The John H. Glenn, Jr.
Oral History Project

Interview 6
(Listed Interview 22)

at the John Glenn School of Public Affairs,
The Ohio State University

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Jeffrey W. Thomas
Interviewer

[Interview 6, Tape 1, Side A]

THOMAS: This is the sixth of a series of oral history interviews with Senator John Glenn. Today is February 20, 2009. This interview is taking place at The Ohio State University Archives. My name is Jeff Thomas.

Senator Glenn, today I would like to focus on some of the significant events that took place during your first term in the U.S. Senate. On January 19, 1975, you were officially sworn into the U.S. Senate, taking the oath of office from Vice President Nelson Rockefeller. Do you retain any first impressions about your initial months in the Senate, any particular stories or incidents that stand out?

SEN. GLENN: No one thing in particular, except when you come in there you can't help yourself from being so much in awe of the place you are in and the history that's there and the importance of the place. When I was sworn in it wasn't the first time I had been around the Senate. So maybe I came in with a little different view of things. When I had worked with Bob

Kennedy, when he was thinking about running for the presidency, I was in and out of his office a lot and was over there to observe some of the debates on the floor and attended some of the committee hearings. So the Senate perhaps was not quite as big an unknown to me as it was to a lot of people coming in who had just been elected for the first time. But I'm reminded a little bit of the story they tell about Harry Truman, who, when he was first elected to the Senate, he said he came in and he stood in the Senate for the first time and said he just wondered how on Earth he got there. After he had been there for six months, he wondered how all those other dumb people got there. So it's something you become accustomed to in a short period of time.

There were a lot of good people. The main thing I remember is some of the people at that time. There were people like Abe Ribicoff and Ed Muskie and Mike Mansfield, and Howard Baker and Hugh Scott on the Republican side, and Jack Javits, and people like that, who were really first class. They were just as professional as they could possibly be. And their interests truly were, what was best for the country, not that everybody doesn't have that view when they go there. But at that time, the difference between then and now is, I think, that there was far more across the political aisle type cooperation than there is now.

I remember when I hadn't been there very long, Jack Javits was the senior Republican senator from New York, a wonderful man. He was sort of the Senate's expert, sort of looked at as the Senate's lawyer. When you

had a question about the constitutionality of something, you always could go ask Jack Javits. A number of times, even though I had just been there a very short period of time, I'd call him up and say I was thinking of putting this legislation in, whatever it was, and I wanted his opinion on this thing. And he'd say, "Sure." I'd go over and talk to him and then a couple of times I remember—here I was as a brand new, know nothing short term Senator, and he'd call me up and say, "I was thinking about what we talked about the other day (whatever it was), and could I come over?" He'd come over to my office. I don't think you'd see too much of that these days. But there was far more cooperation and trust back in those days, and I guess that's the thing that stands out most in my impressions when I was starting out back then.

THOMAS: So, there was less of that cooperation by the time you got to your fourth term?

SEN. GLENN: By the time I got out, there was less of that going on through the years, as time went on. It became more politically segregated I guess, or less political cooperation. It became a lot more along party line. The parties locked down tight votes. That doesn't mean that everybody agreed on everything back there in '75. But I think there was far more willingness. I guess that's the word I look for, willingness, to cooperate and talk about it, and try and work out compromises, than they did even when I left there. I've been out of the Senate now for ten years. I think it's gotten nothing but worse since I left from what I observe and read in the papers.

THOMAS: When you first went in—you talked about being in the Senate before with Bobby Kennedy, but as to the customs or the culture of the Senate, was there anything about that that surprised you when you actually became a Senator?

SEN. GLENN: I think one of the things that impresses everybody that's new in there is the difficulty with getting something done in a hurry. That's not all bad. I came to believe in it over a period of time. Some of the slowness of the political process also stands as a guard against something getting passed too rapidly. I think the average, if I recall correctly, in the average legislative year, there's something like 11-13,000 different bills or pieces of legislation proposed. That would be a terrible thing for the country if all of those things passed. Some of them are put in just for a press release that a person wants to make back home, and they're not serious about it. But even with the serious legislation, it's good that it slows things up a little bit.

They tell the story about George Washington, in the design of the Senate, when they set up the constitution and how the government was going to work, he said, his words, this is not a direct quote, but the House was to be sort of a ferment, they were closest to the people. They get elected every two years. They were to be, sort of the fermenting thing, the new ideas, putting forth new ideas. The Senate, as he said, was the place where you pour the coffee out and let it cool in the saucer. In other words, you don't want to pass things while they are boiling. You want to cool

them off a little bit and look at them a little bit and decide whether it's really what you want to do or not.

I think the Senate performs that roll pretty well, in fact too well sometimes. The procedures and processes and all the committee processes you have to go through, prevent anything from getting through very rapidly. Sometimes it's look at as a bad thing, but I think a lot of time it's a protection against things getting through that never should pass, never should have been put in to begin with.

THOMAS: Sort of going through a current events example of President Obama's stimulus package that just passed. The Senate took their time.

SEN. GLENN: They took their time, but not as much time as you'd think they would take with something of that magnitude. I think it went through in a very, very short period of time. Don't forget, he's only been president for what, I think it was his 31st or 32nd day as we're doing this interview, and he got that through. Of course, they did a lot of work after the election in getting people lined up. The process was underway before he was even sworn in.

But there was—I think it's amazing to get something like that through, which shows the seriousness, the serious nature with which most people look at the economic situation we're in right now. It's not a good situation. It's unprecedented, and while it has some characteristics of the Great Depression that I went through as a boy back in the early 30's, there's so many differences to it, that whether the same remedies applied will really work now as they did to some extent back then, I'm really in

doubt. This is a big roll of the dice right now, whether this is going to bring us out of it or not.

