy Commission scientists came to study the irradiated people assuring them their atolls were safe.

The role of the scientist remained dominant in *Half Life* and among the most revealing of the film's sequences centered on archival footage of the Atomic Energy Argone National Laboratory in Chicago. In what appeared to be an infomercial for medical research carried out at the laboratory, a 1950s black and white image of the

<sup>65</sup> Ibid

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ihid

facilities appeared on screen accompanied by a generic narrative voice. This voice would take the viewer on a virtual tour of the facilities and laboratory activities. The laboratory image quickly shifted focus to seven smiling faces of young Marshallese men identified by the narrator as having just arrived for examination. Helping situate the seven men, the narrator explained these natives of the Marshall Islands, "are fishing people; savages by our standards."69 The camera next honed in on one of the Marshallese men identified as "John" who the narrator described as the mayor of Rongelap. After informing that John already bathed and discarded his clothing for a special white suit, the narrator continued to remind viewers that "John, as we said, is a savage; but a happy amenable savage." <sup>70</sup> The narrator continued to note that John's "grandfather ran almost naked on his coral atoll. The white man brought money and religion and a market for his copra. John reads, knows about God and is a pretty good mayor." The narrator's description of John accompanied footage showing John enter an iron room identified as the radiation detector for human beings. As John sat in a chair in the room to begin his examination the narrator chronicled how "John, the mayor's" first trip to the "white man's country" came with the excitement of San Francisco's cable cars and Chicago's skyscrapers, prior to his entry into the iron room.<sup>72</sup>

Echoing 1950s anthropological approaches to prescribing "native ritual and tradition" the Argone laboratory narrator continued on to situate John's iron room as easily translatable into a broader context of ritual life. He noted, "A savage governs his life by rituals and he understands this [the iron room] because he thinks of it as a new

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Ibid.

Outside a strange kind of priest in a long white coat. A long, lonely wait inside, while outside a new ritual is completed."<sup>73</sup> The narrator went on to denote the collective experience of this "new ritual" by acknowledging that after John finished, the ritual began for the six others. As each finished, he added, they were given "apples and other good things to eat."<sup>74</sup> Marking their departure from this exciting trip abroad, the narrator traced how "the seven men put on the suits and top coats they had been lent in Hawai'i, which they would return in Hawai'i on their way back to the islands of Utirik and Majuro in Rongelap Atoll in the Marshall Islands, in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, where hardly anybody lives."<sup>75</sup> Among those paraded around the Argone Laboratory "John, the mayor" would remain in the spotlight years later as his son, Likoj Anjain, who was exposed to the Bravo Shot's radiation at the age of one, became the first documented leukemia victim of they hydrogen bomb. Likoj Anjain died from acute myelogenous leukemia in 1972.<sup>76</sup>

I incorporate *Half Life's* Argone Laboratory archival footage at length here because the narrator's statements about "savagery" and the perception of individuals returning to a space "where hardly anybody lives" encompass what many have argued as central to U.S. historic dehumanization of Marshallese. This dehumanization informed the decisions to test nuclear weapons in the Marshall Islands in 1946, just as the same dehumanization informed policies governing life on Kwajalein and Ebeye. Navy officials selected Bikini as a test site in 1946 largely because the location allowed for detonating weapons in a sparsely populated area in the same way army officials later selected

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Ibid. My emphasis added. Also, it is important to note here that Majuro is not an island and neither Majuro nor Utirik are located in Rongelap Atoll.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> Johnson, Nuclear Past, 17.

Kwajalein to launch missiles from Vandenberg Air Force Base without risking those missiles traveling over populated centers. In addition to racializing depictions of "savagery," the dehumanization of Marshallese has been very much rooted in a perception of the islands' inhabitants as too geographically remote and numerically insignificant to matter. As Historian David Hanlon has argued, this same dehumanizing perception carries across the broader Micronesian region and is encompassed in the colonial naming of the region through the Greek "Micronesia," meaning tiny islands. 77 Employing the late Pacific Scholar Epeli Hau'ofa insights on Pacific spatiality, Hanlon argued at a 2010 history workshop that the term Micronesia ignored the vastness of regional space comprising both land and oceanic networks. <sup>78</sup> In his famous "Our Sea of Islands" essay, Hau'ofa had characterized the Pacific Islanders' expansive connections across the vast ocean as freeing rather than confining.<sup>79</sup> Hau'ofa opposed the dehumanizing and belittling colonial frameworks that continued to mark islanders' homes as tiny places isolated and imprisoned by the vast distances of oceanic space between them. 80 Building upon this model, Hanlon noted that when measured through its vast expanse, Micronesia became comparable with the geographic size of the continental United States. 81 He further suggested that perhaps a more suitable name for the region would be "Macronesia."82

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> David Hanlon, "Harnessing a Rainbow: Tosiwo Nakayama, the FSM, and Macronesia," a presentation given on November 5, 2010 at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa's yearlong history workshop, entitled *De-Centering the Nation State: Historical Methodology within a Pacific Geography*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Hau'ofa, "Our Sea of Islands"

<sup>80</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>81</sup> Hanlon, David. "Harnessing a Rainbow: Tosiwo Nakayama, the FSM, and Macronesia," a presentation given on November 5, 2010 at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa's yearlong history workshop, entitled *De-Centering the Nation State: Historical Methodology within a Pacific Geography*.

Half Life concluded with some of the most powerful statements challenging this dehumanization voiced by Marshallese victims themselves. Throughout the film, O'Rourke focused on the experiences of irradiated Marshallese individuals suffering varied ailments ranging from thyroid cancer to leukemia and miscarriages. He also focused his camera on the pained movements of those children born with radiationcaused birth defects, some with disproportionately large heads unable to control the constant shifting of their eyes and continual rocking of their bodies. In several scenes O'Rourke returned to the accounts of two Marshallese parents who described losing their son to cancer. The mother explained to O'Rourke that the Americans took her son away when he was 19 after they learned he had radiation sickness. She said they took him to their "big American hospitals" and treated him as if he were an animal. 83 She acknowledged their exams seemed thorough, but also appeared comparable to the way one might treat a lab rat. She said, "they continuously punctured his body in the way you might cut up a chicken. He bled from the things they stuck into him."84 She continued with anger in her voice to describe how she witnessed this treatment with her own eyes and how seeing this tore at her heart and remained on her mind. She said, "I watched them treat him like a guinea pig....They destroyed my son, they used him like a worthless animal."85 O'Rourke gave the young man's mother some of the final words in the film, leaving viewers to reflect upon the history and continuity of U.S. dehumanization of Marshallese. The mother asked, "Don't Americans know that every life is precious? They are educated people. Do they really believe that one person's life is unimportant?"<sup>86</sup> She

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>83</sup> Half life: a parable for the nuclear age. (Documentary film) Directed by Dennis O' Rourke. 1986.
<sup>84</sup> Ihid

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

added she was not sure what went on in the minds of Americans. She said Americans seemed to think of themselves as smart, but she believed they were crazy. She concluded, "They are smart at doing stupid things."<sup>87</sup>

Constituting the first broadly distributed documentation of Marshallese voices expressing their pain, suffering, anger and belief that they bore the consequences of not simply an "accidental windshift" but an intended experiment, Half Life received widespread support upon its release in Majuro in 1986. An article appearing in the June 27, 1986 issue of the Marshall Islands Journal headlined "Half Life Back by Popular Demand." The story noted that since airing on local television in Majuro the week before, "the film apparently [had] been the talk of the town."88 The article indicated that based on demand, the film would show again the following week. 89 Prior to this double header showing, two articles appeared in the Marshall Islands Journal in anticipation of the film's premiere in Majuro, one on May 16 and another on June 13. Each article identified the movie as controversial. The May 16 article detailed *Half Life's* earlier reception in the United States, particularly among U.S. officials connected to the Bravo Shot. Headlining, "U.S. Officials Critical of Marshall's Movie's Message," the article noted the film received an award for extraordinary achievement at a January film festival in Park City, Utah. 90 The article detailed O'Rourke's challenge to the official U.S. narrative of the 1954 Bravo detonation. The article described how the film argued ample opportunity existed to evacuate Marshallese prior to the detonation and immediately after but the U.S. failed to do either. The article also cited the film's release the previous year in Melbourne and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>88</sup> "Half Life Back by Popular Demand," in the *Marshall Islands Journal*. June 27, 1986. Pp. 20B

<sup>90 &</sup>quot;U.S. Officials Critical of Marshall's Movie's Message," in the *Marshall Islands Journal*. May 16, 1986. Pp. 10.

thereafter at several international film festivals. The article noted as well that because distribution would not bring *Half Life* to Washington or other U.S. cities until the fall, few scientists or government officials had viewed the film.<sup>91</sup>

Among those few officials who had gotten a chance to see *Half Life*, a spokeswoman for the Defense Nuclear Agency that provided O' Rourke with some of his documents and archival footage shared her impressions. The Marshall Islands Journal cited the spokeswoman stating, "While we have found the film to be interesting and informative, we strongly disagree with the implication that the responsible government officials intended to engage in human experimentation." The article also captured the reaction of Herbert York, Director of the Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation in San Diego who had been a physicist directing the Livermore Laboratory during the Bravo detonation. While York was not among the scientists O'Rourke interviewed for *Half Life*, nor had he seen the film, he characterized O'Rourke's suggestion of intentional irradiation as "absurd" and "absolutely ridiculous."93 York discounted what he identified as the weathermen's "decades old memories" as well as the more recent conclusions about precautions the U.S. should have taken.<sup>94</sup> He explained that what they knew about winds at the time made U.S. officials feel detonation would be safe. York added he felt people did the best they could in determining the safety conditions. 95 Why the U.S. failed to immediately evacuate the irradiated islanders? York explained, "There was general stupefaction and surprise...it really took time for them to figure out what had

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>93</sup> Ibid, 10 and 13.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

happened."<sup>96</sup> He continued, "And even if they did figure out what happened, it took time for them to figure what to do about it. And I don't think there's anything more complicated or sinister about it...An individual might react quickly, but a bureaucracy never does."<sup>97</sup>

York's statements suggested that perhaps U.S. officials involved in the Bravo test may have been surprised by their incapacity to anticipate how this destructive technology would have moved beyond their control. One might assume this surprise and awareness of immediate irradiating consequences may have influenced those officials leading the nuclear testing program to proceed with caution. And yet, as documented by the Nuclear Claims Tribunal established in the Republic of the Marshall Islands in 1988, of the 67 nuclear tests the U.S. conducted in the Northern Marshall Islands between 1946 and 1958, 45 were detonated after Bravo, including two that exceeded 10 megatons. 98

The *Marshall Islands Journal* article cited O'Rourke acknowledging that York's excuses echoed many he had heard prior to making *Half Life*. He said these explanations initially convinced him the Marshallese must have been mistaken when they told him they believed they were intentionally used in these tests. O'Rourke explained in the article, "There's a lot of guilt floating around out there in people who were responsible for some of these things in the early years." He added that his film cites no particular document, nor did he believe one existed, that directly stated the Marshallese would become an object of study. He believed, however, that circumstantially the case was

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>98</sup> Taken from the Nuclear Claims Tribunal, Republic of the Marshall Islands website at http://www.nuclearclaimstribunal.com/testing.htm

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>99</sup> "U.S. Officials Critical of Marshall's Movie's Message," in the *Marshall Islands Journal*. May 16, 1986. Pp. 10.

clear. But he emphasized the words he continued to use to describe the history as: "Decisions were made which in the end resulted in great damage to these people--the death of these people." Following the May 16 article, the second Marshall Islands Journal story appeared a month later just prior to the film's release in Majuro and headlined "Controversial Film Airs Here Tuesday." The article identified O'Rourke as suggesting the U.S. deliberately exposed Marshallese to radiation and used them as guinea pigs to study the impact. 101 This article also acknowledged U.S. officials criticized this suggestion of intentionality. 102

Alongside countless articles and public statements made by Marshallese leaders and victims, the popularity of *Half Life* in Majuro suggested the degree to which the perception of U.S. intentional harm towards Marshallese had become widespread. This widespread belief that the U.S. deliberately used Marshallese as guinea pigs to study the impact of radiation on humans remains in place today. This chapter has argued for the importance of understanding this violent history of nuclear testing and the tragic legacy for Marshallese in any broader study of violence and rupture in the region. This history is important to bear in mind when considering chapter six's discussions of U.S. neglect towards Marshallese health and welfare on Ebeye and continues to remain relevant to chapter eight's analysis of military violence towards Marshallese protestors. The violences analyzed in both chapters occurred amidst this broader backdrop of the deeper historic violence of nuclear testing in the region.

### **Postscript: Consuming Bravo**

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>101</sup> "Controversial Film Airs Here Tuesday," in the *Marshall Islands Journal*. June 13, 1986. Pp. 15.

On November 15, 2010 the U.S. nuclear testing campaign grabbed media attention again, this time on Radio New Zealand International. The program indicated the United Nations agreed to investigate the impact of the entire U.S. nuclear testing campaign from 1946-1958. The U.N. adopted a resolution to produce a report by 2011 on the impact, expecting to focus on scientific questions, including safe exposure levels alongside the social and economic impact of the tests. 104

I traveled to the Marshall Islands during the same month the Radio New Zealand report came out and transited through the Majuro airport en route to Kwajalein. During my two trips through Majuro in 2010, I noticed two remarkable images adorning the wall of the airport bar. The first image to the far left was a framed black and white photograph of the Bravo detonation's massive mushroom cloud. The second framed image next to this photograph was split in half with one side also documenting Bravo's mushroom cloud. But this image was in color, with the red and orange fire incinerating through the explosion illuminated. Above this portion of the framed image read the text "Hangar Bar Special." Below the emblazoned mushroom cloud, text detailed the Hangar Bar as the place, "Where you can expect warm beer every time." The text continued, "We have a large range of drinks but probably not the one you're looking for! But heck, we've got BRAVO Shots!" The right side of the framed image listed the ingredients comprising the Bravo Shot: Cointreau, Kahlua and Baileys.

These images adorning the wall of the Hangar Bar in the Amata Kabua

International Airport in Majuro immediately brought to mind Pacific Scholar Teresia

Teaiwa's article on Bikini appearing in the 1994 issue of *The Contemporary Pacific*. In

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> "UN to Study Nuclear Test Effects in Marshalls: Report on impacts due next year," *Radio New Zealand International*. Wellington, New Zealand. November 15, 2010.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

"bikinis and other s/pacific n/oceans," Teaiwa traced the history of French designer Louis Reard's introduction and naming of his new two-piece swimsuit, the "bikini," following World War II during the start of the U.S. nuclear testing campaign on Bikini Atoll. Employing feminist theory, Teaiwa explored how this naming gendered and domesticated the horror of nuclear testing by commodifying the Bikinians' destroyed and contaminated homeland into a sexualized adornment for women. 105 Teaiwa's brilliant analysis of consumerism and Bikini came to mind as I thought about what it would mean to consume a "bravo shot" in the Marshall Islands capital. I wondered what people thought about as they drank this shot while looking at photographs of the mushroom cloud that rained radiation on Marshallese who continued to suffer the repercussions of that horror today. I wondered if some of those consumers included victims of this legacy. Consumers of the bravo shot have likely comprised a mix of Marshallese, Americans and individuals from other parts of the region and the globe transiting through the airport over time. Perhaps some, if not many individuals consumed this shot with deep ties to and awareness of the tragic history and drank with empathy and sadness for those continuing to suffer the consequences of this nuclear legacy. Undoubtedly others, if not many, consumed the shot with little to no awareness of the violent history underlying the naming of this beverage. These individuals may not have questioned how consumption of this drink potentially helped normalize or obscure that violent history and legacy by commodifying the suffering of so many Marshallese into an alcoholic beverage. I recognize that room for varied levels of individual interpretation concerning this bravo shot remain and thus have attached the images below to allow the reader an opportunity for continued analysis.

<sup>105</sup> Teaiwa, "bikinis and other s/pacific n/oceans"



Figure 50. Bravo shots at the Amata Kabua International Airport in Majuro. $^{106}$ 



Figure 51. Closeup on Bravo shot. 107

 $<sup>^{106}</sup>$  Photographed by Lauren Hirshberg in May 2010 in Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands.  $^{107}$  Ibid.

## Chapter Eight Marshallese Protests and Ruptures, U.S. Violent Reponses

### **Introducing Julian Riklon**

The disease, death and social disorientation accompanying Marshallese victims of nuclear radiation and exile discussed in chapter seven attested to the foundational violence of U.S. weapons testing in the Marshall Islands from which the story of Kwajalein and Ebeye emerged. Kwajalein's use as a support base during the nuclear testing campaign and Ebeye's role as a destination for displaced and irradiated Marshallese have remained central components of this history. As noted in chapter seven, in addition to Kili Island and the capital Majuro, many radiation victims and displaced Marshallese and their family members settled on Ebeye. Countless Marshallese on Ebeye have either experienced first hand the horrors of U.S. destruction of their lands and the legacy of contamination that followed or have been intimately connected to these victims. One descendent of such victims is Julian Riklon, who today works as the principal of Ebeye's public high school. Riklon was born on Kwajalein in 1946, the same year the U.S. began the nuclear testing campaign on Bikini. Riklon reminded me in our interview on Ebeye that he was born on Kwajalein because "that's where Marshallese people used to live." These "Marshallese people" included Riklon's family. One side of Julian's family came from Kwajalein and the other from Rongelap. He told me the U.S.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Oral history interview with Julian Riklon on May 17, 2010. Ebeye, Marshall Islands.

contaminated his home on Rongelap and because his other home, Kwajalein, remained a space where Marshallese could not live, he had nowhere else to go besides Ebeye.<sup>2</sup>



Figure 52. Julian Riklon.<sup>3</sup>

Riklon's life on Ebeye connects him to the destructive violence of the nuclear testing campaign discussed in chapter seven as well as the structural violence on Ebeye analyzed in chapter six. This chapter begins with a profile of Riklon because his experiences on Kwajalein and Ebeye during the 1980s have also become the most widely documented example of another level of U.S. violence this chapter explores: the violence against Marshallese during the sail-in protests on Kwajalein. While several Marshallese individuals experienced military and police brutality during these protests, Riklon's beatings received the widest media coverage and discussion among Trust Territory and military officials. His life and experiences connect all the themes of violence and rupture analyzed throughout this dissertation. Riklon's story is a lens into the history of U.S.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Photographed by Lauren Hirshberg in May 2010 on Ebeye, Republic of the Marshall Islands.

personal violence on Kwajalein and Ebeye that also reveals the backdrop of deeper histories of violence connected to weapons development in the Marshalls.

Riklon's story resided amidst the broader context of the sail-in protests. Chapter eight considers closely the question of why the U.S. responded with such disproportionate force and violence to the limited threat posed by these non-violent demonstrations. This chapter suggests part of the answer lies in how these sail-in protests created ruptures within the U.S. narrative of entitlement in the region. Previous chapters in this dissertation have attempted to show a process over time in which this Marshallese island came to be constructed, narrated and ultimately understood as American, possessed by the United States. Through Operation Homecoming a large group of unarmed Marshallese men, women and children arrived to Kwajalein to reclaim their home island and in so doing challenged the prerogative and sense of U.S. entitlement to a place guarded and protected by the most powerful military in the world. Operation Homecoming interrupted the U.S. missile-testing mission on Kwajalein. The protest incurred unexpected expenses for the military accompanying delays in missile testing that would ultimately be thrown back to the landowners to repay, but at the time undoubtedly frustrated those in charge of keeping the mission on track. Chapter eight explores these and other potential reasons why the U.S. approached the Marshallese protestors with such force and aggression. This chapter also examines how national and international media covered the protests and particularly how Kwajalein came to be framed within a broader narrative of the global campaign against nuclear arms development. Finally, chapter eight will explore some of the protests' implications for subsequent changing relationships between the United States and the Marshall Islands.

#### To Beat a Bible Translator: Why Julian Riklon was Attacked

This Marshallese man whose name would become associated in media headlines during the early 1980s with the disproportionately violent U.S. response to Kwajalein protests led much of his life by the book. Riklon grew up on Ebeye and traveled to Hawai'i and California for his education in religious studies, which was sponsored by American missionaries on Kwajalein. Following graduation from college, Riklon returned to Ebeye and reconnected with the missionaries who funded his education, working with them for the next seventeen years translating the bible into Marshallese. Reflecting upon the benefits of his religious faith, Riklon told me he found himself in a state of confusion when he thought about the U.S. weapons testing in his home islands. He explained the American missionaries brought him faith and gave him opportunities for an education, but other Americans had such a destructive impact on his life. He added, "I am just sad...that the Americans brought the word of God for us to love one another and then used my islands for testing weapons to kill other people." Aiklon shared his concerns as well in Adam Horowitz's 1991 documentary film, Home on the Range, where he discussed the impact nuclear testing had on his family's and his own personal health. Riklon said his grandmother and brother were exposed to radiation on Rongelap and passed away since, his brother from cancer. His mother also developed thyroid cancer.

Riklon shared his impression on why the U.S. exposed his family to radiation, echoing other Marshallese suspicions of intentionality discussed in chapter seven. Riklon stated he understood that reports indicated the Americans had knowledge of nuclear

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Oral history interview with Julian Riklon on May 17, 2010. Ebeye, Marshall Islands.

testing consequences when they decided to detonate the bomb. Riklon added these reports suggested the U.S. wanted to use the Marshallese people in their experiments "to find out how poisonous are the poisons and what effect these poisons had on human beings." He continued on to discuss how this possibility burdened him greatly and proved to him that the U.S. government at times carried out evil practices that he assumed the U.S. public knew nothing about. He added he hoped the American public realized their government was both bad and good. He shared these thoughts, stating, "because I have seen all of this and I know my entire life will be effected. My home island of Rongelap has been devastated by radiation. Today they are using Kwajalein Atoll my other home island as their missile test site and it's very hard for me to imagine because land is so very important here in the Marshall Islands." He added that by the U.S. coming to the Marshalls to conduct experiments they left him with nowhere else to go and he wished the American people would realize the importance of these islands to the Marshallese people. He concluded by emphasizing the long-term impact of U.S. policies, noting "For my children, and their children, and their children's children, the life they will face is something I can not bare to think about."<sup>5</sup>

Riklon's statements appearing in *Home on the Range* accompanied the film's footage documenting the sail-in protests of which Riklon played a major role. After bible translating for several years Riklon became secretary for the Kwajalein Atoll Corporation (KAC), the organization of Kwajalein landowners that would lead Operation Homecoming. The sail-in represented the largest protest in Marshallese history, with 1,000 Marshallese reoccupying their home islands in Kwajalein Atoll between June and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Interview with Julian Riklon appearing in the 1991 documentary film *Home on the range*. Produced and directed by Adam Horowitz.

October 1982. On the first day of Operation Homecoming, Riklon would find himself at the hands of Kwajalein police guards who beat him unconscious. Riklon recounted this experience during our May 2010 interview on Ebeye. He recalled that in June he sailed to Kwajalein Island with hundreds of Marshallese, primarily women and children. He identified the impetus for Operation Homecoming as the culmination of years of Marshallese struggles to survive unbearable living conditions. He described Ebeye's hospital at the time as inadequate and the scarcity of housing on the island alongside Mid-Corridor islander grievances concerning their displacement fueled the protest. These grievances and others prompted hundreds and hundreds of Marshallese, including Mid-Corridor islanders to reoccupy several of their home islands throughout Kwajalein Atoll. Riklon noted that many Marshallese, especially the older people, had never wanted to live on Ebeye and lost their freedom to make that choice when the U.S. removed them from their islands to make way for missile testing. He concluded the sail-ins answered a need for countless Marshallese who simply wanted to be on their own lands, to fish and gather coconuts, to raise food and to collect indigenous medicines.

After Riklon arrived to Kwajalein's Hamilton Beach he tried to make contact with the other KAC leaders landing at Emon Beach on a different section of the island. Riklon recalled that he received word via walkie talkie that several KAC leaders had been arrested at Emon Beach and were being held at the Kwajalein jail. Riklon and about two hundred other Marshallese, primarily women and children, who were camping out on Kwajalein marched to the jailhouse to protest the imprisonment of thirteen of their

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Knudsen, Greg. "Islanders Return to Ebeye as Agreement Ends Protest," in *Pacific Magazine*. November/December 1982.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Oral history interview with Julian Riklon on May 17, 2010. Ebeye, Marshall Islands.

leaders. 8 Arriving at the jailhouse, Riklon observed several women trying to communicate in Marshallese with the Kwajalein policemen who did not understand. Riklon, fluent in both Marshallese and English, approached the group and began translating on their behalf. Following Riklon's attempt to interject himself and breach the communication barrier, he said the Kwajalein police chief arrived and told the other policemen to arrest him. According to Riklon, the policemen quickly grabbed him in an attempt to drag him towards the jailhouse. As the policemen began to pull him in the direction of the jailhouse, several Marshallese women grabbed the other half of him and pulled in the opposite direction. At this point in our interview, Riklon chuckled slightly and stated he was convinced this was the end for him. The policemen's hold on Riklon increasingly choked his breathing passage and the Marshallese women finally released, at which point the police dragged Riklon to the jailhouse. It was here, Riklon said, they beat him. He recalled, "They were really mad I guess, and they were happy that nobody was looking or nobody was trying to save me." The policemen knocked Riklon unconscious and he added, with another chuckle, that he "saw stars." Riklon remained on the floor and after a short while heard the Marshallese women and children crying and throwing rocks at the jailhouse. He stated the policemen released Riklon indicating they hoped this would calm the commotion. During our interview, I asked Riklon why he thought the police responded to him with such anger and violence if he was simply trying to translate

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Ibid. And Giff Johnson, "Atoll protestors 'occupy' missile sites," from Pacific News Service appearing in the *National Catholic Reporter*. August 27, 1982.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Ibid. It is not entirely clear if the Kwajalein security policemen who knocked Julian unconscious were Americans or other Micronesians. During our interview I assumed these were Americans when Julian said they could not understand Marshallese and because it seemed that over the years the Kwajalein security police largely comprised American employees. It seems very likely these were American security policemen.

for the women and the policemen. He responded again with a chuckle, "Oh, I don't really know. They think that we were stealing something important from them. But it was really they were stealing something important from us."<sup>12</sup>

I include such detail surrounding Riklon's beating here not because he represents the sole Marshallese attacked during these protests, but his story constitutes the only documented beating during Operation Homecoming. While I have been unable to access documentation on other Marshallese individuals attacked by the Kwajalein military and police responders, an anonymous source recently informed me about extensive photographic evidence substantiating the fact that Riklon's beating was not an isolated incident. Many years after the sail-ins, this source gained access to boxes on Kwajalein of photographs taken during Operation Homecoming. The source described these materials as having documented brutality against several Marshallese involved in the protests. The source also noted the images even included pictures of children with accompanying labels marking them as potential future spies. 13 While the army has not released any information documenting these additional beatings, several media publications and U.S. and military correspondence covered Riklon's attack. Riklon's beating thus became part of the public narrative of Operation Homecoming. His attack offers one artery into the heart of the sail-ins and an important text for analyzing the multiple ways in which this violence was narrated by U.S. and Marshallese sources, as well as other international readings of the protests.

## **Brief Political Context of Operation Homecoming**

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Anonymous source.

To better understand the context in which Riklon's beating and the broader sail-in protests took place, this chapter first briefly considers the changing political climate in the Marshall Islands informing these events. While chapter nine will examine the role of Kwajalein in the broader history of Marshallese political negotiations, this next section offers a brief analysis of some of the immediate political and economic concerns prompting the sail-ins. The two protests analyzed in this chapter erupted amidst a changing political climate, with Operation Homecoming occurring in 1982 prior to the emergence of the new Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI). The second protest occurred in 1986, the same year the RMI officially took power. This changing political context is significant when tracing the varied forms of violence against Marshallese protestors as the degree of violence increased over time and moved from the hands of U.S. colonial military leaders to the supposed "postcolonial" Marshallese government.

In addition to grievances about unjust lease compensation for Kwajalein landowners and the island's segregation policies excluding Ebeye residents, a broader climate of political change preceded and informed Operation Homecoming. In 1979, while still under Trust Territory administration, the Marshallese elected their first president Iroij (Chief) Amata Kabua, who would lead the new Marshall Islands government operating alongside the continued Trust Territory infrastructure. The Marshall Islands government organized to hasten the transition from Trust Territory district to decolonized nation status that would arrive in 1986 with the demise of the Trust administration in the Marshall Islands. <sup>14</sup> During this governmental interim period, Kwajalein played a central role as a bargaining chip for Marshallese leaders negotiating a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> The other territories under the Trust Territory Pacific Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia (including Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae and Yap) decolonized in 1986 and Palau in 1994.

new political relationship to the United States. Compensation for Kwajalein's continued use remained a contentious issue particularly for Kwajalein landowners, many of whom expressed concern that their voices and land rights went unacknowledged during the negotiations. The shift in political and legal authority in the Marshall Islands changed how the U.S. negotiated continued usage rights for Kwajalein. If before, the Trust Territory administration acted as an intermediary between the U.S. military and Kwajalein landowners to negotiate leases through the threat of eminent domain, the emerging political transformation meant the U.S. army now negotiated leases directly with the Marshall Islands government, cutting out landowner input. With pressure to bring Marshallese concerns into the land leasing process now appeared by the Marshallese governmental role, the U.S. obligation to include Kwajalein landowners in this process fell by the wayside. Also continuing to fall by the wayside remained the promises written into the original 1964 Kwajalein lease that included a commitment to improve the social and economic conditions on Ebeye. While the U.S. never fulfilled these promises to Ebeye, Kwajalein's landowners identified the issue of Ebeye as among their primary concerns during their protests.

Given this context, landowner protests ensued during the 1970s and 1980s coinciding with the timing around new long-term and interim land use agreement signings and plebiscite votes on the Compact of Free Association. Each of these political and economic negotiations between the Marshallese government and the United States directly impacted landowner rights and lease compensation and also determined whether compensation for Kwajalein would include the long-neglected support for economic and social improvements on Ebeye. As older lease agreements and extensions neared

expiration, landowners took to boats with their families to reoccupy their home islands leveraging their ability to inflict economic and political pressure on the U.S. by forcing, in some cases, the delay of expensive missile tests. During these sail-ins, landowners made monetary demands for continued use of their lands and advocated for inclusion of new policies and laws to tear down the system of apartheid on Kwajalein and commit resources and energy towards improving life on Ebeye. Landowners demanded that Marshallese no longer be treated as second-class citizens in their own homes.

Historian David Hanlon offered further details on the specific negotiations and tensions immediately preceding Operation Homecoming his 1998 Remaking Micronesia: Discourses over Development in a Pacific Territory, 1944-1982. Hanlon explained that following protests during the late 1970s, the U.S. increased Kwajalein usage payments from several hundred thousand dollars per year to \$9 million with the caveat that this new compensation level would begin when the U.S. and the Marshall Islands signed the Compact of Free Association. 15 This negotiation sparked one land occupation in 1978 by about 500 landowners questioning why landowners had to wait until the end of negotiations to receive fair compensation for their lands. The 1978 protest influenced the U.S. to sign a one-year interim agreement compensating \$9 million for Kwajalein, with \$5 million going directly to the landowners and the balance earmarked for capital projects on Ebeye. 16 When the interim use agreement expired in 1980 and a second agreement was signed, the landowners again expressed concern through their newly formed organization, the Kwajalein Atoll Corporation (KAC). Under KAC, landowners demanded fair compensation for past use, from 1944 to 1979. The U.S. Ambassador Fred

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Hanlon, Remaking Micronesia, 210.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

Zeder responded by calling past use claims "a dead issue" and refused to negotiate any retroactive usage payments.<sup>17</sup> The newly formed Republic of the Marshall Islands traveled to Washington D.C. to sign another interim use agreement while KAC called for an atoll-wide referendum on continued use of Kwajalein for missile testing. In May 1982, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the United States signed the Compact of Free Association infuriating the KAC landowners as the Compact guaranteed the U.S. fifty years of Kwajalein usage. The KAC leaders identified this as too long and expressed concern that the new agreement did not specify how Compact monies would be distributed. The Compact also omitted any funding for capital improvement projects for Ebeye. Hanlon wrote the KAC landowners were also "bitterly disappointed that the document did not specify better, more respectful treatment of the Marshallese by the United States Army in its administration of the missile range."<sup>18</sup>

In his book, Hanlon explained how the U.S. and Marshallese government negotiations worked to divide or exacerbate existing divisions amidst Marshallese. He concluded this "would be one of the legacies of American colonialism in a postcolonial order that was really not postcolonial at all." These political and economic divisions would be widened as well by the transition of violence against Marshallese protestors in 1982 at the hands of the U.S. military to those of the Marshallese government by 1986. While the latter portion of this chapter will focus on those 1986 changes, this next section first closely considers the violence arising during Operation Homecoming.

## Military Narratives of Operation Homecoming: Erasing U.S. Violence

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Ibid. 211.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Ihid.

Within this broader political climate, KAC secretary Julian Riklon faced the Kwajalein police attack on the first day of Operation Homecoming. U.S. official narratives of the "Riklon incident" obscured any violence on the part of Kwajalein police. In fact, U.S. discourse on this incident remained consistent with how U.S. officials would describe their overall response to Operation Homecoming. According to U.S. official sources, those responding on Kwajalein to Marshallese protestors expressed fear and concern but also restraint, and avoided exerting any unnecessary violence or punitive measures. Army efforts to erase this violence from the official protest narrative suggested an awareness among military leaders that their power on Kwajalein remained partially checked by the opinions of those beyond the military establishment. Their attempt to control the narrative through their own discourse as well as policies to ban the media from the island hinted at their concerns about public scrutiny of their activities. Since the protests followed the media barrage accompanying the 1976 senate hearings, perhaps the bad taste of media exposure before national and global critics lingered on the palette of military leaders through Operation Homecoming. As this chapter will reveal, the media would continue challenging the army's sanitized versions of its activities on Kwajalein, offering counter-narratives of the Riklon encounter and other violent protest responses to local, national and international readers.

The earliest U.S. official narrative detailing the Riklon incident came through correspondence produced by the Trust Territory Chief Law Enforcement Officer, Bryan J. Vila. On July 21, 1982, about a month after the attack, Vila documented the events for the Kwajalein Missile Range [KMR] Commander identifying his letter subject as "18 June Incident at KMR Police Station." Vila offered a detailed recollection, noting he first

responded to a reported disturbance at the KMR police station on June 18, only to find a large crowd of Marshallese around the main station entrance.<sup>20</sup> He estimated the crowd comprised about 40 males aged 15 and above, 75 females aged 15 and above, 90 children of both sexes under age 15 and at least 20 infants.<sup>21</sup> Soon after he arrived at the police station, Kwajalein Commanding Officer Colonel Peter F. Wittereid contacted Vila informing him that 20 minutes earlier, Republic of the Marshall Islands and Washington Patrol Service officers had arrested several KAC leaders and many young male adults for trespassing at Emon Beach. Vila recalled at this point a large group of Marshallese individuals left Hamilton Beach and marched to the police station defying Colonel Wittereid's order to cease marching. According to Vila's letter Colonel Wittereid told Vila that just after the arrests an adult male Marshallese named JULIAN RIKLON "had attempted to force his way into the Police Station to rescue the demonstrators who were already in custody."<sup>22</sup> The letter continued, "Col. Wittereid stated that the WPS officers had grabbed RIKLON and physically restrained him to prevent his illegal act. No blows were struck nor was any physical harm done to either the WPS officers or RIKLON."<sup>23</sup> Vila's letter added that Colonel Wittereid ordered RIKLON be released after RIKLON calmed down, "as a gesture of good faith to the demonstrators."<sup>24</sup>

Further attesting to the non-violent nature of the encounter, Vila's report stated that after Colonel Wittereid relayed this story he pointed Riklon out to Vila, as Riklon was standing in front of the police station in clear view. Vila described Riklon as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Correspondence Reports from Chief Law Enforcement Officer, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Bryan J. Vila on "18 June Incident at KMR Police Station," sent July 21, 1982. Located in the Micronesian Bureau of Investigation File, TTA, reel no. 3810.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Ibid.

appearing to be "talking freely with the other Marshallese in the crowd and moving in natural fashion. In [his] mind, this reinforced Col. Wittereid's statement that RIKLON had not been injured in any way when he was restrained."<sup>25</sup> Following this detailed narrative of the "incident," Vila continued on in his report to describe the next three hours when a core group of Marshallese young male adults, including RIKLON, crowded around and "rushed" the police station in an attempt to rescue their incarcerated leaders. He noted that while they spoke in Marshallese and he could not understand them, the other Republic Marshall Islands officers translated their intent to free the leaders and Vila believed the translations given his personal "observation of the demeanor, hand gestures, and posturing of those young Marshallese male adults."<sup>27</sup> He stated he and Colonel Wittereid were very concerned about the potential for violent confrontation during this period, as well as the health of the infants on the scene, some of whom were lying on the ground sleeping amidst this large crowd poised for confrontation.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to Vila's letter detailing the "incident," the Kwajalein Commanding Officer also sent a telegram update to the Huntsville Ballistic Missile Defense Command describing the event and erasing any violence against Riklon. The July 28, 1982 telegram noted that during the June 20 confrontation at the jail demonstrators had begun throwing rocks at the policemen who had blocked entrance to the police station. The telegram added that "In view of the possibility of further incidents protective riot control equipment has been obtained...The equipment arrived 23 July 1982 and consisted of 30

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Ibid.

batons, 30 helmets with face shields and 61 sets of disposable handcuffs (flexi-cuffs)."<sup>29</sup> An adjoining update in the same telegram added that "Mission members stated they were pleased that there was been no violence or injuries to date..."<sup>30</sup> Violence against Riklon also remained obscured in an affidavit chronology produced by Principal Deputy Assistant, Secretary of Defense International Security Affairs Noel Koch and Marshall Islands President Amata Kabua. The affidavit appeared in a July 11, 1982 letter from Cabinet Legal Counsel for the Marshall Islands Government Carl B. Ingram detailing the protest events. The chronology began prior to the actual sail-in with inclusion of an open letter from Kwajalein Commanding Officer on June 16, 1982. Written in both English and Marshallese, the letter identified the sail-in as illegal and warned it would "severely damage relations between KMR and landowners."<sup>31</sup> The chronology detailed the Riklon incident describing those Marshallese protesting the arrest of their leaders at the police station as comprising 21 men, 39 women, and 138 children. The chronology stated "one young man attempt[ed] to force entry into the building to rescue arrestees. He [was] restrained without injury and later released so as to not inflame the situation."<sup>32</sup>

Also erasing violence from Riklon's police encounter, the Kwajalein Commander sent a telegram on July 2, 1982 to the Huntsville Ballistic Missile Defense Commander, the Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense, among others detailing a sanitized version of the events. The telegram headlined "summary of situation with estimate for

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Telegram from Commander KMR Kwajalein to Commander Ballistic Missile Defense at Huntsville, AL, Commander Westcom Ft. Shafter, Secretary of State, Washington D.C. July 28, 1982. Located in the Micronesian Bureau of Investigation File, TTA, reel no. 3810.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> "Kwajalein Missile Range Demonstration--Chronology of Events," submitted July 11, 1982, to be used for affidavit in order to secure Temporary Restraining Order against Kwajalein demonstrators. Drafted by Ralph M. Caskey, CPT, JAGC, Staff Judge Advocate, Kwajalein Missile Range submitted to Carl B. Ingram, Cabinet Legal Counsel, Republic of the Marshall Islands at the request of REPMAR President Amata Kabua. Located in the Micronesian Bureau of Investigation File, TTA, reel no. 3810.

potential disorder," and alluded to the Commander's degree of fear and concern regarding the protest. The telegram stated the Kwajalein command would continue to approach the sail-in with several goals. These goals included containing the demonstrators to areas already occupied, preventing any violence and injuries to demonstrators or security personnel and continuing to monitor the Marshall Islands Government's effectiveness and ability to mitigate the protest. The Commander continued on to note that so far Kwajalein command contained the protest with minor breaches, but emphasized these breaches remained rectified short any use of force or arrest. In the same telegram, the KMR (Kwajalein Missile Range) Commander expressed concern about the potential for the protestor demographic to change towards a more menacing character. He explained that while the present composition of demonstrators remained about 70 percent children and 30 percent older men and women, he feared future instability by "an infusion of the less responsible and more aggressive elements that are known to exist on Ebeye."