Back in the days of the Great Depression when Annie and I were growing up in New Concord, and there were four years when the unemployment was over 20%, and one year it was 24.9%, almost 25%. We think it is terrible now and I think right now, the national average is something like 7.6% and that's terrible for the people involved. But as far as the country, the situation for the whole nation, it was far more serious and far worse back then. That is when the Roosevelt proposal set up the FHA, which prevented some home foreclosures including our home in New Concord. There are a lot of economists now who feel that this situation we're in right now in '09 will not be really completely eradicated or done away with by the amount of money we're putting into this stimulus package. There's a good case some economists make for the fact that, while the Roosevelt proposals back in those days had the effect of putting people back to work and getting the worst of the Depression or the worst of the suffering stopped, nevertheless the full recovery, some economics would argue, never really occurred until we got into World War II and started all those expenditures and worldwide interests and all those things that really brought us out of the doldrums.

So, nobody is proposing now that we start World War III over something like that. But as a means of coming out of it, there are enough similarities now that I think that was what moved Obama and the people

supporting him to be able to pass a package of this magnitude in such a short period of time. We see this as being a very serious thing. And of course now, too, this was a party vote. There were only three Republicans in the whole Congress, only three Republicans supported this and they were all in the Senate. Without those votes it would not have come through the Senate the way it did because it made it filibuster proof. That made the 60 votes needed to override any filibuster. That's the long answer to your question.

THOMAS: You entered the Senate in the immediate post-Watergate era after President Richard Nixon had resigned, when the Democrats had a 61 seat majority. At this time was there a real sense of optimism within the Democratic Party? Did that translate into legislation in any way?

SEN. GLENN: I think there was, and there was also a dedication that we didn't want to ever see Watergate happen again. The only time we ever had a U.S. President resign in disgrace. That had never been done before. So there was a lot of looking at ethics legislation and what kind of guidance you could give for any future administration. When I came in Gerald Ford was president. While I was still debating whether he did the right thing or not by pardoning him [President Nixon], nevertheless it did get us through that period and looking more to the future than going back and re-living the past a lot. In retrospect now, I guess that was good, although there was a lot of debate about it at the time.

I happen to be in Washington the day that Nixon resigned. I had a rental car and we drove over around the White House. You could do that in those days. You didn't have all the blockades they have now. We drove around the White House and it was remarkable in comparing our country to other nations around the world. There were no tanks lined up. There were no troops lined up to protect the White House or to make sure there wasn't some military coup or something like that. It was a very orderly process. It was the strength of our system that worked even then.

THOMAS: Mike Mansfield of Montana, the majority leader of the Senate, became a mentor to you during your first year in the Senate. Can you talk a little bit about this relationship, how it came about, and what all that involved?

SEN. GLENN: I had met Mike before I got to the Senate, but didn't know him well. But Mike had a background, a military background that a lot of people were not aware of. He was the only person I ever knew who had served—a hitch as we called it then—a term of enlistment in the Army, Navy and the Marine Corps at different times. When he was growing up in Montana he was very poor. He worked in the mines and his home situation was not a good situation. He had gone off and enlisted and was actually on some of the, as I recall, some of the Yangtze River patrols, way back, way, way back. But he took the greatest of pride in his service in the Marine Corps. And to Mike's dying day I think he wore a Marine tie clip every day. I never saw him without a Marine tie clip. He was very proud of that and I think he felt that the Marine Corps had filled some of what he needed in

belonging or being part of a group, that maybe he'd missed in his family life growing up. That's my analysis of it anyway.

So with my Marine background Mike wanted to be as much help to me as possible. He was a wonderful mentor because there was no one better thought of and he was the majority leader. No one better thought of and no one better at getting people together and working out a compromise position from one side of the aisle to the other. So he was really a great person to be involved with. It didn't mean that I received any real favoritism. If I had a problem and had a question about something in the way of legislation of what would be acceptable or what his opinion was, his door was always open and his phone line was always free to use.

Then later, Annie and I traveled with him and his wife to China for almost a month, I guess it was, and that was a whole episode that was very, very informative. We can get into that a little later if you want.

THOMAS: Senator Glenn, could you talk a bit about your committee assignments during your first six years in office?

SEN. GLENN: Committee assignments are very important and you put in a request for what you want. You have A, B, and C committees, as they are called. The A are the big four, which are Foreign Relations, Armed Services, Appropriations, and whatever the other fourth one is, I forget at the moment. One of those you can apply for. And B committees are some of the others like Government Operations was at that time. It later became,

after the reorganization [in 1978], it became the Governmental Affairs Committee. Then the Aging Committee, committees like that are called C committees, and you can be on one of those.

So I asked to be on the Aging Committee, because I thought that was one that fit with my concerns for the elderly. I had just been through some things with my dad and mother. They were getting old and having health care problems and things like that. It's not a legislative committee, so you don't do any authorizing of legislation through there. But you do a lot of hearings that bring things to light. So I was on the Aging Committee.

The Foreign Relations Committee, I asked to go on that as an A committee, largely because I felt that while I had a military background, I'd like to get over in Foreign Relations to work in some of our areas of diplomacy and all that. Later on in my career, I left that committee and went over to Armed Services because, frankly, the Foreign Relations Committee wasn't doing much of any consequence that I could figure out after I was on it. It was involved mainly with new confirmation hearings and things like that, which were just boring hearing sessions. We did very little work on actual foreign policy. So I asked to go to Armed Services. Barry Goldwater was head of Armed Services at that time and he fully supported my moving over there because I had a lot of military background, far more than most members of the committee did.