The KMR Commander's fear voiced in his telegram echoed broader military concerns about potential Marshallese aggression that would inform requests for additional police personnel and equipment resources. On August 12, 1982 the Department of Interior Under Secretary Donald Paul Hodel wrote to the Under Secretary for Policy, Department of Defense Fred Ikle confirming U.S. Marshals would be sent to aid in protest control in response to Ikle's July 29, 1982 request. This letter noted as well that local Marshallese police could not be expected to use substantial resources to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Telegram from Commander KMR Kwajalein to Commander Ballistic Missile Defense at Huntsville, AL, Commander Westcom Ft. Shafter, Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense, Washington D.C. July 2, 1982. Located in the Micronesian Bureau of Investigation File, TTA, reel no. 3810.
<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

monitor the protest.<sup>35</sup> The legal basis upon which the U.S. military and government justified deployment of increased police security to the Marshall Islands during Operation Homecoming was documented in September 25, 1979 correspondence from the Associate Solicitor, Division of General Law in the Department of the Interior. This letter sent to the Director of the Office of Territorial Affairs on the subject of "Law Enforcement on Kwajalein," coincided with the earlier 1979 sail-in protest. The Associate Solicitor's letter responded to the Director's inquiry sent earlier that month asking if authority existed to send U.S. Marshals to Kwajalein to prevent trespassing.<sup>36</sup>

The Associate Solicitor's response memorandum offers an illuminating lens into the limitations of the new Marshallese government's authority in 1979 and the rationale for the punitive and violent military responses to Marshallese demonstrations. The memorandum marked this transitional moment in which Marshallese governmental authority to determine the protest response remained curbed by that of the continued Trust administration authority. By 1986, the jurisdiction for taking control on Kwajalein amidst continued protests would fall under the new Republic of the Marshall Islands. The 1979 memorandum stated the U.N. Security Council, within which the U.S. had veto power, remained responsible for monitoring the administration of the Trust Territory. Citing the Trusteeship Agreement Charter, the memorandum added that "The administering authority has the authority to ensure that the Trust Territory will play its part in the maintenance of international peace and security and to maintain law and order

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Correspondence from Under Secretary Donald Paul Hodel to Fred Ikle, Under Secretary for Policy, Department of Defense. Sent August 12, 1982. Located in the Micronesian Bureau of Investigation File, TTA, reel no. 3810.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Memorandum from Associate Solicitor, Division of General Law to Director, Office of Territorial Affairs on the Subject: "Law Enforcement in Kwajalein," sent September 25, 1979. Located in the Attorney General File--Kwajalein and Ebeye Miscellany, TTA, reel no. 3849.

with the TTPI."<sup>37</sup> The memorandum continued to state that given this clause, the Trust Territory also "has the authority, by exercise of its police power, to take such action as is reasonable and proper to maintain law and order."<sup>38</sup>

The Associate Solicitor's memorandum seemed to anticipate charges against the U.S. for human rights abuses as well as accusations that the U.S. response hindered Micronesian freedom of movement presumably protected under the Trust agreement. The memorandum indicated that the Trust Territory high court

"held that those concerned with the United Nations have considered that human rights and fundamental freedoms are not unlimited, but subject to various limitations in the public interest; that the freedom of movement guaranteed by Article 7 of the Trusteeship Agreement is expressly subject to requirements of public order and security; that rights guaranteed under the United Nations Charter and Trusteeship Agreement are subject to proper exercise of police power; that the guarantee of liberty in the Trust Territory Code...does not interfere with the proper exercise of police power; and that police power includes power to make laws to secure public peace, good order and comfort of the community."<sup>39</sup>

The Memorandum situated the Marshall Islands specifically under these guidelines identifying the limitations on Secretarial Order 3039, which delegated the Government of the Marshall Islands to take on executive, legislative and judicial functions from the Government of the Trust Territory. The Memorandum indicated the U.S. retained authority under this order specifically giving the High Commissioner, under supervision of the Secretary, the right to exercise any necessary action to guarantee U.S. ability to carry out Trusteeship obligations, with order and laws applicable to the Trust Territory. The memorandum reminded that the U.S. retained authority to maintain law and order in the Trust Territory until such time as that agreement was terminated. The Associate Solicitor continued, "Accordingly, should the Government of the Marshall Islands fail, or

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Ibid

refuse to maintain law and order in the Kwajalein atoll, it is my opinion that the High Commissioner has the authority to do so. In exercising this authority, he may use any voluntary force available in the Trust Territory or United States Marshals if necessary."<sup>40</sup> The Associate Solicitor's memorandum offered a clear picture of the how the Trusteeship Agreement continued to empower the U.S. to oversee Marshallese governmental responses to the sail-ins in 1979 that would continue through 1982. This authority legalized U.S. power to intervene as deemed necessary in order to maintain law and order and continue its preeminent military mission detailed in the Trusteeship Agreement.

To communicate Operation Homecoming's illegality and reiterate the U.S. legal entitlement to continued uninterrupted usage of Kwajalein, Kwajalein Colonel Wittereid issued an open letter to the public in the *Marshall Islands Journal* on June 22, 1982. Wittereid's letter headlined, "Anyone who participates will be a trespasser," and primarily addressed Kwajalein landowners. Wittereid not only categorized those participating as trespassers, he also warned that participants would be held responsible for the cost of any missile test delays. This cost would be deducted from the \$2 million landowner payment due, including charges for cleanup and security and testing delays. To clarify what this fee would look like, Wittereid noted the daily delay cost for one upcoming test would amount to about \$130,000. The letter also noted that good relations between Kwajalein and the Marshallese community required that all Atoll residents strive to live in reasonable harmony. He added that the "clearly illegal" proposed sail-in violated an agreement under which landowners already received pay accepting compensation of

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

about \$3 million with an additional \$2 million to be paid July 1, 1982. 41 Correspondence sent in 1986 to the then President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Amata Kabua, from one Kwajalein landowner suggested the army's punishments for Operation Homecoming had been collectively shared. The letter indicated that all Kwajalein landowners bore the financial costs of the protest, even those not participating. 42

Army discourse positioned Marshallese protestors, largely comprising women and children, as potential aggressors placing Kwajalein security into a position of self defense. Military narratives erased their own violence against protestors from the story but explained their increased armament as justified under the Trusteeship Agreement that implored and entitled the U.S. to continue its national security mission uninterrupted. Under this agreement, the army had free reign to take whatever means necessary to reestablish order in the region. Thus, in pointing to the Trusteeship Agreement, army officials could position Marshallese protests as disruptions to their important mission rather than colonized subjects challenging U.S. colonial policies in their islands.

## **Exposing the Army's Punitive Responses Against Marshallese Protestors**

The army's attempt to control the protest narrative and any exposure of military activities therein that could be deemed unnecessarily punitive, violent or even illegal would prove unsuccessful in the face of challenges from Marshallese and Americans.

Marshallese leaders and American journalists would continue to expose and critique the army's response to the protests through letters, petitions and local and global press. The

<sup>41</sup> Witteried, Peter F. Commanding Colonel. "Colonel Witteried: Anyone who participates will be a trespasser: Open letter to the Landowners of Kwajalein Atoll," in the *Marshall Islands Journal*. June 22, 1982.

<sup>42</sup> Correspondence from Sato Maie (representing Kwajalein Association of Landowners) to President Amata Kabua, Republic of the Marshall Islands on February 27, 1986.

army's media blackout on Kwajalein seemed to only further ignite journalists to spread stories of injustice and violence against Marshallese locally and throughout the world. This next section considers how these counter-narratives moved through different locales and exposed military violence, aggression and illegal tactics against Marshallese during Operation Homecoming.

In addition to building up police defense and threatening protestors with financial repercussions, the Kwajalein Commanding Officer and Trust Territory Administration responded to Operation Homecoming with various punitive measures. Some of these responses even punished those Marshallese not involved with the protest who simply worked on Kwajalein. A telegram from Principal Deputy Assistant, Secretary of Defense International Security Affairs Noel G. Koch detailed some of these punishments. Koch's August 1982 telegram to Marshall Islands President Amata Kabua detailed new Kwajalein restrictions imposed in response to the protest. Koch stated that as of September 30, 1982 the military would no longer allow the sale and transshipment of food to merchants on Ebeye through Kwajalein. In addition, previously available banking services on Kwajalein would now exclude Ebeye residents and businessmen. Framing the new restrictions through their benefits to Marshallese, Koch noted that restricting these services would work to stave off what he viewed as "potential overdependence upon U.S. sources and the resultant negative effect upon independent development of Marshallese capabilities."43 He added that both food and banking privileges were always intended to be temporary and continued with the understanding that Marshallese would over time

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Telegram letter to REPMAR President Amata Kabua from Noel G. Koch, Principal Deputy Assistant, Secretary of Defense International Security Affairs sent on August 21, 1982. Located in the Micronesian Bureau of Investigation File, TTA, reel no. 3810.

develop their own capacity in these areas.<sup>44</sup> Koch went on to note that Operation Homecoming prompted actions long overdue in both governments. He added he believed Kabua would agree "that our mutual goal of self-sufficiency for the Ebeye community can be achieved more quickly by maintaining the momentum of the efforts in selfdevelopment resulting from this demonstration."<sup>45</sup>

While Koch couched these punitive measures within a narrative of supporting Marshallese self-sufficiency, Marshallese leaders and American journalists challenged the sincerity of these claims. Journalist and head of the Micronesian Support Committee Giff Johnson wrote a letter to U.S. House Representative John F. Seiberling critiquing the military's justification for such extreme measures. In his August 1982 letter, Johnson outlined the history of the Kwajalein Ebeye relationship contextualizing Operation Homecoming and the military response to the protest alongside the increasingly challenging conditions on Ebeye. Johnson also acknowledged Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Noel Koch's explanation for implementing these policies that punished those living on Ebeye not participating in the protests. Johnson specifically cited Koch's announcement about banking services and sale and transshipment of food to Ebeye ceasing. He wrote "Koch's pious concern for the 'potential dependency upon U.S. sources and the resultant negative effect upon independent development of Marshallese capabilities' hardly disguises the Defense Department's plan for harsh reprisals against the Marshallese people for protesting continuous violation of their basic rights by the Army--

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

rights such as adequate hospitals, education, sanitation, and jobs--that most Americans take for granted."<sup>46</sup>

Media critiques of U.S. military policies would continue throughout Operation

Homecoming, with many citing the army's punitive measures threatening the health and
well being of Marshallese children involved in the protest. In addition to health risks
imposed by cutting off food shipments to Ebeye, the immediate threat to children
protesting on Kwajalein came through a U.S. decision to cut off the water supply where
Marshallese kids camped out with their families. This punishment constituted one attempt
to hasten the conclusion of the protests. The lack of clean water quickly resulted in two
Marshallese children contracting typhoid. The policy immediately instigated a lawsuit
that found both Marshallese and U.S. courts demanding the military reverse this action.

The water incident spread through articles covering the protest and also informed a report quite revealing in its discussion of a temporary shift in U.S. approach towards Kwajalein hospital exclusions. The report, produced by Trust Territory Chief Law Enforcement Officer Bryan J. Vila, addressed Kwajalein's medical responsibilities to protestors during Operation Homecoming. Vila's statements suggest that the 1976 senate hearings and accompanying media coverage influenced the U.S. military to acknowledge that denying Marshallese health support on Kwajalein held potential consequences for the U.S. Vila produced a document on July 2, 1982 closely following the water blockage catastrophe entitled "Access to KMR Hospital for Demonstrators." The document responded to a query raised during a staff meeting on whether or not Marshallese demonstrators should be denied emergency access to Kwajalein's hospital. Vila noted that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Correspondence from Giff Johnson to Representative John F. Seiberling, United States House of Representatives sent August 31, 1982. Located in Giff Johnson Marshall Islands Resource Materials, Pacific Manuscripts Bureau 1172.

as the Trust Territory's ranking representative on Kwajalein he believed the demonstrators should continue having access to emergency care for several reasons. First, he noted this would be seen as a humanitarian act working favorably to show the ethics and high moral standards of the U.S. government. Second, if access was simply limited to emergency situations there would be no reason to think this would impact Marshallese willingness to demonstrate, since they only averaged about one case every two days and with only one exception all had been children whom were treated for diarrheal diseases.<sup>47</sup> Vila also indicated that diarrhea was the leading cause of children's death in Micronesia due to dehydration, even though full recovery could follow timely medical treatment.<sup>48</sup> Vila then emphasized "IF A CHILD WERE TO DIE WHEN EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT AT THE KMR HOSPITAL MIGHT WELL HAVE SAVED ITS LIFE, THE DEMONSTRATORS WOULD HAVE A MARTYR AND THE USG [presumably U.S. Government] WOULD BE IN A MORALLY INDEFENSIBLE POSITION."<sup>49</sup> Interestingly, the fact sheet continued on to note that the long-term policy of the Kwajalein hospital had been to accept emergency medical cases from Ebeye due to the island's limited medical facilities. He added that a new policy denying access now would mean transporting a sick or injured demonstrator back to Ebeye and then back to Kwajalein, a process that could take several hours and prove fatal.<sup>50</sup>

Vila's 1982 fact sheet worked to rewrite the history of hospital access on Kwajalein, erasing the many testimonies of exclusion given during the 1976 senate

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Fact Sheet, Subject: "Emergency Access to KMR Hospital for Demonstrators," submitted by Bryan J. Vila, Chief Law Enforcement Officer, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. July 2, 1982. Located in the Micronesian Bureau of Investigation File, TTA, reel no. 3810.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Ibid. Caps appearing in document.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Ibid.

hearings and thereafter by Giff Johnson, Greg Dever, William Vitarelli and Jinna Keju. In obscuring this history, Vila's statements seemed to suggest the impact made by these earlier testimonies and media campaigns to uncover U.S. policies of exclusion on Kwajalein. Vila clearly appeared aware by 1982 that denying Marshallese children health care would reflect poorly upon the increasingly scrutinized United States. His correspondence offered another example of how U.S. official discourse produced during Operation Homecoming worked to sanitize Kwajalein history as his statements seamlessly obscured all evidence of prior U.S. practices excluding Marshallese from the Kwajalein hospital. These discursive efforts further suggested the pressures felt by Trust Territory administrators and military officials to uphold a picture of compassion and concern in their approach to the Marshallese protestors.

While the Trust Territory administration and the army continuously strived to sanitize the portrait of their response to Operation Homecoming, the recklessness and illegality of the army's decision to cut off water to Marshallese on Kwajalein would not go unnoticed by Marshallese leaders nor American journalists. Several media publications characterized the array of U.S. responses to Operation Homecoming as unjust, inhumane and in some instances illegal. A September 1982 Micronesian Support Committee Bulletin article provided space for landowner and protest leader Ataji Balos to critique the U.S. response to the protests. Balos asserted the legality of the protest alongside the illegality of U.S. responses. He stated that while the Department of Defense and Republic of Marshall Islands Government claimed the protests to be illegal, their allegations failed under judicial scrutiny. Balos identified five different judges attesting to the Operation Homecoming's legality, two in the Marshalls and three in Washington D.C.

He added, "Rather judges in federal court in Washington have ruled DOD's harassment measures, such as shutting off toilet facilities, illegal and have ordered restoration." Balos continued on to identify another degrading tactic the army employed during the earlier 1979 sail-in to deter the continued protests. Balos noted that landowners refusing to leave their campsites on Roi Namur influenced the postponement of a missile test and the army responded by trying to persuade them "with cokes and ice cream." Balos concluded "We cannot help but feel amazed by the childish and insulting level by which the DOD has chosen to address the Kwajalein people."

Marshallese Foreign Secretary Tony de Brum also addressed the illegality of the U.S. response to Operation Homecoming in *Pacific Magazine's* Fall 1982 issue. De Brum shared his impressions with journalist Greg Knudsen for the article, "The Marshalls Besieged." In Knudsen's article, De Brum described the sail-ins as "a peaceful demonstration which any democratic country must allow, as long as it doesn't interfere with others' rights..." He added "It was our belief that the United States would be reasonable in dealing with this, rather than cutting off banking services, sending in the marines...cutting off toilet facilities, and preventing shipment of food from reaching Ebeye which punishes an entire population for the actions of a small number." Emphasizing the illegality of the U.S. response, De Brum pointed out the U.S. also denied the protestors legal counsel, violating America's own democratic principals. He suggested the discriminatory manner of the U.S. response, noting "For the United States

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> "Ataji Balos Gives Views on Kwajalein," in the *Micronesian Support Committee Bulletin*. Circa August/September 1982. Located in the Micronesian Support Committee Bulletin file, Pacific Manuscripts Bureau 447.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Ibid

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> Greg Knudsen, "The Marshalls Besieged: Foreign Secretary Tony de Brum on Washington, the U.N.,
 Kwajalein, the Northern Atolls,... and Independence," in Pacific Magazine. September/October 1982.
 <sup>54</sup> Ibid.

to pull that kind of stunt on us--us, because those people are Marshallese--is really bad judgment on their part."<sup>55</sup> De Brum also addressed the legality of the occupation noting the protestors contended their resettlement legal because the U.S. never made their second payment on the interim use agreement. He added since U.S. payments lapsed, the reoccupation could very well be legal.<sup>56</sup>

Military frustration about American and Marshallese laws remaining on the side of the protestors came through in a statement from Ballistic Defense Systems Command Commanding General Grayson D. Tate at the 1982 Military Appropriations Senate Hearings. Tate detailed the protest situation as one in which the landowners banded together to create an association and went to New York City and Washington D.C. where they recruited "very clever and very smart lawyers to represent them." Tate described the lawyers as "savvy enough to advise these people very well." Tate seemed to begrudge these smart lawyers for placing the military in the tight position of having to abide by the same laws the U.S. had communicated to Marshallese under the Trusteeship Agreement in 1947. While Tate offered one voice critical of the protestors and their savvy lawyers, other governmental voices emerged from D.C. to challenge the army, expressing support for Marshallese legal rights. U.S. Representative John Seiberling headed the congressional review of the Marshall Islands Compact of Free Association and voiced concern about U.S. responses to Operation Homecoming in 1982. He stated,

"I think the actions of the military out there are hardly becoming of a nation that is a great power. Here we have a bunch of people who are our wards...We're

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Giff Johnson, "Collision Course at Kwajalein: Marshall Islands," in the *Bulletin of Concerned Asian* Scholars. April-June 1986, vol. 18, no. 2. Article based upon Giff Johnson's 1984 book of the same title. Pp. 37. 58 Ibid.

occupying their land and we're denying them the right to peacefully assemble and petition for redress of grievances that our constitution guarantees to our own citizens. And yet we're in their country. I think it's a pretty sad spectacle." <sup>59</sup>

While Sieberling stood out as the most direct attack against the military coming from the capitol, his sentiments mirrored an array voices across the media world during the sailins.

Local and international media outlets revealed the violence of the U.S. response to Operation Homecoming in several articles. Articles detailed Riklon's beating alongside analysis of military attempts to end the protest through other punitive measures including the instance of shutting off water to children at the camp on Kwajalein and the military's severe economic sanctions on Ebeye. Many articles also described the military's media blackout as a strategy to shroud protest violence in secrecy as they threatened any journalists on island with arrest. The August 27, 1982 National Catholic Reporter carried a Giff Johnson story channeled through the Pacific News Service offering details on these actions. The story narrated Operation Homecoming, emphasizing the army's refusal to cease missile testing during the protest and detailing army's economic sanctions imposed on Marshallese. 60 Journalist Mike Malone's 1982 article appearing in *Glimpses of* Micronesia and the Western Pacific chronicled Operation Homecoming and framed the event through biblical themes. Malone described how within twenty days of the Compact of Free Association being signed, "the Ebeye timebomb exploded." He labeled the protest as the largest to date, with nearly 1,000 islanders pouring in waves to their home

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Ibid, 38

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> Giff Johnson, "Atoll protestors 'occupy' missile sites," from Pacific News Service appearing in the *National Catholic Reporter*. August 27, 1982.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Mike Malone, "Ebeye: The Unloved Island," in *Glimpses of Micronesia*. 1982.

islands in the atoll.<sup>62</sup> Marking Riklon's attack, Malone added, "It was the beginning of a classic David and Goliath confrontation. The Army reacted swiftly. Kwajalein security police arrested 13 protest leaders, including one who was beaten as he was speaking to a crowd."<sup>63</sup>

Malone's article continued on to contextualize the protests within the longer history of Ebeye's struggles, citing the unbearable conditions facing those living on the island that grew worse under the army's punitive responses. Malone detailed the army's water cutoff alongside its embargo on food shipments, leaving Ebeye supplies dangerously low. He noted, "Recent visitors to Ebeye speak of restaurants offering little more than rice soup, no meat, fruit, vegetables, sugar; only some canned goods."64 He wrote that three stores closed on the island because they had no merchandise left to sell. Malone also noted the military blockage on Kwajalein banking services hindered Ebeye businessman. He concluded, "As the U.S. trusteeship in Micronesia enters its final stages, America faces a critical phase in its relationship with the islands. It has a special obligation to improve on past standards that smack of neglect and colonialism."<sup>65</sup> Emphasizing the army's economic punishments on Ebeye, Giff Johnson and wife Darlene Keju Johnson offered a lengthy expose on Operation Homecoming in the winter 1982 issue of *Pacific Magazine*. The co-authors detailed how the army banned all maids and gardeners from working on Kwajalein at the start of Operation Homecoming. They

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

explained that this policy cut off jobs for more than 200 Marshallese wage earners, or about 25 percent of the total Marshallese workforce on Kwajalein for four months.<sup>66</sup>

Media coverage of Operation Homecoming even drew on voices of unexpected observers encountering U.S. responses to Marshallese on Ebeye without having been privy to the broader context of the protests. One article showcased the perspective of an individual traveling through the region who accidentally happened upon Ebeye in the middle of the chaos. The Micronesian Support Committee Bulletin profiled B. David Williams' observations condemning the U.S. approach to the protests. Williams' views offered a rare glimpse into a perspective seldom broadcast throughout the events, but nonetheless an important presence in the region's history. Williams came through Ebeye on a religious mission, and thus followed in the footsteps of a cohort that has played a significant role in the broader history of Trust Territory projects. Religious representatives often acted as ambassadors for U.S. policy in Micronesia alongside Peace Corps Volunteers. At any given moment, either group may have represented the most significant American presence Micronesians encountered in their islands. Today, American missionaries continue to have a strong presence on Ebeye. <sup>67</sup> Williams came through Ebeye in his position as Church and Society Program Coordinator for the Pacific Conference of Churches on a trip through the Pacific in preparation for a World Council of Churches meeting.68

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> Giff Johnson and Darlene Keju Johnson. "Kwajalein: Home on the 'Range," in *Pacific Magazine*. November/December 1982. Pp. 27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> This fact was interestingly relayed to me during my first visit to Ebeye when people told me I would likely be mistaken for a missionary simply because those were the primary Americans one encountered on Ebeve.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> The World Council of Churches is an ecumenical, international organization long committed to political and religious self-determination.

In the article entitled "Ground Zero," Williams described his arrival to Ebeye on June 15, 1982 as fortuitous in giving him the opportunity to observe the crisis underway on the island. He framed the event as "without a doubt, the high point of our World Council of Churches' visit, as we could see here with unusual clarity the fierce, ongoing confrontation between Gospel values and the gospel of national security and material welfare." He continued, "As nowhere else on our trip, we encountered visible symbols of life-threatening forces." Williams added he found life and hope in this encounter and described Ebeye as buzzing with meetings and communal force of everyone thinking and talking about the sail-ins with a deep sense of urgency. His narrative revealed a picture of life on Ebeye missed by most other media coverage during the protests. Williams explained that amidst the excitement and energy, he also witnessed the pain of the situation on Ebeye. He recalled that during one of his meetings a woman arrived in tears claiming her marriage was breaking up as she and her husband held different views about the protest that were complicated by his job on Kwajalein.

Williams continued on to acknowledge how media coverage seemed greatly focused on condemning Kwajalein landowners as motivated solely by money. Williams agreed that many likely were but added, "they were thoroughly justified in doing so, having developed a clear sense of the meager nature of present arrangements per family in a very expensive living situation." He concluded however that "there was far more than money involved, and it is unworthy of these people for outsiders to dwell on that. They are deeply concerned about their young people and their future. They love their

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> David B. Williams, and Bulletin Editor. "Non-Cooperation at Kwajalein," in the *Micronesian Support Committee Bulletin*. Winter 1982. Located in the Micronesian Support Committee Bulletin file, Pacific Manuscripts Bureau 447. Pp. 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Ibid.

islands and want them back."<sup>72</sup> Williams' conclusions regarding the media focus on economic motivations again represented a rare voice in the sea of protest narratives. He seemed to acknowledge the legitimacy of these economic concerns alongside a multitude of other legitimate grievances. Many articles addressing landowner monetary goals tended to position landowner financial rights as mutually exclusive from concerns about conditions on Ebeye. Articles like one headlined "Money or morality?" for example, tended to frame the protest as either about landowner monetary motivation or landowner concerns about Ebeye. This false dichotomy obscured the historic connection between the two concerns and characterized landowners as capable of only a singular grievance. The articles furthermore tended to weigh the legitimacy of one grievance against the other.<sup>73</sup> Williams appeared somewhat more nuanced in his analysis by acknowledging that, yes, landowners demanded greater compensation and had a right to be concerned about conditions on Ebeye for which the U.S. bared at least some responsibility. A broader perception of Operation Homecoming as rooted in the selfishness of greedy landowners unconcerned with the impact on Ebeye's workers became one of the more common narratives accepted by American civilians on Kwajalein.

Williams' discourse resided amidst the wave of press coverage causing increasing discomfort for the military. A June 1982 telegram from the KMR Commander sent to the Huntsville Ballistic Missile Defense Commander, the Secretary of Defense and Secretary of State amidst others exemplified how the military closely tracked the increasing scrutiny. In the telegram, the Kwajalein Commander identified two pages of quotes and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> See Daniel C. Smith's "Senator Imada Kabua: Kwajalein problem not money but treatment," in the *Marshall Islands Journal*. March 13, 1981 and Greg Knudsen's "Kwajalein Issue: Money or Morality?" in *Pacific Magazine*. July/August 1982.

passages appearing in the *Marshall Islands Journal*. The telegram instructed recipients to pay particular attention to the June 18 issue, which included "relatively inflammatory statements attributed to attorney George Allen to the effect that he had advised his clients that they have a legal right to occupy their land."<sup>74</sup> Both army and Trust Territory officials undoubtedly took note of Operation Homecoming's impact on increasing negative publicity towards U.S. policies in the region.

Journalists and activists narrated Operation Homecoming in local and international publications by focusing on unjust military responses while also situating the protests within a broader Pacific and global fight against nuclear armament. In this respect, Marshallese landowners and demonstrators' actions took on global weight as they became framed within the broader international struggle against nuclear imperialism. As discussed in chapter seven, one publication engaged in the fight against nuclear armament originating out of a place tragically familiar with U.S. atomic weaponry was Japan's bimonthly newsletter *Han-Genpatsu News, No Nuke News Japan*. The newsletters' spring and summer 1982 issues ran articles detailing the long-term impact of U.S. nuclear testing in the Marshalls, investigating deteriorating conditions on Ebeye and narrating the progress of Operation Homecoming. In the April/May issue, editor Arakawa Syunji discussed his December 1981visit to Ebeye and his impressions of the island's dire living conditions. He explained that his hosts warned him against drinking the water, telling him Marshallese transported clean water from Kwajalein to store in tanks but

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> Telegram on the subject: "Marshall Islands Journal Articles," circa late June 1982, from Commander KMR Kwajalein to Commander Ballistic Missile Defense at Huntsville, AL, Commander Westcom Ft. Shafter, Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense, Washington D.C. Located in the Micronesian Bureau of Investigation File, TTA, reel no. 3810.

those tanks remained unsanitary.<sup>75</sup> Syunji noted, "The islanders told me not to use the tank water, not even to wash my mouth out unless I didn't care if my mouth would swell up."<sup>76</sup> Building upon his earlier expose on Ebeye, Syunji chronicled the progress of Operation Homecoming for the June/July issue of *Han-Genpatsu*. His article described the Marshalls as a "soon to be liberated colony" of the United States.<sup>77</sup> Syunji contextualized Operation Homecoming by noting "inhuman conditions imposed for decades on a quarter of the islanders have finally led to an explosion."<sup>78</sup> His article also stated that as protestor numbers increased to 1,000 by July the U.S. military responded with a media blackout preventing reporters from entering the atoll.<sup>79</sup>

In an editorial act of solidarity with the Marshallese protestors, the *Han-Genpatsu* editors encouraged readers to send postcards to both the demonstrators and President Reagan. The newsletter included templates, with the postcard to demonstrators reading: "Dear Sisters and Brothers, I send you, who have reoccupied your home islands, my sincere support. Your struggle is a great encouragement not only for the people of the Marshall Islands but for people all over the world who are seeking a society free from oppression and nuclear threat." In addition to including a template to be sent to the Marshallese, the editors also printed a postcard for readers to send to President Reagan. The Reagan postcard read,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Arakawa Syunji, "Report from the Marshall Islands: Part I Ebeye Island-A Slum in the Pacific," in *Han-Genpatsu News, No Nuke News Japan.* April/May 1982. Located in the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau 1172, Giff Johnson Marshall Islands Resource Materials.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> Arakawa Syunji, "Kwajalein Owners Continue Movement to Reoccupy Their Home Islands in Protest Against the U.S. Military Rule," in *Han-Genpatsu News, No Nuke News Japan*. June/July 1982. Located in the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau 1172, Giff Johnson Marshall Islands Resource Materials.
<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

"The people of the Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Islands, are continuing the sit-in on their home islands. I support their action and strongly protest the inhuman acts of your government. I believe the U.S. government should respect the basic human rights and the right of self-determination of the Kwajalein people. It should close the Kwajalein Missile Range and return the islands to their owners."<sup>81</sup>

Before encouraging readers to send along the postcards to support Operation

Homecoming, the article concluded with a quote from Senator Imada Kabua that tied the protest to the broader global campaign against nuclear proliferation. Kabua's words read, ""We are not Naïve...We cannot prevent a superpower from developing nuclear weapons. But we can ensure that our islands will not be used for such a purpose. I personally believe it is not only our legal right, but our moral duty." 82

News of Operation Homecoming broadcast as well out of the Philippines, another region deeply familiar with U.S. militarism. The September 10, 1982 issue of *Depthnews Asia* published out of Manila ran a feature article reported by Giff Johnson contextualizing the history of Kwajalein leading up to Operation Homecoming. In his article, "US Evicts Pacific Islanders to Build Secret Missile Base," Johnson linked Operation Homecoming to a movement emerging out of years of struggle on Ebeye and discriminatory practices on Kwajalein. Johnson described the landowners as conducting a "peaceful protest" spurring a violent response from the U.S. that included the beating and arrest of some leaders and the continuation of missile testing despite the risk to Marshallese safety. <sup>83</sup> Johnson discussed the "shroud of secrecy" thrown over the protests by the Kwajalein media blackout and detailed the army's response in cutting off food

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>83</sup> Giff Johnson, "US Evicts Pacific Islanders To Build Secret Missile Base," in *Depthnews ASIA*. September 10, 1982.

shipments to Ebeye. <sup>84</sup> He added that because the army also denied Ebeye business leaders banking access on Kwajalein and since no bank existed on Ebeye, businesses were losing thousands of dollars on loans and other bills they could not pay. <sup>85</sup> Johnson concluded his article by quoting protest leader and Senator Ataji Balos explaining how the landowners found life more pleasant on Kwajalein and Ebeye. He said the longer people stayed on their home islands, the less likely they would ever want to return to Ebeye. Johnson noted "The Kwajalein people say they will shut down the vital test range before they will suffer 50 more years of apartheid-like conditions in Ebeye. <sup>86</sup> Finally, Johnson situated Operation Homecoming within the broader implications of the protest. He concluded "It may well be that the future of the US nuclear weapons programme rests in the hands of 5,000 Kwajalein landowners on their remote Pacific atoll. <sup>87</sup>

Johnson's story published out of Manila was not the first time he emphasized Kwajalein's significance to the broader U.S. weapons development campaign and the global nuclear arms race. This connection also surfaced in Johnson's 1979 *Pacific Islands Monthly* article in which he referenced army representatives contending this point.

Johnson reported during the 1979 sail-in that while U.S. State Department spokesmen continued to downplay the significance of the range, army representatives identified no comparable installation existed for testing the new MX missile. <sup>88</sup> The army representatives added that relocating the Kwajalein Missile Range would cost substantial money and time. Johnson's article also referenced a State Department spokesman stating "Any appreciable delay in MX missile development could hurt passage of the SALT

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>88</sup> Giff Johnson, "Occupying Kwajalein," in *Pacific Islands Monthly*. September 1979.

[Strategic Arms Limitations Talks] treaty in the US Senate."89 In Pacific Magazine's November/December 1982 issue, Johnson and his wife Darlene Keju Johnson coauthored an article that again detailed the protest's broader repercussions the importance of Kwajalein to the United States. The co-authors asserted that Kwajalein Missile Range had "perhaps contributed more to the nuclear arms race than any other spot on earth." 90 Identifying how the sail-in protests threatened U.S. missile testing they detailed the continued importance Kwajalein played as new technology became available under President Reagan's Star Wars campaign. They explained that the delivery system for the new key weapon in the U.S. nuclear arsenal, the MX missile, was scheduled to be tested at Kwajalein Missile Range.91

An article appearing in one of the most widely read mainstream U.S. newspapers, the Washington Post, also contextualized Kwajalein's role in the larger nuclear arms race. Staff Writer Walter Pincus detailed the protests, noting how Kwajalein landowner Ataji Balos' wife wired President Reagan during the sail-ins to ask him to "suspend' the testing of a Minuteman II missile," which placed those demonstrating in danger. 92 Pincus noted that Balos' wife also told the president "she wished that 'all nuclear weapons testing at Kwajalein would stop forever." Pincus concluded his article stating that attempts had been made in the past to "enroll Marshallese in antinuclear weapons protests" that would bring an end to missile testing at Kwajalein. He suggested these efforts failed due to Kwajalein's role as a major source of jobs and income for the Marshall Islands.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Ihid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup> Giff Johnson and Darlene Keiu Johnson. "Kwajalein: Home on the 'Range," in *Pacific Magazine*. November/December 1982. Pp. 23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> Waler Pincus, "Landowners Held in Sit-In On Kwajalein," in the *Washington Post*. June 22, 1982.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

While Pincus may not have cited Marshallese participation in anti-nuclear movement in 1982, by 1983 Marshallese representatives would prove key participants at the 1983 Nuclear Free and Independence Pacific (NFIP) conference in Port Vila, Vanuatu. Kwajalein would also constitute a core topic of discussion at the conference. During his conference keynote speech, "Militarism of the Pacific: Strategic Hot Spots," Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's Owen Wilkes identified Kwajalein as a hot spot and the space where the U.S. tested most strategic weaponry, including new first strike weapons. 95 Highlighting Kwajalein's centrality to the larger nuclear competition, Wilkes contended, "if we could shut down the Pacific Missile Range we would cut off half the momentum in the global arms race." Additional papers delivered at the 1983 NFIP conference discussed both the nuclear testing legacy in the Marshall Islands and the histories of Kwajalein, Ebeye and Operation Homecoming. Kwajalein Atoll Corporation representatives, Laji Taft and Abon Jeadrik presented a paper detailing the events leading up to Operation Homecoming and Marshallese continued struggles on Ebeye. Their paper highlighted the continued exclusions of Marshallese from Kwajalein's hospital. Jeadrik and Taft asserted the army narrated these kinds of life threatening exclusions as a thing of the past but their personal observations attested that exclusions remained common practice.<sup>97</sup> They characterized those excluded comprising mostly children near death, some of whom died en route back to Ebeye.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>95</sup> Owen Wilkes, (Former Research Staff, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute). "Militarism of the Pacific: Strategic Hot Spots," Keynote Speech on Pacific Militarization presented at the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Conference, July 10-20, 1983. Port Vila, Vanuatu. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> Laji Taft, and Abon Jeadrik (Kwajalein Atoll Corporation). "Kwajalein Atoll: The Impact of Foreign Military Presence." Presented at the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Conference, July 10-20, 1983.
 Port Vila, Vanuatu. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.
 <sup>98</sup> Ibid.

The NFIP's conference resolutions included a commitment to addressing Ebeye's continued struggles and highlighted the significance of Kwajalein within the broader nuclear arms race. The resolution situated Kwajalein within the global arms context, identifying the island's central role in the nuclear arms race with virtually every missile in the U.S. nuclear arsenal tested there.<sup>99</sup> The resolution condemned Kwajalein's use for first strike weapons and other missile testing and demanded the atoll's islands return to their rightful owners. The resolution added the owners should receive appropriate compensation for the environmental destruction caused by the base presence. Finally, addressing a very real threat to Ebeye if the U.S. pulled out of Kwajalein, the resolution urged the immediate development of alternative economic strategies to end Kwajalein's peoples' dependency upon the base.<sup>100</sup>

Voices connecting Kwajalein to the broader anti-nuclear movement also emerged on the other end of the missile launch pad at California's Vandenberg Air Force Base.

During January and March 1983, security officers arrested more than 1,200 protestors at Vandenberg during their demonstration against the MX missile launch to Kwajalein. Giff Johnson described the Vandenberg protests in his 1986 *Collision Course at Kwajalein*. He characterized the January and March demonstrations as "mass nonviolent civil disobedience actions that severely disrupted base operations, preparations for the MX launch, and regular Minuteman III testing." Johnson added that subsequent protests to delay missile launches followed later in 1983, 1984 and 1985. One of the groups involved

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<sup>99 &</sup>quot;Resolutions Adopted by NFIPC/83." Presented at the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Conference, July 10-20, 1983. Port Vila, Vanuatu. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

Giff Johnson, "Collision Course at Kwajalein: Marshall Islands," in the *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*. April-June 1986, vol. 18, no. 2. Article based upon Giff Johnson's 1984 book of the same title. Pp. 40.

in the protests, identified as "Coalition for Peace on Earth," issued a proclamation to the people of Lompoc and Vandenberg Air Force Base stating their objection to continued weapons testing at the base. The proclamation also objected to "the U.S. Military's displacement of thousands of Marshall Islanders from the homes in Micronesia, splashdown target for test missiles."

The connection between Operation Homecoming and the subsequent Vandenberg protests also surfaced in Pat Fahey's article appearing in the 1983 issue of the *Pacific* Concerns Resource Center Bulletin. In her piece, Fahey detailed the large nonviolent protest taking place in January 1983, describing a coalition of participants that included sponsorship by the Livermore Action group (Berkeley), the U.S. Nuclear-Free Pacific Network (San Francisco), and Action for Peace and Disarmament (San Luis Obispo). 103 Fahey characterized the coalition's action as "greatly inspired by the Marshallese people's occupation of the Kwajalein Missile Range dubbed 'Operation Homecoming.'" Fahey added that the protest originally intended to coincide with the first test launch of the MX missile, but delays on Capital Hill altered the timing. Fahey explained that the protest proceeded for two primary reasons: the first to acknowledge the many other arms race technologies continuously tested at Vandenberg and the second to challenge the army's continued "apartheid policy against the Marshallese on Ebeve." The array of media coverage spanning the Marshalls, the broader Pacific and the globe suggested the massive reach of the sail-ins, particularly in circles concerned with the broader nuclear arms race. It seems unlikely that demonstrators like Julian Riklon would have predicted their

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> Pat Fahey, "MX Delay Temporary," in the *Micronesian Support Committee Bulletin*. First Quarter 1983. Located in the Micronesian Support Committee Bulletin file, Pacific Manuscripts Bureau 447.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid

actions' widespread impacts as these rippled beyond Kwajalein and Ebeye across the Pacific and the world.

## Reef Crossings and Missings: Keeping the Protests Away from Kwajalein's Civilians

While journalists and activists voiced concerns about Kwajalein and Operation Homecoming across the Pacific from Vanuatu to Japan and from Manila to California, the Americans situated in closest proximity to the events remained in the dark. The army's media crackdown on Kwajalein meant this investigative journalism remained carefully stewarded away from the island's civilian residents. Protecting Americans on Kwajalein from both the Marshallese protestors and from stories about the protest appeared to be a significant military imperative during Operation Homecoming. Army directives expressed fear and concern about monitoring the proximity of protestors to nearby American civilians. During the protest, army policies instructed Americans to stay away from the protest areas and to refrain from any communication with the Marshallese demonstrating. Having no access to any published information about the protests and physically restricted from the demonstration sites, civilians on Kwajalein knew far less about why the protests occurred and how the army responded than media audiences thousands of miles away. This next section considers army's attempts to keep civilians away from protestors and in the dark about Operation Homecoming and civilian responses and interpretations of these events.