I thought the Armed Services Committee and Foreign Relations, as I told Barry at that time, I though they ought to be combined, if they wanted to do that. You can't run foreign relations without knowing what your military posture is. You can't run the military posture without knowing what the foreign relations would be. So anyway, nobody wanted to combine committees. So I asked to shift, even though by that time several years had gone by and it meant that I lost the seniority I had on that [Foreign Relations] committee. I would have to start over again in Armed Services, but I did that. I was always glad that I did.

The other committee, Governmental Affairs, was one that I asked to go on and not too many requested that committee. But the reason I went on it is because it is a unique committee. It is the only committee that has a jurisdiction written into its instructions on what it is supposed to do for the Senate. It's the only one that can look into anything in government. One of the things that you look into through the oversight committee is efficiencies in government. Now "efficiencies in government" I thought was not an oxymoron statement. I think there can be efficiencies in government as much as in any other private organization or business or anything else.

Abe Ribicoff was the chairman of that committee. I talked to him about this. He said it could be a unique opportunity or unique direction to have from the Senate. Governmental Affairs is the Senate's investigate arm since it has the sub-committee on investigations, PSI [Permanent

Subcommittee on Investigations], which was better known as the old Truman Committee. So I asked to go on that committee because I had some ideas on the efficiency of the government. We could use that in hearings to really look into a lot of things that nobody else could get into. It worked out that way, too. Later on, many years later when I had been on the committee long enough I became chairman of it. In the meantime the title had been changed to Governmental Affairs instead of Government Operations. But I was able then to do a lot of investigating and passed legislation on building efficiencies with the Chief Financial Officer Act and the Inspector General Act.

Then under that committee, also, was jurisdiction over nuclear matters. That was of great interest to me because I had been through World War II and the Korean War and I knew enough about the background of conventional war. I couldn't imagine how much more horrible it would be to be in nuclear war. So that was another attraction to be on the Governmental Affairs Committee, which turned out not only looking only at the efficiency of the government but also delved more deeply into some of the nuclear background, nuclear policies.

So with these committee appointments, you weigh them very carefully, because it's where you are going to do most of your work. In the House it is where they seem to do almost all their work. The people in the House really concentrate far more on their committee assignments and they are experts in that particular area. In the Senate, you are more of a

generalist as far as the legislation coming through. But the committee assignments are still where you do the greatest amount of your work. That wound up for me being in the Governmental Affairs and the Armed Services Committees. They were good assignments for me.

THOMAS: Trying to halt the spread of nuclear weapons was a major issue for you during all four terms. In fact, you passed six major bills in that time period, the first being in 1978. Could you expand a little bit on this legislation and the issues?

SEN. GLENN: Back then the objective was to try and prevent a nuclear war in the future. You had five nations with nuclear weapons by this time. You had the U.S. and the United Kingdom, Britain. You had France, Russia, the Soviet Union at that time, and China. These were the big five that had nuclear weapons. Well, our objective at that time was to try and prevent the spread of nuclear weaponry to more and more people around the world. To have them forego the arms race in nuclear matters if we would cooperate with them in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, such as electric generation or medical research and those types of things. The idea was that eventually, we hoped, if we could get control of that and prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, then we could gradually work the levels of weaponry downhill for the big five or the five nations that had it, and so maybe, possibly, prevent the likelihood of a nuclear war occurring.

That was the objective then of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act of 1978. That was my legislation that you mentioned. What we were

trying to do was to obtain better cooperation between nations, between us and other nations, and promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy if they ceased the building of nuclear weapons or stopped heading in that direction. I think we did some good with that legislation. We at least got support for the International Atomic Agency and organizations like that, that were good at looking into problems around the world.

Looking back, obviously we were not 100% successful because you have places like India that set off what they called a PNE, a peaceful nuclear explosion. They said they wanted the weapons because China next door had it and they didn't. There had been some border disputes. So India wanted nuclear weapons and if India gets nuclear weapons, Pakistan, with their difficulties with India, said if India has to have a nuclear weapon then we are going to have a nuclear weapon. Meanwhile, Israel, although they still have not to this day admitted to having nuclear weapons, everyone knows they do and treats them as though they do. So now we are dealing with trying to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to North Korea and Iran and other places.

But I think looking back on it, I think, my legislation had a beneficial effect. We can point to some countries. I think there are fourteen other nations that had nuclear programs at one time that as a result of our efforts in this area did pull back. They did not go ahead with the development of nuclear weapons and put their weapons under safeguards as they are called, which is a misnomer. What it means is they

let their areas be inspected to see what's going on. Safeguards do not make anything safe and it does not guard anything. It's an information gathering process that is given to the United Nations, which sponsors it.

So I think we gave them something that helped them out a little bit. You have places like South Africa, which had a very active weapons program at one time. They stepped that down after a while, after a lot of diplomatic pressure. Argentina and Brazil both had the beginnings of programs at one time, and they decided to stand down. Taiwan had a nuclear program. I made two trips to Taiwan when they said they would give up their program. I took a very small staff and went out there because I would not know what I was looking at. I was in a nuclear bomb plant and I took some people with me and they took us out to the place where they had been doing some research, and they showed us that they had really stood down their program. This was in the hills outside of Taipei in Taiwan.

So I think there were some success stories. But obviously through the years we were not as successful as we wanted to be. Although with the arms reductions now with the Start Talks, we have reduced the objectives of how far we will reduce, mainly with the Soviets, now the Russians. All of this had an early effect on some of those things I think that were beneficial, although we certainly were not 100% effective in preventing the spread of nuclear weaponry.

This doubles the importance these days, though, when you realize that more places have nuclear fissile material that can be made into a bomb. Then we have al-Qaeda and some of the other religious extremists doing things like they did at the World Trade Center in New York. They would love to have nuclear weapons. So it makes it more difficult than ever to try and monitor what they are doing today, as the nuclear information has spread to more and more nations around the world. So it is not, I might add to that, it is not a science that is as closely held as it once was. For somebody that wants to build a nuclear weapon now, they could get the know-how to put a weapon together if they just have the fissile material. That is the tough part, enriching uranium up to weapons grade material, as opposed to the lower enrichment that is used in nuclear power plants.

Just how easy it would be, to cite an example, when I was still in the Senate we had a student from Princeton call the office. The staff director of one of my sub-committees that dealt with this on Governmental Affairs was Len Weise. This student called Len Weise and he wanted to come down and wanted an appointment. Well, he had designed a nuclear weapon and he wanted to show us the plans for it. His name was Rotow. So he came down and walked into the office, Len's office, with all these blueprints of how you would build a nuclear weapon. Len was a scientist in some of the math areas. He was not a nuclear scientist. But he looked at it and he thought this was something that we better look at pretty

carefully. The first thing he did was stamp everything secret and not give it back to the kid, which didn't go over very big.

But anyway, we then contacted a man named Taylor who had been a nuclear weapons designer, and we had him come in and look at these diagrams. Taylor said, "Yea, it would work. All you would need would be the fissile material to put into it." It was one of those that sort of became known as the ash can bomb potential that we were up against. If you had something about the size of a good size garbage can or ash can, you could probably build a bomb that would work, if you had the fissile material to put in it.

My recommendation was that Rotow be hired over in the Department of Energy, which handled some of the development of the nuclear material. But he went back to Princeton, and later on then, came back in a second time with a design for a hydrogen bomb. Once again, it would work if he had the material to do it. In questioning him about how he came up with all of this information to build the bigger bomb, because I didn't believe he would get all that just from Princeton from what he was studying there, he said, no, he'd gone out to Los Alamos and had been going through the library at Los Alamos and found these books.

So this resulted in us sending some people out to Los Alamos to the library. It turned out that some of the books that they had that were highly classified had been misplaced in the stacks, the open stacks, where anybody could come in and look at them. At that time, there were people

going to Los Alamos—these were still some of the Cold War days—but you had people from the Soviet Union who had been out to the Los Alamos library when these books were in the open stacks. People from Israel had been there and people from some of these other nations that were looking to develop nuclear weapons. And you had some of these highly classified books there in the open stacks. Well, this resulted in my taking action. We closed the library at Los Alamos. As I recall now, it took the better part of a year before they had gone through all of the library, which is an extensive one, and had it cleaned up to where we knew that we were not giving away secrets through the open stacks.

So, anyway, it was through committees that we first started talking about nonproliferation. We got into some very interesting things that I'm still doing work in here today in 2009, even though I've been retired from the Senate for ten years. As a result of some of these things, I was asked to be on a Strategic Posture Commission. It is looking into what the strategic posture of the United States should be with regard to nuclear weaponry. Whether we can manufacture, what our limits are now, how much do we have in reserve, everything to do with our nuclear weaponry right now, and what our policy should be. This was a commission that was asked for or requested by Congress. We have two former Secretaries of Defense as the chair and vice chair and thirteen other members. I'm one of the other members. We have been meeting on a regular basis ever since last June. We'll make our report to Congress by April 1, 2009.

I say that only to indicate that there is a long-running interest in nuclear weaponry and how to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to more and more nations around the world. It's a tough one, particularly once we got beyond five nations having nuclear weapons. It got to be very, very difficult to prevent other nations that wanted the equality of weaponry, to keep them out of it. So that's where we stand now. So it's going to be something I think we have to stay with in the future. But it started for me way back in the '70s.

THOMAS: The Los Alamos incident, do you recall what year that was? Approximately?

SEN. GLENN: This was probably in the early 80's. Probably the mid-80's I would guess. I could get the actual date.

THOMAS: I'm just looking for an estimation. It's an interesting story.

SEN. GLENN: Well, we did so much at that time. I also forgot to mention, too, with Pakistan, we had excellent intelligence information. It was very highly classified at that time. Pakistan was really getting into this; they really had a weapons program. I made two trips to Pakistan and met with—this was back when the president there was President Zia [ul-Haq]. I met with him and had dinner with him and my memory is, the people with him, the foreign minister and minister for defense were [Sahabzada] Yaqub [Khan] and [Ali Ahmed] Talpur. We had dinner with them including the president. They just flat denied they had any nuclear weapons program at all. Looked us right in the eye and said they had no program. We knew

exactly what they were doing because we had excellent intelligence, and right out of their program.

Of course later on then they set off nuclear weapons, underground explosions. It still is a concern because of what happens in Pakistan now with regard to their weaponry. The open literature estimates are that they have somewhere between 30 and 50 nuclear weapons now. But if their government ever fell and an al-Qaeda sympathetic government ever took over, al-Qaeda may have nuclear weapons and that is something we have to be concerned about. So these things are long running in their impact and effect.