Amidst the various articles narrating Operation Homecoming, some alluded to the army's concern to protect Kwajalein's civilians from the protestors and the integrity of segregated spaces on the island through which these civilians moved. A 1982 article

appearing in the Micronesian Support Committee Bulletin described the arrest of Kwajalein's leaders on June 19 directly leading up to Riklon's beating. The article noted that when the protest began the army responded by arresting the protest leaders as they headed to set up camp near Eman Beach on Kwajalein. The article continued, "The Army contended they were entering a 'restricted' area, but the KAC leaders maintain the arrests were made because they were moving into the swimming area for Kwajalein's predominately white American population." That a fear of Marshallese protestors encountering American civilians concerned the army also came through in a July 29, 1982 telegram from the Kwajalein Commander. After erasing any trace of the Riklon attack, ensuring the mission to date involved no violence or injuries, the telegram warned a more tenuous situation could evolve. The Commander wrote the island situation could become worse as the week progressed "with a possibility of confrontation if demonstrators move into residential areas." 107 He added, "If this occurs additional security forces will be required to control and contain the demonstrators." <sup>108</sup> In the September 1982 Pacific Islands Monthly Giff Johnson hinted as well at army concern over Marshallese protestors moving into the white area of the island. He noted that according to Kwajalein Security Police the Marshall Islands Government retained a temporary restraining order against the protestors. This order gave the U.S. legal authority to arrest the protest leaders for entering the restricted area on Kwajalein. Johnson continued on to cite the Kwajalein landowners' legal counsel George Allen

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>106</sup> "The Defense Department Attacks Kwajalein People," in the *Micronesian Support Committee Bulletin*. Circa September 1982. Located in the Micronesian Support Committee Bulletin file, Pacific Manuscripts Bureau 447.

 <sup>107</sup> Telegram from Commander KMR Kwajalein to Commander Ballistic Missile Defense at Huntsville,
 AL, Commander Westcom Ft. Shafter, Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense, Washington D.C. July
 29, 1982. Located in the Micronesian Bureau of Investigation File, TTA, reel no. 3810.
 108 Ibid.

contending that "the real reason the arrests were made was because they were moving into the swimming area for Kwajalein's predominately white, American population." <sup>109</sup>

Concern about Operation Homecoming's potential impact on the Kwajalein civilian community also came through in Department of Defense Under Secretary for Policy Fred C. Ikle's correspondence on July 29, 1982. In his letter to Under Secretary Donald P. Hodel in the Department of the Interior, Ikle expressed alarm at the continued security risk posed by the sail-in. He cited "recent evidence of plans to expand the area of occupation to operational areas of Kwajalein Island;" plans called off due to a UN Visiting Mission on island. 110 Ikle stated these proposed plans constituted evidence that the Kwajalein law enforcement needed to be better prepared for a preemptive measure rather than waiting until after the fact, which could produce violence. He requested the authority to position a small civilian law enforcement contingent in order to deter this possibility, "lessening the threat of a physical confrontation, and the accompanying public media attention."111 Ikle concluded by noting "I am sure you will agree that the safety of 3000 Americans warrants taking every precautionary step available to this Government, and trust that you will be able to send Federal Marshalls to KMR in order to carry out the responsibilities of the Interior Department for security of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands." He emphasized the issue's importance by asking Hodel to give the matter his personal attention. 112

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>109</sup> Giff Johnson, "U.S. vetoes independence as Marshallese landowners occupy Kwajalein" in *Pacific Islands Monthly*. September 1982.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>110</sup> Correspondence from Fred C. Ikle, Under Secretary for Policy, Department of Defense to Donald P. Hodel, Under Secretary, Department of the Interior, sent July 29, 1982. Located in file on correspondence, memos and other information related to protestors, landowners, entry to Kwajalein Atoll, TTA, reel no. 886.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid

In line with keeping Marshallese protestors away from American civilians, the Kwajalein security police also prevented these civilians from approaching those demonstrating. Army policies contained both the protestors and their protest story from Kwajalein's civilian population. While I have been unable to secure copies of any Kwajalein newspaper issues accompanying the early months of Operation Homecomingthese issues remained absent from archived *Hourglass* copies--brief protest coverage appeared in an early October 1982 article predicting the demonstration's conclusion. The October 6, 1982 *Hourglass* article notified residents that the Kwajalein Atoll Corporation, the Marshall Islands Government and United States negotiators were nearing an agreement and that demonstrators would soon evacuate Kwajalein. The article reaffirmed an earlier order by Kwajalein Commander Colonel Banks' that demonstration sites remained off limits to Kwajalein residents. The article stressed "residents must not go near the camp sites, regardless of whether demonstrators are present or not." 113 The same Hourglass issue included a community notification on the final page entitled "Commander's Hot line." The notification asked, "Are you concerned about the Marshallese protest? Have you heard rumors about our island community or policies affecting you? To check on the accuracy of any rumors or information about the protest and attendant problems, call the Commander's Hot Line." The text continued on to reassure residents they need not divulge their names if they called.

In addition to using the island newspaper to instruct Kwajalein civilians about how to respond to Operation Homecoming, the army used *Hourglass* issues in the middle of the 1986 sail-in to also inform Marshallese protestors about their expected behavior

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>113</sup> "U.S.-Marshalls Talks 'Progress Favorably," in the *Kwajalein Hourglass*. October 6, 1982.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

while on island. These *Hourglass* issues carried text written solely in Marshallese warning Marshallese on island that imprisonment and monetary fines would accompany a variety of possible offenses. These crimes included using unauthorized vehicles on the island, using another person's property, impeding public officers' ability to work, public drunkenness, unauthorized removal of property and any attempt to bypass Kwajalein's laws. The text worked to keep the majority of Americans on island not fluent in Marshallese out of the loop of military communication with and threats towards the Marshallese protestors. Brief updates in the *Hourglass* also appeared during the 1979 and 1986 sail-in protests alerting residents to the starts and conclusions of these protests as well as instructing them to stay away from Marshallese encampments on the island.

Recent oral history interviews with civilians who lived on Kwajalein during Operation Homecoming suggested army efforts to control protest information and keep civilians away from Marshallese protestors proved quite successful. Civilians who lived on Kwajalein during the protests told me they remained largely in the dark about what was going on. A recent interview with novelist and former Kwajalein resident Robert Barclay, who was an adolescent at the time of Operation Homecoming, revealed the degree of restriction around the demonstration sites. Barclay recalled that guards stood watch around each encampment preventing any communication between the Marshallese and Americans. Barclay added that his recollection of what was going on at the time remained foggy, but he remembered watching Marshallese protestors march the street during what he believed to be the 1979 protest. He recalled seeing the Kwajalein Commander randomly pull one of the Marshallese men from the march line and beat him.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>116</sup> "KMR Rules/Laws," appearing in the *Kwajalein Hourglass*. April 16, 1986. Translated by Rachel Miller.

What remained most vivid in Barclay's memory was how strange it seemed that the Commander was wearing a pith helmet when confronting this group of nonviolent protestors comprising largely women and children.<sup>117</sup>

Other civilians I spoke with also attested to their lack of awareness about the causes of the protest and their impression of the broader civilian community's limited knowledge. When asked why they thought Marshallese might be protesting, some told me they felt many Americans on Kwajalein believed the landowners were uppity or greedy. Nathaniel Jackson Jr., an American civilian who frequently transited between Kwajalein and Ebeye in his position as ferry boat captain for the islands told me he blamed landowner greediness for harming the masses of Marshallese workers on Ebeye by protesting. He lamented that often it seemed workers bore the brunt of consequences in these situations. When discussing how the protests personally influenced their lives on Kwajalein, several civilians I spoke with recalled minimal impact. Some noted a common American reaction on the island included seeing the demonstration as a minor inconvenience because it prevented Americans from going to their favorite beaches. Many civilians also remained without the help of their domestics for several months. He

Some civilians told me they felt the protests created largely negative consequences for Marshallese and American social interactions. Cris Lindborg, Raymond Wolff and Nathaniel Jackson Jr. all agreed during their interviews that these interactions declined once the U.S. tightened security during and after the protests to such a degree

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>117</sup> Oral history interview with Robert Barclay on December 22, 2010. Kaneohe, O'ahu.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>118</sup> Oral history interview with Nathaniel Jackson, Jr. on October 17, 2010. Big Island, HI.

Oral history interviews with Cris Lindborg and Raymond Wolff on October 16, 2010. Big Island, HI. Oral history interview with Robert Barclay on December 22, 2010. Kaneohe, O'ahu.

that Marshallese could move even less freely between Kwajalein and Ebeye than before. As cited earlier in the chapter, some of the older Marshallese domestics recalled the increase in security during these later years as opposed to during the 1960s and 1970s, which they characterized as less restricted. 120 Commenting on what they perceived as the most extreme security measure following Operation Homecoming, Cris Lindborg and Raymond Wolff recalled one Kwajalein Commanding Officer's plan to secure Kwajalein's borders with a fence. The plan, which they characterized as "ridiculous" and "paranoid" involved creating a razor wire fence across the reef between Kwajalein and Ebeye. Lindborg noted the Commanding Officer's "vision was basically to block all of the Marshallese out and he was fearing that the Marshallese were going to come in an invade us across the reef. So he put this concertina wire...rolls of this battlefield wire, on the north end of the island, in the water, from drop off to drop off, ocean to lagoon, and they had these big flood lights into the reef because they thought at low tide the Marshallese were going to come over." 121 Lindborg and Wolff could not recall the exact months in 1982 when the Commander took this measure but noted the fence did not remain up for long.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>120</sup> Oral history interviews interpreted by Rachel Miller with: Neilat Zackhrias (May 14, 2010), Cinderella Silk (May 15, 2010), Getruth Clarence (May 18, 2010), Telki Amon (May 20, 2010), and Neibanjan Lavin (November 15, 2010). All interviews conducted on Ebeye, Marshall Islands.

121 Oral history interview with Cris Lindborg and Raymond Wolff on October 16, 2010. Kailua-Kona, HI.



Figure 53. Image of concertina wire fence strung across Kwajalein reef, 1982.



Figure 54. Kwajalein's concertina wire fence from different angles, 1982. 122

The army's temporary razor wire attempt to control movement on the reef connecting Kwajalein and Ebeye proved unsuccessful as a recent exchange with a former

Figures 54-55 photographed by Kwajalein civilian Dave Blackwell in 1982. The images document the temporary concertina wire fence the army erected across Kwajalein's reef to further separate Kwajalein and Ebeye following Operation Homecoming. In the top right corner image of figure 54, through the circular wire fence, Ebeye is visible in the distance beyond the first palm tree covered islet. The image reveals the proximity between the two islands. The bottom images in figure 55 very slightly illuminate the fence emerging from both the lagoon and ocean sides of Kwajalein at the northern tip of the island.

Kwajalein civilian exemplified. Encountering Judy Rosochacki through Kwajalein's thriving Facebook community gave me the opportunity to learn more about her subversive role in maneuvering around the army's concertina wire to visit Ebeye in 1982. Her story exemplified one way some American civilians on Kwajalein challenged army responses to the protest even while remaining largely in the dark about broader media coverage of Operation Homecoming, During Operation Homecoming, Rosochacki was a high school student on Kwajalein. She wrote that while working at the island grocery store Surfway she had befriended many Marshallese workers. She recalled how the army denied Marshallese on Ebeye fresh water supplies during the protest as an attempt to hasten its conclusion. Rosochacki characterized the "sit-in" as a mistake where islanders "were being ripped off by their own wealthy landowners, who simply told them the army did not pay rent for use of Kwajalein." 123 Her characterization of the protest echoed aspects of media coverage cited earlier and seemed to reflect how many civilians understood Operation Homecoming as revealed during oral history interviews. 124 Several civilians used this narrative to explain their perception of how most Americans on the island understood what was going on at the time. 125 Interestingly, this understanding seems to have remained in place for many civilians nearly thirty years after the event, suggesting the long-term influence of army policies in dissuading civilians from further investigating the story. After asking Rosochacki why she framed the protest in this way and who shared this information with her, she said she had heard these stories from

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>123</sup> Interview responses over online Facebook message exchange with Judy Rosochacki between March 4 and March 7, 2011.

Oral history interviews with: Giff Johnson on May 13, 2010. Majuro, Marshall Islands; Cris Lindborg and Raymond Wolff on October 16, 2010. Kailua-Kona, HI; Nathaniel Jackson, Jr. on October 17, 2010. Big Island, HI; Robert Barclay on December 23, 2010. Kaneohe, O'ahu.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>125</sup> Oral history interviews with Giff Johnson on May 13, 2010 in Majuro, Marshall Islands; and Cris Lindborg and Raymond Wolff on October 16, 2010. Kailua-Kona, HI.

Americans. She said while working she was "privy to several conversations between Americans (some working at Surfway, and others shopping at Surfway) discussing the reason for this sit-in." She added that one American named Theresa "spoke fluent Marshallese, and she knew what was going on there." <sup>127</sup> Amidst the rumors swirling at Surfway, Rosochacki said she heard after the army cut water supplies to Ebeye, the Marshallese only had rainwater and coconut milk for survival. She added those most impacted remained the children and the elderly. 128 She wrote, "We decided one night, during low tide, to walk the reef over to Ebeye and bring as much water as we could carry. We couldn't carry enough to make any real difference, but we felt like we had done some small thing to help." <sup>129</sup> Having crawled around the concertina wire, Rosochacki characterized the fence as "a joke." She added "We had no trouble getting through it unscathed."131

While not physically impacted by the razor wire, Rosochacki's deviant behavior held a different set of repercussions. Rosochacki said after she graduated high school she had planned to stick around for a couple months and apply to Parsons Art Institute in Paris. Instead she found herself "unceremoniously shipped off to Colorado to live with an aunt and uncle within 2 weeks of graduation." A couple years later her parents explained to her what had happened. They told her someone had seen her crawling under the wire and her father was informed that if she "did not depart the island immediately,

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

[her] entire family would be thrown off." 133 Rosochacki explained that she had never done anything before that to garner such attention on Kwajalein. She said "All the high school kids worried abut back then were things like the 10:00 curfew (that WAS enforced), and riding a bike at night without a flashlight (enforced by a \$4 fine)."134 While citing these few rules disciplining teens on Kwajalein, Rosochacki added that for adults "Kwajalein was a three-mile playground." 135 She said adults had no rules and remained more at the mercy of their children's rebellions. She added that other parents would have reacted similarly to hers in sending their child away if caught for deviant behavior. Rosochacki asserted, "The adults WERE afraid of the military laws and of losing residence on Kwaj." She concluded, "Kwaj was such a fantastic place, being thrown off was as harsh as a jail sentence would have been." 137

Rosochacki's story seems richly layered in revealing Kwajalein's contradictory appeal to Americans. Clearly, Rosochacki felt some awareness and sympathy for Marshallese impacted by military policies, even if she remained somewhat uninformed about the larger history fueling the protests or how her presence on Kwajalein related to that history. She acknowledged an atmosphere of fear under which Kwajalein adults lived, vulnerable to the rebellious acts of their less controllable teens. And yet, she concluded that despite the army's seemingly unjust policies towards the Marshallese and their anxiety producing surveillance structure, Kwajalein remained "such a fantastic place" that being denied the ability to stay equated to a jail sentence. Rosochacki's nostalgia for Kwajalein amidst a broader critique of Marshallese landowners seemed to

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid. 135 Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

echo many conversations with Americans regarding the protests. During oral history interview, several Americans expressed nostalgia for the life they lived on Kwajalein. Their longing for those days suggested the army's success in having designed a suburban family setting with such pleasing quality of life amenities and financial subsidies that Americans recalled most the privileges of their lifestyle on island. In doing so, these same Americans seemed to downplay the broader surveillance structure and military hierarchies limiting their freedoms while on island. Some of these same nostalgic Americans expressed disdain for the hierarchical structure of Marshallese society they identified as leaving Marshallese workers powerless to the whims of their chiefs. While these narratives seemed to lack any substantive historic or cultural knowledge about Marshallese society, they also marked the ways in which Americans ignored the hierarchical structure of their life on Kwajalein. In doing so, these narratives indicated perhaps the partial success of Kwajalein's suburban setting in obscuring this hierarchical structure. Americans arriving to Kwajalein entered a space defined by hierarchy and discipline, just not one that remained under the authority of Marshallese chiefs. Americans' chiefs wore army uniforms instead. Life under the army left no room for community dissent; the kind of dissent Americans critiqued Marshallese society as lacking. As Rosochacki reiterated, any public divergence from Kwajalein's military authority held serious repercussions not just for the individual but also for anyone related to that individual.

While Rosochacki shirked the 1982 army rules by crawling around the concertina wire, archival and oral history sources suggest Marshallese proved obedient in avoiding Kwajalein's fence dividing the island from Ebeye at this time. However, after the army

removed the fence, several hundred Marshallese took the risky three-mile journey across the reef during the subsequent protest in 1986. In contrast to the presumed Kwajalein Commander's earlier fears, these Marshallese individuals did not walk cross the reef to invade the island but rather to reach their jobs. They took to the reef after Marshallese protest leaders blocked the Ebeye dock halting ferry service to Kwajalein in 1986. During these sail-ins, the dock blockade represented one attempt by Marshallese protest leaders to gain leverage in their negotiations with the U.S. and Marshall Islands governments.

On a recent trip to Ebeye, I got the opportunity to speak with one of the women who attempted to walk the reef in 1986. Niebanjan Lavin was among 600 to 700 Marshallese workers impacted by the dock blockade walking the reef in response to the army's threat that "absentees would lose their jobs" on Kwajalein. Lavin recalled having to work during the protest because she had just given birth and needed to feed her daughter. She described how she set out with a group of men to walk across the reef but quickly fell into a hole in the ocean. She described the experience as scary but noted that luckily others knew how to swim (presumably she did not) and assisted her in getting back to Ebeye. She later reached Kwajalein on a speedboat during the protest and her employer offered her the opportunity to stay in the lodge on the island so she could keep working. Unfortunately, because her boss did not extend this invite to her newborn daughter, she had to decline. But Lavin managed to keep her job as the dock blockade lasted a short time. While articles published during the 1986 dock blockade alleged that landowners threatened to destroy the homes of the so-called "strike breakers" who

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>139</sup> Oral history interview with Niebanjan Lavin on November 15, 2010. Ebeye, Marshall Islands.

worked on Kwajalein during the protest, Lavin said nobody every threatened her.<sup>140</sup> She recalled most people on Ebeye, including the workers, as supportive of the protest despite their increased difficulty in getting to work. She said they all stuck together as one.<sup>141</sup>



Figure 55. Neibanjan Lavin. 142

While Julian Riklon faced police violence in 1982 and Neibanjan Lavin nearly drowned walking the reef during the subsequent 1986 sail-in, civilians on Kwajalein remained largely ignorant to the historic confrontations taking place beneath their noses. In addition to oral history examples noted above, the degree of civilian detachment from the Marshallese protests seemed most exemplified by an article appearing in the *Marshall Islands Journal* on April 4, 1986. The article, reprinted from the March 27, 1986 issue of the *Kwajalein Hourglass*, deserves close analysis to explore how the text revealed the extent to which American and Marshallese worlds on Kwajalein remained separate in the

140 Johnson, Giff. "Protests at the missile range," in *Islands Business*. June 1986. Pp. 26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>142</sup> Photographed by Lauren Hirshberg in November 2010 on Ebeye, Republic of the Marshall Islands.

midst of these historic protests. Author Ruth Horne explored the stresses and anxieties civilians faced on Kwajalein in 1986 in her piece "Even Paradise can be Stressful..." Horne's article focused primarily on interviews with Kwajalein's physicians who identified the unique circumstances those living on Kwajalein faced that contributed to these stresses. Horne began her article identifying the phrase "Almost heaven" that appeared as a popular slogan on Kwajalein and asked readers if when they saw this phrase they wondered if they had missed the boat. 143 Horne continued to note that while expectations on a small Pacific island often conjured up visions of stress-free living, Kwajalein physicians Eric Lindborg and Paula Barclay identified stresses and anxieties afflicting many Kwajalein residents. The physicians discussed the island's remoteness as one potential reason some felt out of control, trapped or even guilty for neglecting family or friends far away. Both physicians continued on to discuss the fishbowl effect spurred by the smallness of the community as another stress alongside the difficulty of living in a controlled military environment. Horne cited Barclay as identifying "The limited living space in bachelor quarters, trailers and houses [affecting] almost all KMR residents," adding another stress alongside the "limited variety of activities," especially for those who don't enjoy water sports, jogging or other physical fitness activities. 144 Horne said some missed mall shopping and could feel stressed about being limited to the islands few stores. She cited Barclay describing patients who seemed stressed due to their busy lives filled with too many leisure opportunities. Barclay explained how patients came in with tension headaches due to a full day's work followed by tennis, meetings, sometimes a

 <sup>143</sup> Ruth Horne, "Even Paradise can be Stressful...," reprinted from the March 27, 1986 issue of the *Hourglass* on Kwajalein in April 4, 1986 issue of the *Marshall Islands Journal*. Pp. 14.
 144 Ibid.

movie. She cautioned "The drive to take advantage of the leisure opportunities on Kwajalein--even if they are enjoyable--can put more stress on a person's life." <sup>145</sup>

I quote Horne's article at length here not simply because of the insights her piece offered into daily life on Kwajalein but primarily due to the timing of the article's publication. As noted above, Horne's lengthy analysis of the various stresses facing Kwajalein residents appeared during the 1986 Marshallese protests. Horne's article seemed to capture the lifestyle and concerns of American civilians that likely accompanied the broader period of Marshallese protests confirmed as well by my oral history interviews. Thus, her article serves as one useful text for imagining the simultaneity of such divergent realities existing in close proximity but worlds apart during these unprecedented moments of crisis and rupture. In addition to crisis, the sail-in protests also represented the only periods of temporary but significant Marshallese residency on Kwajalein since labor camp's removal in 1951. Given the army's campaign to limit civilian access to protest news, it is not shocking these worlds continued to remain so far apart. But another potential factor contributing to this apparent lack of reflection on the immediate surrounding events, as exemplified by Horne's article and oral history interviews, could simply be found in the characteristics of most civilians working on Kwajalein. All civilians employed on Kwajalein opted to live and work within the confines of a military structure and thus chose to accept a certain hierarchical environment in which questioning authority was not an option. As noted earlier, Kwajalein's strict punishments for those stepping out of line impacted the civilian community as well as the Marshallese. While regulations towards civilians may have taken on different and less discriminatory forms as those segregating and punishing

145 Ibid

Marshallese, oral history interviews uncovered many stories about Kwajalein officials banning civilians from the island. Interviews revealed how Kwajalein officials threatened those civilians sympathetic to Marshallese and purchasing items to bring to Marshallese friends. Kwajalein civilian Cris Lindborg, whose family seemed revered as iconic figures on Kwajalein, recalled when the Kwajalein Command threatened to ban her for taking a turkey off island to share with Marshallese friends on Majuro for Thanksgiving. <sup>146</sup>
Civilians shared several comparable stories with me including one in which the army banned some of Kwajalein high school's recent graduates for tipping over a beach lifeguard stand in the middle of the night. <sup>147</sup>

Americans working on Kwajalein seemed well aware of the kinds of repercussions that may have accompanied any solidarity with the Marshallese or even inquiry about the protests. The continuity of civilian fear on Kwajalein's intimidating environment surfaced many times during my attempt to approach civilians for interviews on island. One individual in particular felt quite sure that our conversation could risk her job and asked to remain anonymous. While this concern likely would have been present during the 1980s as it is today, fear may not have represented the only factor contributing to Americans' seemingly willful detachment from the protests. Robert Barclay offered another hypothesis during our interview as to why Americans on Kwajalein remained uncritical of any surrounding ruptures. Barclay's impression of Americans on Kwajalein emerged not only from having grown up on the island but also through years of reflection while writing the novel *Melal*, which thoughtfully incorporated various dimensions to American and Marshallese characters to present a portrait of life on Kwajalein. While

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>146</sup> Oral history interview with Cris Lindborg on October 16, 2010. Kailua-Kona, HI.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>147</sup> Facebook email question and answer exchange with Robert Barclay on March 9, 2011.

acknowledging the diversity of individuals he encountered on Kwajalein, Barclay identified the typical American civilian on island as a well-meaning, decent human being with good intentions. He added however that this individual remained intent on getting along and not making waves.

Barclay reminded me during his interview, as had other civilians, that those on Kwajalein remained there for one purpose: to make money. He noted that even if Americans saw injustices towards the Marshallese, they would back off as soon as they caught wind because that reality would be problematic and complicate why they were on Kwajalein. Barclay said injustices against Marshallese are not something Americans want to think about and they have an easier picture to put in place. <sup>148</sup> As part II of this dissertation attempted to show, the physical environment created for civilian life on Kwajalein enabled that "easier picture" to come in a familiar suburban package. That readily available spatial and cultural narrative of suburban U.S.A. allowed Americans to avoid reflection on the larger military colonial context framing their life on Kwajalein. As Barclay reiterated, this picture remained easily accessible even during times of rupture that presumably could shake the foundations of that myth. The Kwajalein setting likely mirrored in many ways the suburban environment most civilians came from in the U.S. In the United States and on Kwajalein, suburbanization reinforced the American exceptionalist narrative by maintaining a storied and physical barrier obscuring the racialized urban poverty and discrimination relationally linking the suburban to the urban.

While any critical engagement with the protests remained limited on Kwajalein, as this chapter has shown analysis of the U.S. aggressive and violent response erupted in dozens of articles spreading across the Marshalls, the broader Pacific and the world.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>148</sup> Oral History Interview with Robert Barclay on December 22, 2010. Kaneohe, O'ahu.

Having examined documentation of the 1982 protests, the final section of this chapter turns to explore Operation Homecoming's aftermath as evidenced by divergences arising during the last large scale Marshallese protest in 1986.

## The Aftermath of Operation Homecoming: Transferring Violence and Political Power

Between the 1982 and 1986 sail-ins, the Marshallese political terrain was changing in unprecedented ways that would impact how the army and the Marshallese government would approach the latter protest. Compared with Operation Homecoming, the responsibility for reprimanding and controlling Marshallese demonstrators would shift from protection under a disintegrating Trusteeship Agreement to the authorization of a decolonizing Marshallese government. This shift in responsibility for controlling the protestors resulted in even greater threats of violence and unprecedented policies for governmental control over Kwajalein.

Analysis of Operation Homecoming's immediate and long-term implications begins with a return to Julian Riklon who offered an initial lens into the demonstration and accompanying U.S. violence. During our May 2010 oral history interview on Ebeye, Riklon shared his impressions of the protests' impacts on Kwajalein and Ebeye. Highlighting some positive changes that resulted from the collective sail-in protests over the years, Riklon noted the most significant shift came through the change to the 1964 lease agreement detailed in chapter four. This protest victory came through shortening the 99-year lease length and increasing lease payment amounts to landowners. 149 Riklon added that following the protests, Ebeye got a new high school, a new power plant and a

<sup>149</sup> Oral history interview with Julian Riklon on May 17, 2010. Ebeye, Marshall Islands

new pier. While Riklon highlighted these important improvements, he also noted the landowners may not have gotten as much as they desired as evidenced by their continued fight with the Marshall Islands government for a new lease agreement. He lamented the contemporary congestion on Ebeye and the limited housing to accommodate all living on the island, but saw solutions to these continued problems resting in people returning to their home islands. Unfortunately, for many on Ebeye whose home islands continue to reside within the U.S. missile test range the option to return home remains unavailable.

Riklon's description of some immediate changes following Marshallese demonstrations echoed a Giff Johnson article appearing during the middle of Operation Homecoming identifying the direct correlation between Marshallese protests and immediate change that came to Ebeye in 1979. In his 1982 Pacific Islands Monthly article Johnson wrote "The landowners believe they are caught between the U.S. Trust Territory bureaucracy and a Kwajalein army command unconcerned with their problems on Ebeye. They say it is only when they physically occupy their islands in protest that they are able to force action by U.S. officials." Johnson detailed that following the 1979 occupation, the U.S. increased compensation payments from a few hundred thousand a year to \$9 million. He added protest leaders were therefore not terribly surprised when President Kabua announced ten days into Operation Homecoming that \$6 million quickly became available to upgrade the power plant and sewage system and to provide drinking water for all Ebeye homes.<sup>151</sup> When we spoke in May 2010, Johnson also described what he felt represented a significant shift in the army's approach to the Marshall Islands following the protests. He credited the sail-ins with forcing the army to recognize the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>150</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>151</sup> Giff Johnson, "U.S. vetoes independence as Marshallese landowners occupy Kwajalein," in *Pacific Islands Monthly*. September 1982.

Marshallese, noting the army learned "that unless they dealt more effectively with the Marshall Islands, that they would not have uninterrupted use of Kwajalein." <sup>152</sup>

The 1982 Operation Homecoming and predecessor 1979 sail-in protest also introduced implications for the last demonstration of this kind in 1986. Examining how the U.S. and Marshall Islands Government approached this final sail-in offers insights into broader implications of how Marshallese demonstrations helped shape the contours of the emerging Republic of the Marshall Islands. While the length of the 1986 sail-ins slightly exceeded that of Operation Homecoming, the Marshallese participation level significantly declined from the 1,000 involved in 1982 to the few hundred by 1986. The reduced participation likely came from several factors. These included Ebeye improvements addressing some of the grievances expressed in 1982 causing fewer individuals to feel as compelled to demonstrate again.

One factor influencing reduced protestor participation by 1986 seemed to reside within the fear of consequences for protesting previewed during the earlier sail-ins.

Marshallese landowner Sato Maie sent a letter to President Amata Kabua on behalf of his landowner group suggesting the degree to which fear of economic punitive measures influenced some against participation. Maie identified U.S. financial punishments against landowners during Operation Homecoming as a potential deterrent. Maie wrote in February to express he and the Kwajalein Association of Landowners' (KAL's) strong disapproval of the demonstrations and their concern that the protests would only lead to further violence and destruction of property. He added his association believed the demonstrators did not represent the majority of landowners and in fact only comprised

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>152</sup> Oral history interview with Giff Johnson on May 13, 2010. Majuro, Marshall Islands

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>153</sup> Ed Rampell, "Islanders sit in against 'apartheid," in *Pacific Islands Monthly*. June 1986. Pp. 13.

those holding about 27 percent of acreage used by the missile range.<sup>154</sup> He asserted his organization would not take part in the demonstration and they wanted the record to clearly reflect their position so that when the U.S. deducted the protest costs under the new Compact, as they had with Operation Homecoming, KAL's members would not suffer. He stated, "It must be clearly understood by all concerned that we will not stand idly by as we did in early 1983, allowing our people to suffer for the misdeeds of others." Maie requested Kabua's government take a clear public position regarding who would pay the protest costs so everyone would know the penalty for their conduct. He also asked that Kabua make his position clear to the US government and act in whatever way possible to protect the interests of those committed to peaceful negotiations. <sup>156</sup>

Maie's letter exemplified that U.S. punitive measures during Operation

Homecoming proved in part successful in deterring participation during the 1986 protest.

Marshall Islands Government Attorney General Greg Danz also asserted the 1986

demonstration did not represent majority concerns but rather those of a small number of landowners unhappy with the Kwajalein interim use agreement. He suggested landowners take their grievances to court instead of jeopardizing Marshallese health and welfare on Ebeye. Danz alleged that the 1986 protest arose because landowners rejected the new Kwajalein short-term lease agreement. According to Giff Johnson in an 1986

Islands Business article, the army negotiated the lease in September 1985 covering the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>154</sup> Correspondence from Sato Maie (representing Kwajalein Association of Landowners) to President Amata Kabua, Republic of the Marshall Islands on February 27, 1986. Located in the Attorney General File-Kwajalein Missile Range...TTA, reel no. 3849.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>157</sup> "KMR Workers Walk Ebeye Reef to Get to Jobs on Kwaj.," in the *Marshall Islands Journal*. May 2, 1986. Pp. 10.

period until the Compact went into affect in 1986. In October, the landowners requested concessions from the US, including Kwajalein rehiring the approximately 200 Marshallese domestics fired three years earlier as a punitive action during Operation Homecoming. The concession requests also included allowing Marshallese transiting Kwajalein to eat at the snack bar and allowing Marshallese students to attend Kwajalein high school until Ebeye had a high school. The landowners also demanded a \$6 million lump sum payment in addition to funds coming under the Compact. Johnson wrote that the military rejected the monetary request in February but agreed in part to some of the other requests. Unsatisfied with the U.S. response, approximately 100 Kwajalein Atoll Corporation landowners sailed to Kwajalein in early February. Johnson added that while the 1986 protest was considered low key compared to the earlier sail-ins, "Nevertheless, the army flew in additional security personnel, stating that the occupation was disrupting normal KMR operations."

In fact, the combined U.S.-Republic of Marshall Islands Government response distinguished the 1986 sail-in from Operation Homecoming through the increased threat of violence and punitive measures taken. After removing protestors from Kwajalein with orders for security to "shoot to wound," the Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI) Government declared a state of emergency in May responding to the Ebeye pier blockade. Landowner and protest leader Ataji Balos addressed his concern regarding the "shoot to wound" order in an April 18, 1986 article in the *Marshall Islands Journal*. The article cited Balos receiving a report from his lawyer claiming Kwajalein army authorities had issued a "shoot to wound" order if any occupying landowners crossed over a type of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>158</sup> Giff Johnson, "Protests at the missile range," in *Islands Business*. June 1986. Pp. 27-28. <sup>159</sup> Ibid

"'line-of-death'" boundary painted yellow on the island. <sup>160</sup> The "shoot to wound" order also appeared in Adam Horowitz's 1991 documentary film *Home on the range* during video footage following Marshallese women and men getting kicked off Kwajalein. As viewers watched an older Marshallese woman screaming as guards dragged her onto a boat, a news radio announcer detailed the events. The announcer chronicled, "In evicting the landowners, Missile Range Commander Colonel William Spin ordered his guards to 'use deadly force only in extreme necessity' and if there is any shooting by guards they should shoot to wound and not to kill."<sup>161</sup> The order demonstrated the degree to which the threat of violence increased since Operation Homecoming to the level of armed response despite the reduction in numbers of protestors.

The protest concluded after RMI President Amata Kabua met with landowners on May 6, 1986 and promised to seek better lease compensation and developmental assistance for Ebeye. But the violent threatening manner in which the Marshallese government removed protestors from Kwajalein and the legal means through which they enacted the removal left a bitter taste throughout the nation. In his June 1986 *Pacific Islands Monthly* article, "Islanders sit in against 'apartheid," Ed Rampell referenced protest leader Ataji Balos' observations of this violent removal from Kwajalein. Balos noted being denied access to his lawyer during the events and added "The police used force and handcuffed ladies...Two ladies fainted and went to the hospital. The police were really tough on them."

Alongside the brutal manner in which Kwajalein guards removed demonstrators from the island, Kwajalein Command tried to hasten the protest's conclusion by

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>160</sup> "KAC Victorious in Court," in the *Marshall Islands Journal*. April 18, 1986. Pp. 1 and 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>161</sup> Home on the range (documentary film). Directed and produced by Adam Horowitz. 1991.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>162</sup> Ed Rampell, "Islanders sit in against 'apartheid," in *Pacific Islands Monthly*. June 1986. Pp. 13.

threatening to fire workers unable to reach Kwajalein during the Ebeye pier blockade. Touched on earlier in this chapter in exploring Neibanjan Lavin's effort to reach work during this period, a May 2, 1986 *Marshall Islands Journal* article also detailed the threat's impact. The article noted that following the first week of the pier blockade Commander Colonel William Spin began working to permanently replace all workers who could not reach work. Spin's recruitment efforts immediately increased Marshallese numbers trying to walk the reef from 135 to more than 420 of Kwajalein's 590 Ebeye workers. Marshall Islands Government Attorney General Greg Danz indicated in the article that about 40 dependents at Kwajalein had been hired to replace Marshallese. He added that Kwajalein planned to bring in expatriates to fill essential positions. Danz explained in the article that Colonel Spin indicated "KMR could not house or feed the 420 Marshallese who [walked the reef] to Kwajalein."

Speaking back to Spin's punitive labor measures, Ataji Balos challenged the colonel's rationale for recruiting and accommodating additional workers on Kwajalein by highlighting the island's continued structure of segregation. Appearing in the May 2, 1986 *Marshall Islands Journal* Balos questioned Spin stating he saw no reason why workers could not live and work on Kwajalein. He added, "'The Colonel says he can't house and feed all 420 workers, that they must return to Ebeye. Why then did he say he's going to hire hundreds of outsiders to come and work at Kwajalein. How will he house and feed them?" He concluded, "The Americans just don't want Marshallese to live on Kwajalein." Balos also shared his impressions of Kwajalein's segregation practices in Ed Rampell's 1986 *Pacific Islands Monthly* article covering the protests. Balos stated

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>163</sup> "KMR Workers Walk Ebeye Reef to Get to Jobs on Kwaj.," in the *Marshall Islands Journal*. May 2, 1986. Pp. 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>164</sup> "KAC Blockade Will Continue," in the Marshall Islands Journal. May 2, 1986. Pp. 4.

"the situation on Kwajalein atoll is definitely like apartheid. Our kids aren't allowed to attend high school at Kwajalein. There isn't any at Ebeye. We can't use their hospital; ours is inadequate." Balos continued on to describe Kwajalein's high standard of living just three miles from Ebeye making one island look like paradise while the other a slum. Balos noted "They mistreat and look down on our people as if we are not human beings."

In addition to army punishments against workers alongside threats of armed attack to hasten the protest's conclusion, the Marshallese government employed another drastic measure that significantly distinguished the 1986 sail-in from earlier protests. Before removing the protestors, President Amata Kabua declared eminent domain over Kwajalein. Marshall Islands Attorney General Greg Danz explained the government made this declaration to remove Kwajalein protestors because the protest had gone on "long enough." In his 1986 *Islands Business* article, Giff Johnson explained that by authorizing the government to take possession of land belonging to the protesting landowners, the Marshall Islands Cabinet identified the U.S. and Republic of Marshall Islands activities conducted at the Kwajalein Missile Range as constituting "public use." The government's position on eminent domain relied on an argument that United States use of Kwajalein offered defense protection and other services to the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) government. This in turn allowed the RMI government to provide services to the Marshallese people. 169

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>165</sup> Ed Rampell, "Islanders sit in against 'apartheid," in *Pacific Islands Monthly*. June 1986. Pp. 13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>167</sup> Giff Johnson, "Protests at the missile range," in *Islands Business*. June 1986. Pp. 28.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid

<sup>169</sup> Ibid

The RMI government's eminent domain order raised several questions about the United States relationship to the Marshall Islands and the RMI government's responsibility to the Marshallese people. A May 9, 1986 Marshall Islands Journal article referenced the Opposition Coalition Party's statement critical of the Marshall Islands High Court for issuing the eminent domain order. Speaking on behalf of the Coalition, Senator Carl Heine blamed the RMI government for aggravating the protest by issuing the order, which did nothing to resolve grievances but only exacerbated unrest. Heine noted his party seriously questioned the rationale of the High Court in sanctioning this order. He stated "We strongly believe that the M.I. government with all the enormous powers at its command has done to the weak and helpless people of Kwajalein what many a dictator the world over has done to gain and usurp unnecessary power and authority."<sup>170</sup> He added that his party viewed the use of eminent domain as both dangerous and unnecessary. He stated, "occupation by an alien military power of privately owned lands does not constitute 'public use.'"<sup>171</sup> He added that his party felt the government betrayed the Kwajalein people in order to support the powerful U.S. government and military. He said he regretted the government could not sit at the bargaining table with the people of Kwajalein to discuss their grievances in a civil manner. Heine concluded.

"'We think it is not a sound practice to utilize an alien concept called 'eminent domain' to settle private disputes in the interest of the military, especially in these islands. We hope that all Marshallese citizens who are concerned with their civil rights will stand behind the courageous people of Kwajalein in their fight and struggle to gain their lands and freedom. We do not know who may be next in the agenda of eminent domain proceedings'" 172

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 $<sup>^{170}</sup>$  "Heine: RepMar Cause of Kwajalein Unrest," in the Marshall Islands Journal. May 9, 1986. Pp. 1 and

<sup>4.</sup> <sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>172</sup> Ibid.