Another area that we covered under this nuclear thing, too, was the whole nuclear weapons process of how we make nuclear weapons. My interest in looking into that particular area, which I never thought was a real problem, started as part of that nuclear weapons development process at a site called Fernald down by Cincinnati. Fernald, we had people from there who came into my office and knew my interest in nuclear matters and said the underground water there, the water tables, were being contaminated by what was happening at Fernald. I at first thought that this was some type of alarmist thing that probably was not true. But we went out and found out differently. We learned that the situation was far worse than we thought it was. So we started a program, got the legislation through to start a clean-up program at Fernald. It was true that the underground water tables had been contaminated. There were actually

dairy farms downstream on the underwater table where the water was sufficiently radioactive they had stopped using that area for dairy farms. There were things like that that were really not a good situation at all.

So we had two sets of hearings, one in Washington and one in the council chambers in Cincinnati, regarding Fernald. We got money to try and clean that up. Then I wondered, if Fernald had problems like that, how about the other sites in the nuclear weapons system, the production system. You had places like Rocky Flats near Denver and Hanford in Washington. There is a huge installation in Hanford, Washington, also one in Oakridge, Tennessee. All of these were places that we had the General Accounting Office look into at that time. The General Accounting Office came under the Governmental Affairs Committee. I had jurisdiction over it. So they were very responsive to my requests for them to do studies and they did studies of these other sites.

We found out that Fernald down here, which I thought was a terrible situation, was only the tip of the iceberg. The first estimates on cleaning up all of these nuclear sites so they were not a hazard to the people around those sites—I still remember the first estimate of the cost to clean up the nuclear weapons complex. It was seventeen different sites in eleven different states, and it was going to be $8-12 billion to clean up. The more we got into it, the more complex it became and the more difficult it became to deal with. When I left the Senate the costs were

estimated to be somewhere above $300 billion and some of the places would be tough to even figure out how we could clean them up.

So, this interest in nuclear matters started back when I first got to the Senate in Governmental Affairs, which led into not only trying to prevent the spread of nuclear weaponry and control that and reduce the arsenals around the world, but also into dangers to our own people just in the weapons production process, all around the country.

THOMAS: These were all sites that were under the jurisdiction of the Department of Energy?

SEN. GLENN: Most of them were under the Department of Energy, yes. There was a DOD, Department of Defense, interest in some of them, also. Their control—and still controlled to this day—in that process is by the Department of Energy. Our national labs at Los Alamos and Lawrence Livermore, Oakridge, and the others, are all under the Department of Energy. And they in turn are the ones that we've now visited recently to get the current situation as part of this new Strategic Posture Commission that I'm on. So it's a long running process.

THOMAS: At these sites there were safety concerns not only to the environment, but also to the workers that were there. Is that correct?

SEN. GLENN: Yes, the question was whether they had been exposed to more than the acceptable radiation per year, which at that time, and I think still is, about 5 rims per year. This is a measure of the radiation you get at one of these sites. You wear a little badge that gives you an analysis of how much

radiation you have received while you are there. You have to measure this in totality, though, because everybody receives some radiation just from natural earth background radiation. In Ohio here, I think the average radiation people get per year is like 60-80 milligrams, and it's quite acceptable. But even that tiny amount sometimes helps develop cancer and the jury is still out on some of that. The farther up you go in the atmosphere though, the more of this you run into. For instance, if you lived in Denver, you'd get something like 110-120 milligrams per year just through natural radiation and background, sun, solar, and different materials.

An interesting little side note—once in the middle of one of these investigations of where people get the radiation from I wondered how much radiation we had on Capitol Hill in Washington. So I had some of the people who measure these things come down and make a survey for a couple of days around Capitol Hill. They went around with their radiometer equipment and the only place where they found where there was elevated radiation was the base of one of the statues in Statuary Hall in the Capitol. It was a base chuck of rock that had come out of Maine or someplace, marble, and it had a higher radiation level than anything else we found on Capitol Hill, which was sort of unusual. It still was not large enough that it would cause any danger to anyone. I forgot which statue it is now, but one of the statues in Statuary Hall where they had the

inauguration luncheon, for instance, one of those statues radiates more than the background radiation around Capitol Hill.

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

THOMAS: Senator Glenn, in 1976, prior to becoming a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Mike Mansfield asked you to accompany him on a fact finding trip to the People's Republic of China. What do you recall most about the month you spent in China on that trip?

SEN. GLENN: I remember that trip very vividly for two reasons. Mike had asked me to go because he knew of my interest in China, and he also was concerned about what direction China was going as a nation.

Let me back up a little. At the end of World War II, I was stationed in China for about six months. We were in a Corsair squadron stationed just outside what is now Beijing. It was Peking then. We were at an airfield and were flying Corsairs and we did the north China patrol as they called it. Everyday we were assigned to go out and fly a certain grid pattern across all that area around Peking as it was then, down towards Tientsin, that whole northern China area. We flew at low altitudes going at slow speed down about 500 feet or so, or 1,000, looking for road cuts or bridges that had been damaged or railroads that had been blown up, things like that. What we were there for was to support the efforts of, give military support, for General [George] Marshall's peace teams, which were out there trying to negotiate a peace between Chiang Kai-shek and

the communist forces under Mao Zedong. We flew the patrol every day and we were there through the winter. It was 1946, 1947 I guess we came out of there.

But that was old, old China. Before the days when you even had anything like Tienneman Square. As you came out of the Forbidden City and downtown Peking, our air base was six miles straight south, right out through the South Gate. The area that is now Tienneman Square was an area of both streets and shops and houses and little enclaves of one kind or another. But that was old China, and I had been fascinated with China. That was my first experience in actually living in a completely different culture than I had anything to do with at all in the military. We'd been in the Pacific down in the islands during the war. But there in China, we were living there on that base, in Quonset huts, and we would go in to town, not every night, but we were in town a lot. In looking back on it now and seeing pictures of Peking now, Beijing now, with all the high-rises and the Olympic things and all, back at that time the old Grand Hotel, I think it was called, was the tallest building in downtown Peking. It was about five stories and it's still there. I've been back in it several times since then and it's just about a block off of what has become Tienneman Square.

So I had an interest in China and I had talked to Mike [Mansfield] about China. He had become a real Chinese scholar in later years after his service in the Marine Corps in China. He saw China's emergence coming,

I think, before most people did and thought it was going to be very important for our future relationships. He thought that back even in '76. He had been a professor of Far East history for a while. So he asked Annie and me to accompany he and his wife Maureen on this visit they were planning to make to China. I was a new senator at that time. So this was to be a big decision on my part. Whether I went with the majority leader and spent a month, it was going to be three weeks to a month, touring China, or whether I should stay in Washington and play the role of a new senator.

Well, I decided that was too good an opportunity to miss. So Annie and I were with him and I've always been glad we made that trip because it was during the time period before China really got modernized in any way at all. Prior to our trip the Chinese had not permitted airplanes to fly in and land. But because it was Mike Mansfield, our government plane was permitted to fly in and land at Shanghai airport, let us off, and then leave immediately. It was not permitted to stay in the country. They would come back to pick us up at the end of our visit there. I think it was one of the very first planes allowed in that way.

Well, before we got ready to go, about a month, no, just a couple of weeks before leaving, Mao [Zedong] died. Mike, of course, said that we'd be glad to cancel the trip. They were going to have a 30-day period of mourning for Chairman Mao. The Chinese said no, that they would like to leave our trip on, but they would not be able to have as many

official functions for us because of that. As far as the official functions that was fine. We could still go and tour and go where we wanted to go. The trip had been all set up and worked out for many months in advance as to exactly where we would go and what we'd see.

Once we left Shanghai, we were there a couple of days, we left Shanghai and went by train up to Nanking. We were out on the communes there to see how they operated. Then we went to the hospitals where they were training what were called the barefoot doctors, which we would call paramedics in this country. They were getting some medical training before going out into the villages and communes. We went to Peking and were able to visit some of the different government agencies there and talked to them about their policies.

Everywhere we went energy was a big thing. China had not even become completely electrified at that time. They had big plans for building big huge generating plants and things like that. The generating plants they had were small and inadequate and they were planning to use hydropower for development of much of their electrical future, and did. That was one of the things behind the Three Gorges Dam that has been built since that time—huge generating capacity in that.

We had asked to see some of their medicine and that was interesting, too, in regard to acupuncture. I was very curious about their acupuncture.

But everywhere we went they wanted to give us a pitch on what they planned for electricity. At some of the places I would ask who was doing their planning for this electrical generation. At every stop I got the same answer. The direction for all this was coming from "the thoughts of Mao and the will of the people." "The will of the people and thoughts of the Mao," I guess that was it. So I accepted that as their explanation for a while.

Another place we went was way out in Xinjiang Province, way out in northwestern China, in the Taklamakan Desert area, where we knew they were doing nuclear testing. I asked to view those sites and they said they could not work that into our tour. They would not even acknowledge that there were such sites out there. But they had a huge area out there that they were irrigating for vegetables and fruits and things like that, in the Taklamakan Desert. So we were out there in those areas. There were some thirteen different nationality groups that lived in that area around Urumqi, which was their capital. It was one of the stops of the old trade route, the Silk Route. So it was a fascinating place to be and see how all those different nationalities had developed.

But anyway, they, too, had their proposals about how they were going to develop electricity. So at every stop I kept asking about who was directing this whole thing with the electrical generation, and they would say, "The will of the people and the thoughts of Mao." At one of the stops, I told Mike if he didn't mind, since we were probably going to hear

this same business again that we had been hearing it at each stop, I was going to be very angry at this stop if they wouldn't tell us the truth. I asked would he mind if I bordered on being impudent with them or something. He said no, to go ahead. This was down in southern China in the hill country where they did have some potential for some hillside hydropower development. They had taken us out to this area that came down off a mountainside. They had pools of water where they had dammed up little places and they were using this water power to develop enough electricity that it was running the villages down at the foot of the mountain. But that was about all there was to it. It would be like about what you would get off of what we used to call a Jeep generator that we had in the military. In a trailer you would have a 500 watt generator used for squad electricity out in the islands. It was about that capacity.

But anyway, at this spot I asked the person about who was directing their overall development of water power and that I'd like to talk to them. They gave me the same answer about this is being developed by "The will of the people and the thoughts of Mao." So I feigned great anger and I said, "At each stop we have been hearing this nonsense about the thoughts of Mao and the will of the people. I'm not an electrical engineer in my own country, but I'm enough of an engineer to know that someone has to direct this. You don't think about this in the thoughts of Mao and suddenly it develops out here. Somebody has to develop this for the country. You're telling us about all these thousands of kilowatt outfits

you're going to have one of these days. I know that that doesn't just happen, so I'm tired of being lied to and I hope that sometime before we leave this country I can talk to the people who are really going to direct this sort of thing." Well, there was complete silence. Mike was smoking his pipe and sitting there trying to keep from laughing because I was putting on quite a show. I did it with a straight face, so it wasn't a joke. They said they would take this into consideration.

Well, later before we left China, one of our last days when we were back in Shanghai, we were to go into a hospital to see an operation under acupuncture. We had seen one operation under acupuncture out in Urumqi in a hospital. We happened to be going by and I had asked about acupuncture and they said, "Well, here is an operation going on." A woman was having a tonsillectomy sitting up in a chair fully conscious, eyes looking around. She had her mouth open and she's undergoing this operation with acupuncture. I had always had an interest in medicine, so acupuncture was something I've always wondered about. We knew people like Scotty Restin, who was a good friend. He used to be a writer for the New York Times, was an expert in foreign policy. On one of his earlier visits to China, as one of the first newspeople allowed in there, he had appendicitis and they used acupuncture on him for that. So this wasn't a joke.