Concern about the RMI Government's eminent domain order also appeared in a May 2, 1986 editorial in the Marshall Islands Journal. The editorial, "Eminent Domain a Sticky Issue for RepMar," questioned whether the government's right to take land for public use proved necessary in the case of Kwajalein. The article asked if condemning land for the U.S. government's benefit fell within the definition of public use. The editorialist concluded "We don't agree that 'activities conducted by the United States and the Republic of the Marshall Islands at the Kwajalein Missile Range...constitutes a public use. Marshallese don't have free access to KMR and public use of facilities there."<sup>173</sup> The editorial continued on to note that even if people viewed the Kwajalein Atoll Corporation as unreasonable in its demands it remained clear that the RMI Government placed U.S. interests ahead of Marshallese landowners. The editorial acknowledged the quandary the RMI government fell into given the terms and conditions of the Compact and interim use agreement. The editorial explained the RMI government's rationale in declaring that a minority of landowners could not "jeopardize the government's access to benefits, security and services which the U.S. provides as a result of the Compact and control of KMR for weapons development." <sup>174</sup> But, the editorial concluded, the eminent domain order represented an unsettling precedent given the singular importance of land in the region.<sup>175</sup>

Contrasting the various published critiques for his eminent domain order, President Kabua received praise from the U.S. Secretary of Defense. A May 13, 1986 letter from the Defense Secretary exemplified how President Kabua's order strengthened

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>173</sup> "Eminent Domain a Sticky Issue for RepMar," editorial in the *Marshall Islands Journal*. May 2, 1986. Pp. 2. <sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>175</sup> Ibid.

the alliance between the U.S. and the RMI governments. The Secretary of Defense expressed "deep personal appreciation" to President Kabua adding that Kabua's "strong and effective personal leadership in ending the demonstrations," and his "courage and wisdom deserve the admiration of [his] countrymen, and have earned [him] a place of honor in the history of the Republic of the Marshall Islands." The Defense Secretary continued on to assure President Kabua he would do his part to make sure Kabua's efforts were not in vain and work to build a new relationship on the foundations Kabua had lain. He thanked President Kabua again adding he felt that despite the challenges confronting the Marshall Islands, the emerging nation appeared to be in very good hands. 177

For the U.S. military and the RMI government 1986 marked a watershed moment in containing Marshallese unrest on Kwajalein. After the 1986 sail-in neither administering authority in the region had to deal with any further protests that would interfere with the U.S. mission on Kwajalein and the linked Compact funding. Adam Horowitz's 1991 film *Home on the range* offered insights into the fundamental shift taking place during this period in regards to landowner participation in the political process for negotiating both Kwajalein compensation and Compact funding. Illuminating the changed U.S. approach, State Department Representative Mike Senko appeared in the film stating "The Kwajalein Atoll is part of the Marshall Islands. And the United States policy is very clearly to deal with other governments on a government to government basis when it involves a military lease agreement."

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>176</sup> Correspondence from the Secretary of Defense to Republic of the Marshall Islands President Amata Kabua. May 13, 1986. Located in the file: Situation Reports on the Kwajalein "sit-in" of early 1986. TTA, reel no. 3748 F093.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>178</sup> U.S. State Department Representative Mike Senko interview appearing in the 1991 documentary film *Home on the range*. Produced and directed by Adam Horowitz.

the governments of Japan, Germany and Spain concluding "We don't go direct to the local people and this is just a continuation of that precedent." <sup>179</sup>

The blame for usurping Marshallese landowner rights shifted during the 1986 protest to encompass more broadly the emerging RMI Government as complicit alongside the U.S. military for betraying Kwajalein landowners. But in the 1991 documentary film In *Home on the Range*, landowner and protest leader Handel Dribo identified the continuing mark of U.S. power and influence in the region alongside that of the world. He explained that he could not really get Americans; they seemed to have the most and the least at the same time. But he understood the U.S. to be big and powerful around the world with an influence so enormous he found it hard to believe. He qualified, "but the bad things she's doing around the world today are the worst." 180

This overwhelming U.S. influence reflected upon in Dribo statements infused policies on Kwajalein and Ebeye during the protests and furthered tensions between Marshallese political leaders and their broader population. This chapter has attempted to reveal how the Marshallese protests instigated a disproportionately and personally targeted level of violence that sat along a spectrum of more abstract technological violences detailed in chapters six and seven. The 1986 protest positioned Operation Homecoming in a different light, revealing how army and RMI government acts of violence sat against a complicated political terrain, transitioning across the colonial to the supposedly "postcolonial" era. The protests exposed the ambiguity of this shift and the willingness of U.S. military and civilian personnel to do whatever necessary to keep the story and the mission of Kwajalein moving forward with as little disruption as possible.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>179</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>180</sup> Kwajalein landowner Handel Dribo interview appearing in the 1991 documentary film *Home on the range*. Produced and directed by Adam Horowitz.

The complexity of this ambiguous political terrain amidst which the protests emerged is the subject of the next chapter. Chapter nine will consider the influence of both Operation Homecoming and the 1986 protest on helping shape this terrain as the Marshall Islands transitioned from Trust Territory Administration to that of the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

## Part IV Kwajalein, Ebeye and Marshallese Decolonization

Building upon part III's focus on change and rupture and the accompanying violences on Kwajalein and Ebeye, part IV traces continued change in the region with a focus on politics. Chapter nine returns to historic moments less characterized by overt crisis and marked instead by a long process of political negotiation and transformation. Chapter nine reads in large part simultaneous with the events of the 1970s and 1980s chronicled in part III, offering examination of the political counterpart history to the emerging protests and Compact changes. Chapter ten is situated in the aftermath of these historic events and picks up in the presumed "postcolonial" moment to examine how relations changed between Kwajalein and Ebeye under the new Republic of the Marshall Islands. While chapter nine traces the army's role on Kwajalein as influencing and constraining the political process of Marshallese decolonization, chapter ten examines how the newly decolonized nation in turn influenced life on Kwajalein and Ebeye. Taken together both chapters analyze the long-term impact of U.S. colonial control on Kwajalein as shaping the contours of the emerging nation's sovereignty. While the Compact of Free Association replaced the Trusteeship Agreement in 1986 in defining the Marshall Islands' relationship to the United States, a hierarchical structure informed by Marshallese economic dependency upon the U.S. marked and continues to mark continuities from this historic colonial dynamic through today.

## Chapter Nine Kwajalein's Influence on Marshallese Decolonization and Sovereignty

As detailed at the conclusion of chapter eight, one significant change between the 1982 and 1986 sail-ins was the shift in responsibility for ending the protests to the new Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI) government. This change influenced many to charge the RMI government with having betrayed Kwajalein landowners by aligning the government's interests more closely with those of the United States than its own people. Chapter nine picks up on the sail-ins' conclusion and the Republic of the Marshall Islands inauguration under the Compact of the Free Association with the United States. This chapter begins by exploring one of the protests' most significant political repercussions influencing the Compact of Free Association: the United States decision to take independence off the Marshallese ballot. In order to examine the decision's impact on Marshallese politics, chapter nine also uncovers the historic roots of Marshallese discourse on independence leading up to the protests within the broader context of Micronesians' political negotiations for self-governance.

Chapter nine argues that the U.S. colonial presence on Kwajalein heavily shaped the contours of the Marshallese political transition towards decolonization that came in 1986 with the dissolution of the Trusteeship Agreement. U.S. military control on Kwajalein influenced this political process on a few different levels that ultimately constrained the picture of Marshallese sovereignty in the presumed "postcolonial" era.

Chapter nine explores the first level through how Marshallese protests on Kwajalein influenced the U.S. to remove independence as an option from the Marshallese political ballot. Left only with a vote for the Compact of Free Association or the continuation of status quo in the region, Marshallese voters chose the Compact. Although, as will be discussed in later in the chapter, Kwajalein peoples voted largely against the Compact. Considering the more than two decades of Compact relations between the United States and the Republic of the Marshall Islands, this chapter next examines how the U.S. presence on Kwajalein helped shape the contours of the Compact. I argue that Kwajalein's value to the United States positioned the island as a source of leverage in political negotiations and also pushed Marshallese political leaders and landowners to opt for a political status that remained separate from the rest of the Micronesia. Finally, chapter nine examines politics after the implementation of the Compact of Free Association under newly elected President Amata Kabua. Chapter nine analyzes Kabua's discourse over time when discussing the role of Kwajalein in relation to the nation's sovereignty. I will argue, as exemplified by several of Kabua's publicly documented statements, the continued army presence on Kwajalein limited the newly emerging nation's sovereignty.

The United States historically approached Marshallese political change through a politics of intimidation. Under the Compact of Free Association, the United States remained dependent upon the newly formed nation for continued access to Kwajalein, while the emerging Republic of the Marshall Islands remained dependent upon the United States for economic support. But this mutual dependence was never equal and U.S. political and army negotiators would continue to approach Marshallese political

leaders with coercion and intimidation under the Compact. While the United States emergence from the Cold War as "victor" remained largely indebted to U.S. colonial control of Marshallese islands for weapons testing during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, in the last two decades the U.S. relationship to Kwajalein has become more tenuous. While Kwajalein continues to constitute an incredibly valuable, multi-billion dollar missile testing range, the geopolitical context of the Cold War has changed. In the wake of the Cold War, the United States has managed, as per usual, to identify new threats and new wars that continue necessitating Kwajalein's use for weapons development purposes. But army officials and U.S. political negotiators have made clear that if economic negotiations for Kwajalein did not meet what they viewed as reasonable the army would pull out.

Reactions to the potential threat of the army pulling out of Kwajalein among those living on Kwajalein, Ebeye and Majuro seem to reveal the unequal level of dependency that continues to define the U.S. relationship to the region. Americans and Marshallese I have spoken to foresee catastrophe if the U.S. ever followed through on this threat. Some also noted that Ebeye would not be alone in facing immediate economic and social devastation. Americans and Marshallese have acknowledged the risk to the entire nation, whose current economy largely hinges upon Compact monies accompanying extended use agreements for Kwajalein and income taxes from Kwajalein employees. Given this continued level of economic dependency in the supposed "postcolonial" era, chapter nine concludes by considering the limitations on sovereignty under the Compact of Free

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> These discussions included oral history interviews with: *Marshall Islands Journal* editor Giff Johnson on May 7, 2010 in Majuro, Marshall Islands; Pacific Scholar and teacher at the College of the Marshall Islands in Majuro David Kupferman on November 5, 2010 in Honolulu, HI; Marshallese employee and Kwajalein resident Yoshi Kemem on November 14, 2010 in Kwajalein, Marshall Islands, Kwajalein and Ebeye landowner Michael Kabua on November 14, 2010 in South Loi, Marshall Islands.

Association. More broadly the chapter questions this common historic transition from colonial rule to "postcolonial" sovereignty that often neglects attention to the long term political, economic and social implications of colonialism.

## The Kwajalein Protests' Political Impact: Removing Independence from the Marshallese Ballot

As noted above, among the most significant political impacts of the sail-in protests involved the U.S. removing independence from the Marshallese ballot. Marshall Islands plebiscite timings determined when landowners took to their boats to sail-in and reoccupy their islands throughout Kwajalein Atoll. Journalists covering both the sail-ins and the plebiscites and those political leaders negotiating self-governance with United States discussed and critiqued the U.S. decision to remove independence as a voting option. These journalists identified and condemned the anti-democratic approach to removing voting options for Marshallese based on fears and predictions that Marshallese might actually vote against U.S. interests in the region. Examination of the relationship between the Kwajalein protests and the Marshallese ballot reveals the U.S. undermining of Marshallese political rights supposedly protected in the Trusteeship Agreement. The Agreement's article six charged the U.S. with supporting Trust Territory inhabitants towards eventual self-governance or independence if they so chose.<sup>2</sup> The U.S. decision to remove independence clearly conflicted with this stated responsibility under the U.N. But as this dissertation has revealed, the U.S. seemed to often pick and chose which Trusteeship Agreement directives they would follow and typically opted for only those

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Trusteeship Agreement for the Former Japanese Mandated Islands, signed by Harry S. Truman, July 18, 1947. TTA, reel no. 106. Pp.4

serving U.S. military interests in the region. Since the United Nations proved impotent from the inception of the Trusteeship Agreement in asserting any significant power or influence over U.S. practices in the region, the removal of independence not surprisingly proceeded with minimal challenge except from a few journalists and Marshallese political negotiators.

Journalist Giff Johnson remained among those few commenting on Operation Homecoming's impact on the ongoing political negotiations for sovereignty in the Marshall Islands. In the September 1982 Pacific Islands Monthly, Johnson detailed the shift in political options in an article headlined "U.S. vetoes independence as Marshallese landowners occupy Kwajalein." Johnson wrote that as the protesting landowners rejected the recently signed Compact, the U.S. responded by demanding that "independenceearlier agreed by U.S. and Marshall Islands negotiators as an option for Marshallese voters--be removed from the ballot for the upcoming referendum on the compact."<sup>4</sup> Johnson's article explained that the Kwajalein Atoll Corporation, the 5,000 member landowner group leading the Kwajalein protest, announced its opposition to the Compact immediately after Marshallese and American negotiators signed the agreement on May 30, 1982. The Compact agreement concluded 13 years of negotiations between the two nations. Johnson detailed how Operation Homecoming quickly followed in June to oppose the Compact's provision granting the U.S. usage rights to Kwajalein for another 50 years. Landowners also objected to the Compact's mutual security pact granting the U.S. strategic denial rights and the annual \$1.9 million lease payment for the island, well

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Giff Johnson, "U.S. vetoes independence as Marshallese landowners occupy Kwajalein," in *Pacific Islands Monthly*. September, 1982. Pp. 31.

below the \$9 million annual rent. Finally, landowners opposed U.S. refusal to pay past use compensation for Kwajalein.<sup>5</sup>

Johnson's article continued on to detail how Operation Homecoming influenced the U.S. to remove independence from the Marshallese ballot. He traced U.S. Ambassador Fred Zeder and Marshalls Foreign Secretary Tony de Brum meeting in mid-May to sign a Memorandum of Understanding to accelerate the timeline for ending the Trusteeship by October 1. The memorandum outlined two voting options for Marshallese, free association or full independence. Both options guaranteed an end to the Trusteeship Agreement. In his article, Johnson noted that according to informed sources, "The U.S. Government would not have objected to the independence option if compact approval was a certainty." Johnson continued on to note that when the Kwajalein landowners put Compact approval in jeopardy with their protest, U.S. officials quickly repudiated Zeder's memorandum. Explaining the position from the U.S. military, Johnson included a statement from Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Noel Koch. Koch claimed the U.S. had done everything possible to expedite the process of granting Marshallese greater autonomy, but that under international law, "declaring independence simply isn't an available option to them." Johnson noted that Koch's statement conflicted with U.N. Trusteeship provisions obligating the U.S. to develop Micronesia "toward self government or independence as may be appropriate..."8 Johnson continued on to note that "Pentagon officials were reportedly 'furious' because they feared the Marshallese would vote for independence and then demand more than the annual \$1.9 million

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

payments [for Kwajalein] specified in the compact." Johnson concluded his article citing a *Wall Street Journal* article indicating Pentagon officials' extreme concern about Kwajalein's future. These officials noted the prohibitive \$2 billion cost in creating a similar test site elsewhere and the difficulty in finding a comparable site missiles could reach without launching them over major population centers. <sup>10</sup>

The allegation that the U.S. took independence off the Marshall Islands ballot due to the fear that Marshallese might actually vote for it showed up in additional articles covering the sail-in protests. Alongside Johnson's article employing political negotiator Tony de Brum's charge that the U.S. shifted its political strategy based on the Kwajalein protest, *Pacific Magazine* also ran an article that same month highlighting De Brum's impressions. In the article, journalist Greg Knudsen asked Foreign Secretary De Brum several questions about the sail-in protests' impact and the Compact negotiations. Similar to Johnson, Knudsen also contextualized the Compact negotiations within the May 30 signing of the Compact and the Memorandum of Understanding. Knudsen noted the Memorandum indicated "sincere attempts would be made to hold a plebiscite--with a clearcut choice between the Compact and independence--on August 17 in the Marshalls, and acquire necessary U.S. Congressional approval by Oct. 1, 1982. Otherwise, De Brum stated, the Marshalls would unilaterally declare the end of the 35-year U.N. trusteeship relationship and would thenceforth be independent." Knudsen added that a 10-week political education program was planned for the Marshalls to allow Marshallese to determine their future status from an informed position, leaving it up to fate on October

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Greg Knudsen, "The Marshalls Besieged: Foreign Secretary Tony de Brum on Washington, the U.N., Kwajalein, the Northern Atolls,...Independence," in *Pacific Magazine*. September/October 1982. Pp. 17.

1.<sup>12</sup> Knudsen's article stated that following the May 30 Compact signing, a chain of events ensued hindering these plans from taking place. This chain involved the Kwajalein landowners' objection to the Compact and launching of Operation Homecoming, as well as additional objections to the Compact coming from the Northern Atolls impacted by the nuclear testing campaign. Responding to these objections, U.S. Ambassador Fred Zeder denied the U.S. commitment to the agreed upon timetable "under increased pressure from personnel in the departments of Interior, State and Defense," and the U.N. acquiesced to U.S. "proclaiming an inability--or unwillingness"--- to send an observing team to the August 17 sanction of the plebiscite. <sup>13</sup> Finally, the U.S. imposed its Trust Territory authority to suspend the Marshallese plebiscite, postponing it indefinitely "and announced that no wording on the ballot would be allowed that offered a clear choice for independence." <sup>14</sup> De Brum responded by going to Washington and New York to meet with U.S. government officials and to present his peoples' plight at the U.N. Committee on Decolonization.

Following Knudsen's narrative contextualizing why the U.S. removed independence from the ballot, his article solicited Foreign Secretary De Brum's input on where the negotiations currently stood. De Brum began by noting never expected he would need to negotiate the plebiscite's language. He said Ambassador Zeder explained to the Marshallese negotiators that free association would be put on the ballot against independence. De Brum added he hoped that would be the final wording for the plebiscite. Knudsen asked both De Brum and Foreign Secretary Phillip Muller to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ihid.

describe their experiences at the U.N. Committee on Decolonization. Muller noted the Committee received them quite well with several countries supporting the Marshalls, including Papua New Guinea, Fiji, the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. While openly received by the Committee on Decolonization, De Brum noted the U.N. Trusteeship Council reacted quite negatively to their trip. He said one of the Trusteeship Council members directly asked them not to go. This member also warned that their actions would further postpone the trusteeship termination. Attesting to international pressure on Marshallese negotiators, Muller stated he received requests that he not make a statement before the Decolonization Committee. He added that just before speaking, France and Britain tried to pressure him to withdraw the Marshalls' petition.

Knudsen's interview with De Brum and Muller also solicited their insights on Operation Homecoming and the ongoing political negotiations. When asked about the protests, De Brum explained his hope that the landowners would have expressed their views in the plebiscite addressing their own government with a vote rather than the army. But he perceived the demonstration to be peaceful and felt that any democratic country must allow their people to express their views in this way. Knudsen asked De Brum whether the RMI government would consider a formal declaration of independence. De Brum's response offers useful insights for considering what independence may have signified for a people living under three colonial regimes within less than a century and is worth examining at length. He stated,

"We maintain the position that we are already independent, subject to restrictions placed upon us by the trusteeship agreement... We would argue that someone decided someplace away from us, without our knowledge or agreement, to place upon us restrictions that are dictated either by international agreements other than ones agreed to by ourselves, or by spoils of war. But, we were always

<sup>16</sup> Ihid.

independent, no one has ever possessed us or colonized us or in any way taken away our sovereignty. It may have been more dormant at some period than others, but it has always been there. Therefore, the removal of this colonial yoke that was placed upon us should not require the approval of those people who put that yoke on us, but ours."<sup>17</sup>

De Brum's contention that Marshallese should not need their decolonization legitimated by their colonizing overseer stopped short of complete disconnection from the United States. He qualified his assertions when responding to Knudsen's question as to why the Marshallese would want to continue any relationship with the U.S. given their negative experiences thus far. De Brum acknowledged this to be a good question and added that from his experience in negotiating with the U.S. for 13 years he saw a side of the United States less visible to their friends around the world. He claimed this side "violates the very basic foundations of democracy which it boasts to the rest of the world." 18 He said examples included denying Kwajalein protestors legal counsel and taking independence off the Marshallese ballot out of fear people would vote for it. De Brum reiterated a contention he stated on other occasions that the United States feels "they are a little bit more equal than everyone else..."<sup>19</sup> But recognizing the undeniable U.S. influence in the world making it impossible to cut ties completely. De Brum concluded he preferred a relationship no closer than arm's length. He added the U.S. was "much too big, too powerful, too intent on doing what they want to do."<sup>20</sup>

I recently had the opportunity to sit down with De Brum in Waikiki to discuss further the significance of U.S. removal of independence from the Marshallese ballot. In our November 2010 discussion, De Brum contended that when the Marshallese first

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Ibid.

began working to form a new government they wanted an independent government. He noted that at the time, Marshallese leaders were not privy to the Solomon Report, discussed in chapter one. These leaders later learned about the report and observed U.S. policy confirmed by Henry Kissinger himself stating U.S. intentions to keep the Marshalls and the rest of Micronesia as a permanent U.S. territory.<sup>21</sup> De Brum added that the biggest fight he encountered in his role as Vice Chairman of Status Commission for Marshall Islands was over the wording that would appear on the ballot. He believed the Marshallese decision should have been about whether or not they wanted to be independent; but the American negotiators wanted the wording to center on the Compact. According to De Brum, U.S. negotiators indicated that if Marshallese voted against the Compact then they could begin to negotiate for independence. De Brum added that his "legal beagle" people told him the U.S. did not want the Marshalls "to enjoy even a scintilla moment of independence because during that scintilla moment we could say we don't want you here."<sup>22</sup> De Brum paused in reflection. He then said, "whether people would vote for it? I think they would have if they had the opportunity, if only as a bargaining chip."<sup>23</sup> He added that after he went to the U.N. to declare Marshallese wanted independence many of his American friends stopped speaking to him for years. De Brum concluded Marshallese lost the opportunity to use Kwajalein as a bargaining chip with the United States when the option for independence disappeared. He felt his government betrayed the landowners by giving Kwajalein away, by negotiating a long-term lease and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Oral history interview with Tony de Brum on November 22, 2010. Honolulu, HI

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Ibid.

by ignoring landowner desires for past use payments. He repeated twice, "We were betrayed by our own government," adding "there's no question of that."<sup>24</sup>

My discussion with De Brum raised questions as to what may have happened if Marshallese had been given the opportunity to vote for independence. He seemed to feel they likely would have taken advantage of that option. Importantly, for the concerns of this dissertation, independence could have given Marshallese both greater control over Kwajalein and the ability to leverage the island's importance to the U.S. in determining the future relationship between the two countries.

Scholars who have approached the history of Micronesian political negotiations have downplayed this contingent moment of potential independence in the Marshall Islands. Instead, political histories have focused more broadly on Micronesia's political transition away from Trust Territory administration. Early works like Marshallese author Carl Heine's 1974 *Micronesia at the Crossroads: A Reappraisal of the Micronesian Dilemma*, and Ron Crocombe and Ahmed Ali's 1983 edited collection *Politics in Micronesia* tended to address the Compact of Free Association as a given in a predetermined path towards self-determination.<sup>25</sup> Analytic focus in each of these works centered more on whether each island territory would go it alone in the Compact negotiation route or opt for a unified Micronesia under free association with the United States. In fact in Heine's preface, he acknowledged potential limitations of this approach. He stated "Throughout this book, I have taken the position that the only realistic political course for Micronesia is to enter into a state of free association with the United States.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Carl Heine, *Micronesia at the Crossroads: A Reappraisal of the Micronesian Political Dilemma*. East West Center Book. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1974); Ron Crocombe and Ahmed Ali, *Politics in Micronesia* (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific. 1983).

However, as a Micronesian, I am colonized, and perhaps my feelings may have been colored by my own experiences."<sup>26</sup> Heine continued on to cite his time living in the United States and his attraction to the nation's wealth, variety and liveliness.<sup>27</sup> The notion of independence seemed marginal to these works suggesting the ideas may have also remained marginal in political discussions at the time. Even David Hanlon's more recent 1998 *Remaking Micronesia: Discourse over Development in a Pacific Territory 1944-1982* glossed over this historic contingent moment for Marshallese independence in his chapter on Ebeye and the political changes occurring in the Marshall Islands.

While historiographically, independence has not remained a central lens through which scholars have approached Marshallese political history, I consider the topic worthy of analysis for better understanding Kwajalein's role in history of decolonization. This next section traces some of the earliest iterations imagining political independence in the Marshall Islands and the relationship of these discussions to Kwajalein. Whether Marshallese would have voted for independence cannot be determined. Clearly, as the last section indicated, U.S. political negotiators must have been wary enough about this possibility if they felt compelled to remove the option from the ballot. What also seemed clear in discussions with Tony De Brum and additional sources cited below, is that simply the possibility of an independent Marshall Islands as this related to U.S. valuation of Kwajalein could have offered Marshallese political leaders and landowners considerable economic leverage in dealing with the United States. The terms and conditions of the Compact of Free Association in relation to Kwajalein placed limitations on how much landowners could gain for this valuable island. The Compact also meant

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Heine, Micronesia at the Crossroads, xi.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Ibid.

landowners could not choose to do anything else with Kwajalein, either in terms of living on the island or renting the space to other nations who may have paid more for use of this strategic space. While scholars have tended to neglect this aspect of Marshallese political history in relation to discussions of Kwajalein, the power independence potentially offered landowners and Marshallese political leaders in approaching the U.S. on a more equal level seems worthy of consideration.

## Considering Independence in the Marshall Islands: How Kwajalein Shaped the Debates

Interrogating further De Brum's contention that Marshallese may have indeed voted for independence if given the option, this section unearths some of the roots of Marshallese discourse on independence under the Trust Territory Administration. The chapter explores how publicly documented discourse on independence moved from an early 1968 Congress of Micronesia meeting to later testimonies at the U.S. Senate Hearings on Ebeye in 1976. I argue that given historic debates and discussions about independence for more than two decades prior to the Compact vote, it seems reasonable that U.S. political negotiators would have been aware independence remained a viable option and desire among many Marshallese. Furthermore, if the United States and the United Nations took seriously U.S. obligations laid out in the Trusteeship Agreement to support Trust Territory inhabitants in their political development towards self-determination or independence, inclusion of independence would have remained on the ballot. Finally, this section offers an introduction to considering Kwajalein's role in

debates about Micronesian independence more broadly that would transition to discussions of a separate independent Marshallese nation by the mid-1970s.

Suspicion that the United States might ignore Trust Territory obligations to support political self-determination and instead potentially fix political elections across Micronesia surfaced prior to the Solomon Report's exposure in 1971. As discussed in chapter one, the Solomon Report revealed U.S. policy to curb political independence by ensuring economic dependency across Micronesia to an extent that Micronesians would have no choice but to remain permanently tied to the United States. Despite this underlying agenda documented during the Kennedy administration, the United States Secretary of Interior supported the creation of the Congress of Micronesia in 1964. The Congress provided a space for elite Micronesian political leaders educated in U.S. schools on democracy-style government to discuss and debate the future of their islands. In supporting the creation of the Congress, the United States promoted the political self-determination process to culminate in a Micronesian state, bringing all of the island regions together into one, newly formed political, economic and social entity.

During one Congress meeting among Micronesian political leaders in 1968, Palauan Political Status Commission Chairman Lazarus Salii voiced his concern over the potential for the U.S. to ignore Micronesians' rights to choose their own political path. He feared the U.S. may try to fix the political future of the island regions. Salii's concerns surfaced in journalist Marjorie Smith's article on the political negotiations appearing in the 1968 *Micronesian Reporter*. Smith noted that Salii told the Congress of Micronesia during the summer 1968 meetings "there is a danger...that ballots for Micronesia's plebiscite will be printed in Washington...it is humanly possible for non-Micronesians to

determine what is best for Micronesians."<sup>28</sup> Salii was not alone in his suspicions. A memorandum from the ACLU sent to Senator Harry M. Jackson, the Chairman of the Committee of the Interior and Insular Affairs four years later also voiced this concern. The letter prefacing the May 1972 memorandum written by James Gutmann, Special Adviser on Micronesia and Roger Baldwin, International Affairs Adviser noted the memorandum "expresses not only our position but our willingness to assist where practicable in protecting the rights and liberties of the Micronesian peoples."<sup>29</sup> The memorandum stated the ACLU supported Micronesian right to self-determination. The text elaborated that this involved ensuring Trust Territory peoples' freedom of choice during plebiscites after the inhabitants were fully informed of the alternatives proposed. The memorandum concluded "Precautions need to be taken to avoid any pressures by the Administering Authority in favor of any specific alternative."<sup>30</sup> Little did the ACLU know that within a decade the "pressure" applied by the administering authority would involve removing those alternatives from voters' ballots in the Marshall Islands.

One of the early documented instances of Micronesian debates on independence appeared in Marjorie Smith's 1968 coverage of the Congress of Micronesia's summer session in Saipan. Smith titled her *Micronesian Reporter* article, "The Summer of Dissent" and marked the summer meetings as a significant turning point for Micronesian leaders in their assertions for political rights, particularly independence. Smith stated 1968 marked a moment clearly distinguishing the summer's meetings from all prior years

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Smith, Marjorie. "The Summer of Dissent," in *Micronesian Reporter*. Fourth Quarter, 1968. Pp. 26.
<sup>29</sup> ACLU Memorandum on the Trust Territory of Micronesian sent by Special Adviser on Micronesia James Gutmann and International Affairs Adviser Roger Baldwin to Senator Henry M. Jackson, Chairman for the Committee of the Interior and Insular Affairs. May 24, 1972. Located in the U.S. Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs 92nd Congress Box 27 at the National Archives in Washington D.C. This remained the only document from the ACLU I found in the archives in relation to Micronesia. It is not entirely clear if or why this remained the only time the ACLU became involved.

as those political leaders present brought an energy for change and a will for dissent. Four of those leaders, she wrote, had been among the thirteen present at the first meeting of Micronesian political leaders a dozen years earlier. Among the four, Amata Kabua would go on to become the first Marshallese president.<sup>31</sup> Smith noted the leaders present in 1968 came with an awareness "that the reason the United States has been in Micronesia all these years has been for the safety of the United States, not out of altruistic impulses to help an underdeveloped country."<sup>32</sup> And while Smith noted this revelation was nothing new for Micronesians, whom she characterized as realists, over the summer "it became clear to Americans in Micronesia for the first time that Micronesians understand why the United States is here."<sup>33</sup> She explained this understanding gave the Micronesians confidence with the summer's meeting constituting the first time "they faced the Americans as equals instead of wards asking for favors."<sup>34</sup>

The leaders' shift in confidence, according to Smith, also provided the space and opportunity for Micronesians to introduce discussion on independence as a future possibility for the region. Smith noted that Americans who had grown up believing in their own revolution and decrying colonialism should not have been shocked to hear Micronesians use the word independence. She added, however, that Micronesian leaders discussed how they had been told for years they could not achieve independence because they lacked the resources to do so. But these same leaders used the summer meeting to talk about their islands' marine resources, underdeveloped agriculture and strategic locations. Smith added that in relation to the Marshalls, someone somewhere told the

Marjorie Smith, "The Summer of Dissent," in *Micronesian Reporter*. Fourth Quarter, 1968. Pp. 22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

Marshallese the United States was paying \$100 million a year to lease military bases in Spain. She said this information, whether true or false, got the Marshallese saying "If we were an independent country, the United States would have to pay rental on her bases at Eniwetok and Kwajalein.' An independent Micronesia could be run very nicely on a hundred million dollars a year, the Marshallese hint..."

Smith's coverage of early Micronesian discussions on independence and Kwajalein's relationship to the region's potential economic future echoed Tony de Brum's statements during our November 2010 interview. As noted earlier, De Brum lamented that once the U.S. removed independence from the ballot, Kwajalein could no longer work as a bargaining chip for the Marshallese because the RMI government gave it away through the Compact.<sup>36</sup> It is useful to pause and consider De Brum's reflections as contextualized during a moment nearly 25 years after the Compact began. In the contemporary Marshall Islands political and economic moment, discourse on Marshallese independence having ever been considered as realistic possibility remains absent, particularly given the nation's extreme economic dependency on the United States.

Smith's article offered a glimpse into a contingent moment in which independence seemed an exciting possibility not just for the Marshalls, but across the entire Trust Territory. Her article is thus worth continued examination for the rare insights she offered into this since obscured and silenced moment.

Smith framed Micronesian discussions of independence as significant through their unprecedented identification of possibilities for using independence as economic and political leverage in negotiating continued relations with the United States. She

35 Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Oral history interview with Tony de Brum on November 22, 2010. Honolulu, HI

explained how after Marshallese political leaders brought up independence at the meeting, the word "hung there heavily in the air...and everyone stared at it with some awe..."<sup>37</sup> She said from that point on the potential moved into the realm of the possible and Palauans next considered ways they could support an independent Micronesia with money from Babelthuap.<sup>38</sup> Smith noted that following the buzz of discussion about independence, the Trust Territory Commissioner warned at a summer press conference against basing entire economies on military spending given the risks inherent in military spending fluctuations. She wrote, however, that Micronesian leaders responded by "nodding wisely and said to themselves that until the oil runs out in Kuwait and until the phosphate is gone from Nauru those tiny countries enjoy the world's highest per capita income--and invest much of it for slimmer days." <sup>39</sup> Smith concluded it remained impossible, given her observations, to know how many Congress members took independence seriously as Micronesia's political fate. But, she explained, more important seemed their renewed confidence to consider the option and use the idea as a potential bargaining point in future status discussions. 40 Smith stated "when they pronounced the forbidden word 'independence.' They got Micronesia's attention. Now all of the other alternatives can be discussed and explained." She added the summer's congressional session began a territory-wide debate unlikely to be stopped thereafter even if anyone wanted to stop it.42

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Marjorie Smith, "The Summer of Dissent," in *Micronesian Reporter*. Fourth Quarter, 1968. Pp. 25. 38 Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Ibid.

In 1968, Smith's article discussed independence under the political presumption that the region would become a unified entity, an "independent Micronesia." As Smith noted, Palauans discussed their economic assets strengthening the *region's* political future as a whole. Together, Micronesian leaders considered the economic leverage that could be gained by negotiating higher compensation for Kwajalein as an independent entity. Early on, Marshallese political leaders shared this vision of a unified and potentially independent Micronesia. But that vision changed by the mid-1970s. And for the Marshall Islands, Kwajalein played a central role in that shift. This next section explores how Kwajalein continued to influence debates on independence and helped shape the Marshallese political path towards free association with the United States as separate from the rest of Micronesia. To do so, the section relies heavily on testimonies among Marshallese political leaders and landowners at the 1976 senate hearings alongside future President Amata Kabua's statements asserting Marshallese separation to the Congress of Micronesia in 1977.

## Kwajalein's Impact on the Compact of Free Association: Negotiating a Separate Status

In addition to offering a space for addressing grievances about Kwajalein and Ebeye's relationship as discussed in chapter six, the 1976 senate hearings provided a platform for Marshallese to express preferences regarding their nation's political future. Testimonies given during the hearings supported and opposed independence, free association, Micronesian unity and Marshallese separation. These varied testimonies

offer a range of discourse for examining Kwajalein's role in shaping the Marshallese path towards a separate Compact agreement with the United States.

The senate hearings introductory statements offered an interesting platform for considering the ambiguous position from which Marshallese would be negotiating their political future. Because the U.N. Trusteeship Agreement cloaked the U.S. colonial relationship with the Marshall Islands under the realm of national administration sanctioned by the organization charged with representing nations, Senator Won Pat from Guam struggled to mark the political status within which Marshallese resided. In his opening statements Won Pat highlighted this ambiguity by suggesting the confined political context within which Marshallese would be testifying about their political future. He compared his appearance before the Marshallese with a story of a politician addressing inmates in a prison. Won Pat said the politician first addressed the group by saying "fellow citizens," which provoked laughter among the audience because as prisoners they were no longer citizens. 43 The politician stopped to think and then addressed the group as "fellow convicts," which likewise evoked laughter because he himself was not a convict. Finally, the politician stated he had no idea what to call those before him, but he was very glad to see them. Likewise, Won Pat addressed his Marshallese audience noting he too was very happy to see them. As a representative from Guam, Won Pat explained how his people had lived under the U.S. flag for more than half a century before becoming a part of the U.S. Commenting on the momentous nature of the occasion he concluded, "Now you are being given the opportunity to determine for

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> "Current Problems in the Marshall Islands," 42. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

yourselves whether you want to associate with the United States or you want to become independent."<sup>44</sup>

Won Pat's remarks showcased the deeper history of U.S. imperial control across Micronesia that began with Guam, even though he neglected to mark Guam's relationship to the U.S. in such a manner. He instead pointed to the more confusing or almost comicperhaps tragically comic--conundrum of an individual facing an unfree population but unsure about (or hesitant in) how to name the structure that confined that freedom. Won Pat alluded to the discursive challenge in marking the freedoms and unfreedoms across the range of U.S. territorial designations given to these island spaces controlled by the United States but not part of the nation. Closest to home for Won Pat would have been Guam's original "unincorporated territory" status under the U.S. designated through the Treaty of Paris in 1898. These territorial categories in Micronesia seemed to have historically moved from one island's unincorporated status in the late 1800s through to other islands' trust territory status marked by the 1947 Trusteeship Agreement. By identifying these and other islands controlled by the U.S. through terms outside of the colonial or imperial, the U.S. could expand its imperial reach through the twentieth century while upholding an exceptionalist national narrative.