Anyway, we asked to hear about that when we came back to Shanghai. Well it turned out that I had made such a fuss about the

electrical generating business that even though we wanted to see the acupuncture operation, they had scheduled Annie and me to go off to a generator plant. We got down there and sure enough it was a big generator. It had drive shafts of stainless steel, or whatever type steel, a foot or so across. It was a big generator plant. The parts were being made there to go into some of their hydro projects.

So they had all their engineers in this meeting with us so I could question them and it was very interesting. Every question I asked, there would be some answer, but then I noticed through this meeting of about forty-five minutes or so that there seemed to be an awful lot of glances back to one guy that was sitting sort of back in the corner of the hall. He never said anything. I gathered, I don't know, I just sort of felt the way they were sort of looking at him occasionally that he was probably a leader of some kind. So they talked about their plans and I kept asking, "Well, who is your director? Who is your brains behind this thing," as we were told about the thoughts of Mao and the will of the people. I'm not that stupid that I think that could run. They said, "Well, we have all of our engineers here and these are all our engineers."

At the end of the meeting, I made a beeline back to this guy because I thought from some of my questions, when they were being translated, I though he knew what I was saying. I looked at him and he knew exactly what I was saying. I thought he understood English. So I went back and I got him and it turned out, to make a long story short, he

spoke perfect English as good as I did, even better. He was the brains behind their generator development. He had been a professor at the University of Illinois in electrical engineering. He was Chinese and went back to China, but had lived in this country for a long time. He might have been born here, I'm not sure. But anyway, he went back to China to live, and he was the one designing the big generators that they later put into their really big time hydro electric projects.

That was interesting. I had a good chat with him. I didn't want to embarrass him during the meeting. I asked some questions and then before anybody had a chance to answer, I turned directly to him and said, "Isn't that right?" He sort of nodded his head like that. So I knew that he knew English. So I talked to him after the meeting was over and he was the one who was the designer, but he came from this country and he was training the other electrical engineers, which was interesting.

Back to the acupuncture they had scheduled—when we first got to Nanking we went to one of the hospitals where they were training the so-called barefoot doctors. We were in a ward where they had about 20 or 25 people, all belly down who were getting treatment. They had acupuncture needles sticking out of their backs. We had a doctor that was with us on the trip. I asked what they were treating and was told it was Bell's Palsy, which in this country some people get when about half their face becomes numb and it droops and they just don't have muscle control. It's called

Bell's Palsy. We had a good friend once, Dr. Bob Hillary, who was head of the space program, and his wife had that for a while.

But anyway, what they were treating was Bell's Palsy and teaching these barefoot doctors how to deal with Bell's Palsy when they went back out to the communes. I asked about how long does it take before they get better. They were giving these acupuncture treatments twice a day to these people, up and down their back with needles. I asked, "Well, how long does it take?" The doctor briefing us said, "Only two weeks or so and they seem to get better." So our doctor he was standing across the bed from me and he sort of winked at me, a big wink. So we went outside and I said, "What was the big wink about?" He said, "In the States our treatment for Bell's Palsy is don't do anything and most of it goes away in two weeks." So now, there was that kind of acupuncture mis-use, as I view it, but there's no doubt about the anesthesia effects of acupuncture. I think we should be making more use of this because there's less after effect from it and so on.

When I was going out to the generator plant, at the same time they set up a meeting for people to see an operation under acupuncture. This woman, an elderly woman, walked into the operating room and laid down on the gurney. They fiddled around with needles for a while until they had it the way they wanted it. She was being operated on because she was losing sight in one eye. By x-ray they had found that there was a tumor back in there. So they were going to remove this tumor and were going to

do this operation on her head to remove this tumor behind her eye, all on acupuncture.

Our people, including our doctor, were in the observation area around this dome, as it was called, and watched this operation. She came in, laid down, and they tested this out and finally got her ready to go, and she's still fully conscious. They went in and operated above her eye, took a section of the skull out, went down in there, got the tumor out, sewed the whole thing up again, and sewed her up again, and she was conscious all the way through. She didn't walk out of the place, but when they were wheeling her out on the gurney she could see our people and waved to them, waved to them up above. She could see them.

So at the final dinner we had in Shanghai before we left, they knew of my interest in the acupuncture stuff, so they had seated me with the Chinese doctor who was in charge of acupuncture research for China. He spoke pretty good English. He had had some of these documents translated into English and gave them to me that night. I brought them back and gave them to our son who was an anesthesiologist on the West Coast for his use, then gave them eventually to the Library of Congress because Congress didn't have any particular stuff on that.

It was fascinating because he said that acupuncture seems to work on about 80% of people and they keep other anesthesia standing by in case acupuncture does not work. But they feel that they know enough about it. I didn't get into any argument over the treatment of disease. They have

acupuncture needle treatments for all different kinds of disease. I'm a skeptic on the treatment of disease. I think the anesthesia aspects of acupuncture are very, very valid, and I think we should be making more use of them in this country. How did we get off on all that?

THOMAS: On this trip, was there much discussion with China about economic development, trade between China and the U.S.?

SEN. GLENN: A little bit, but not much. We got into that much later on. I probably made—I don't know how many trips to China—I suppose ten or twelve trips to China during my time in the Senate. Because from those days, when I was back there during the post-World War II days, to see the development of China to what it is now, it's miraculous now.