In addition to highlighting the ambiguous position from which Marshallese would negotiate a political relationship with the U.S., Won Pat's statements also revealed that just six years prior to U.S. removal from the Marshallese ballot, independence remained a noted possibility for the Marshall Islands. Won Pat's acknowledgement of independence as a real desire for Marshallese foreshadowed statements that would arise during several senate testimonies. Among the most vocal advocates for independence at the senate

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. 43.

hearings, Kwajalein landowner Ataji Balos testified pointing to the central importance of Kwajalein in the political negotiations. At the time of his statements, Balos had been serving for several years on the Congress of Micronesia Joint Committee on Future Status and participated in the Marshall Islands Political Status Commission. Balos couched his plea for independence alongside a push for Marshallese separation from Micronesia. Arguing as to why Micronesian unity would not benefit the Marshall Islands, Balos centered his statements on Kwajalein. He argued the proposal for a unified free association with the United States would adversely affect the nation and the Kwajalein people specifically. 45 Balos accused the U.S. of promoting Micronesian unity in part to gain leverage on negotiating a long-term lease for Kwajalein. He stated Kwajalein landowners would not approve the terms of free association because the Compact draft suggested a continuation of the unjust 1964 lease agreement. Balos added, "The United States insists on the concept of Micronesian unity because it realizes no truly representative group of Marshallese leaders will ever sign an agreement embodying the 1964 Kwajalein lease." 46 Calling attention to this unique "divide and conquer" approach in Micronesia, Balos asserted that if U.S. negotiators felt serious about Micronesian unity they would first come to the Marshalls to negotiate a fair deal for Kwajalein compensation so equitable agreements on the island's future could be made.<sup>47</sup>

Balos' testimony identified the continuation of Kwajalein's unjust lease as among the primary goals informing U.S. political attempts to unify Micronesia under one Compact of Free Association. Balos in turn marked himself as speaking on behalf of Kwajalein landowners who would not support an unfair lease as among the terms

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Ibid. 5.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Ibid.

defining the Marshall Islands political future. Balos' statements foreshadowed the 1986 vote when the majority of Kwajalein landowners voted against the Compact of Free Association based largely the Compact's leasing terms for Kwajalein. Concluding his testimony, Balos noted he believed many Marshallese wanted independence so they could have more control over their lands and government. Reiterating Senator Won Pat's opening remarks, Balos added Marshallese did not feel free in their own lands.<sup>48</sup>

Additional Kwajalein landowner voices surfaced during the 1976 senate hearings expressing their desire for independence as linked to their experience with land dispossession and unfair compensation. Kwajalein landowner Atidrik Maie testified to his frustration with the lack of U.S. compensation for his land on Gugeegue, an island directly north of Ebeye in Kwajalein Atoll. He noted he had requested compensation several times to no avail and added he desired independence because the way the U.S. negotiated and made decisions about his land remained unfamiliar to him. He preferred to negotiate directly and represent his island and his own interests rather than have another entity represent him. 49 Kwajalein landowner Handel Dribo also expressed his desire for independence at the senate hearings. Dribo noted he too preferred Marshallese negotiate their status as a separate entity from the larger Micronesian region. In opting for separate status, Dribo explained he feared losing his Kwajalein land rights if Marshallese chose unity. He said he understood Micronesian unity would mean "other people throughout Micronesia other than Marshallese would be concerned and actually legislate regarding [his] land and [he did not] think that is right." He added "I feel that we have separate

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Ibid, 16.

languages and we have separate cultures and so it is very difficult to call us a united group."<sup>51</sup>

Many testifying at the hearings echoed Dribo in contending a unified Micronesia never existed and pointed again to Kwajalein's distinct value in influencing U.S. political negotiators to push Micronesian unity on the Marshallese. Among the most direct challenges to the concept of a unified Micronesia came through the future Marshallese President Amata Kabua's testimony. Kabua spoke at the time as Senator and Member of the Congress of Micronesia and Chairman of the Marshalls Political Status Commission. He contextualized his statements within his recent trip to the U.N. Trusteeship Council to present the first formal declaration of Marshallese preference for separate status negotiations. Kabua stated the Marshallese wanted to negotiate separately from Micronesia, noting the people of the Marshalls were ready politically and economically for self-government. He argued "The people of the Marshall Islands do not admit the existence of any 'Micronesia' as a term to validly describe either a prospective nation or a prospective government of which they will be a part."<sup>52</sup> In describing the urgency with which Marshallese should be allowed to pursue their separate status negotiations with the U.S., Kabua stressed the experiences of those displaced by army activities and injustices on Kwajalein. He asserted "every day we lose comes at a high and continuing social and economic price for our people. They are victims of loss of their lands without compensation, massive dislocations in their lives as a result and of substantial and continuing discrimination at Kwajalein."<sup>53</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52 &</sup>quot;Current Problems in the Marshall Islands," 58. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

Kabua continued on to identify the Marshall Islands as ready for self-government and to outline the benefits of more equitable and reciprocal relationship with the United States. He noted the Marshallese did not need the U.S. managing their defense or marine resources.<sup>54</sup> They instead needed U.S. financial and technical assistance in developing these resources and U.S. support to market the harvests of the sea. Kabua emphasized that aside from the United States no other government coveted Marshallese lands or waters. Thus, Marshallese could easily defend these resources without U.S. involvement. He qualified however, the Marshallese would be "quite willing to negotiate fair and equitable agreements" with the United States to make certain their lands and waters remained available for U.S. continuing strategic use. 55 Kabua's statements suggested the United States and Marshall Islands relationship should continue but on a level of negotiation and partnership among equal sovereign nations. His testimony seemed to echo Tony de Brum's earlier contention that independence could have allowed Marshallese greater leverage in negotiating Kwajalein's use at terms considered more "fair and equitable" to Marshallese.

Just one month prior to Amata Kabua's testimony emphasizing Marshallese distinctive status and readiness for self-governance De Brum also shared these views before the United Nations Trusteeship Council. On June 30 1976 De Brum spoke in his role at the time as Vice Chairman of the Marshall Islands Political Status Commission advocating for separate status negotiations and eventual independence. De Brum expressed his belief that the U.S. would indeed end the Trusteeship Agreement, but feared if they did so on the basis of Micronesian unity U.S. control over the region would

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Ibid, 57.

be guaranteed, turning the Marshalls into "an outright colony." De Brum continued on to describe why Micronesian unity would not benefit Marshallese. He alluded to the unique historic relationship between the Marshall Islands and the United States. In doing so, he highlighted the consequences disproportionately suffered by Marshallese because of this relationship that contrasted that of other Micronesians. He stated,

"No one can take Marshallese, Ponapeans, Trukese, Palauans, Yapese, Kusaieans, and others, put them all together and come out with Micronesians. Micronesians unity is and has always been a myth, advanced by our so-called benefactors in order to keep us dependent, and accepted by some of our brothers in the Carolines who see it as a means of continued enjoyment of the U.S. dole system without having to give up any of their lands, without having to be displaced by the U.S. military, without having their islands blasted off the face of the earth, without being exposed to atomic radiation, without suffering discrimination or without being shot at once a week with ICBM's from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California." <sup>57</sup>

De Brum continued on to note that while the U.S. celebrated 200 years of independence from England, in those 200 years, whether intentional or not, the U.S. had grown to become a colonizer in its own right. He described the relationship intended to be of beneficiary and trustee only benefited the United States. He concluded, "The atomic testing at Bikini and Enewetak Atolls, the missile tests at Kwajalein, and the resulting dislocation of one out of every three Marshallese, suggests that the United States rule of thumb for the Marshalls is 'Ask not what you can do for the Marshalls, but ask what the Marshalls can do for you." <sup>58</sup>

Testifying before the Trusteeship Council, De Brum marked that which defined the Marshall Islands as historically distinct from the rest of Micronesia with Kwajalein constituting a primary component of that definition. His arguments further revealed how

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> "Current Problems in the Marshall Islands," Appendix. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Ibid

<sup>58</sup> Ibid

U.S. military objectives on Kwajalein and Marshallese identification of those objectives would continue to shape the contours of Marshallese decolonization. Senate testimonies echoing De Brum's speech pushed for independence and separation from Micronesia by centering Kwajalein to debate that which would gained or lost through varying political paths. Kabua, for example, pointed to the economic benefits of negotiating a continued lease for Kwajalein and economic support from the United States from a position of an agreement between equal sovereign nations. Other Kwajalein landowners also emphasized that moving forward towards free association with the rest of Micronesia signified a loss of control over Kwajalein's leasing terms and the accompanying loss of economic leverage with the United States.

Among those reiterating Kwajalein's central role in the political future of the Marshall Islands, George M. Allen also spoke before the United Nations Trusteeship Council on June 30, 1976 as Legal Council for the Marshall Islands Political Status Commission. Allen directly tied the fate of these political negotiations to Kwajalein prefacing that he came speaking on behalf of the Kwajalein people. He argued "The future well-being of the people of Kwajalein Atoll is inevitably linked to the future political status of the Marshall Islands."<sup>59</sup> He charged the proposed Compact of Free Association for a unified Micronesia ignored the hardships on the Kwajalein people and proposed no changes in the island's discriminatory treatment or compensation, but included continued use of the island for missile testing. Allen alleged, "In short, the United States, in the guise of ending the trusteeship, intends to maintain its military presence in the Marshalls, and to exclude the Marshallese from their own lands and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Ibid.

waters, as at Kwajalein, indefinitely."<sup>60</sup> Allen detailed the various problems occurring between Kwajalein and Ebeye noting the fate of Kwajalein people remained dependent on these political status negotiations. He stated, "it is impossible to consider the question of future political status after the trusteeship without considering the social and economic problems of the people of Kwajalein. Those problems are caused by racial discrimination against them practiced by the U.S. Government and its contractors."<sup>61</sup> Allen described the draft Compact of Free Association entitling the United States to continue its past 30 years of abuse with another 70 years of land and water use in Kwajalein Atoll without adequate compensation. The Compact, he argued, left Marshallese people in Kwajalein to live as second-class citizens in their own islands. He advised that the U.N. avoid giving its blessing to policies calculated to perpetuate continuing injustice on Kwajalein.<sup>62</sup>

Allen's statement positioned Kwajalein peoples as among the primary stakeholders in the political future of the Marshall Islands and condemned the injustices that would continue plaguing them through the Compact of Free Association. This analysis of the of Compact of Free Association, however, did not encompass the opinions of all or even the majority testifying at the 1976 senate hearings. Several Marshallese speakers expressed support for both the Compact and Micronesian unity. John Heine spoke as Acting Chairman for the Voice of the Marshallese and testified that he and his newly formed group supported Micronesian unification and free association with the U.S. Heine said his group did not see the Marshalls as ready for independence. He said the Marshall Islands still needed further medical help and lack trained indigenous lawyers,

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Ihid.

doctors and leaders to enable independence.<sup>63</sup> Heine explained the Marshallese had been trying for years to learn about democratic governance but the nation needed more time. Heine also challenged testimonies about the Marshallese unity and distinction from other Micronesian islands. He noted the Marshall Islands had distinctions and divisions from within as well, based on customs of following different paramount chiefs.<sup>64</sup> Heine argued that Marshallese concerns about unification largely remained concerns about how money would be shared throughout Micronesia, with Marshallese not wanting to share their wealth across other districts.<sup>65</sup> In making these arguments, Heine seemed to give less weight than De Brum to the distinct historic conditions and consequences of U.S. control over Marshallese islands for weapons development. By critiquing Marshallese concerns about sharing wealth across the districts, which would have been primarily generated through Kwajalein's value to the U.S., Heine suggested that perhaps this unique history did not warrant separate protected compensations for the Marshallese.

Heine's advocacy for Micronesian unity and free association remained one voice among several at the senate hearings opposing Marshallese separation and independence. Some Marshallese opted for separate status but favored free association, like President of the Marshall Islands Student Alumni Association Reuben Zacharias. He spoke on behalf of the college graduates and high school students comprising the association concerned with the welfare of the Marshall Islands. Zacharias noted that Marshall Islands leaders tended to ignore this community's views but this group spent years training and preparing to come back and help the islands. He added his group supported separation from Micronesia for political negotiations primarily because land remained so important to the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> "Current Problems in the Marshall Islands," 20. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> Ibid, 23.

Marshallese. Zacharias stated "Our land is our unity...We consider our land more precious than any money..." He said his group advocated association with the United States, but under a status to be negotiated according to Marshallese wishes and aspirations. Zacharias said he felt his people remained largely uninformed about the Compact. He noted, however, that he was organizing student committees to study the Compact carefully and plan public debates to be played over the radio in Marshallese to broaden access and education. 67

While as noted above, several individuals voiced support for Marshallese independence during senate testimonies, the senate hearings' representatives communicated their impression that a majority of Marshallese desired free association. These representatives passed along this message through a series of letters to political leaders in D.C. Senate Representative and Subcommittee on Territorial and Insular Affairs Member Patsy Mink wrote several letters after the hearings communicating her belief that, on the whole, Marshallese did not desire independence. In a letter sent to Acting President's Personal Representative Philip Manilard in the Department of Interior's Office of Micronesian Status Negotiations Mink stated Marshallese wanted separate status negotiations with the United States. She noted too that they did not want to be bound to Micronesian unity in negotiating their future. Mink added, "recent expressions regarding 'independence' do not reflect accurately how the people view their future relationship with the United States. My conclusions are that the vast majority of the people desire continued ties with the United States and that 'free association' would

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> Ibid, 47-48.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Ibid, 48.

more aptly describe what they want, only that it be separately negotiated solely by and for the Marshalls district, by the Marshallese."<sup>68</sup>

Mink's letters did not constitute the final statements asserting Marshallese political preferences. Proving the senate hearings would not be the last political forum for voicing Marshallese support for independence, Kwajalein landowner Ataji Balos brought his concerns before the House of Representatives at the Congress of Micronesia after the hearings. In his statement, Balos centered the question of political independence around the issue of Marshallese economic dependency. He described how under the U.N. Trusteeship Agreement, the Marshallese had been promised the option for independence but instead only received aid if they gave Marshallese lands to the U.S. military as detailed in the Compact of Free Association. He added, "We have been promised aid only if we forbid other nations from doing what the United States wants to do in our islandsthat is dominate us militarily." <sup>69</sup> Balos continued on to contextualize the celebration of American independence on in the Marshalls as a hypocrisy given the lack of freedom of choice for the Marshallese people in their relationship with the United States. He noted that as long as the Marshallese lacked an economy and lacked control over their political development, no freedom of choice existed. He also critiqued the rule guiding political negotiations between the Marshalls and the United States: the closer the relationship, the more aid for Marshallese. He concluded that negotiations could only eventuate in a "political and economic straightjacket from which we can never escape."<sup>70</sup>

 <sup>68 &</sup>quot;Current Problems in the Marshall Islands," Appendix. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.
 69 Statement by Rep. Ataji Balos of Marshall Islands. Presented to the House of Representatives of the Sixth Congress of Micronesia, Second Special Session, Saturday, July 24, 1976. Located in the Pacific Collection, UH Manoa.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> Ibid.

In his statements before the Congress of Micronesia Balos rejected free association and categorized the Compact as an infringement on Marshallese sovereignty. He explained that the Compact prohibited Marshallese freedom to remain a neutral and peaceful nation. He added "If the United States wants anything from us, such as our lands, then the United States must deal with us on an equal basis--as an equal sovereign nation." Asserting Marshallese entitlement to the same freedoms the U.S. enjoyed, Balos said he chose equality among the world's nations just as the U.S. had done 200 years prior when declaring its own independence. Balos reminded the Congress the U.S. celebrated its bicentennial while in the same month, Bikinians and the peoples of Enewetak and Kwajalein remained exiles due to U.S. military testing in their lands. He stated, "As long as this is the case, I cannot believe that an agreement, any agreement with a nation which has so abused its sacred trust, will protect our islands and people in the future."

Balos' statements offer helpful texts for thinking about the kinds of suspicions, fears and pain informing Marshallese relations with the United States that many brought with them to the voting booth. Part III of this dissertation attempted to illuminate the range of violence and abuse infusing many Marshallese experiences with the U.S. This chapter continues to consider what that history of abuse meant for those negotiating a political future with the United States and those voting on that future. Balos advocated for independence and raised questions as to why Marshallese victims of radiation and displacement would put trust in a continued relationship with the United States under the Compact. Before the Congress of Micronesia he proclaimed "I say tell all the unfortunate

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Ibid.

Marshallese exiles that their homes, their lives, their health and welfare, will be protected by the American military."<sup>74</sup> Given the injustice and abuse discussed in this dissertation's analysis of Kwajalein and Ebeye's historic relationship and U.S. nuclear testing in the Northern Marshall Islands, Balos statements pointed to legitimate concerns about the degree of Marshallese trust attainable by the United States. If the Marshallese historic relationship to the United States remained riddled with such mistrust, why, he asked would Marshallese want to continue any close relations? He answered this question by acknowledging the economic issues fueling Marshallese fears of independence.

Balos addressed Marshallese economic fears in his statements before the Congress by enumerating the Marshall Islands' rich land and marine resources to argue why Marshallese should feel confident about their capacity for economic independence. By shifting the focus of attention away from Kwajalein's economic value, Balos highlighted other areas of wealth production upon which an independent Marshallese nation could be built. He pointed out that other independent nations had freedom to allow people to fish their waters for money. He gave the example of New Guinea receiving over \$5 million for fishing rights each year. He said in the Marshalls, the United States permitted nations to fish freely with no pay to the Marshallese. He added, "Our seas are rich with tuna, and rich with minerals. Yet, we are being told we cannot support ourselves so that outsiders alone can reap the benefits from our seas." He continued, "If nations of the world look to our seas for food, then we should be treated no differently than those

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

who receive payment for granting fish rights to other nations."<sup>76</sup> Balos concluded this could only be achieved if Marshallese gained independence.<sup>77</sup>

While several Marshallese voices asserted a desire for independence during the 1976 senate hearings, the majority of political discussions following the hearings shifted towards a focus on the contours of a separate Compact of Free Association with the U.S. As had been the case with debates about independence, political statements about the Compact largely considered the role Kwajalein played and would continue to play in shaping this agreement. In his address to the Congress of Micronesia in 1977, Senator Amata Kabua identified Kwajalein's role in pushing the Marshall Islands away from a unified Micronesia and towards a separate Compact. On February 8, 1977 Senator Kabua spoke to the Congress to affirm Marshallese would chart their own course in a future political relationship with the United States without input from any other Micronesian island region. He acknowledged the collaborative effort he participated in with the Congress for ten years to end the Trusteeship Agreement and to promote selfgovernment. But Kabua also noted that while early on he supported Micronesian unity he no longer felt this would benefit the Marshallese.

Explaining his shift in support for a separate Marshallese Compact with the U.S., Kabua located the effort by non-Marshallese to include agreements for continued leases of Marshallese lands in the Compact as a significant contributing factor. He condemned Micronesians for supporting the inclusion of these lease agreements in the Compact when Marshallese landowners themselves did not recognize the leases as legitimate. He noted this Micronesian approach showed a lack of respect and consideration towards the

76 Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

Marshallese. Rechoing De Brum's statements before the U.N. Trusteeship Council, Kabua also highlighted the unique relationship between the U.S. and the Marshall Islands in regard to American strategic interests in the region. He claimed the Marshallese had borne the brunt of the U.S. strategic presence in Micronesia. Thus, he continued, they should not have to equitably share tax revenue across the region when other islands had not faced the same consequences from the U.S. presence. Kabua added that by necessity Marshallese dealt with problems left in the wake of Bikini, Enewetak and Kwajalein. He stated, "The tax revenue, meager as it is, which comes from Kwajalein should not have been used to support the activities of this body. It should have remained in the Marshalls where it was most needed in alleviating the critical problems of Ebeye and Kwajalein which continue to plague us at present time."

Further identifying Kwajalein's role in contributing to the Marshallese move away from a unified Micronesian Compact, Kabua addressed continuing tensions between U.S. and Marshallese regarding Kwajalein. Kabua referenced Ataji Balos' accusation that U.S. negotiators tried to solidify a lease on Kwajalein at cheap prices for a lengthy period by negotiating with people from other island groups, and in so doing tried to foster unity. Kabua continued on to note "The willingness of non-Marshallese to negotiate away Kwajalein without any attempt to remedy the present problems at Kwajalein made it abundantly clear to us that if we were going to solve our problems we had to do it ourselves." He added that Micronesian unity primarily benefited Americans not islanders. Kabua continued on to critique what he viewed as a Micronesian obsession

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Remarks of Amata Kabua to the Senate of the Congress of Micronesia Regarding Separation of the Marshall Islands from the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. February 8, 1977. TTA, reel no. 323. <sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

with unity rooted in U.S. military usage and particularly army control over Kwajalein. He said island leaders would do better to look to their own legitimate needs for economic development rather than trying to get money from Kwajalein leases. Kabua called upon "leaders of this body to forego their obsession with leasing Kwajalein to the United States. Their attempts to do so and to coerce us into a Micronesia in the process will only make rebels out of the people of the Marshalls and jeopardize their ties of friendship to the other island groups of the Trust Territory."

Kabua's statements to the Congress built upon the deeper history of political negotiations connecting the Marshall Islands, the United States and Micronesia that largely hinged around the value of Kwajalein to all three parties. Kwajalein played a substantial role in influencing the political process towards self-determination in the Marshall Islands and remained a significant factor veering Marshallese political leaders away from Micronesian unity. That said, it is important to keep in mind that underlying publicly documented discourse on the future political negotiations for the country remained several other narratives illuminating various other influences. These include conflicts and loyalties based on personality differences, kinship relationships and backroom economic negotiations, among others. Many of these stories became accessible to me via hearsay and thus remain outside the bounds of this project. This chapter thus recognizes that what can be analyzed from documented statements remains only the tip of an iceberg into understanding the complexities and varied relationships informing political negotiations from both U.S. and Marshallese sides.

82 Ibid.

## Amata Kabua, U.S. Politics of Intimidation and the Limits to Marshallese Sovereignty

As the previous section detailed Kwajalein's role in shaping the contours of the Marshallese political future, this next section shifts to examine the final Compact votes and Kwajalein voters' rejection of the agreement. The section further explores how as the Republic of the Marshall Islands began to emerge with President Amata Kabua taking charge, Kwajalein landowners continued to express concern about being marginalized from the political process that largely hinged on the value of their islands to the United States. As such, President Kabua came to be seen by some in Kwajalein as a leader who betrayed his people by aligning his emerging nation's policies closely with U.S. interests while ignoring or minimalizing Kwajalein landowner interests.

By examining several of Kabua's publicly documented statements, I trace how a U.S. politics of intimidation in the Marshall Islands replaced the more formal colonial infrastructure, placing constraints upon President Kabua's choices as leader of the new sovereign nation in a presumably "postcolonial" moment. Given U.S. successes in creating economic dependency in the Marshall Islands as colonial administrator of the Trust Territory for more than four decades, it is not surprising that Kabua may have found his hands economically tied when it came to going against U.S. interests.

Undoubtedly, many other undocumented factors remained influential in governing Kabua's political decisions as leader and it remains impossible to determine clearly his personal motivations for aligning so closely with the U.S. over other potential options. Certainly, the Compact of Free Association funding and terms structured his choices in a way that independence perhaps would not have. Independence may have allowed for

alternative political routes for the emerging nation that involved greater economic alignments and partnerships with other foreign powers. The route independence would have taken the Marshall Islands remains unknown, since the U.S. removed that option following the protests. This final section thus focuses instead on how economic dependency and the U.S. politics of intimidation under the Compact of Free Association greatly influenced the leadership of this newly sovereign nation. As was revealed in the previous section, this final part also shows the central role Kwajalein continued to play in this process.

Before delving into Kabua's public statements illuminating how U.S. political intimidation and economic leverage influenced his decisions, this section begins with a review of Marshallese Compact votes, highlighting Kwajalein voters' divergence from the rest of the nation. Following years of debates and discussions on the Marshall Islands future political status and the turmoil erupting during the sail-in protests, the Marshallese cast their votes as a separate political entity in a plebiscite choosing free association in September 1983. The 1983 Compact provided a temporary agreement to be voted on again three years later. The agreement came following the 1982 sail-ins and discussions among negotiators from the United States, the Marshall Islands government and the Kwajalein landowners. According to Pacific Historian David Hanlon, while the Compact passed by comfortable margins in most areas of the country, it was rejected by a three to one margin in Kwajalein Atoll. The primary objections in Kwajalein centered on the 30year length of the lease and the intervention by the Marshall Islands government in distribution of lease payments. 83 According to Stewart Firth in his paper presented at United Nations University Conference in April 1986 in Auckland, the Kwajalein

<sup>83</sup> Hanlon, Remaking Micronesia, 212.

landowners gained nothing from this lengthy fixed lease.<sup>84</sup> In his paper, "Staying While Leaving: The Americans in Micronesia," Firth explained that the landowners "best hope of extracting further concessions from the military at the missile range is a succession of short-term leases which can be renegotiated, and they have turned to the endless delays in 'decolonising' Micronesia to their advantage." Echoing Tony De Brum's statements noted earlier in this chapter, Firth added, "The future for the Marshallese at Kwajalein will be defined by the needs of the military. Once the Compact goes into effect their bargaining power will be weak."

Ebeye Mayor Alvin Jacklick also addressed the Kwajalein peoples' rejection of the Compact in the 1983 plebiscite in a press release statement to the U.S. Senate Subcommittee. Appearing in the January 1984 *Marshall Islands Journal*, Jacklick's statement emphasized that Kwajalein people voted 75 percent against the plebiscite in September 1983. While Hanlon detailed the Kwajalein lease length and payment distribution terms as the Kwajalein peoples' primary objections, Jacklick emphasized the Kwajalein people also found the Compact's health and education provisions for Ebeye residents to be wholly inadequate. Jacklick continued on to detail the history of Kwajalein displacements and Ebeye's contemporary needs for adequate technical educational training and health care support. Again pointing to the continued health concerns on Ebeye, Jacklick highlighted Kwajalein's policies excluding Ebeye residents from the island's high quality health facilities. He described the many small graves in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> Stewart Firth, "Staying While Leaving: The Americans in Micronesia," presented at the United Nations University Conference, Auckland. April 3-6, 1986. Pp. 20.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> "Mayor Jacklick's statement to U.S. Senate subcommittee" (January 19, 1984 press release) in the *Marshall Islands Journal*. January 31, 1984.

Ebeye's cemeteries attesting to the all too common death of young children on the island. Jacklick argued the economic and social challenges facing those on Ebeye could be attributed to this major military installation's impact on the atoll. 88 Given that Kwajalein so centrally influenced the development of Ebeye's problems and the United States had the necessary resources to address Ebeye's challenges, Jacklick contended the U.S. remained responsible for providing adequate education and medical care on Ebeye. 89

The vote that came three years later in 1986 cemented the Compact of Free Association as a long-term agreement for the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the United States. Again in 1986, the Kwajalein people rejected the Compact. According to political negotiator and Kwajalein Senator Tony de Brum, the Kwajalein people felt betrayed that their government signed the 1986 agreement. During our oral history interview, De Brum noted Kwajalein people rejected the 1986 Compact because they did not want to perpetuate Ebeye's problems for another 30 years. He contended they felt the Compact ignored the problems on Ebeye and the Kwajalein peoples' interests. In describing the Kwajalein lease agreement, De Brum lamented, "Our own stupid government gave it away," and in so doing betrayed the people. Reiterating earlier arguments about Kwajalein's bargaining chip influence with the United States, De Brum noted that once the Compact entered Kwajalein into a long-term lease, the landowners lost any leverage to negotiate. De Brum added that in signing the Compact, the RMI government did not build into

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup> Oral history interview with Tony de Brum on November 22, 2010. Honolulu, HI

the agreement any guarantees for resources or change on Ebeye. De Brum added they also ignored Kwajalein landowner claims for past use compensation. <sup>91</sup>

Among the primary figures De Brum would identify as chief betrayer was the Marshallese head of the government during the Compact signing, RMI President Amata Kabua. As Pacific Historian David Hanlon has noted, De Brum remained closely associated with Kabua during this time. Thus, his critiques decades later raise interesting questions about either a potentially shifted stance towards the president over time or perhaps an attempt to rewrite his own participation in that history. However, as detailed in chapter eight's conclusion, Kabua certainly represented a shift in policy during the 1986 sail-ins instigating other Marshallese to also allege government betrayal when Kabua declared eminent domain over Kwajalein to end the protests.

Before examining some of Kabua's statements revealing his policy alignments with the United States as the new president of the Marshall Islands, it useful to briefly consider the context of his path towards presidency. Kabua was elected the first President of the Marshall Islands in 1979 by the Marshallese Parliament, the Nitijela, and led the nation for 18 years until he passed away in 1996. Kabua had also been the Marshall Islands paramount chief. Following his death, a 1997 obituary article traced Kabua's path to presidency. The article detailed his political career as beginning as Clerk to the Council of Iroij (paramount Chiefs) in the early 1950s, from which he moved on to become a founding member of the Congress of Micronesia and served on the Congress as President of the Senate for two terms. The obituary credited Kabua with spearheading the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> Ideas emerging from conversations with Pacific Historian David Hanlon regarding Tony de Brum's participation in the political history of the Marshall Islands arising during a meeting at the University of Hawai'i, at Manoa in December 2010 as well as email correspondence March 14, 2011.

Marshallese movement for political separation during the mid- to late-1970s, noting his election to the first and second Constitutional Nitijela (parliament) and his ultimate election to presidency in 1979. The *Pacific Magazine* article, "Amata Kabua--1928-1996: The Father of a Nation" identified the deceased politician as one who led the country to split from the rest of Micronesia and negotiate a political future of free association with the U.S. government. The article added that free association provided the Marshall Islands with more than a billion dollars over 15 years for nuclear test compensation and government operation expenses in exchange for Kwajalein Atoll's use as a missile testing site. 4 Long-time friend and former chief secretary Oscar de Brum described Kabua as "the father of the nation" who led the drive to restore Marshallese sovereignty, bringing the small country "into the modern world to take its place within the family of nations."

As many credited President Kabua with hastening the significant political shift towards national sovereignty, this section turns now to explore Kabua's public statements on the political relationship between the Marshall Islands and the United States. Amidst his many publicly documented speeches and interviews, Kabua spoke often about the role of Kwajalein and Ebeye in his vision for the nation's future progress. Exploring these statements on Kwajalein and Ebeye from the most influential political player during this period sets the stage for better understanding the history of the two islands following the Compact to be examined in chapter ten. Again, it is important to emphasize that while this section examines Kabua's publicly documented discourse on Kwajalein, Ebeye and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>93</sup> Giff Johnson, "Amata Kabua--1928-1996: The Father of a Nation," in *Pacific Magazine*. March/April 1997. Pp. 14.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

the nation's future, this analysis cannot begin to account for the complexity of conflicts and alliances that remained interpersonal, political, kin-oriented and economic also influencing Kabua's policies. Despite those gaps in analysis, there exists ample relevant information contained within Kabua's publicly documented statements to suggest why certain policies changed on Kwajalein and Ebeye following the Compact and why others remained in place.

Before being elected president, Amata Kabua shared his views on the Marshall Islands political future in a 1972 interview with the *Micronesian Reporter*. In his interview, Kabua emphasized he did not believe in the kind of independence expressed by some Marshallese youth in which one had nothing to do with those around him. He noted, "Independence is just a degree of a person's or a nation's being able to control his or its own fate and not always in an unfriendly way." He explained that he saw nothing wrong with Marshallese becoming independent if they kept close ties to the United States. He added he knew no nation in the world to be purely independent and cited coexistence as much important than isolation from the world community. <sup>97</sup>

Kabua's interview went on to address the U.S. military role in the Marshall Islands. When asked to discuss his views on the military Kabua stated "We in the Marshalls are not opposed to the presence of the military in our area." He explained Marshallese viewed the military as an economic factor whose presence made possible the acquisition of job skills. He added the military offered job opportunities allowing Marshallese to earn money and support their families. He emphasized the military jobs'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> "Interview: Amata Kabua," in *Micronesian Reporter*. Fourth Quarter 1972. Pp. 4.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

importance given the declining state of copra value impacting Marshallese livelihood. While supporting the army's presence on Kwajalein, Kabua acknowledged his awareness of Marshallese concerns about social problems on Ebeye. He said he viewed Ebeye's challenges as solvable if everyone worked together. He denied any U.S. military accountability for Ebeye's difficulties. Kabua's statements are worth close examination as they offer a lens into the opinions of the one Marshallese individual with the most power to influence any change on Ebeye. Kabua stated,

"There is not necessarily a 'problem' with the military; I think it's our own people's problems. The situation on Ebeye is in part attributable to the fact that people from the outer islands migrate there to look for a job, but at the same time they do not believe in building good houses for themselves and would rather live in shacks and earn enough money in a given period of time and then go back home. But the problem is that they don't seem to have gone back home, and consequently there are slums emerging. Other than that I think that just the congestion in the area of Ebeye causes a lot of social problems; but we know that's not only in Ebeye. I think that happens in New York City and other places like that where the concentration of population is high."

By equating Ebeye's social ills to the natural progression of urbanization comparable to other cities like New York, Kabua erased years of Marshallese voices, including his own, that decried U.S. colonialism and Kwajalein's segregation policies as largely responsible for Ebeye's problems. Kabua's decision to elide the continued tensions between U.S. army policies on Kwajalein and Ebeye in 1972 foreshadowed his later decisions to stand by U.S. interests regarding Kwajalein and the Compact.

If any doubt existed regarding Kabua's commitment to the pre-eminency of a partnership with the U.S. military, this uncertainty would have been dispelled during his May 1, 1979 presidential inaugural address. Kabua began his speech acknowledging first the historic nature of the day, stating that from "this day forward, let no one doubt our full

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

and complete sovereignty over the Marshall Islands."<sup>101</sup> He later reiterated his continued commitment to the United States following the Trust administration's disintegration and the important role Kwajalein would play in this ongoing partnership.<sup>102</sup> He noted that after the government, Kwajalein Missile Range remained the second largest employer in the Marshalls, employing directly or indirectly more than 800 Marshallese people. Kabua added he gave his firm commitment to the Senior Legal Office of the U.S. State

Department in 1977 in his role as Chairman of the Political Status Commission and to Kwajalein Atoll families that he would meet the U.S. national security requirements during and after the trusteeship.<sup>103</sup> He said he knew the cost in meeting these requirements had been and remained high to the Marshallese people. But added he nevertheless stood prepared to meet U.S. national security requirements and to provide maximum governmental support in reaching fair and equitable agreements toward that end.<sup>104</sup>

Less than a year after his inauguration, Kabua spoke to *The New Pacific Magazine* further detailing his views on the Compact and its relationship to the U.S. military presence on Kwajalein. The interviewer asked Kabua to describe what free association meant and what the U.S. gained from the Compact. He explained, "Free Association is a contract between our two sovereign countries wherein we have delegated the U.S. certain responsibilities, and in this case it is defense and security. In return for providing them with what they consider to be a legitimate defense need, we receive a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>101</sup> "Marshall Islands Constitutional Government Inaugurated." Amata Kabua, President of the Marshall Islands Inaugural Address, printed in *Micronesian Reporter*. Second Quarter 1979. Pp. 10. <sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>101</sup>d, 1

certain amount of economic assistance."<sup>105</sup> Kabua continued on to note this economic assistance built on the fact that for the prior 30 years the U.S. had done little to help build any economic base for the Marshalls. Thus, he believed the U.S. had a continuing responsibility to deal with the economic situation they caused. He added the Compact remained worthwhile for the U.S. because they gained "a base," and "exclusive defense presence."<sup>106</sup> Kabua said that since World War II, the U.S. viewed the Marshalls as an important strategic space. He continued, "So we said, fine. If you want to stay here, you want to control defense and security, fine; that's your responsibility, fine; that's what it is. It is *not* a continuation of a colonial relationship."<sup>107</sup> Kabua reiterated the Marshall Islands retained full control over foreign affairs unless defense-related and the new relationship recognized Marshallese sovereignty.<sup>108</sup>

Seven years later, and one year following the Trust administration's dissolution in the Marshalls, *Pacific Magazine* interviewed Kabua for its fall 1987 issue posing several questions on national economic development and Kwajalein's role within that process. Kabua's insights illuminated Kwajalein's economic impact across the nation and suggested the degree of economic dependency emerging. After detailing his ideas on development through private enterprise growth, Kabua noted that Kwajalein contributed significantly to his vision of business expansion. He explained that USAKA (United States Army at Kwajalein Atoll) contributed greatly to cash income on Ebeye and Majuro and therefore to the demand factor for private enterprise expansion. <sup>109</sup> He added that

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>105</sup> "Interview: President Amata Kabua," in *The New Pacific Magazine*. March/April 1980. Pp. 59.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid

<sup>109 &</sup>quot;Interview: The Marshalls' Kabua on Development," in *Pacific Magazine*. September/October 1987. Pp. 64.

USAKA employed over 600 Marshallese, or about 15 percent of total wage employment in the nation. This employment brought in over \$5 million per year in income, constituting about one third of total wage income in the economy and over 60 percent of private sector wage income. He added he expected even greater contributions from Kwajalein in the future because the current USAKA Commander planned to open the base for supplies from the Marshalls. This Kwajalein policy shift would provide Marshallese a market for chickens, fish, pork and eggs among other items. Kabua also noted Kwajalein planned to start new construction projects on the island, which would provide more employment opportunities for Marshallese laborers and subcontractors. 110

The continuity of Kwajalein's centrality to the local and national economy through today has been suggested by how individuals in the Marshalls respond to the idea of the U.S. pulling out of Kwajalein. As noted earlier in this chapter, when discussing this possibility with several individuals across Kwajalein, Ebeye and Majuro many responded they believe this would likely cause local economic implosion on Ebeye and a ripple effect impairing the national economy. Whether Kabua anticipated this extreme dependency during his 1987 interview remains unclear. His publicly stated responses would suggest otherwise. When asked to characterize the long-term impact of his policies Kabua responded, "These benefits can be summarized in two words: economic security and national identity." <sup>111</sup> He explained the Compact enabled the Marshalls to create a foundation for economic self-reliance and simultaneously achieve self-government. Kabua added his policies focused on using Compact funding and the Compact's access to U.S. markets to develop a self-reliant economy to improve the living standards for the

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>111</sup> Ibid, 66.

people. In regards to identity, he noted, "the consciousness among our people of belonging to a free nation of our own, will mature. This sense of national identity will further strengthen our efforts to become self-reliant." 112

Throughout his publicly documented discourse, Amata Kabua tied the Marshall Islands future to an interdependent relationship with the United States. While in most statements he emphasized the relationship as a partnership, presumably based upon mutual respect and mutual interest, a few statements showcased his acknowledgement of the relationship's hierarchical nature. This chapter's final section explores what Senator Tony de Brum characterized as foundational to the political relationship between the United States and the Marshall Islands: intimidation. The section focuses on U.S. intimidation pervading Marshallese political negotiations in part to raise larger questions about what sovereignty signified under the confining choices available to Marshallese political leaders. What does it mean for a nation to emerge after three successive colonial regimes to negotiate sovereignty with the most recent colonial overseer who had become a global economic and military imperial force partly due to that colonial relationship? Kabua explained how this reality limited his choices even as the most powerful individual in the Marshall Islands. He acknowledged he had little influence on the United States during a 1983 discussion with Associated Press reporter Todd Carrol. Carrol asked Kabua his impressions of President Reagan's latest "peacekeeper" MX missile landing near Kwajalein that June. Kabua described the tests as "'killer' weapons" and as the "business of the United States," adding he was "too small' to understand U.S.-Soviet

112 Ibid.

Missile politics."<sup>113</sup> Kabua said he preferred to associate with the kind of guy without a gun. Carrol then asked how Kabua could allow the U.S. to continue missile testing at Kwajalein if he seemed so opposed to weapons. Kabua replied, "'If I didn't let them use it, they would have taken it anyway."<sup>114</sup>

Similarly, in the 1991 documentary film *Home on the Range*, which chronicled the 1980s sail-in protests, Kabua again spoke about his limitations on influencing the United States. The film portrayed President Kabua responding to the protests by declaring eminent domain and ordering Marshallese removed from Kwajalein. The film included a video interview with Kabua that captured him stating: "What can you do? I mean when you grow up with your brother and he's a lot bigger than you and he slap you, what can you do? It's better to earn some money out of the situation than having nothing." Home on the Range also documented the discouragement and powerlessness felt by some landowners on Ebeye and their perception of the RMI government's impotence in dealing with the United States. In the film, landowner and protestor Julian Riklon acknowledged the RMI government's economic dependency on the U.S. during the protests. He stated "The Marshall Islands government says they are independent and that they possess power and authority, but I feel our government is not really independent because in fact, almost all the money that the Marshall Islands government has comes from the American government." Riklon concluded that given this economic reality, the RMI government had to do whatever the U.S. government demanded. 116

<sup>113</sup> Todd Carrol, "Self-Government But Missiles Too," in News Cable from Associated Press on the Marshall Islands and Amata Kabua. 1983. TTA, reel no. 613.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>115</sup> Statements from President Amata Kabua appearing in the 1991 documentary film *Home on the range*. Produced and directed by Adam Horowitz.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>116</sup> Statements from Julian Riklon appearing in the 1991 documentary film *Home on the range*. Produced and directed by Adam Horowitz.

A political cartoon appearing in the 1985 *Guardian* similarly illustrated the atmosphere of intimidation surrounding the Compact of Free Association signing. The image shows a man (presumably Amata Kabua) sitting in a chair atop the Marshall Islands. Uncle Sam sits in front of the man holding a document titled "New Compact" and a pen for the man to sign with. Behind the man, with his hands on the man's shoulder, stands a third individual who appears to be a military commander. With the three atop the Marshall Islands engaging each other on Compact signing a missile appears heading directly toward them. Suggesting the degree of pressure and intimidation on the Marshallese political leader, the cartoon's caption reads "Hurry up and sign." 117

 $<sup>^{117}</sup>$  John Bauman, Cartoonist who illustrated this Guardiangraphic appearing in the  $\it Guardian$ , August 9, 1985. P. 1.



Figure 56. U.S. politics of intimidation in the Marshall Islands: "Hurry up and sign." 118

As the Guardian political cartoon hinted at, the hierarchical and intimidating political relationship between the United States and the Marshall Islands informed the continued structure of U.S. Marshallese relations following the Trust Administration's dissolution. As President Kabua's statements also implied, the U.S. approach to negotiating the Marshallese future political status seemed to lack any recognition of equality among those negotiating. This reality came through most powerfully in President Ronald Reagan's televised speech to the Marshallese congratulating them on their new

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political status in 1985. 119 Dennis O'Rourke captured Reagan's speech in his 1986 documentary film *Half Life*. In his address to the Marshallese, Reagan acknowledged first the historic nature of the occasion and reflected on what he called "a very special relationship" existing between the U.S. and the Trust Territory peoples for many years. 120 He continued on to state "Under the trusteeship we've come to know and respect you as members of our American family. And now, as happens to all families, members grow up and leave home. 121 Building upon the presumed emotion and sentiment accompanying parents sending a grown adolescent off into the adult world, Reagan continued on to state that Americans wished the Marshallese the best as they assumed full responsibility for their domestic affairs and foreign relations. He added they wished them luck as the Marshallese charted their own course for economic development and entered the world as a sovereign nation. Returning to the parent-child metaphor, Reagan added, "We look forward to continuing our close relationship with you in your new status, but you'll always be family to us." 122

Running with Reagan's family metaphor amidst the broader context of U.S.

Marshallese relations detailed throughout this dissertation, one can consider the degree of family disfunctionality present when thinking about what kind of "parent" exposes its "child" to radioactive fallout. Reagan's suggestion of a benevolent while paternalistic approach to the Marshall Islands worked to sanitize and obscure the deeper history of violence and injustice characterizing U.S. policies in the region. By narrating the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>119</sup> While O'Rourke did not identify the speech with a date in his film, the article "Screen: 'Half Life,' A Documentary," written by Walter Goodman and appearing in the *New York Times* on December 3, 1986 indicated Reagan's address to the Marshallese had been made one year prior.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>120</sup> President Ronald Reagan's address to the people of the Marshall Islands, appearing in the 1986 documentary film *Half life: a parable for the nuclear age*. Directed by Dennis O' Rourke.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid

Marshall Islands as part of the American family, integrating this realm of the Marshallese foreign into the U.S. domestic, Reagan's remarks mirrored on an executive level Kwajalein's physical transformation into a U.S. suburb on a localized level. Thus, in some ways, Reagan's words seemed fitting for this moment of political transition in marking the Marshall Islands through such a familial domestic context. But as has been illuminated through analysis of Kwajalein's transformation into a space of U.S. domesticity, while the islands and their strategic value seemed easily integrated into the realm of the American imperial family, Marshallese themselves remained foreign. U.S. political intimidation tactics towards these supposed "family members" suggested something other than a benevolent fatherly relationship. Unless, of course, that father figure remained more coercive and dictatorial rather than loving and supportive.

Reagan concluded his brief address by reflecting on all the positive projects the U.S. and Marshall Islands built together over the years, like roads, airports, schools and hospitals. He added the most important of that which was built together remained the "understanding of the meaning of democracy and freedom and the dignity of self-determination." He concluded the Marshallese had built "a strong foundation for [their] future. Together in free association, [the U.S. and Marshalls] can and will build a better life for all." Reagan's televised address offers a useful text for considering how in deploying his family metaphor Reagan further obscured the continued hierarchical structure defining U.S. and Marshallese relations through sentiment. By emphasizing a historic relationship built on mutual efforts towards Marshallese democracy, freedom and self-determination, Reagan erased the history and continuity of colonial domination,

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

military destruction and political coercion and intimidation more accurately characterizing the U.S. relationship to the region.

In a recent oral history interview, Kwajalein Senator Tony de Brum discussed how this intimidation historically infusing Marshallese and U.S. political negotiations continued to characterize the culture between the nations today. De Brum spent the majority of his career negotiating the Marshallese political future with the United States. In our discussion, he reflected upon his earliest impressions of the United States. He recalled that as a boy he grew up enthusiastic about the U.S. relationship to the Marshall Islands. But he acknowledged too that he was a boy during the nuclear testing campaign, so this relationship also seemed quite scary to him. 125 He recalled observing the relationship between Ebeye and Kwajalein as confrontational from the get go. 126 As a child he used to travel to Kwajalein with his grandfather from their home on Likiep Island, 90 miles slightly northeast of Kwajalein. His grandfather took him several times to Kwajalein during the U.S. naval administration to collect supplies for his small store on Likiep. De Brum remembered this as the period when the navy moved the Marshallese off Kwajalein to the labor camp on Ebeye. I asked if he recalled the navy explaining to the Marshallese why they were being removed. De Brum chuckled slightly, presumably at the naivety of my question, and answered, "They didn't explain. They didn't have to and they didn't try to...As you know the labor camp site now is a golf course, so obviously they didn't need it for any major military undertaking or anything like that in 1950 or 1951." During our conversation De Brum also reflected on what he called the "anomaly" that Marshallese viewed their relationship with the United States as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>125</sup> Oral history interview with Tony de Brum on November 22, 2010. Honolulu, HI

<sup>126</sup> Ibid

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

"friendship" despite so much antagonism over the years. He said they did not see the military's "spear line" to be the true relationship they dealt with. He added that if just one or two people administering Kwajalein felt that same spirit of friendship perhaps there would not be so many problems. But instead, the United States operated from a place of hierarchy and intimidation.

In addition to the economic, military and political factors potentially influencing what De Brum identified as a spirit of friendship with which Marshallese approached Americans, another hypothesis as to why Marshallese continued over time to come at the U.S. from this position may have resided in religion. The significant role Christianity has played in the Marshall Islands, across Micronesia and the Pacific more broadly is a topic this dissertation largely neglects. But the importance of Christianity as another layer to this history must be acknowledged. And perhaps here may help explain in part the spirit of friendship guiding some Marshallese approaches to Americans. I can personally attest to several Marshallese individuals reminding me that Americans brought Christianity to them before they brought atomic weapons and missiles. As noted in chapter two, navy officials employed Christianity as well in their efforts to convince Bikinians in 1946 of their larger Christian mission in allowing their home island to be used in atomic tests "for the good of mankind" to end all wars. 129 As scholars of religion in the Pacific have noted. the success of missionaries in converting so quickly and broadly across the region likely had something to do with Pacific Islanders' adopting Christian practices while simultaneously retaining many of their own traditional religious and cultural practices. 130 Both Kwajalein and Ebeye have historically been and remain through today heavily

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>128</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>129</sup> Niedenthal, For the Good of Mankind, 68.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>130</sup> For more on this topic, see Diaz's recent Repositioning the Missionary

Christian spaces. Given the historic context of religion in the Marshall Islands, De Brum's statements may also signify how Americans on Kwajalein and Marshallese on Ebeye have come to interpret and practice Christianity in quite distinctive and consequential ways.

Further exemplifying the continuity of U.S. intimidation in the region, De Brum spoke about a recent incident on Kwajalein in which the wife of the highest-ranking Marshallese civilian living on island became barred for 30 days. The Marshallese woman apparently gave some cola to someone living on Ebeye and the Kwajalein Command charged her with attempting to smuggle soda onto the black market. The Kwajalein Commander barred the woman from the island and she immediately packed and moved onto a small island. De Brum added she intended to remain on the small island for 30 days until he got word and remedied the situation. He concluded, "The intimidation of 50 to 60 years is so real that...that is normal. The army tells you to move off, even if your husband is a representative of our government on Kwajalein, they pack up and move and they did not say anything to anybody."

Reiterating his point about U.S. political intimidation in the Marshalls, De Brum also shared a memory from the period following self-government but prior to the Trusteeship termination. He recalled how during this time a plane came to Majuro carrying "enough brass...to sink the island," with about 12 to 14 military leaders greeted with a reception at the old yacht club. He noted that his uncle Oscar, who was chief secretary at the time, introduced the generals and admirals and asked each of them to say something at the reception. Each spoke about their pleasure in being there, some recalling

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 $<sup>^{131}</sup>$  Oral history interview with Tony de Brum on November 22, 2010. Honolulu, HI  $^{132}$  Ibid

wartime memories as an earlier connection to the Marshalls. Then his uncle turned to the Marshallese ambassador to the United States and stated he would now ask the ambassador to say grace. For De Brum, witnessing this exchange demonstrated how his uncle perceived the military people as the priority people. He explained that even though the Marshallese ambassador by international law outranked every one else present, his uncle treated him as a purely incidental addition to the group who could say grace. De Brum explained that from his observations this was how things went. Marshallese leaders felt intimidated and knew the strength of their political relationships were based in how many Americans they knew rather than negotiating on a people to people basis. 133 He concluded the only way to remedy this problem lay in equalizing conditions; ensuring people in the Marshalls had the same access to education and good health and modern civil life as their neighbors. And their closest neighbors were the Americans. 134 As chapter ten will further explore, one way Marshallese families attempted to gain greater equality with American neighbors came through enrolling their children in school on Kwajalein. Chapter ten examines how Kwajalein's student guest program fit within the larger narrative of educational opportunity as the great American equalizer and how this narrative worked to obscure continued structural inequalities between Ebeye and Kwajalein.

Chapter nine has attempted to illuminate the history of the broader political context informing these continued inequalities between the two islands. This chapter has explored how Kwajalein's economic value to various political negotiators shaped the Marshallese political path towards decolonization. Chapter nine has revealed how

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

economic dependency and U.S. political intimidation structured the limits of Marshallese sovereignty, replacing a formal U.S. colonial administration with a more covert and coercive hierarchical dynamic. Having widened the geopolitical lens to explore the roots of this process in the Marshall Islands amidst a backdrop of broader Micronesian and U.S. political negotiations, chapter ten returns again to narrow in on Kwajalein and Ebeye. While chapter nine has considered how Kwajalein's value shaped the contours of the Compact of Free Association, chapter ten examines how politics under the Compact continued to influence historic changes and continuities on Ebeye and Kwajalein.

## Chapter Ten Local Changes and Colonial Continuities on Kwajalein and Ebeye under the Republic of the Marshall Islands

While chapter nine examined the broader political climate emerging from the Marshallese sail-in protests and the Compact of Free Association, chapter ten shifts gears to hone in on the changing political terrain's local implications for Kwajalein and Ebeye. Chapter ten asks: what, if anything, changed for Ebeye and Kwajalein in the wake of these historic events? To help answer this question, chapter ten first explores an array of media articles identifying a period of improvement on Ebeye alongside a shift in the U.S. army's relationship to the island under the new Compact. The chapter examines articles illuminating how some infrastructure problems ailing Ebeye's community for decades under Trust Territory administration transformed practically over night under Marshallese sovereignty. While these same articles and oral history interviews have also revealed the continuity of challenges facing Ebeye through today, specific improvements made under Ebeye's local government following the Compact suggested the significance of localized accountability. With an infusion of Compact funding in hand, improvement projects on Ebeye during the late 1980s and early 1990s became directed by Marshallese leaders who actually lived on the island. These leaders, many of whom had participated in the sail-in protests, worked to direct Compact funding where they deemed support most needed. The new local government on Ebeye contrasted years of governance and input by Trust Territory administrators and military officials who had minimal stakes in

Ebeye's welfare and bared none of the immediate repercussions of the decisions they made. Thus, while this chapter continues to attend to the continuity of challenges facing Ebeye in the Compact era, I argue that the inauguration of local government on the island seemed to represent one significant improvement.

Following an examination of some of these broader changes on Ebeye under the new Compact, chapter ten narrows in further to spotlight one educational program aimed at improving life for some Marshallese families on Ebeye. This Kwajalein school quasiintegration program has taken on several names, including "Ri-Katak (Marshallese meaning "one who studies") and the "Ebeye Guest Program." The program in part mirrored early U.S. school integration programs. The second half of this chapter traces the history of Kwajalein's school program, which invited five children from Ebeye to enroll annually. The program offers a useful platform for exploring how U.S. efforts to obscure the continuity of structural inequality and racial discrimination in the United States transferred seamlessly to this U.S. colonial possession in the Pacific. Like stateside efforts at educational integration, Kwajalein's program built upon the American bootstraps myth and libertarian discourse that both narrate heroic individuals rising above their unfortunate circumstances. Also echoing stateside programs, these myths enabled Americans on Kwajalein to continue ignoring the discriminatory structure of segregation that historically and continually helped cement Ebeye's unfortunate "circumstances" into place. Given the continuity of challenges facing Ebeye in the Compact aftermath, the educational program on Kwajalein worked to elide concerns about Kwajalein's link to these problems and instead allowed the military and American civilians on the island to narrate their presence on Kwajalein as helping Marshallese on Ebeye. Mirroring U.S.

narratives of individualism and equal opportunity, Americans on Kwajalein could presume to address the "Ebeye problem" in a controllable manner by allowing five children to study on Kwajalein annually. Emerging alongside the lack of significant structural changes on Ebeye following the Compact, the school program represented the culmination of what appeared a common attitude among many Kwajalein civilians. These civilians over time had become ambassadors of Kwajalein's narrative, gatekeepers of the island's memory. Through their island's educational integration efforts, Americans on Kwajalein could narrate themselves as helping the Marshallese by giving them the opportunity to become more like Americans. Educational integration remained a flagship example for many Americans pointing to the positive relationship between Kwajalein and Ebeye and the righteousness of U.S. presence in the region.

Chapter ten broadly examines how the Compact of Free Association replaced U.S. Trust Territory and army responsibility for Ebeye and their historic conflicts over their presumed roles by shifting the responsibility to the RMI and local governments. Under this transition to the presumed "postcolonial" period, attention to the historic causes for Ebeye's continued problems seemed to fall by the wayside. Kwajalein's school integration efforts thus became narrated as acts of charity for Ebeye rather than Marshallese entitlements to shared resources given the colonial history and continuity buttressing Ebeye and Kwajalein's divergent infrastructures. Through this program, the army and the civilian community could continue to obscure the history and continuity of their settler colonial privilege coming at the cost of Marshallese displacement and dispossession. Instead, they could point to Marshallese children studying on Kwajalein as a sign of their benevolence towards Ebeye. Just as Marshallese workers would depart

Ebeye at a certain time each day or risk fines and criminal charges, so too would Marshallese students. But Americans could narrate the U.S. presence on Kwajalein as bringing jobs and education to Marshallese. As had proved the case over decades of civilian history on Kwajalein, this message of benevolence would resonate louder than voices questioning why the Marshallese remained over there and Americans over here. The army and civilian focus on Kwajalein's school integration efforts worked to uphold the narrative of American exceptionalism in the region. The program obscured the continued hierarchical relationship in the presumed "postcolonial" moment by celebrating the individual successes of Marshallese students. Marshallese students "ferrying" to Kwajalein daily compared with stateside bussing scenarios that elided structural continuities of racial segregation between urban and suburban communities. By focusing on individual student opportunities to ferry or bus to better resourced schools, attention diverted from the structural reality of continued racial apartheid in the United States and on Kwajalein.

## Contemporary Reflections on Post-Compact History on Ebeye and Kwajalein

The sail-in protests and Compact of Free Association implications for Ebeye and Kwajalein have been debated by those present and writing on these issues at the time and those reflecting upon them decades later. As this section will reveal, certain infrastructure problems changed quite immediately under an infusion of Compact funding and a shift to local governance. But many problems on Ebeye remained the same and some have even worsened. In this presumed "postcolonial" moment, many Americans and some Marshallese have blamed the continuity of challenges facing Ebeye on Marshallese

governmental decisions and Marshallese family support practices that have continually fueled migration to Ebeye. While no doubt appropriate in certain instances, this shift in accountability seemed to accompany a discursive erasure of the history and continuity of U.S. colonial policies and economic neglect in the region. This first section explores this discursive transition that emerged alongside the broader political shift towards

Marshallese decolonization. By focusing on how these two shifts played out in recent approaches to Kwajalein and Ebeye, this chapter considers some of the long-term implications for colonialism in the Marshall Islands that became elided with the ushering in of sovereignty.

This section considers recent oral history reflections to help situate where Ebeye has come in the nearly 35 years since the Compact. During his discussion of U.S. intimidation politics detailed in chapter nine, Senator Tony de Brum also shared his impressions of change on Ebeye following the protests and the Compact. He argued the Compact enabled some of Kwajalein's disenfranchised people a measurable and substantial improvement to their livelihood. He defined these disenfranchised populations as those who had been displaced from their homes throughout the atoll and moved to Ebeye to enable U.S. missile tests. De Brum continued on to qualify, however, that he did not believe money alone solved the kinds of problems generated from displacement. He stated Americans often thought the 1986 Compact sealed the deal on solutions. But, he added, the challenges facing displaced people relocated to Ebeye with no life skills did not cease when people threw money at them in 1986. De Brum argued

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Oral history interview with Tony de Brum on November 22, 2010. Honolulu, HI

this had been the wrong path both from the U.S. army and the Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI) government.<sup>2</sup>

In explaining why money alone would not fix the problems on Ebeye, De Brum alluded to the more significant long-term consequences accompanying colonial displacements in the Marshall Islands. He explained how upon this infusion of money for Kwajalein peoples, some Marshallese ended up feeling jealous. But others, he added, seemed to feel sorry for the Kwajalein people receiving compensation. Those Marshallese who pitied Kwajalein peoples looked at Ebeye as the destruction of clan life and culture that people had enjoyed and lived with for a long time. De Brum reflected, "when you remove people from their land, you chop off half of their soul. This is where people from Kwajalein are today."<sup>3</sup> He continued on to explain that when Kwajalein people received money today, they leave. They move to Arkansas, Seattle, Costa Mesa Honolulu. <sup>4</sup> He added that most second generation Kwajalein people live outside the Marshall Islands, but emphasized they are not living well. De Brum said, they live on food stamps in these places, in subsidized housing. But they opt to cut chicken for \$7 an hour rather than clean toilets on Kwajalein for \$2 an hour. As noted in chapter four, Pacific Scholar Monica LaBriola's work and my oral history interviews complicate the identification of Ebeye as a space lacking continued Marshallese cultural values. But De Brum's reflections still help point to some of the systemic, long-term consequences of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Springdale, Arkansas is home to the largest Marshallese population living outside the Marshall Islands. This mass exodus began during the 1980s as Tyson Chicken company, located in Springdale, began to recruit Marshallese to their workforce.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Ibid.

U.S. colonial displacements that ignited a process of local and diasporic impoverishment not easily altered through Compact compensations.

While Senator De Brum argued monetary compensation had not solved these long-term problems plaguing Ebeye, another Kwajalein landowner and Iroij (Chief) Michael Kabua explained the importance of money to easing challenges facing Ebeye after the Compact. In a recent interview at his home on South Loi in Kwajalein Atoll, Kabua explained that his government never took seriously how important Kwajalein was to the Kwajalein people. He argued the government had ignored the fact that the money given to landowners was never enough to begin with. By starting out too low in their estimates, the money negotiated during the Compact remained insufficient. 6 Kabua, who is the cousin of former President Amata Kabua and brother to Amata's immediate successor following his death, Imada Kabua, explained his frustration as a major landowner on Ebeye. He said he gave his land rent free to the people living on Ebeye in addition to land for expanding cemetery space. He asked me to imagine life on Ebeye if he actually charged this population rent. He explained that in the past he tried to talk to his government about his concerns but felt ignored. He added that Americans point to the Marshallese and say this is a problem with your own government. But he explained that his government does not have enough money. According to Kabua, the RMI government did not demand enough money for Kwajalein because they never thought enough about the important value Kwajalein retained for the U.S. and for the world.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Oral history interview with Michael Kabua on November 14, 2010. South Loi, Marshall Islands.



Figure 57. Iroij (Chief) Michael Kabua.<sup>8</sup>

Kabua's reflections illuminate this moment of shift in finger pointing among

Americans towards Marshallese as accountable for the problems left on Ebeye in the

wake of formal decolonization. His comments raise questions as to how much money, if

any amount, could account for the kinds of long-term systemic problems incurred by the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Photographed by Lauren Hirshberg in November 2010 on South Loi, Republic of the Marshall Islands. In the image, Iroij Kabua is seen wearing a traditional belt for a wedding ceremony. He graciously made time for me to interview him just before he was leaving for a Marshallese wedding celebration in Honolulu.

U.S. colonial presence in the Marshall Islands. According to De Brum, money alone could not begin to address the cultural impact of colonialism on displaced Marshallese.

While Kabua seemed to feel greater funding for Kwajalein could have made a difference.

Kabua continued on to note he could not imagine Ebeye struggling the way the island had for another 70 years, but felt somewhat helpless to change the situation. He cited a recent discussion to create space elsewhere in Kwajalein Atoll where Ebeye people could live, which De Brum also mentioned in our discussion. But Kabua explained that in order to develop other islands and the necessary accompanying transportation services, those Marshallese planning needed more resources. Kabua argued this money should come from the U.S. government. From his perspective, he saw the U.S. spending a billion dollars a week in Afghanistan and in Iraq, but since Kwajalein was considered part of the U.S., the island could become a threatened target as well. He asked if I could imagine what would happen if Iran targeted Kwajalein. He continued, "We are only 3 miles from Kwajalein, we are quite vulnerable." Here, in the presumed "postcolonial" moment, Kabua seemed to argue the U.S. remained accountable for greater funding to Kwajalein not because of the colonial past in which forty years of economic policies of neglect on Ebeye contributed to the contemporary struggles. Rather, Kabua pointed to Kwajalein's categorization as part of the United States; a part that made those living in close proximity vulnerable to the risk of getting caught in the crossfire of global missile attacks.

Kabua's emphasis on Ebeye's vulnerability as an island in close proximity to this potential U.S. target came through in other statements among those living on Ebeye. Que Keju expressed this fear during an interview captured for the 1991 documentary film

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Ibid.

Home on the range. He explained, "Knowing that a warhead could destroy a sizeable area, just one of them, and having to think about 12 or 13 all at the same time dropping on Kwajalein Atoll. I mean that's pretty berserk. I mean it's outrageous." Also appearing in the same film, Ebeye resident Harold Keju affirmed his concern about the ongoing missile testing that many watched from the island. He stated with nervous laughter, "when I see those things, I really scared...that's gonna be the end of the world." These statements reflect not only the fears informing life for some (and perhaps many) on Ebeye, but they offer a lens into the broader reality of military intimidation buttressing the political intimidation discussed in chapter nine. As noted elsewhere in this dissertation, the history of confrontation and accommodation with U.S. military destruction (both real and potential) has been ever present since 1944 when the relationship between the United States and the Marshall Islands began. This history exemplifies the subjective lens in periodization that marks World War II ending for Americans in 1945. While for many Marshallese the continued land destruction, displacements and fear of missile explosions maintain. Referencing experiences of those in the Northern Marshalls in his 1989 essay "The Source of the Force in Marshallese Cosmology," Anthropologist Laurence Marshall Carucci's identified this "unending war" for Marshallese. His observations seemed to resonate across experiences for those on Ebeye who have continued to fear Kwajalein's missile explosions. <sup>12</sup> Unlike the atomic testing campaign, intercontinental ballistic missiles launched at Kwajalein have never

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Statements from Que Keju appearing in the 1991 documentary film *Home on the range*. Produced and directed by Adam Horowitz.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Statements from Harold Keju appearing in the 1991 documentary film *Home on the range*. Produced and directed by Adam Horowitz.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Laurence Marshall Carucci, "The Source of the Force in Marshallese Cosmology," in Geoffrey M. White and Lamont Lindstrom (eds) *The Pacific Theater: Island Representations of World War II*. Pacific Islands Monograph Series, No. 8. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1989), 76.

been documented as causing human harm or death. But fear remained present for Harold Keju who watched as these massive vehicles of destruction touched down so close to home, potentially carrying residual shell shock in their wake. According to Michael Kabua, this position of vulnerability and the accompanying lifestyle of fear for Marshallese on Ebeye warranted greater compensation from the United States.

An article appearing in the April 1986 Marshall Islands Journal hinted at the flawed missile launch system perhaps suggesting Marshallese fears on Ebeye as not wholly unfounded. The article, reprinted from the *Honolulu Advertiser*, also revealed the massive financial costs to this imperfect system. In doing so, the article offers a comparative lens for thinking about U.S. investments for change on Ebeye during the year the Compact went into effect. The article, "Air Force Missile Blows Up After Vandenberg Takeoff," detailed how the Titan 34D rocket presumed to be carrying a secret spy satellite blew up shortly after liftoff on April 18. The failure constituted another setback in what was described as the "nation's crippled space program." The article added the Titan incident came in the wake of the Challenger shuttle explosion in January, as well as another Titan 34D catastrophe that followed seven prior successful launches. The article detailed an August 1985 missile explosion after launch that destroyed an \$800 million photo reconnaissance satellite intended to be carried to orbit.<sup>14</sup> This rocket explosion cost about \$65 million, according to Captain Rick Sanford while another defense expert requesting to remain anonymous estimated the cost at \$100 million. The article continued on to note "Last year, two-thirds of the Pentagon's most

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> "Air Force Missile Blows Up After Vandenberg Takeoff," reprinted from the *Honolulu Advertiser* and appearing in the *Marshall Islands Journal*. April 25, 1986. Pp. 17.

critical payloads went on the shuttle or the Titan." The *Marshall Islands Journal* article revealed the imperfections in this potentially dangerous weapons system and also highlighted the seemingly unimaginable cost to these flaws. One can ponder, as presumably landowners like Michael Kabua have, the U.S. limitations on funding for Ebeye and imagine the potential island improvements that could be made with the money lost on even one of these failed missile launches.

Where Tony De Brum argued that a focus on money had not addressed the extent of problems plaguing Ebeye and Michael Kabua saw more money as imperative,

Marshallese worker Yoshi Kemem offered a different perspective on what he saw as responsible for a lack of change on Ebeye following the Compact. Kemem is among the few Marshallese able to speak to the experience of living on Kwajalein and Ebeye as he became the first Marshallese civilian contractor to move from Ebeye to live on Kwajalein in 1998. We spoke at his home on Kwajalein in November 2010 where he explained how he saw some changed occurring on Ebeye following the Compact but not as much as expected. Kemem said he traveled a lot and observed much development on Majuro. He added, "on Ebeye it should be taken care of a long time ago, you know water system, electric system." But in contrast to De Brum and Kabua, Kemem credited failed leadership as the biggest barrier to change on Ebeye, in both local and national governments. He attributed Ebeye's problems to how Marshallese leaders used money. Kemem said "I don't blame the Americans... if U.S. government is going to control how

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Oral history interview with Yoshi and Fumiko Kemem on November 14, 2010. Kwajalein, Marshall Islands.

they [Marshallese leaders] use the money it would be better. They can...make sure money is used for this purpose, not that purpose."<sup>17</sup>

During our discussion, Kemem continued on to explain how a lot of Compact money given to the RMI government for projects on Ebeye ended up being used in other ways. He reiterated the biggest problem on Ebeye as leadership, which meant the solution lay in finding leaders who did not think of themselves first. He described how his dad taught him to put God first, then the people around him, then himself and this was the kind of leadership needed. He also warned that if the U.S. ever pulled out of Kwajalein, life would be tough, not only for people who worked with the U.S. government but for people all around the Marshall Islands. Kemem recommended improvement projects on Ebeye require a proposal for U.S. money. He said, for example, a new hospital should require a proposal for how people intended to use the money. Then, Kemem advised, instead of the U.S. giving the local and RMI government money to build the hospital, the U.S. should buy all building materials and ship those to Ebeye to ensure the money was not spent elsewhere. Under this structure, Kemem believed change would come. <sup>18</sup> For Kemem, Ebeye's continued problems remained completely disconnected from U.S. colonial policies of neglect in Ebeye's infrastructures for more than four decades. In fact, rather than holding U.S. colonial policies accountable for Ebeye's failing infrastructure, Kemem placed his faith in the United States as the only administrator trustworthy enough to oversee positive change on Ebeye.

Kemem's clear distrust in local and national Marshallese leadership contrasted with the enthusiasm expressed by journalist Giff Johnson who shared his perspective on

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

an increased respect for this leadership that followed the protests and the Compact. During a recent interview in Majuro, Johnson explained how this new respect seemed to derive from how the U.S. approached the Marshallese government differently, particularly with respect to Kwajalein and Ebeye. He said under the new Compact, the relationship between the two governments became more direct. He added the Compact established an equal footing for the RMI government with the United States. Thus, the relationship became one defined as two sovereign nations in which the U.S. simply rented a base from the other. Johnson explained that the U.S. shift towards working in a more formal, positive and diplomatic manner with the RMI government legitimized the Marshallese government and established a better roadmap for dealing with issues on Kwajalein. On the compact of the RMI government and established a better roadmap for dealing with issues on the compact of the RMI government and established a better roadmap for dealing with issues on the RMI government and established a better roadmap for dealing with issues on the RMI government and established a better roadmap for dealing with issues on the RMI government and established a better roadmap for dealing with issues on the RMI government and established a better roadmap for dealing with issues on the RMI government and established a better roadmap for dealing with issues on the RMI government and established a better roadmap for dealing with issues on the RMI government and established a better roadmap for dealing with issues on the RMI government and established a better roadmap for dealing with issues on the RMI government and established a better roadmap for dealing with issues on the RMI government and established a better roadmap for dealing with issues on the RMI government and established a better roadmap for dealing with issues on the RMI government and established a better roadmap for dealing with its properties.

Johnson argued that following the Compact, the U.S. no longer dealt with Kwajalein on simply an ad hoc basis but instead moved into a 30-year agreement that everybody signed off on. As noted in chapter nine, clearly not everyone supported this agreement. But Johnson also pointed out that no substantive protests have followed the 1986 Compact. While landowners clearly retained grievances, Johnson argued the establishment of sovereignty for the nation proved significant. As this section has attempted to trace, this new moment of sovereignty for some shifted the focus away from U.S. historic accountability for Ebeye's continued challenges and centered the debates instead in the realm of Marshallese governance. With the focus of scrutiny diverted towards Marshallese leadership and away from the army and the former Trust administration, Kwajalein's military officials seemed to slightly shift their approach to

 $<sup>^{19}</sup>$  Oral history interview with Giff Johnson on May 13, 2010. Majuro, Marshall Islands  $^{20}$  Ihid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Ibid.

Ebeye. Reflecting upon what changed for Ebeye during the 1980s, Johnson listed a number of improvements that in turn enhanced the army's image in the region. While Ebeye's new local government spearheaded most improvement projects with funding from Compact money, the army appeared much more on board with developing Ebeye and often came to the island for ribbon cutting ceremonies. Even when not primarily responsible for changes on Ebeye, Johnson noted the army tended to enjoy partaking in these celebrations, presumably embracing the positive turn in public relations after decades of media scrutiny in the region. Johnson recalled that, at the time, things seemed to be moving towards a more productive relationship between Kwajalein and Ebeye.<sup>22</sup>

This section has attempted to suggest that part of that seemingly improved relationship came through the broader historic political and discursive shift unmarking U.S. accountability for continuities in colonial structures of inequality between Kwajalein and Ebeye. Contrasting the hundreds of articles arising during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s decrying the army's apartheid policies of segregation on Kwajalein, now the continued problems on Ebeye shifted to Marshallese governmental and cultural factors. Marshallese cultural values of supporting family members became further scapegoated for Ebeye's density problems and alleged Marshallese governmental corruption was linked to misuse of Compact funding on Ebeye. While Kwajalein remained a space of segregation and surveillance with continued hospital exclusions and search and seizure practices towards Marshallese workers, these policies now existed within the confines of a sovereign nation rather than a U.S. colonial territory. Therefore, the blame for any continuities in structural inequalities seemed to shift more onto Marshallese themselves. In the presumed "postcolonial" moment, these inequalities became further connected to

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

Marshallese choice rather than colonial imposition. As chapter nine revealed, however, given the constraints on the emerging nation informed by economic dependency and U.S. political intimidation, Marshallese choices in addressing continued inequalities between Kwajalein and Ebeye seemed quite limited.

## Media Narratives of Ebeye's Post-Compact Improvements: Shifting to Local Accountability

Despite limitations on Marshallese choices in regards to Kwajalein and Ebeye's relational inequalities, this next section traces media coverage of the more significant structural improvements arriving on Ebeye alongside Marshallese decolonization. The creation of a local government on the island ushered in a series of noteworthy changes. While acknowledging critiques noted in the previous section from Yoshi Kemem as to his views on Marshallese mismanagement of Compact funding, this next section traces some of the positive projects that seemed to emerge on Ebeye under this new leadership. In doing so, this section argues that inaugurating a system of local leadership rooted in individuals living on Ebeye who thus felt the immediate repercussions of their policies on island seemed to ignite an important shift towards island improvements.

While the previous section considered how this shift obscured the continued hierarchical relationship between the U.S. and the Marshall Islands and more specifically Kwajalein and Ebeye, some changes remain noteworthy of consideration. Several of Giff Johnson's articles covering Ebeye's changes continued to include some context on U.S. historic policies that fueled the island's problems. But in contrast to articles written prior to Marshallese sovereignty, stories written in the presumed "postcolonial" moment

framed these policies as in the past, no longer continuing to inform structural inequalities between Kwajalein and Ebeye. Media attention to changes on Ebeye also further revealed the army's shifted approach to Ebeye and Marshallese leadership in the post-protests era. Military leaders made clear in these articles that the 1980s sail-ins weighed heavily on their approach to dealing with Marshallese in a manner intended to avoid further conflicts and thus further delays in their missile testing operations.

Giff Johnson's reflections on Ebeye's Compact-era improvements during our interview on Majuro echoed the media attention he gave to these changes during the midto late-1980s and early 1990s. Johnson's articles covered a variety of Ebeye improvements amidst a broader media campaign tracing changes in the region. In doing so, many of his stories credited Ebeye's new local government with ushering in these positive changes. In his story "Ebeye Development Plan Finally Sees Action" appearing in the January 1987 *Pacific Magazine*, Johnson detailed how change came to Ebeye after months of delays due to the protests and Compact uncertainty. He explained that a 15-year, \$100 million development plan for Ebeye was finally moving forward.<sup>23</sup> According to Johnson, the plan's centerpiece revolved around a causeway to be built to neighboring island Gugeegue during the next few years. The plan also earmarked \$6 million for immediate emergency improvements on Ebeye, which included constructing new flush toilets and new water and electric meters for all houses, repairing the damaged dock and renovating the crumbling public safety building. Johnson identified a desalination plant

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Giff Johnson, "Ebeye Development Plan Finally Sees Action," in *Pacific Magazine*. January/February 1987. Pp. 11.

and power plant as also in the works to help reduce Ebeye's dependence on fresh water brought over from Kwajalein.<sup>24</sup>

Another Johnson article appearing a few months later in *Pacific Magazine* detailed the Ebeye public works transfer from national administration to local Ebeye government. Johnson's piece identified the move's unprecedented nature as this represented the first time any national government function transferred to local government in the Marshalls.<sup>25</sup> Newly elected Ebeye Mayor Alvin Jacklick applauded the transfer after more than a year of negotiations, noting the local government could better ensure proper service to the public.<sup>26</sup> The following year, another Johnson article appeared in the spring 1988 Pacific Magazine tracing additional improvements on Ebeye. Headlining "M.I.'s Ebeye Changing For Better," Johnson credited Ebeye improvements to the local government's arrival and the creation of the Kwajalein Atoll Development Authority (KADA) in 1983. Johnson emphasized how these governmental shifts represented the first time Ebeye residents had power to make decisions about their island.<sup>27</sup> Johnson wrote that after KADA produced a redevelopment plan, local government leaders gained strong support from U.S. Congress. He noted KADA's \$50 million U.S. support would go towards the causeway connecting Ebeye with six islands to the north. Johnson highlighted the "can-do" attitude on Ebeye and the spirit Mayor Alvin Jacklick brought when inaugurating the first multi-million dollar combination power plant-desalination plant that went online the previous year. Qualifying what seemed to be relatively meager achievements for those living nearby Kwajalein's

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Giff Johnson, "Ebeye Obtains Control For Its Public Works," in *Pacific Magazine*. July/August 1987. Pp. 24

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Giff Johnson, "M.I.'s Ebeye Changing For Better," in *Pacific Magazine*. March/April 1988. Pp. 53.

privileged conditions, Johnson wrote, "Getting fresh water six hours a day may not seem like much cause for celebration." He continued "But after you've lived for 20 years with fresh water half an hour a day, on lucky days, it is a major event." Johnson added "Health officials report that soon after the plant began pumping fresh water, the level of communicable diseases dropped markedly."

Johnson's applause for the dramatic changes occurring on Ebeye given the shift in responsibility towards local government and increased funding offers an opportunity to reflect on this transition amidst the context of Ebeye's historic relationship to Kwajalein. For decades, Marshallese leaders and American journalists had decried the failing infrastructure on Ebeye under Trust Territory administration residing within three miles of Kwajalein's suburban island luxuries erected by the army. The continued denouncements of responsibility for Ebeye between these two arms of U.S. colonial power in the region halted any substantive change. Countless Marshallese grievances about Ebeye came through during the 1976 senate hearings, media interviews and testimonies before the United Nations over the years. Recall Julian Riklon's oral history interview advising me to visit Ebeye's cemetery to see the tiny graves lining the rows to better understand how bad things had been under U.S. administration during the early 1980s. And yet, Johnson's articles suggest how at least some of the solutions to decades of problems incurring much suffering on Ebeye could be addressed so quickly, like the flick of a switch. His articles seemed to attest further to how unnecessary so many years of tragedy and struggle on Ebeye remained. Communicable diseases all of sudden curbed by clean water. Shocking in the seeming simplicity of it all? Or more accurately,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Ibid.

disturbing in the seeming simplicity of it all. Because such obvious solutions, so easily fixed, came to Kwajalein and Ebeye at such high costs to so many Marshallese lives, health and well being. These tragedies continued because U.S. colonial administrators representing the Trust Territory and the army had minimal stakes in the welfare of those on Ebeye. They bickered over their relative accountability and relative funding available for Ebeye; this island they deemed as existing to serve Kwajalein. And in the meantime those on Ebeye suffered amidst this colonial finger-pointing game.

As Senator Tony de Brum reminded me in a recent interview, Marshallese on Ebeye continued to suffer tragedies in the wake of the U.S. colonial administration.

While some of the 1988 projects detailed by Johnson improved physical health conditions for many on Ebeye, De Brum noted mental health resources remained non-existent. He illustrated the impact of this lack of resources by sharing his recent experience attending a 9-year-old boy's funeral on Ebeye. The boy had committed suicide by hanging himself. De Brum explained that this child witnessed the exact same suicide of another 9-year-old boy four years prior, when he was just five. He said the boy never received any mental health support to attend to that trauma. De Brum emphasized that mental health care for that kind of trauma would be "a luxury no one's ever heard of on Ebeye." He then paused and discouraged sighed, "there goes another boy." Like other islands under U.S. Trust Territory Administration, youth suicide has plagued Ebeye with epidemic-like growth since the early 1960s. 32

While Johnson's enthusiasm for the renewed spirit on Ebeye came through in several articles, he also intermittently addressed the story of U.S. colonial neglect in the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Oral history interview with Tony de Brum on November 22, 2010. Honolulu, HI

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Donald H. Rubinstein, "Epidemic suicide among Micronesian adolescents," (*Social Science and Medicine*. Volume 17, Issue 10. 1983).

region as responsible for many of the continued challenges Marshallese faced on Ebeye. His 1989 article appearing in *Islands Business* contrasted earlier articles by contextualizing Ebeye's changes within relative comparisons to American expectations. He wrote, "By American standards Ebeye Island is still a slum. But it is, after years of neglect by American officials, changing its image as the 'slum of the Pacific.'"<sup>33</sup> Johnson again detailed the newest improvements on island adding that previous Ebeye resident attitudes tended to be characterized by resignation and inaction. But peoples' attitudes seemed to change alongside the recent improvements. He acknowledged Ebeye had been "a political black eye for the United States," and that due to the island leaders' new aggressive stance, Ebeye projects were garnering significant financial support from the U.S. Congress and government agencies. Johnson's statements offer further insights on why army officials seemed more enthusiastic for change on Ebeye, since these changes seemed to help heal the nation's "political black eye" in the region. Johnson concluded, "It is going to be many years before Ebeye Island can be called a good place to live and raise children. But under the authority's direction Ebeye and the adjacent islands are becoming the first planned urban community in the Marshall Islands."<sup>34</sup> Johnson's discourse about urbanization on Ebeye marked a shift from what had been years of identifying the urban on Ebeye with disdain. Previous articles detailed in earlier chapters connected Ebeye's urban image to that of the slum, particularly when compared with Kwajalein's utopian suburb. But in Johnson's Compact-era improvement context, the urban on Ebeye seems to have moved towards something positive and even exemplary.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Giff Johnson, "Kwajalein cleanup full-speed ahead," in *Islands Business*. March/April 1989. Pp. 69.

By 1990 Johnson's enthusiasm for change on Ebeye led to a 39-page spread appearing in a *Pacific Magazine* special edition primarily devoted to detailing improvement projects on the island. Johnson's expose, "Special Report: 'The Reconstruction of Ebeye,'" included several vignettes on improvement projects amidst broader historical contextualization and alongside interviews with local entrepreneurs. Johnson began the report by proclaiming Ebeye had come a long way since 1986, with noteworthy changes in power, water, garbage pick-up, sewage and road improvements.<sup>35</sup> He added, however, the island still had a long way to go before it could be considered a healthy environment especially for children. He again highlighted the planned causeway's importance to easing congestion on the island. Johnson also characterized the excitement building around the potential for continued change on Ebeye and noted "with infrastructure development in place, there is an optimist--almost euphoric--mood among the leadership of Kwajalein that their island could be a model for development in the Pacific region.<sup>36</sup>

Johnson's special feature traced Ebeye's history, implicating U.S. administration and Ebeye's lack of local authority in the island's problems. He noted Ebeye was often caught between "the intransigence of a distant U.S. Trust Territory bureaucracy in Saipan, and a hostile military command three miles away at Kwajalein." Johnson continued to add that both Trust Territory administrators and the military spent years pointing the finger at each other as responsible for Ebeye while doing little to help the island. Johnson recounted the testimonies on Kwajalein hospital exclusions, wage

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Giff Johnson, "Ebeye: From Pacific Slum to Isle Showcase," subsection in "Special Report: 'The Reconstruction of Ebeye," in *Pacific Magazine*. January/February 1990. Pp. 30.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Ibid.

discrimination and other tensions fueling the sail-in protests. Johnson's report explained that while the 1979 protests led to several million dollars going towards Ebeye development projects, the real change for Ebeye came in 1983 through the inauguration of the atoll's first local government. Here again, Johnson's approach offered the historic context of U.S. contributions to problems on Ebeye as residing in the past, with immediate solutions lying in contemporary Marshallese governance. With the shift to sovereignty in 1986, these new media narratives shifted attention away from the continuity of the coercive and hierarchical U.S. presence in the Marshall Islands. In doing so, continued problems on Ebeye became partly framed as rooted in U.S. historic policies on Kwajalein, with minimal commentary on the continued U.S. role in the region.

In focusing on the importance of local government on Ebeye, Johnson emphasized newly elected Mayor Alvin Jacklick's role in promoting change. He added Jacklick had been a young activist educated in the United States and through the sail-in protests. Johnson noted Jacklick was not alone in his transition from protestor to local government leader. He pointed to other former protestors who now led the Kwajalein Atoll Development Authority (KADA) on Ebeye that organized and supervised development programs. Johnson explained that due to the leaders' affiliation with the protest, support from Majuro came hesitantly at first. Johnson wrote, "The scares of the Kwajalein protests--during which the Marshall Islands Government was obligated to side with the U.S. because of lease agreements--took many years to heal." Here, Johnson naturalized the RMI government's choice to align policies during the protests with U.S. interests to explain their continued distrust of the protest leaders. Johnson's statements

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Ibid, 32.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Ibid, 34.

revealed how within a decade of articles attending to Marshallese critiques of RMI government violence and betrayal through eminent domain policies the protest narrative have become one of fated obligations. Johnson's article continued on to cite Mayor Alvin Jacklick's response to Majuro's continued suspicion of protest leaders. Jacklick stated "'People said we were just a bunch of young radicals trying to overthrow the government and the Army." Jacklick asserted these impressions continued to be wrong. He added, "everyone said we were 'poison fish.' But the poison fish have turned Ebeye around."

Johnson's special edition offered several examples of how local leadership on Ebeye ushered in significant change on the island. He told the story of how Ebeye's local government and KADA made lemonade out of lemons when disaster struck Ebeye in 1988 following a tropical storm. The storm left 1,300 homeless with houses on the ocean side turned to piles of rubble. KADA and the local government banned rebuilding without permits and instead relied on FEMA-constructed emergency barracks. KADA worked with FEMA to integrate emergency assistance into long-term housing improvements, which resulted in newly constructed duplex communities on Ebeye and the nearby island Gugeegue. Johnson's coverage of Ebeye leaders' innovative response to the storm exemplified the possibilities emerging by placing individuals who actually had a personal investment in Ebeye in positions of authority on the island. Ebeye's new leadership ideas seemed to dramatically contrast decades of Trust Territory and military neglect. Trust administrators and army commanders charged with determining Ebeye's fate for decades had little stake in the island's failures or successes. They also had

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Giff Johnson, "Local Kwajalein Government 'Takes Charge,'" subsection in "Special Report: 'The Reconstruction of Ebeye,'" in *Pacific Magazine*. January/February 1990. Pp. 44.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Giff Johnson, "KADA Leads Kwajalein Atoll Revitalization," subsection in "Special Report: 'The Reconstruction of Ebeye,'" in *Pacific Magazine*. January/February 1990. Pp. 41.

minimal oversight monitoring their efforts, with the greatest challenge to their policies coming from Marshallese protests and media scrutiny. This absence in accountability seemed foundational to the structure of colonialism in which colonized subjects lack any voice in their governance and have little to no recourse for challenging colonial overseers.

In addition to highlighting local government in improving Ebeye, Johnson's expose also detailed the shifting attitude and support from the army. He noted how the army was opening up more jobs on Kwajalein. He added that while compensation under the Compact shifted to a Marshall Islands minimum wage of \$1.50 per hour rather than U.S. minimum wage of \$5 per hour, the army agreed to continue U.S. wages for those who worked on Kwajalein prior to the Compact. This meant some Marshallese on Kwajalein earned up to \$11 or \$12 per hour as supervisors. 43 Echoing earlier articles. Johnson discussed how in prior years Marshallese workers charged Kwajalein with wage discrimination. But, he added, according Kwajalein's new logistics contractor Pan Am Personnel representative Paul Patrick this discrimination ceased with the Compact signing. Patrick said when a job opened on Kwajalein, Marshallese got priority. Patrick also cited a recent push to promote Marshallese and claimed that no difference in pay remained between Americans and Marshallese doing the same work. 44 Echoing Patrick's assertion of improved relations between the two islands, Johnson included statements from Army Commanding Officer Colonel Philip Harris. Harris credited Ebeye's new leadership in helping improve the relationship and noted "The two communities are tied together enough now, where a return to the icy climate of the early 1980s is

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 48.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Giff Johnson, "Marshallese See Opportunity on Kwajalein," subsection in "Special Report: 'The Reconstruction of Ebeye,'" in *Pacific Magazine*. January/February 1990. Pp. 47-48.

unthinkable."<sup>45</sup> Acknowledging the army's vulnerability to Marshallese actions, Harris added that "big programs of Strategic Defense Initiative tests to come would be 'extremely difficult with the early 1980s mentality."<sup>46</sup>

Further indicating the army's heightened awareness of its vulnerability to conflict with Marshallese landowners, Johnson's special report continued on to cite how the military approached control over payments for Kwajalein. Johnson explained the U.S. paid about \$6 million rental a year to some 80 senior landowners for Kwajalein Missile Range. 47 He added that during early 1980s when rent first jumped into the millions, the major landowner organization, the Kwajalein Atoll Corporation (KAC), created a payment system ensuring that about 5,000 landowners received an equal quarterly payment, irrespective of their land holding or traditional status. By 1990, disputes between landowners and the RMI government led to KAC's demise and thereafter payments divided into three equal portions for iroij, alab and dri-jerbal, which Johnson identified as the three classes of Marshall Islands landowners. <sup>48</sup> Four iroij (chiefs) received one third of \$6 million, and about 75 alap (landowner) and senior dri-jerbal (worker) split the remaining two-thirds. Johnson cited military concerns about Marshallese conflicts regarding shifting payment systems potentially disrupting Kwajalein missile tests. He traced how a U.S. Congressional report three years earlier criticized the changing Marshallese payment system. The report argued the system could undermine U.S. national security interests by planting seeds of unrest among landowners

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Giff Johnson, "Ebeye Residents Have Money to Spend," subsection in "Special Report: 'The Reconstruction of Ebeye," in *Pacific Magazine*. January/February 1990. Pp. 55.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> These three classes are actually not all traditionally categorized as landowners. While far more complex than this brief explanation, the basic breakdown was: iroij owned the land, alap oversaw the land and drijerbal worked the land.

at the missile range. Despite this fear, army officials stated that once the U.S. gave money to the RMI government to pay the 80 senior landowners, what happened to the money was no longer the army's business. <sup>49</sup> The army official's statement suggested a heightened awareness that following the protests and the Compact, the army remained vulnerable to future conflicts and simultaneously more limited in their control over the new sovereign nation.

Johnson's 1990 special report illuminated military shifts in policy and outlook towards Ebeye and the Marshallese and new protocol for negotiating between Kwajalein landowners and the RMI government. His report suggested long-term impacts arising from the protests and the Compact through these developments. His expose about change on Ebeye garnered enthusiastic responses that came through in *Pacific Magazine's* letters to the editor section. These letters commended what writers perceived as the long overdue positive media coverage in the region. Senator Daniel K. Inouye (D-Hawai'i) sent a letter applauding the magazine for detailing these remarkable changes on Kwajalein and Ebeye, which he said he also observed during a recent visit to the region. He credited the KADA members, Kwajalein local government and President Amata Kabua for their "can-do attitudes" in making the difference. He concluded that often in the past, articles on Ebeye focused on overcrowding and he was pleased to see the "full story" this time.<sup>50</sup>

With the seemingly renewed spirit of enthusiasm for change on Ebeye emerging, media attention to the army's continued policies of segregation and exclusion on Kwajalein that had informed several articles prior to sovereignty fell by the wayside. The

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Thia

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Editor's Mailbox, "About Ebeye." Letter from Daniel K. Inouye in *Pacific Magazine*. May/June 1990. Pp.6.

allegations of U.S. policies of apartheid in the region were relegated to stories of the past, no longer seeming relevant to the future of Kwajalein and Ebeye's relationship. This shift, in part, likely reflected a shift among the voices of those Marshallese leaders who had been most vocal in denouncing these policies in the past. As noted above, some of these former protestors had become busy now leading improvement projects on Ebeye. While Marshallese landowners and political leaders seemed to have quieted down on the issue of racial discrimination against Marshallese on Ebeye, segregation between the two islands largely remained in tact and has through today.

While Compact-era changes occurring on Ebeye captured Johnson's attention and seemed to reflect awareness among Marshallese living on the island, U.S. politicians and even Kwajalein's army command, Kwajalein's civilian community remained un-phased. Those civilians who had been living on Kwajalein during this period told me the Compact had no direct impact on civilian lives. While some, as noted in chapter nine, identified the protests influencing their lives, primarily as a minor inconvenience, none recognized any personal impacts from the Compact. But indeed, one significant change came to Kwajalein following the Compact that in the very least affected Kwajalein's civilian children. In 1987, civilian students on Kwajalein would begin sharing their classrooms with children from Ebeye. This chapter's second half turns now to explore that historic shift.

Spotlight on Ri-Katak: Narrating Marshallese Students as America's "Guests" on Kwajalein

As the previous section revealed, some of the immediate improvement projects fixing parts of Ebeye's failing infrastructure seemed to have quieted previously loud voices decrying segregation between Kwajalein and Ebeye. As Kwajalein remained a space of residential segregation, the island's new quasi-school integration program implemented following the Compact seemed to further divert attention from the continued structure of inequality between the two islands. By making life on Ebeye slightly more tolerable, increasing landowner payments and inviting a few Marshallese kids to learn on Kwajalein annually, the U.S. seemed able to avoid further scrutiny about the continuity of racial apartheid characterizing Kwajalein and Ebeye. This change on Kwajalein partly mirrored how racial apartheid throughout the U.S. became addressed through bussing solutions that diverted attention from the continuities of larger structural inequalities making schools in white suburbs better resourced than those in racialized urban centers. But unlike bussing programs in the U.S., Kwajalein's quasi-integration proved to be a one-way exchange. Marshallese children ferried to Kwajalein each day to learn; no Americans ferried to attend school on Ebeye.

The history of Kwajalein school's quasi-integration program, referred to as "Ri-Katak" (Marshallese meaning people who study or learn) in some cases and the "RMI" or "Ebeye Guest Program" in others seemed partly reminiscent of 1950s U.S. school integration efforts. The program aimed to provide educational opportunities for a select few Marshallese children each year as one way to address the extreme disparities between schooling on Kwajalein and Ebeye. In other respects, the program seemed quite distinctive. Kwajalein's integration efforts lacked the violence accompanying integration

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> From here forward, I will employ the term Ri-Katak when referring to Ebeye students for ease of narrative.

in the United States and also lacked the overt racial framing discourse. In Little Rock, Arkansas, school integration following the Brown vs. Board of Education ruling fit within a larger narrative of racial inequality and entitlements to racialized populations. But on Kwajalein school integration was framed within a narrative of American charity and good will to this impoverished foreign population; more like a good neighbor policy. This U.S. approach in the Marshall Islands worked to obscure any acknowledgement of the relational history informing Kwajalein's well-resourced, quality educational facilities and the lack of such schooling on Ebeye. American subsidized living and schooling on Kwajalein could remain totally unconnected to the history of Marshallese displacements and exclusions from the island under U.S. colonial rule. In this "postcolonial" moment Americans could narrate themselves through Kwajalein's school as charitable towards a population whose lack of quality schooling remained completely disconnected from American lives and education on Kwajalein. Ebeye's children arrived as "guests" to this presumably American island to attend this American suburban school.

The Kwajalein school program began selecting Ebeye students in 1987 for enrollment based upon a series of criteria to help determine their success in the program. The Kwajalein school board selected students primarily based on English skills and their ability to get along well with the American children. They also considered the likelihood of the child's long-term success in the program, often based in part upon perceived parental support. While these categories remained the publicly acknowledged criteria for selection, rumors and critiques surfaced over the years among Americans and Marshallese who also identified to me during casual discussions that family and iroij

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Oral history interview with Shem Livai on December 12, 2010. Honolulu, HI and email interview with Anram Chi-Chi Kemem received on January 14, 2011.

(chief) status significantly contributed to selection. The veracity of these claims can be difficult to disentangle because the link between iroij connections and the resources that would have helped support academic skills and English fluency often correlated. This connection came through in several years of Kwajalein yearbook classroom photographs as common iroij family names appeared often among the Marshallese students.<sup>53</sup>

Like many racialized American children enrolled in bussing and integration programs, Ebeye's Ri-Katak students carried the weight of an entire community on their shoulders as they entered this segregated suburban school to pursue an "equal opportunity." Echoing United States school integration discourse, the Ri-Katak program enabled a focus on individual educational achievement while deterring attention from the continuity of community structural inequalities. With five Marshallese children selected each year, the Ri-Katak program reinforced U.S. celebrative narratives emphasizing the limitless possibilities for the individual child lucky enough to be selected in the educational lottery and move along to their successful future. By employing this central American exceptionalist myth of individual opportunity to frame Marshallese student successes on Kwajalein, the U.S. further naturalized Kwajalein as an American space. Because Marshallese remained foreign to this narrative, their educational opportunities were framed as charity rather than entitlements for those included in national citizenry. The Ebeye student receiving this charitable gift now became responsible for the success of their family and community that continued to struggle under the structure of poverty and segregation created by the U.S. presence on Kwajalein. That this expectation often carried too much pressure for a child seems evidenced by the fact that since the program's

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> While as noted above, the Kwajalein integration program goes by several names, I will henceforth use "Ri-Katak" for stylistic purposes to avoid listing all the program's titles in every sentence.

implementation in 1987, an average of about two of the five children enrolled each year in kindergarten actually made it through to Kwajalein's high school graduation.<sup>54</sup> Those who graduated tended to leave Ebeye for school in the U.S. and remained there for work.

This trajectory has been a common one historically across Micronesia and the broader Pacific. In the Marshall Islands, the beeline from Kwajalein's schooling to U.S. college and work was and is perceived by many as success. Therefore, the Kwajalein Command and RMI government have been able to showcase the Ri-Katak program as enabling those success stories. In so doing, each could also then wipe their hands of any broader responsibility to address the educational needs for the rest of Ebeye's children. By focusing on the few annual Marshallese success stories at Kwajalein's school, military and government administrators could avoid planning and investing in equitable educational opportunities for all Ebeye children through teacher training, money for books and other school materials, alongside safe and healthy school buildings. This pattern mirrored the state of affairs for U.S. inner city students who have historically faced drained resources following white flight to suburbs and policies that emphasized bussing solutions over more equitable regional tax sharing or mixed income housing.

The relationship between the Ri-Katak program and the Compact of Free Association is largely undocumented and those documents that do exist have remained largely inaccessible. Because I have been unable to obtain copies of the program's mission statement and other supporting materials, although not without attempt and denial during my visit to Kwajalein, my analysis thus relies more heavily upon oral history interviews and the Kwajalein yearbook's program descriptions. Amidst the archival documents that could be secured, a few offered some insights on discussions of

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Oral history interview with Shem Livai on December 12, 2010. Honolulu, HI.

education integration on Kwajalein prior to the implementation of the Ri-Katak program. Kwajalein Commanding Lt. General John F. Wall addressed the possibility of educational integration on Kwajalein in a letter to President Amata Kabua in January 1986 preceding the Compact. The letter addressed several "non-monetary requests" made during the 1986 sail-in protest. After acknowledging concerns about snack bar access for those visiting Kwajalein on official business and approving increased visitation rights for Mid-Atoll Corridor peoples to their home islands, Wall turned his attention to the subject of education. He stated he could not permit open access to Kwajalein's school system. He explained, "Even if we were to recover all costs associated with education at KMR, I fear the costs to RMI parents would be prohibitive."55 Wall added he was seriously investigating the possibility of implementing a scholarship program for several deserving candidates to be selected for their academic quality by governmental authorities for school attendance. He also noted he was exploring ways to provide remedial English tutors "for those candidates who have a reasonable chance to matriculate." <sup>56</sup> Wall's statements suggested the Ri-Katak program may have been one concession among the broader array of Ebeye requests resulting from earlier protests and continued political negotiations. Because of my denied access to the program's official educational mission statements and because the Compact language does not include specific mention of the program, I hesitate to firmly argue a causal link here. Nonetheless, it seems enough evidence exists to suggest this as a possibility if not a likelihood.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Three-page correspondence from Army Commanding Lieutenant General John F. Wall to President Amata Kabua, Republic of the Marshall Islands. Written January 31, 1986. Located in the File: Kwajalein sit-in and use rights negotiations, TTA, reel no. 4122. <sup>56</sup> Ibid.

The likely linkage between Compact concessions and the Ri-Katak program's implementation is also suggested by earlier calls for greater educational integration between Kwajalein and Ebeye prior to the Compact signing. One 1981 Marshall Islands Journal editorial addressing school integration focused on Ebeye residents' second-class status. The editorialist prefaced his column identifying his attempt to describe what he viewed as "at best 'separate but equal' facilities" on each island.<sup>57</sup> The editorialist concluded the situation between Kwajalein and Ebeye exemplified how the army "has not been forced to pay the social cost of the activity it performs in the interest of national security." The editorial continued on to address the issue of integration spreading the blame for Kwajalein and Ebeye's relationship beyond the army noting that the Trust Territory also held responsibility. The editorial stated that in the past when integration was proposed for educational facilities, a former high Trust Territory Official noted concern "that integration of such things as schools would be damaging to the culture." <sup>59</sup> The editorialist categorized this presumption as representing the "Zoo theory," a concept during the Kennedy administration used to justify continued separation and neglect throughout Micronesia. The author noted, "The great irony is that it is hard to imagine something more culturally damaging than the ghetto which is Ebeye."60

The *Marshall Islands Journal* editorial's brief discussion of the risk to

Marshallese culture posed by educational integration on Kwajalein would prove to be a
topic that arose during several oral history interviews concerning the Ri-Katak program.

The editorialist above characterized this concern as representative of an earlier "zoo

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> "Kwajalein," Editorial. Unclear if also written by Editor Daniel C. Smith or another contributor to the editorial section. Appearing in the *Marshall Islands Journal*. March 13, 1981.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

theory," which presumed the only way to keep indigenous culture pure and uncorrupted was to keep native peoples separate from Western modern influences. Specific concern about preserving Marshallese culture through segregation surfaced as well in chapter two under the naval administration who in some ways adhered to earlier iterations of a "zoo theory" like approach to indigenous culture. As chapter two illuminated, naval officials expressed concern about potential corruption to Marshallese culture that could come through too much exposure to Americans living and socializing in close proximity. Navy officials voiced these concerns when justifying the removal of the Micronesian labor camp to Ebeye in 1951. But these same naval officials seemed perfectly comfortable with Marshallese and more broadly Micronesians adopting whatever American cultural values would enable them to be the most productive workers on Kwajalein. Neither the naval officials nor the editorialist above expressed any concerns about American culture becoming corrupted or impacted by exposure to Marshallese culture. Nor did any of these concerns arise during oral history interviews with Marshallese and Americans connected to the Ri-Katak program, some of whom expressed fears about the impact to Marshallese culture.

This continued focus on Marshallese cultural protection from the naval period through to the present has worked to help justify policies separating Americans and Marshallese on Kwajalein and Ebeye. The seeming fragility of a presumably static Marshallese culture remained the primary focus of concern, while American culture's malleability and resilience remained a given. Pacific Scholars like Vicente Diaz have commented upon this perception of indigenous culture as static and incapable of adaptation and incorporation of outside influences. Diaz has written about this

dichotomy, which presumes that when native culture shows any comparable malleability and adaptation, Westerners have tended to narrate that culture as lost. This story of the dying native culture has historically contrasted with a narration of Western culture as strengthening and progressing due to an openness to change.<sup>61</sup>

Before further examining these concerns about the Ri-Katak program's impact on Marshallese culture, this next section briefly considers how Kwajalein yearbooks narrated this effort at educational integration on the island. Kwajalein's high school yearbooks offer a revealing array of illustrations and discourse tracing the Ri-Katak program's history. The yearbooks provide a lens into how students, teachers and the broader Kwajalein community may have narrated and understood the program. <sup>62</sup> While the program began in 1987, and yearbook photographs reveal at this early stage and thereafter the change in kindergarten class composition that now included Marshallese children, discourse on the program did not appear in the yearbooks until 1999. This year marked the first that any Marshallese students who began the program in 1987 graduated from Kwajalein High School. The 1999 Kwajalein yearbook *Ekatak* (Marshallese also meaning people who study or learn) identified the program as the "RMI Student Guest Program."<sup>63</sup> It is worth considering here the implications of marking Marshallese students--some of whom were direct descendants of families displaced from Kwajalein whose ancestors have inhabited the atoll's islands for thousands of years--as "guests" on Kwajalein. This language proved the culmination of decades of discourse working to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> For more on this topic see Diaz' opening discussion of the "Carolinian Bon Jovi" in his chapter "Fight Boys, 'til the Last...' in *Pacific Diaspora*, Paul Spickard et al.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> As noted earlier, because I have been denied access to materials documented by those charged with organizing the program, these yearbooks also remain my only written sources documenting the Ri-Katak program.

63 "RMI Student Guest Program," section appearing in *Ekatak* yearbook for Kwajalein High School, 1999.

naturalize Kwajalein as a U.S. space, as outside the Marshalls and outside Marshallese history. Thus by 1999, Marshallese students attending school on the island came as "guests" of the Americans. The 1999 yearbook description noted "The intentions of the program were to improve diplomatic relations between the RMI and the United States, and most importantly, to allow the opportunity for Marshallese students to get ahead in their education." The description went on to explain that every year, Kwajalein selected these guest students from Ebeye's schools to attend kindergarten on Kwajalein and 1999 marked the first year in which the students were graduating. 65

Over the years the *Ekatak* yearbooks continued to mark Ebeye students as guests and applaud Kwajalein's policies offering them this gift to "get ahead in their education." The 2000 *Ekatak* yearbook showcased a descriptive insert and photo collage narrating similar details about the program, but this description also added information about how Kwajalein selected the Ebeye students. The yearbook noted, "To be chosen RMI students have to complete an all English test. Only the students with the highest grades will attend the Kwajalein Elementary School." This year's description also acknowledged Marshallese Atota Matthew for having been a mother figure to the RMI students in the program. The insert read, "She has helped in countless ways make sure the Marshallese students fit and receive the best possible education." The vagaries of the term "fit" can almost be missed with a quick read, but undoubtedly involved a host of challenges. Oral history interviews with former Marshallese students detailed what these efforts to "fit" involved and will be analyzed later in the chapter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> "RMI Students," section appearing in *Ekatak* yearbook for Kwajalein High School, 2000.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Ibid.

By 2001, the Ekatak insertion shifted from "RMI Student Guest Program" and "RMI Students" to "Ebeye Guest Students." This yearbook's insert began, "Each day the Ebeye guest students are welcomed onto Kwajalein to attend school. The Marshall Islands Student Guest Program is designed to improve diplomatic relationships between the RMI and the United States and provide selected Marshallese students an opportunity to experience American education."<sup>69</sup> The description continued on to note that only five students were "welcomed" each year and to be chosen these students had to take an all English test, in which only the five highest scoring students would go on to attend Kwajalein's American school. The yearbook added that in the past only one child per family could attend school on Kwajalein, but that rule only lasted a few years. 70 The 2001 description also detailed Ebeye guest students' busy days on Kwajalein. These involved waking up at 6 a.m. to prepare for school to catch the 6:45 a.m. ferry. Applauding their efforts, the insert continued, "When they arrive at school, they do their best to learn and earn a good education. Over their years in attendance, they make friends with fellow classmates and teachers."<sup>71</sup>

Like in previous yearbook descriptions, the 2001 *Ekatak* again credited Atota Matthew for her service to Marshallese students. Identifying Matthews as a Marshallese resident on Kwajalein who helped students "adjust to the new culture," the yearbook noted Matthew also showed the children to their classrooms, introduced them to their teachers and watched over them while they were at school. The insert stated "The students say that 'they couldn't have done it without Atota Matthew. Komol tata! [Thank

 $<sup>^{68}</sup>$  "Ebeye Guest Students," section appearing in *Ekatak* yearbook for Kwajalein High School, 2001.  $^{69}$  Ihid

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

you very much!]""<sup>72</sup> Given decades of army surveillance policies over Marshallese on Kwajalein, one can consider the possibility here that Matthew may have played a couple different roles in supporting this slight influx of Marshallese presence on Kwajalein. In addition to guiding Marshallese students through this likely difficult adjustment, Matthew's presence may have also helped potentially ease American concerns about the increase of Marshallese children on their island and in their school.

The 2002 *Ekatak* issue introduced the program through a more active description and also began to narrate potential cultural adjustment issues facing Marshallese students. The insert headlined "Guest Students...a new culture" and read "There's at least one found in every classroom: Marshallese pupils hard at work."<sup>73</sup> The description continued on to explain that Marshallese students had been attending the Kwajalein program since 1987 commuting to and from Kwajalein daily. The insert added "Adjusting to a different culture and language was not always easy," and continued on to describe how "Mother" Atota Matthew helped out in this area.<sup>74</sup> The yearbook added that Mathew remained the first teacher students met at the dock on Kwajalein who stayed with them until they reached high school where they then needed to depend on themselves. Again, in addition to Mathew's metaphoric role in escorting Marshallese children from dock through high school as a mentor, it seems possible her arrival to the dock may have served another purpose. Given Kwajalein's continued surveillance setting, Mathew's presence at the dock each morning may have met an army security regulation requiring that Marshallese children have an escort when moving beyond the dock.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> "Guest Students...a new culture," section appearing in appearing in *Ekatak* yearbook for Kwajalein High School, 2002.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

The 2002 yearbook also included a photo collage depicting several Marshallese students out and about around Kwajalein's school campus accompanied by text narrating the children's hopeful futures. One photograph showed a Marshallese child named Jefferson staring off to the side of the picture, almost appearing to be daydreaming. The photograph's caption alluded to a celebration of opportunities linked to the Ri-Katak program. The caption marked Jefferson as "imagining himself as the president of the Marshall Islands." By 2003, "Ebeye Guest Students" headlined the program insert, but in this yearbook no textual description accompanied. Only captioned photos of enrolled Marshallese students filled the page. Thereafter, from 2004 to the most recent 2009 yearbook, any inclusion about the program remained absent. The only evidence of the Ri-Katak program continuing came through in senior profile descriptions where some Marshallese students referenced their participation in the program. The yearbook's discontinuation of Ri-Katak program inserts possibly hinted to the program's success over time in achieving its initial goals of improving diplomatic relationships between the RMI and the United States. Early on, tensions may have remained more apparent between the two nations and thus necessitated a reminder of Kwajalein's charitable gift to Marshallese on Ebeye. Perhaps the absence of this reminder signaled the degree to which in some ways those tensions were fading over time, or becoming less overt.

Having examined the Kwajalein yearbooks' discourse narrating the Ri-Katak program's history, goals and benefits, this chapter turns now to analyze oral history interviews with Marshallese and Americans connected to the program to better understand its impact over time. One of the program's exceptional success stories, Shem Livai, discussed his impressions of participating in the program in a recent oral history

75 Ibid.

interview in Honolulu. Livai completed the Ri-Katak program graduating from Kwajalein High School in 2005. Since graduation, he had gone on to complete a four-year bachelors degree in engineering at the University of Hawai'i. This next section closely examines some of Livai's personal reflections documented while still participating in the program and his impressions years later during our 2010 interview.

In 2005, while still a Ri-Katak student, Livai offered his perspective on the program's impact on Marshallese culture in an essay published in the Kwajalein High School newspaper and the *Ekatak* yearbook. Livai's essay detailed his personal journey through the program and revealed issues likely facing other Marshallese students commuting to Kwajalein each day. His essay linked to concerns voiced earlier in this dissertation about how exposure to American culture potentially threatened Marshallese culture. But in a roundabout way, Livai's essay "Got Culture?," revealed how exposure to American culture on Kwajalein further strengthened his awareness of and connection to his own culture.

While his essay theme centered on cultural impact, Livai's introductory statements also revealed some of the potential generational gaps in perception of Ebeye's history and the U.S. influence in that history. Livai began the essay by marking himself born on Ebeye in 1986, identifying the island space as a unique place in the middle of the Pacific; distinct due to its size and ethnic diversity. Livai continued on to note people from Europe, Asia, Pacific and North and South America all convened on Ebeye to work in health care, business, education and some in religious missions. He added that "Because of the lack of education, a corrupt government, and a misuse of money by kings and

landowners, the Marshallese nation is made weak and dependent on other nations."<sup>76</sup> He noted that the resulting cultural mix on Ebeye from many peoples coming to the island could cause Marshallese to forget their culture and instead adopt these other cultures. He emphasized that American culture was most popular among those adopted.<sup>77</sup> Livai's explanation of Ebeye challenges and outsider cultural impositions spoke to perhaps the generational disconnect that accompanied being born at the moment of national sovereignty and decolonization. This narrative suggested in some ways how generational change--and likely the influence of an American education--could obscure and erase acknowledgement and attribution of some of Ebeye's problems to a history of the U.S. colonial presence in the region.

Livai's essay continued on to describe his experience of moving between cultural worlds by commuting to Kwajalein for school every day. He explained how his parents worried early on about the impact of this cultural transition. He recalled that as a child he often complained about not wanting to eat the same chicken and rice on Ebeye all the time and received lectures from his Dad about respecting his culture. He also described peer pressure in middle school and how these years changed him. He stated he, "would come home with [his] CD player playing American songs like rap, hip-hop and reggae...dressed in American clothes," asking his parents to buy newer American goods. He added that his friends "would call [him] "ri-belle,' meaning American," and early on he took that as something to be proud of and laughed with them. When Livai reached high school, the story changed. He wrote about coming home on the ferry one

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> Shem Livai, "Got Culture?" Student essay appearing in *Ekatak* yearbook for Kwajalein High School, 2005.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Ibid.

day to Ebeye and noticing elementary school kids in the exchange program on the boat socializing in English. He wrote this embarrassed him that even though they were out of school and surrounded by Marshallese, these kids still spoke English when he felt they should have been speaking their own language. He recalled how their loud socializing instigated a Marshallese worker sitting next to him to tell him in Marshallese "relukum nok matin majol,' meaning that they had forgotten their Marshallese culture.'"80 Livai noted the man who whispered this to him was clearly unaware that Livai himself was a student in the program. He instead had presumed Livai was a worker heading home on the ferry. Livai recalled these words stayed with him as he walked home. When friends called him "ri-belle," instead of laughing this time he began to cry as he thought about years passed and the cultural shame he felt. He wrote that after that day, he "became determined to get [his] identity back by getting to know [his] culture better and learning great things that will make [him] 100% Marshallese again."81 Livai concluded that traveling back and forth from an English to a Marshallese-speaking island seemed tedious and he had taken this for granted. But through this experience he learned to never forget how he once lost his identity because now he was proud of who he was and where he came from.82

Discussing Livai's experiences as a Ri-Katak student five years after he wrote this essay offered a further opportunity to gather insights about his impressions of the program. During our interview, Livai spoke about how his educational achievements to date proved exceptional among the Marshallese cohort who entered the program with him. He noted that many had dropped out during high school, sometimes due to drugs or

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

alcohol, teen pregnancy, or simply a lack of interest in school. <sup>83</sup> Livai attributed his success largely to his parents' support and their encouragement for him to graduate and go on to college. He noted his father had completed a couple years of college as well but had to drop out due to financial reasons. But even that shortened experience enabled him to offer Livai guidance and advice along the way. <sup>84</sup> Livai's parents had come to Ebeye from Ebon Island in the Kwajalein Atoll (father) and Pohnpei (mother) located in the Central Caroline Islands and currently Federated States of Micronesia. Livai's father worked as a taxi driver on Ebeye prior to landing a job on Kwajalein in automotive services. He worked on Kwajalein when Livai attended school there. But Livai noted that not all Ri-Katak children had parents working on Kwajalein.



Figure 58. Shem Livai. 85

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>83</sup> Oral history interview with Shem Livai on December 12, 2010. Honolulu, HI.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>85</sup> Photographed by Lauren Hirshberg in December 2010 in Honolulu, HI.

During our interview Livai recounted his memory of being selected to attend kindergarten on Kwajalein. He noted that Ebeye parents who wanted their children to be reviewed would first apply to the program. He said often more than a 100 children would apply but only five selected each year. He qualified that in 1990, the year he began, Kwajalein selected seven children. Livai added he was the only student who entered that year that actually made it through high school graduation. He recalled the review process involved going to Kwajalein and looking at picture cards. To determine who would be eligible to enroll the program administrators asked the children to identify symbols in the picture cards in English ("they show a picture of a cat, we say cat"). <sup>86</sup> Livai said the program leaders also asked the children to listen and read mostly in English and placed the children in a room with American students to observe how they got along. Livai also noted they checked his parents' background to help them determine his potential to finish the program. <sup>87</sup>

As our conversation continued Livai described his experience moving between Kwajalein and Ebeye. Prior to the Ri-Katak program, Livai had not spent much time on Kwajalein. In the early grade levels he attended from morning until lunch and noted that at this young age most children seemed very excited to go to Kwajalein everyday. He recalled it being fun, and said his teachers were always really nice to him. He said he experienced no tensions with the American students at that point. But that changed when the students hit middle school and high school. He said at this age, tensions emerged as kids grouped off based on popularity. Livai identified the American students as doing their own thing more and added "us Marshallese we just stick together no matter

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup> Oral history interview with Shem Livai on December 12, 2010. Honolulu, HI.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ihid.

what."89 He continued "The Americans didn't like messing with us because we...we were more physical." He explained that if one of the "guest students" got teased or bullied. the Marshallese kids would gang up and warn the American students not to mess with him and the encounter would quickly end. But he qualified this did not happen very often.

As a senior, Livai's leadership experience as a Ri-Katak student came through in his role as President of the Marshall Islands Club, which began at Kwajalein High School during the 1990s. Livai described leading the club to participate in the "Christmas on Carlos" event, in which Kwajalein residents annually brought Christmas toys to the atoll's Marshallese inhabited island Carlos. He also recalled helping the club organize a day for hosting Ebeye's seniors on Kwajalein. Livai noted the senior hosting day seemed a great way for the school to show off their facilities and their students. Marshallese seniors came over on the ferry in the morning and attended one of Kwajalein High School's classes. After class they went bowling and socialized and ate with the Ri-Katak students. I asked Livai his impression of what this experience was like for Ebeye's seniors. He responded, "It was kind of good and bad. When they came they were really amazed and they kind of felt like they missed out on a lot, and they kind of felt like embarrassed, like how the school was so good and they were just...there for a day."<sup>91</sup>

Livai's experience observing the potential discomfort of Ebeye's students exposed to Kwajalein's educational opportunities denied them through segregation echoed concerns voiced more than three decades earlier in a local Ebeye newspaper. Ebeye View publications advisor Chris Christensen submitted a letter to the editor in the View's April

89 Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> Ihid.

27, 1971 issue. Christensen's letter responded to an article appearing in the same issue that detailed a recent visit among Ebeye's 6th, 7th and 8th grade girls to Kwajalein to enhance their homemaking skills. The experiential learning visit included a trip to Kwajalein's bakery, commissary, laundry facilities, and elementary school where the students learned about good health and good attire. The U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity funded the exchange program. Clearly annoyed with the program, Christensen wrote the curriculum remained totally irrelevant for Ebeye girls who Christensen categorized as not needing the kind of brainwashing that taught girls to wear makeup, set hair, apply lipstick and other "grotesqueries." <sup>92</sup> Christensen added that to teach Marshallese girls "such trivial American inanities as proper table setting procedures is even more irrelevant to the culture, unless we are training hotel maids and waitresses (God forbid)."93 Finally, Christensen concluded that "field trips to the Surfway or the laundry seem to be a curious exercise of the learning process (Come on in natives and see wonderful things we've got--however don't touch. And by all means get out of your head any ideas of shopping here with us.)"94 Considering Christiansen's letter alongside Livai's interview suggests some continuities amidst other changes taking place over the years on Kwajalein. More than thirty years after Christiansen's letter Livai had come into a position of hosting Marshallese students on Kwajalein, showing them what they could observe but not fully partake in themselves.

Livai continued on to describe how being among a select group of Marshallese chosen to enjoy Kwajalein's educational resources and opportunities placed him in a precarious position, hovering between two social worlds, not entirely rooted in either. He

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> Letter to the Editor from Chris Christensen (publication advisor) in the *Ebeye View*. April 27, 1971.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

spoke about his connections with Marshallese on Ebeye diminishing socially over time. He said he did not like hanging out on Ebeye much because the kids often caused trouble and tended to beg for money, which he did not enjoy. He noted however that while many of Ebeye's older generation expressed jealousy and others viewed the Ri-Katak kids as spoiled traitors or snobby, his new status brought him a certain level of popularity among some peers on Ebeye, especially girls. He explained that a good pickup line would be to say he went to school on Kwajalein and he could get any girl. In general he said he tended to socialize more on Kwajalein during high school, but in doing so found it difficult to keep up with the American kids' material lifestyle.

Livai's struggles to keep up with the lifestyles of his American counterparts in 2005 revealed how Ri-Katak children and teens faced similar barriers to those Marshallese workers before them who had navigated Kwajalein's restrictive army policies since 1968. Livai discussed how he began working in sixth grade on Kwajalein as a paperboy, then later took jobs as a referee and night supervisor so he could buy all the things his American friends had. He explained, "They were really spoiled and they had a lot of stuff that I wanted to be accepted...I had a lot of jealousy towards my classmates." So he worked to buy things like i-pods and American style clothing. But he said he could not shop for these items on Kwajalein, only on Ebeye. He recalled too how going to school on an island where very few Marshallese lived and no guest facilities existed for Ri-Katak kids made it difficult when events like prom came up. He said the guest students tended to just ride bikes around the island, or go to the library or gym to wait until the event started. He added though that a few Marshallese friends lived

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>95</sup> Oral history interview with Shem Livai on December 12, 2010. Honolulu, HI.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

on Kwajalein so sometimes Ri-Katak kids would go to their houses to take showers and cook food and get ready for events.<sup>98</sup>

Despite some challenges, Livai counted himself quite lucky to have gotten the chance to go to school on Kwajalein. He said the experience opened up many opportunities in his life. He explained how most kids educated on Ebeye ended up in the army or job corps; very few went on to a four-year college. By observing the progress of his siblings, whom were not selected to attend on Kwajalein, Livai saw huge gaps in curriculum between the two islands. He said because Kwajalein was a U.S. military base with lots of government money pouring into the island, Kwajalein's students got top teachers and got to take college bound classes like calculus, biology and English. 99 He noted he took Algebra in sixth grade on Kwajalein, whereas on Ebeye most students did not take this subject until they were seniors. Livai's observations hinted at the educational opportunities that could have existed for Ebeye's children if the army had historically considered the children of their Marshallese labor force as equally entitled to the kinds of quality school resources they believed American workers' children deserved. As noted in previous chapters, the army had invested several billion dollars over nearly five decades on Kwajalein. During that time the military rarely and only begrudgingly contributed to infrastructure and educational facilities on Ebeye, which continued to house over a quarter of their workforce. Ebeye workers' children were left with inadequate school facilities due to minimal Trust Territory funding and because they remained prevented from living on Kwajalein and attending school there.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ihid.

Livai explained how going to school on Kwajalein also prepared him well for the adjustment to college in Hawai'i, revealing the army's success in naturalizing the island as an American space. Of course this American space compared with another U.S. settler colony in the Pacific: Hawai'i. He said "Kwajalein is like little America...so when I came here [to Hawai'i] it was so easy to adapt, like I can socialize and communicate with the other students out here." 100 He added the experience taught him how to act around Marshallese and around Americans, giving him somewhat of a split personality. He elaborated that if he acted more American around Marshallese friends they thought he was weird, and same went for his American friends. With Marshallese, he said he had to act more tough, none of that girly stuff. But with Americans, he acted more refined, more professional. 101 Livai's narrative of switching behavioral hats to appease each culture seemed to reiterate his earlier "Got Culture?" essay by revealing how his exposure to American culture also heightened his awareness of Marshallese.

Livai detailed his long-term plans to work in Hawai'i and remain away from Ebeye, which he characterized as boring with fewer opportunities to make it big. 102 Towards the end of the interview, I asked Livai if he felt there was more to say about Ri-Katak and how he might evaluate the program. He said perhaps the program could be improved if they admitted more than five students each year. But he assumed Kwajalein limited the number because of classroom size limitations. I then asked Livai if he ever wondered why the kinds of educational resources on Kwajalein did not exist on Ebeye; so instead of kids having to go to Kwajalein for an improved education, they could just stay at home and receive the same opportunities. Livai said he felt the problem had much to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>100</sup> Ibid. <sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

do with organization and money and cited his government's corruption as the barrier to improvements happening anytime soon. He emphasized the difference with Kwajalein being that the island was a U.S. military base and received lots of money and resources from the United States.<sup>103</sup>

While Livai's reflections exemplified the exceptional experience of one

Marshallese student succeeding through the Ri-Katak program and feeling grateful for
the opportunity, Neibanjan Lavin narrated the program through a different lens. Lavin,
who appeared in chapter nine as one of the Marshallese workers walking the reef during
the 1986 sail-ins, spoke with me on Ebeye in November 2010. She shared her
experiences as a Marshallese woman who had been educated in the United States and her
impressions of Ri-Katak as a negative influence on Marshallese children. Born on Wotje
Atoll, Lavin moved to Ebeye as a baby with her parents who came to work on the island.
When Lavin reached adolescence they sent her to California to attend high school and
live with a family her sister had found to sponsor her. After high school Lavin returned
to Ebeye and began working on Kwajalein in several different positions for about ten
years. She then quit her job on Kwajalein due to personal family reasons and has
remained working on Ebeye for the past 20 years.

Having moved between American and Marshallese educational and employment worlds Lavin shared how these experiences influenced her impression of the Ri-Katak program and its threat to Marshallese culture. She explained how she felt kids who went to school on Kwajalein were "going to lose their custom...[and she wanted] them to

<sup>103</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>104</sup> Strangely enough, Lavin attended high school in Dublin, California, which is literally five minutes drive from Pleasanton, where I attended high school.

firmly know about their Marshallese, their culture." She said when she saw these kids, "they act like they're all that, like they are not Marshallese...[like] they are kind of special."<sup>106</sup> She said some of these kids going to school on Kwajalein were her relatives. She explained that Marshallese tended to be quiet, not so fast and even though she went to school in California, she always knew how to retain Marshallese customs. Lavin said, "I play I'm American, and when I came back to the Marshalls, I know that I'm Marshallese. I play my lady, my lady style. But when I was in mainland, I could be, you know, I don't care. Whatever I need, whatever I want, I act. I know two different characters." <sup>107</sup> Lavin credited her ability to switch hats so easily to the fact that she already grew up with Marshallese customs by the time she went to school in the U.S. The kids going to Kwajalein, she said however, are so young when they begin. She said their age made it easier for these kids to take up American culture and she observed this especially with ladies. She said the way they dress and their loud behavior reflected an attitude of not caring, as if nobody else was around. She concluded the kids that go to Kwajalein, "I'm even sorry sometimes that they go there, they go there and they pick up fast their lifestyle and not show them that they're Marshallese." <sup>108</sup>

Lavin's narrative of the Ri-Katak program seemed to echo some of the earlier naval discourse regarding concern about Marshallese cultural vulnerability, although for different reasons. She identified the program as primarily harmful in teaching Marshallese kids to act more individualistically, as if they stood outside (and often above) their larger community. Her insights reflected one perspective as a family member of Ri-

 $<sup>^{105}</sup>$  Oral history interview with Neibanjan Lavin on November 15, 2010. Ebeye, Marshall Islands  $^{106}$  Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

Katak students. Another Marshallese family connected to the Ri-Katak program offered a very different narrative. Yoshi and Fumiko Kemem's sons both attended school on Kwajalein, but only one through the Ri-Katak program. That is because Yoshi and Fumiko had the rare experience of being the first Marshallese civilian contractor family to move from Ebeye to live on Kwajalein. Thus, during our oral history interview on Kwajalein, they could speak to one son's experience of attending school on Kwajalein through the Ri-Katak program and the other attending after they became island residents.

The Kemem family's unprecedented path to residency on segregated Kwajalein began with Yoshi's employment in the island's security and law enforcement as a constable translating for the police department in 1985. As he moved up to the position of investigator for the police department, Kwajalein Command permitted Yoshi to move his family from Ebeye to Kwajalein in 1998. Aside from RMI government representative Noda Lojkar, Yoshi's family became the first Marshallese family to live on Kwajalein. Two out of three of Yoshi's children attended school on Kwajalein, with one having had the experience of transitioning from the Ri-Katak program to attend as a resident. While his sons are different ages, they both graduated Kwajalein High School in 2009. The Kwajalein school held back for one year the older son who had not been in the Ri-Katak program so he could catch up after transitioning from Ebeye's school. The younger son transitioned smoothly as he had been selected for the Ri-Katak program as a child on

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>109</sup> Today, the Kemem family remains one among only a few Marshallese families and bachelors living and working on Kwajalein. Yoshi and Fumiko told me that two years after they moved to Kwajalein the second Marshallese family came, which consisted of a Department of Energy employee moving from Majuro (not Ebeye) to help care for those Marshallese living on Ebeye impacted by radioactive fallout. Yoshi and Fumiko noted the few other Marshallese living on Ebeye were bachelors (in the Bachelors Quarters), one working in finance and three other pilots who used to work for Air Marshall Islands in Majuro.

Ebeye. Both sons were attending U.S. colleges when I interviewed their parents on Kwajalein.

Before delving into their impressions of the Ri-Katak program, Yoshi and Fumiko Kemem shared how their lives changed when they moved from Ebeye to Kwajalein. Yoshi said a lot changed, including the convenience of living somewhere with consistent power and electricity. He explained how on Ebeye, half the time power was on, half the time it was off. While they lived and worked on Kwajalein, Yoshi noted that he and his wife's social world remained on Ebeye. He said they went to Ebeye everyday to see family, to socialize and to attend Church on Sundays. For his kids, he said the adjustment to living on Kwajalein remained difficult at first and in the beginning they too returned to Ebeye to socialize. He said that while kids on Ebeye tended to be outside playing most of the time, on Kwajalein the children went inside by 6 or 7 at night and the streets emptied. Over time, he said his kids befriended more children on Kwajalein and tended to be less enthusiastic about leaving the island to socialize on Ebeye.

Exemplifying Kwajalein's continued structure of segregation and surveillance that made socializing with friends and family from Ebeye difficult through today, Yoshi said he and his wife constantly sponsored Marshallese to come onto the island. While Yoshi and Fumiko could move freely to visit this community on Ebeye, any visits coming from Ebeye continued to require sponsorship approval and remained under strict time limits. When asked if he felt his family was treated differently on Ebeye because they lived on Kwajalein, Yoshi said yes, and especially when they first moved to Kwajalein. He stated

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>110</sup> Oral history interview with Yoshi and Fumiko Kemem on November 14, 2010. Kwajalein, Marshall Islands

"people think because I live here, I am somebody, but we don't think that way."<sup>111</sup> He continued, "We were same person that we were over there. People think you know that we live here, a lot of good things happen here, and that we are up here [raising his hand high], but we don't think that."<sup>112</sup>

As our conversation moved on to discuss the Ri-Katak program, both Yoshi and Fumiko spoke highly of the school's support they received as parents. They characterized the teachers and other parents on the island as quite helpful. Both remained incredibly proud of their two boys being in college. They noted that when their son Chi Chi was selected for Ri-Katak in 1996, he remained the only boy chosen that year. While I missed the opportunity to meet Chi Chi on Kwajalein in November 2010, as he was away at college in Arizona, he generously shared some impressions of the program with me over email in January 2011.

Chi Chi Kemem's narrative of Ri-Katak partly mirrored some of Shem Livai's experiences noted above and in other ways remained distinctive, particularly given his unique opportunity to study on Kwajalein from Ebeye first and later as a resident. Chi Chi wrote that when first selected to go to school on Kwajalein, he found the experience quite confusing. He had not recalled knowing why or how he got chosen. He did recall however, feeling pressure as a Ri-Katak kid in wanting to make sure he succeeded in school. He wrote he was "scared of making [his] parents look bad because [he] was a really bad kid; got into trouble every chance [he] got." Unlike Livai's account, Chi Chi narrated the experience of being a Ri-Katak student as offering him a privileged status

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>113</sup> Email interview with Anram Chi-Chi Kemem received on January 14, 2011.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

devoid of the kinds of negative experiences Livai identified as accompanying that status. Chi Chi said he could see how his parents spoke about it to everyone and how the older kids and adults were nicer to him on Ebeye. Chi Chi's narrative lacked any mention of the kinds of teasing Livai encountered, suggesting he either avoided these same experiences or had not felt them to be as centrally relevant to his impressions of the program. Chi Chi further explained, "I was respected on Kwaj by everyone as if I was equal, but received more attention on Ebeye because I was Ri-Katak."

Similar to Livai's experience, Chi Chi identified the segregated social worlds he moved through between the two islands, noting he socialized more on Ebeye as a young kid but tended to stay on Kwajalein as he got older. In contrast to Livai's and other Ri-Katak students' commuter context, Chi Chi wrote that when his family moved to Kwajalein he began seeing extended family less often because of Kwajalein security. Although, he qualified that he saw his mother's family more because of her family line connection to iroij status, suggesting this status helped those family members move more easily through Kwajalein's surveillance structure. Acknowledging the costs and benefits that came with moving to Kwajalein's segregated space, Chi Chi said while he preferred living on Kwajalein he missed his relatives on Ebeye. But he said his home on Kwajalein compared much more favorably with his previous tight his living conditions on Ebeye. He described their small house on Ebeye as having been home to five families and their kids, and uncles, aunties, adding up to 38 people in one small household. He noted the house had "a small kitchen, living room that [was] no longer visible due to bunk beds taking up space, one bathroom, four bedrooms, and a small store" where his grandparents

115 Ibid.

<sup>706</sup> 

slept. 116 In contrast, he notes that on Kwajalein his immediate family of six shared a twostory, four-bedroom house with three bathrooms.

Echoing Livai's sentiments, Chi Chi wrote he felt grateful to have gone to school on Kwajalein. He said the experience prepared him well for continued schooling and the workforce. Chi Chi described Kwajalein's tight knit community as an additional bonus, recalling how friends' parents looked out for him, welcoming him into their homes and sharing lessons they gave to their own children. He said even sometimes "friends' parents would discipline [him]. [He] didn't like it, but it taught [him] a lot and [his] parents approved of it."117 He also recalled the experience when a Kwajalein coach got on he and his brother's case for skipping out on soccer when they comprised the team's star players. He wrote "He talked to us about drills and how they apply not only in soccer but in the real world. He wasn't just teaching us soccer, but also life-lessons." 118 Chi Chi concluded he felt he would have been a "a worse student, athlete, son and brother" if he grew up on Ebeye because of the many bad influences there. 119

Chi Chi continued on to describe the divergence between Kwajalein and Ebeye's social temptations for youngsters, identifying Ebeye as a space much more conducive to bad behavioral choices. In doing so, however, he also highlighted the distinct disciplinary approaches distinguishing the two island communities. He said on Ebeye teenagers taught him to smoke at age 4, uncles showed him how to dip chewing tobacco. 120 He cited underage drinking and violence as much more visible on Ebeye and certain things that would just not fly on Kwajalein. But in describing these contrasting social worlds

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid. 118 Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

and influences, Chi Chi also identified a major difference between discipline on Kwajalein and Ebeye. He wrote he had friends on Kwajalein also caught for underage drinking, but these friends got barred from the island. He added, "Now they can't even visit their family for their actions." Chi Chi's inclusion of Kwajalein's disciplinary actions echoed anecdotes noted in chapter eight that detailed Kwajalein parents' anxiety from living in a place where their entire family could be held accountable for the behavior of an individual rebellious child. While rebellion on Ebeye likely ignited a range of disciplinary consequences, none of these would have compared with Kwajalein's island barring policies. Often on Kwajalein, if a child violated army rules, the parents would either have to split up the family after the child became barred from the island or guit their jobs and move away from Kwajalein to remain with their child.

Chi Chi's written reflections concerning his overall impressions of Ri-Katak and what he planned to do with his educational opportunities gained from going to school on Kwajalein contrasted with Shem Livai's. Whereas Livai expressed no desire to return to Ebeye or the Marshall Islands for any long-term residency, Chi Chi wrote that he planned to return to the Marshalls after college. He wrote he would first work in the United States to get experience and money. He would then return home "to help [his] homeland." He added, whether doing so through volunteer work or running for political office, he was "more than willing to help the RMI get rid of its flaws and expand their success." 123

In addition to these varied narratives about the Ri-Katak program voiced by Marshallese participants and family members connected to the program, American civilian Bob Butz offered insights as both a parent and former teacher at the school.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>121</sup> Ibid. <sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

During an oral history interview on Kwajalein in November 2010, Butz talked about having his own children in classrooms with Ri-Katak kids and working as a teacher in some of these classrooms. Butz came to Kwajalein in 1995 and currently manages the island's golf course. When first arriving to the island, Butz taught full time at the school and continued on as a substitute teacher from 1997 to 2003. He said he perceived the Ri-Katak program as having been positive for both Americans and Marshallese and never observed anything negative about the program. He recalled too that participation in the program appeared to be quite an honor for the families of those kids selected.

In his role as a former teacher on Kwajalein, Butz narrated the Ri-Katak program through his observations of Marshallese student and parental pressures as well as the relationships he saw developing between American and Marshallese children. He said he recalled observing Marshallese parents who seemed to acknowledge the importance of their children's participation in Ri-Katak. He added that these parents recognized that their children's presence on Kwajalein meant they would get the best education possible. He reiterated this honor and privilege of going to school on Kwajalein seemed to mean a great deal to both parents and kids, especially when children reached high school and became more aware of what they represented. Butz's narrative of Marshallese awareness about the importance of taking advantage of the privilege to go to school on Kwajalein echoed some of the Kwajalein high school yearbook narratives about the program. Butz's interview and the yearbook discourse described the program in a way that naturalized Kwajalein as an American space by highlighting the privilege of these five Marshallese "guest' students getting to partake in the Americans' charitable gift of education. By framing Marshallese opportunities on Kwajalein in this way, these Ri-Katak program

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>124</sup> Oral history interview with Bob Butz on November 14, 2010. Kwajalein, Marshall Islands

narratives helped erase the U.S. historic colonial presence on the island and naturalized the resulting continued structure of segregation between Kwajalein and Ebeye.

Butz's reflections on the Ri-Katak program continued on to identify how inviting poor children from Ebeye to attend school on Kwajalein further ignited charitable efforts among Kwajalein's community. Butz said lunchtime could be a challenge because the Marshallese children often could not afford to bring lunch to school. He explained that Kwajalein offered several programs with volunteer money collected to provide lunches. Butz added that many people also provided lunches from their homes and he recalled encouraging his daughter and son to bring Marshallese friends home with them for lunch. When asked if Butz ever observed any discomfort among the Marshallese kids in his classrooms or mistreatment by American students, he said he never saw such dynamics. He added his daughter had as many Marshallese friends as non-Marshallese. Butz said he felt when kids came together at a such a young age with the kinds of parents living on Kwajalein, "hardly any prejudices or racism or any kind...goes on whatsoever." 125 Butz narrated the Marshallese kids as seeming eager to share and be a part of everything and this offered a great experience for everybody. He qualified, however, that he could "see how they could be ostracized by their own, their situation on Ebeye, because they are sort of living in two worlds." <sup>126</sup> He continued "They come over everyday to the American world and they go back everyday to the Marshallese world." Butz also shared with me that among the most meaningful experiences informing his time on Kwajalein had been the opportunity to get to know and learn from his Marshallese employees. Surprisingly, given this seemingly heartfelt sentiment, when I asked Butz how often he visited Ebeye

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

during the fifteen years he lived on Kwajalein, he told me he had never gone. He added he felt a bit ashamed of that fact. 128

Contrasting Butz's glowing narrative of the Ri-Katak program as an American civilian parent and former teacher on Kwajalein, another American civilian contractor shared a more cynical view of the program's intentions and outcomes. Exemplifying how Kwajalein's atmosphere of fear continued to inform American experiences on island through today, this woman wished to remain anonymous fearing that her opinions could cost her job. She began her narrative of the Ri-Katak program by arguing that the five child per year enrollment policy allowed the U.S. to address disparities between Kwajalein and Ebeye in a controllable manner. 129 She continued on to discuss how she felt Americans on Kwajalein often pointed to the Ri-Katak program as an example of the good deeds they were doing for the Marshallese. As an example of this phenomenon, she told the story of a recent conversation with another civilian on Kwajalein who had been complaining to her about the 2009 Australian documentary film Rocket Island. The film spurred a significant negative response across Kwajalein's civilian community, so pervasive as to make it difficult for me to conduct interviews on island and in Hawai'i with civilians who had become suspicious of anyone documenting Kwajalein thereafter.

Rocket Island echoed some of the 1970s and 1980s investigative journalism reports on Kwajalein and Ebeye, highlighting the continued structures of segregation between the two islands. Interestingly, the anonymous civilian told me that Americans on Kwajalein seemed most disturbed and unsettled by the film's opening scene. The film began by showing American civilians being served by Marshallese waiters and waitresses

<sup>128</sup> Ibi

 $<sup>^{129}</sup>$  Oral history interview with anonymous source on November 14, 2010. Kwajalein, Marshall Islands.  $^{130}$  Ibid

during a special dinner event on the beach. The anonymous civilian said Americans bristled at the scene's suggestions of racial segregation and American privilege on Kwajalein as they argued the beach dinner represented a more exceptional event. The source reminded me, however, that no Americans serve each other food in the dining cafeteria or snack bar on Kwajalein where only Marshallese and other "brown people" serve and clean. 131 She also noted the beach dining event occurred four times a year. 132 But, she said Americans still complained when this scene quickly shifted from that of a segregated country club setting to images of Ebeye's dilapidated houses, illuminating the stark contrast. Noteworthy as well, when speaking with Julian Riklon and Michael Kabua on Ebeye and South Loi respectively regarding *Rocket Island*, they each said they found nothing inaccurate about any of the film's scenes. 133 Nonetheless, the anonymous civilian said when she spoke with the American on Kwajalein regarding that American's negative perception of the film, she said the American began gushing about Ri-Katak and questioned why the film neglected to mention the program. The anonymous civilian stated she believed Americans on the island lacked any concept of how little the program actually contributed to benefiting Marshallese families on Ebeye. 134 She said, "I look at that program and I think to myself, the only people who are truly benefiting from that program are the American students who are in school with the students because they actually get a chance to realize that Marshallese are not just their bubus [Marshallese word for "nannies"], which prior to that program they didn't have." She concluded that

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>133</sup> Oral history interview with Julian Riklon on May 17, 2010. Ebeye, Marshall Islands.

 <sup>134</sup> Oral history interview with anonymous source on November 14, 2010. Kwajalein, Marshall Islands
 135 Ibid

as per usual, "in the end you find that the Americans are starting out helping Marshallese and end up helping themselves." <sup>136</sup>

The Ri-Katak program continues through today as do Ebeye's struggles to obtain resources for educational materials, well-trained teachers and enough safe and healthy facility space to accommodate the growing student-age population on island. But, like discourse on educational opportunity in the United States, Americans on Kwajalein can spotlight individual success stories while avoiding direct confrontation with the deeper history of colonialism and segregation perpetuating the continued structural inequalities between the two islands. The divergent paths Ri-Katak students who graduate Kwajalein High School continue to take will undoubtedly offer an array of stories infusing the broader Marshallese diaspora. As in many cases, those Marshallese who first made the ferry trip to enter school in this "American space" on Kwajalein continued on to enter additional American spaces of education and employment thereafter.

This dissertation's significant emphasis on how suburbanization acted as a distinctive form of colonial spatial organization on Kwajalein made this final section's focus on the island school's quasi-integration program seem fitting. The Ri-Katak students ferrying practices contrasted bussing models in the United States in the way this school integration effort remained a one-way exchange. As noted earlier, no Americans ferried to study on Ebeye. But the program's history still offers food for thought when further considered alongside discussions of school integration in U.S. suburban history. Much suburban and urban historiography has focused on housing and school integration and proposed a variety of policy solutions to U.S. patterns of residential apartheid. This literature's analysis of solutions for urban disenfranchised communities has tended to

136 Ibid.

center on more equitable regional tax sharing structures and mixed income housing.

These narratives have also tended to fall within a national framework of urban and suburban communities remaining entitled to more equitable resources as citizens.

On Kwajalein, the historic narrative of the Ri-Katak program remained outside any narrative of national entitlements and rather centered on charitable deeds done for a nearby poor Marshallese community. While Kwajalein's segregated suburban atmosphere continued to be narrated as within the U.S. domestic, Marshallese remained foreign to this domestic space. Therefore, while discourse on the Ri-Katak program continued to evade any acknowledgement of a U.S. neocolonial presence in the region, any narrative of national entitlements did not quite work to describe relations with the Marshallese. Enter stage left: U.S. benevolence and charity to a tragically poor nearby Marshallese community whose historic impoverishment remained unconnected from American wealth production and privileged living on Kwajalein. Chapter ten has attempted to show how in the supposed "postcolonial era" on Kwajalein, the history and continuity of structures of inequality erected under U.S. colonial rule became obscured. The Ri-Katak program helped contribute to this narrative erasure. In detailing continued challenges on Ebeye through today, some Marshallese leaders and workers and some American journalists have more recently marked the RMI government and Marshallese cultural values of family support as most responsible. For the army on Kwajalein, this proved an ideal scenario, because it no longer came under scrutiny for its historic and continuous policies of displacement and segregation. They now could point to the RMI and local governments as accountable for the problems of their people.

With the Ri-Katak program the army could also now point to this flagship example of U.S. benevolence to Marshallese on Ebeye and wipe its hands of any further accountability for years of colonial injustices in the region. With the 1986 Compact signing and dissolution of the Trust Territory administration, suddenly decades of structural inequalities and failing infrastructure on Ebeye shifted to Marshallese responsibility. This in part seemed an appropriate and positive shift in many ways, as this chapter has tried to indicate that local accountability on Ebeye seemed to usher in certain improvements. But blame for Ebeye's continued problems also fell upon a government whose economic decisions still depended upon U.S. approval and who now was expected to take on the task of undoing decades of U.S. colonial policies of economic neglect in the region. As noted earlier, oral histories and many casual discussions with those connected to this history revealed the presence of Marshallese governmental corruption contributing to Ebeye's continued problems since 1986. Without documentation to substantiate or refute these stories, this dissertation has focused on other factors. The veracity of these stories, however, would not seem to influence this chapter's larger argument that a shift in focus onto Marshallese governmental policies obscured the continued impact of U.S. colonial history on Kwajalein and Ebeye. This colonial history erected structures of inequality between the two islands that remain in place today. Yet critiques of those most responsible for the depth of these structures over more than 60 years seemed to fade as criticism against this emerging Marshallese government became more pronounced.

While the U.S. military's continued presence on Kwajalein meant continued enforcement of segregation, inhumane search and seizure policies and the prevention of

displaced Marshallese from returning to their home atolls, the army in recent years has escaped from the scrutinized scene unscathed. And thus while American civilians on Kwajalein continue to reap the benefits of this history, as does the army's multi-billion dollar missile testing program, the shift in accountability for all related consequences and costs moved to the Marshallese. Americans continue to take comfort in knowing that they annually allow five Marshallese children the privilege of sitting in classrooms with theirs. That privilege continues through today and likely will into future years, as long as those Marshallese children remember to leave the island on time each day.

# Conclusion **Examining U.S. Military Empire and American Culture on Kwajalein**

This dissertation has analyzed the historic spatial and cultural process that transformed a Pacific island into a space of U.S. suburban domesticity. The project has traced this process from global and local perspectives. On the global level, U.N. sanction of U.S. colonial control over the region naturalized U.S. presence while disavowing an expanding U.S. Empire. On the local level, the dissertation illuminated how Kwajalein's suburbanization and Ebeye's relational urbanization further produced a spatial and cultural picture mirroring simultaneous developments in the United States. This conclusion aims to show why, for many reasons, scholars of Pacific, U.S. and global history should know Kwajalein's story and why, also, there are broader implications for U.S. citizens in understanding more about their nation's imperial past and present.

First, this project centers Marshallese history in the Cold War moment in an attempt to expand Micronesian historiography by connecting Kwajalein's local colonial transformation to the region's broader changes under U.S. Empire. The history of the U.S. presence on Kwajalein and Marshallese negotiation and responses to that presence significantly impacted the recent history of the Marshall Islands. The post-World War II relationship between the Marshall Islands and the United States continues to be a predominant influence in Marshallese society through economic and political ties in negotiating continued Compacts. In addition, issues of health care compensation and

access in relation to the nuclear testing campaign's radiation legacy and Kwajalein and Ebeye's segregation continue to infuse daily life for many Marshallese. The growing Marshallese diaspora following the 1986 Compact signing, marked by migrations to Hawai'i and the continental U.S., remains tied to the historic U.S. role on Kwajalein. While this project does not delve into all of these long-term changes, I argue Kwajalein's story has played a central role influencing much of this recent history for Marshall Islanders. The Marshall Islands was a central space upon which Cold War imperial competitions played out. This dissertation illuminates how the history of those competitions further impacted long-term changes in the region. By expanding the historic picture of the relationship between the United States and the Marshall Islands as this played out on Kwajalein and Ebeye during the Cold War, this dissertation has hoped to further expand historic knowledge about the Marshall Islands as part of a broader Micronesian and Pacific History. Furthermore, this project hopes to contribute to the growing literature in Pacific Studies on the history of U.S. military empire in the region in the postwar period.

Kwajalein was a catalytic site in postwar U.S. militarism and expansion. As such, it augments President Eisenhower's caution about the rise of military industrial power. This project contends the postwar period gave rise to a military industrial *colonial* complex. I have shown how amidst the postwar context of global decolonization, the United States maintained and reproduced a national narrative disavowing the imperial nature of military expansion across Micronesia. Globally, the U.S. reproduced this mythical story by narrating entitlement to control over the region through wartime sacrifice on Kwajalein that erased the Marshallese presence from the war. The U.S. also

maintained this exceptional narrative through the 1947 U.N. Trusteeship Agreement sanctioning U.S. control in the region by marrying U.S. national security to international peace. That marriage between a deeply rooted U.S. war story and the emerging global narrative of insecurity positioned the United States into a role of global protector.

International sanction of that role has carried significant repercussions through today as the U.S. continues waging war in the Middle East and has grown to comprise a military empire with bases in 150 countries.<sup>1</sup>

The latest U.S. "War on Terror" has made more evident how the U.S. "War on" narrative has become naturalized in recent decades. While the demise of Cold War threats would have presumably decreased U.S. weapons development practices, like the multibillion dollar missile testing mission on Kwajalein, this dissertation has revealed how this testing has remained uninterrupted through today. This perpetual state of war preparation evidenced through Kwajalein's missile activities speaks to the continuity and expansion of a deeply rooted U.S. war story historically positioning the nation in a state of perpetual threat and insecurity. As noted in my introduction, scholars Richard Slotkin and Tom Englehardt have illuminated how that war story emerged from the settler colonial foundations of the nation and was continually reproduced through the post-World War II period. Kwajalein offers a site of how U.S. power became normalized as a national security imperative rather than an imperial endeavor. This project does not argue, however, that the post-World War II period marks the first moment the U.S. become a militaristic culture. Rather the postwar era constituted a moment when that existing culture of militarism met historic changes--technologically, economically and politically--which provided an opportunity for the consequent U.S. military empire to emerge.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Vine, Island of Shame, 16.

In addition to economic wealth and military technology buttressing this unprecedented moment of postwar U.S. imperial expansion, American imperial power remained tied to American mythical narratives of the nation. My approach to this dissertation involved thinking about the relationship between American exceptionalist narratives buttressing American culture and American power during the Cold War as these transformed Kwajalein. This project is deeply inspired by Phil Deloria's examination of American culture in his 1998 *Playing Indian* and his specific consideration of how the U.S. national character remained historically separated from the nation's power. As Deloria and other scholars of U.S. and Pacific colonialisms have revealed, the contradictions foundational to U.S. national narratives also constituted the discourse colonized subjects would historically appropriate to create ruptures in the nation's mythical fabric and further unsettle U.S. power. This dissertation has traced how, on Kwajalein, this imperial power became obscured and rewritten as part of the ongoing national story further strengthening the myth of the nation during the Cold War.

The U.S. maintained an exceptionalist narrative about Kwajalein through the transformation of the island into a space of suburban domesticity. Suburbanization proved a method for transforming the island into an appealing space for recruiting and managing labor comprising a large American family component. What makes suburbanization distinctive in Kwajalein's story is explained through the emerging Cold War national landscape of suburban and urban segregation. The only reason the military transformed Kwajalein into a suburban community was because the labor they needed on the island largely comprised white, white collar workers who had families and this was emerging as the idealized family setting in the U.S. during this period. Suburbanization

thus became a way for the army on Kwajalein not only to attract certain people, but to organize space and manage workers. But, Kwajalein's suburbia could never be fully achieved because bachelors, and not only families, resided on the island as well. Thus, complicating how continental suburbanization attempted to protect white male property (homes, wives and children) from dual Cold War threats of soviet infiltration and racialized urban others in nearby cities, Kwajalein's suburbanization also needed to protect these families from the Marshallese and American bachelor men.

Kwajalein was perhaps the most striking manifestation of American exceptionalism, where suburbanization produced U.S. domesticity on a foreign landscape. Interrogating this spatial and cultural process of suburbanization on Kwajalein, this dissertation argues that suburban and urban studies need to take into account the spaces of U.S. Empire. Kwajalein's naturalization as a space of U.S. suburban domesticity entailed the narration of racialized Marshallese as foreign to that space. On Kwajalein, narratives of American domesticity relied upon the dehumanization of Marshallese and the positioning of their presence in the region as existing to serve Americans. Thus, when Marshallese challenged these narratives and asserted their existence beyond such categories, military officials responded aggressively. In addition to U.S. violence and threat of violence during Marshallese protests, chapter nine detailed how the U.S. government responded to these protests by removing independence from the Marshallese ballot. By having to recognize Marshallese as participants of their own history, U.S. officials became concerned that these Marshallese individuals may actually vote against U.S. interests in the region. In recognizing Marshallese humanity through their potential agency, U.S. officials needed to assert greater control over that agency and

thus prevented Marshallese from exercising their political rights.

In centering Marshallese history in the postwar period, this dissertation aligns with the critics of the misnomered Cold War literature that has historically narrated this period as "cold" by marginalizing "hot" spaces of impact across the globe. For the Marshall Islands, the periodization of postwar U.S. weapons development did not shift with the end of the Cold War. U.S. weapons testing in the Marshall Islands, and specifically on Kwajalein, complicates U.S history periodizations marking the end of World War II in 1945 and the Cold War in 1989. Centering the history of a place that has continued to feel the consequences of ongoing U.S. wartime preparation in a way incomparable to anywhere within the domestic United States further reveals regional biases in periodizations of shared histories. For Marshallese at the center of U.S. weapons development campaigns, periodization markers like 1945 and 1989 did not mean the end of further displacements and bodily harm and even death connected to the continued state of U.S. war preparation taking place in their home islands.<sup>2</sup> U.S. missile testing on Kwajalein has continued uninterrupted since it began during the early 1960s. Thus, while for Americans, bomb shelters and "duck and cover" instructive advertisements faded alongside the perceived Soviet threat in 1989, for Marshallese this historic marker did not change much on Kwajalein. Kwajalein's missile testing practices continued unabated by

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Anthropologist Laurence Marshall Carucci writes about a specifically Enewetakese perception of an "unending war" in his chapter, "The Source of the Force in Marshallese Cosmology," in Geoffrey M. White and Lamont Lindstrom's *The Pacific Theater*. I am thinking here with Carucci's discussion of Enewetakese responses to World War II and the subsequent nuclear testing campaign in their islands to further suggest that the continued intercontinental ballistic missile testing campaign on Kwajalein represents an extension of this process in Kwajalein Atoll. My hypothesis builds upon my own oral history interviews with Marshallese individuals on Ebeye and through interviews appearing in Adam Horowitz's 1991 documentary film *Home on the range*. Horowitz also interviewed Marshallese living on Ebeye about their experiences in living so close to the missile impact zone. These interviews suggested shell shock-like impacts among some, if not many Marshallese on Ebeye. This shell-shock accompanied further markers of an unending war through the continuity of Marshallese displacements from islands within the lagoon impact zone to make way for missile testing. Those displacements are explored throughout this dissertation.

the demise of one global enemy to suit the continued U.S. war state and war economy that quickly identified new enemies following the Cold War.

Cold War U.S. national security depended upon increased insecurity for many colonized peoples coming under the regime of this expanding military empire. The Marshall Islands have continued to suffer the consequences of insecurity brought on by U.S. continual war preparation in their islands. The story of Kwajalein represents a continuity in the longer trajectory of U.S. weapons development in the region. Foundational to this history remains the impact of nuclear testing and radioactive fallout in the Marshall Islands. This dissertation has shown how the rise of the U.S. military empire came at the expense of displacement, disease and death for countless Marshallese individuals and families.

By centering Kwajalein and the Marshalls to complicate this portrait of the "Cold" War, my dissertation further identifies this region as among the most central the U.S. depended upon to "win" this war. The U.S. did not just act upon the Marshall Islands. Rather, the U.S. colonial sense of entitlement to the islands and the ways in which Marshallese responded to that entitlement greatly impacted U.S. and global history by influencing the outcome of the Cold War. This project argues that U.S. scholars who ignore this history do so in a way that mirrors colonial perceptions framing initial U.S. military approaches to the region. These colonial presumptions historically positioned the islands and their histories as insignificant because they appeared spatially remote and sparsely populated. This view is a challenge to historiographical practices that privilege certain histories over others informed by colonizing biases marking the islands as less

worthy of study.<sup>3</sup>

Cold War exceptionalisms produced by military officials were appropriated by civilians living on island who reproduced and protected these narratives over time. Kwajalein's civilian community did not initially create the conditions of colonial power and privilege they entered into when arriving on island. But many civilians seemed to have taken up this privileged position with ease helping to reproduce the power of that position over time. Civilian labor has kept Kwajalein's missile installation running for more than four decades, alongside Marshallese labor. While my dissertation examines how civilian discourse contributed to naturalizing relations of inequality between Marshallese and Americans on Kwajalein over time, this project also reveals many examples of civilian discomfort with the island's segregated and discriminatory structure. Several civilians challenged discriminatory policies towards Marshallese through their distinctive positions of influence on Kwajalein. But just as Americans broadly across the continental U.S. and Hawai'i have not largely recognized their settler colonial status, nor the naturalized system of racial segregation infusing white suburban residencies, most civilians on Kwajalein seemed to have gone along with Kwajalein's structure not questioning their roles within it. This acceptance of colonial privilege remains deeply rooted in American culture alongside racism, patriarchy, heteronormativity and classism. This project does not intend to suggest these varied cultural norms infusing Kwajalein's colonial history began on the island, nor do I intend to scapegoat Kwajalein's civilians as

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Recent scholarship challenging this perception of islands through a focus on empire have included Laura Briggs' *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), Mary Renda's *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), and Cumings' "Archipelago of Empire" in *Dominion from Sea to Sea* 

exceptional amidst this broader national culture. If anything, I see Kwajalein as strongly representative of a broader racializing and gendering colonial culture of militarism and suburbanization emerging during the Cold War. As this project has also revealed, civilians remained subject to these cultural norms in distinct ways themselves on Kwajalein.

The histories of U.S. Empire are cultural histories. Military and Trust Territory officials erected structures throughout Micronesia, the Marshall Islands and Kwajalein that reproduced American cultural norms in the region. They did so amidst an American cultural context and a changing global history that largely naturalized and normalized these actions. I do not see militarism or imperialism as outside a broader American national culture. Rather, these structures of power remain foundational to that culture. Civilian workers on Kwajalein, just like American workers in the United States, remained complicit in reproducing that power and buttressing a national culture built upon erasing the violences foundational and continuous to settler colonial and imperial expansion.

American culture as well as political power fuels the military industrial colonial complex.

My contention of broader American complicity in the violence of the settler colonial and imperial expansion may imply an inevitability of continued acts of U.S. military destruction and violence around the world. But actually, I see hopefulness in considering power in American culture. Because the flip side to an argument that identifies such power in the masses of American people who produce and reproduce this culture over time sees these same masses as most able to change that culture and in doing so change the future actions of their nation. Building partly upon Foucault's hopeful spaces of rupture and Gramsci's broader statements about hegemonic cultural shifts, this

project is hopefully committed to raising awareness about this broader history of imperial violence as this has played out in the Marshall Islands. In doing so, perhaps Americans can become more aware of their complicity in reproducing the most destructive aspects of American culture and consider ways of changing that culture through altering their participation in it.

"The wheels of militarization," Cynthia Enloe has argued, "are greased by...popular inattention." She was talking of Iraq, Afghanistan, South Korea, the Philippines and Japan, but it is no less true of Kwajalein. But at work is more than only inattention. No less important has been the ways in which engagements within and across the U.S. Empire have been premised on certain compartmentalizations. One can see the kind of separations described by Phil Deloria and other scholars echoed in the lives of civilians on Kwajalein, dwelling in privilege in a way many have not experienced in the United States. This privilege was built out of Marshallese dispossession and oppression, and a tremendous amount of spatial and cultural work that went into obscuring that relational truth. As Deloria argues, "From the beginning, national identity and the nation itself have relied upon such separations. The plotting out and expanding of the United States have for a long time meant celebrating the nation's growing power and its occasionally wise, often tragic, sometimes well-intentioned deployment of that power on the continent and around the world. The celebration of national character, on the other hand, has frequently involved the erasure of such exercises of power." On Kwajalein, most Americans seemed content to inherit the power and privilege that came with their engagement in this historic moment of imperial expansion. They seemed to struggle more

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Shigematsu and Camacho (eds), Militarized Currents, vii.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 190.

with the fact that their colonial privilege came in relation to the oppression of others, and thus worked to disavow that history in various ways.

Such contradictions have long been observed by other historians of empire, and have little purchase in U.S. national histories. But they lie at the heart of U.S. imperial histories, and are encapsulated in the 1947 Trusteeship Agreement. The U.N. agreement sanctioned U.S. administration of Micronesia under contradictory directives deploying the U.S. military to use the territory to ensure national security while imploring a new Trust Territory government to support Micronesians towards self-determination. These two entities remained arms of the same imperial body, just as the military continues to remain a powerful arm, if not the most powerful arm, of U.S. Empire today. American inattention has few consequences to Americans; they suffer little the repercussions of this imperial expansion, but continue to benefit from it enormously, even if to inattentive eyes, invisibly. As Americans ignore this history, they also ignore the localized and global repercussions of the impact of their expanding empire. This project argues that few, if any, places in the world have felt the repercussions of U.S. military expansion to the same degree as Marshall Islands. The region has historically born the brunt of that expansion through U.S. weapons testing in their home islands. The Marshall Islands continues to feel impact of U.S. empire today as Marshallese continue to suffer the consequences of displacement, radiation-related illnesses and broader national economic dependency upon the United States. All while Kwajalein remains an indispensable location, the laboratory of strategic defense, and now also a port in a new private space industry.

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