I'll comment on some of these later trips, too, because I think they are of interest. When we made trips out when Chiang Ching-kuo was the president of China, I don't know why, but he would almost always see a Senate group coming out. He liked to meet with Senators. I was with different groups at different times out there. And we'd always have a meeting with him in the afternoon maybe for an hour and a half or two hours, in which we asked questions about trade and about development and so on. He would be quite open about their views on what they were doing. Then there were several times he'd have dinner for us and we'd have a chance to talk to him, informally, as well as in the formal meetings in the afternoon. So I knew what their plans were and how they were

developing what their trade patterns were and what they were emphasizing.

Those were extremely informative trips, very, very informative trips. I know people sometimes criticize the trips that congressmen and senators make abroad, and for most folks their only trip abroad is when they're on vacation of some kind. I guess they equate all these congressional trips as being vacations. But I'll tell you the ones that we went on while I was in the Senate, I don't know of a single one that wasn't extremely informative. My view, rather than preventing them, I won't say that it should be a requirement, but I'd almost go that far to say that you ought to require congressmen and senators to go out of the country once a year or every other year, something like that, and find out what goes on in the rest of the world because the trips that we made were very, very, very informative.

Jesse Helms was chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee for a number of years, and I thought it was just not a good situation at all that he took great pride in not traveling. He was chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. Every trip I ever made, I really thought they were great.

THOMAS: The information you gathered here, in talks with the Chinese about trade and economic development, did that directly translate into public policy?

SEN. GLENN: Some. One trip abroad that I recall—I think it did translate directly into policy in a big way—was one with Abe Ribicoff. Abe was chairman of

the Governmental Affairs Committee when I got on the committee. We had a trip which, I think there was like ten senators on it. He had worked on this trip for along time. We went to Jordan, Morocco, Egypt, Iran. We went to Kiev in Russia. It was an excellent trip and we learned a lot on that trip.

But the part I remember best, was we got to Egypt and Sadat was the President of Egypt. He wanted us to come out and be his guests at dinner at his summer home, sort of an island in the Nile River. I still remember it very, very well, because he had nice comfortable chairs seated all around. We had a very lengthy discussion there that evening and it was there that he first talked seriously about the willingness to sit down and finally have peace with Israel. When we came back we scheduled a meeting then with President Carter and went through all of this with him. Of course, some of his diplomats had been working on this anyway, I guess. But as far as we knew, this was the first time he had ever told any legislators about his willingness to do this. We were very convinced that he was serious about it. So Abe scheduled us for a meeting with the president and went through the same thing with the president. There may have been other information that President Carter had, also.

I've always thought that that meeting we had, as a result of the meeting with Sadat over there, was really the key toward moving toward the signing of the peace agreement that was held at the White House about a year after that, I guess. We were invited to that, to be there at the White

House for the signing ceremony. So you run into things like that every once in a while—maybe are used as a conveyor of information for some of these people that turns into something with big time importance for the future.

THOMAS: Overall, or generally, on these trips, it's more of a fact gathering procedure? You're coming home with some impressions?

SEN. GLENN: Yes, a lot of it is. In the meetings we always had in China, those were particularly good because we came back knowing what the Chinese views were with regard to things in that area. Or with their view of Japan, with which we were better able to judge, make your own judgment, on what is important out there right now and what is not.

We had South Korea; we went there a number of times. In addition to the trips with the Chinese on trips to the Far East, we tried to stop also in Korea and Japan, in whatever order it occurred.

One time we did stop in Hong Kong and we were one of the first planes, too. This was when Tom Dashel was the majority leader. He had just become majority leader. We were permitted to take a flight direct from Hong Kong to Peking. Before that trip they had never let Americans planes fly directly up across China because of some of the bases that were located on the cross route there. We heard from intelligence reports exactly where the bases were, but they were restricted anyway. Probably they didn't want to send the other planes up through there with photographic equipment on them and things like that.

The only other time we were prevented from flying direct was the trip that we made with Sadat in Egypt. We went from Israel on that trip. I think we went from Israel direct to Egypt, and that wasn't permitted, because they were afraid of an airplane coming in. It could be a bomber or something else if not identified properly. To let us fly directly on our airplane with the congressional delegation, all the senators we had, we had to fly from Israel out into the middle of the Mediterranean to where you were on the northwest side of Egypt and come back into Egypt from that direction. They cleared us to come in on that path. So there were some things like that that you learn first hand about the tensions in that part of the world.

THOMAS: When you did become a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, you chaired the East Asian Pacific Affairs sub-committee?

SEN. GLENN: Yes.

THOMAS: And one of the things that sub-committee did was help pass the Taiwan Enabling Act of 1979. Do you want to give us a little background on that one?

SEN. GLENN: We were trying to figure out ways—I was chairman of that sub-committee. I had asked to be chairman of that sub-committee because of my interest in East Asia. They thought I was well qualified to head that sub-committee, which I was. Dick Holbrook, who is Obama's envoy now to Pakistan and India to try to work out some of those problems, Dick Holbrook was the East Asian desk officer in the State Department at that

time. So he and I traveled together some and worked together very closely.

THOMAS: He would have been fairly young at that point?

SEN. GLENN: Yes, he was, that was early in his career. He has been considered a couple of times since then as Secretary of State. He hasn't made it yet. But he was head of the Council of Foreign Relations for a while and things like that. What was your question?

THOMAS: We were talking about Taiwan.

SEN. GLENN: Yes, we were very concerned about that. I was concerned because of the threats back and forth. I didn't want to see a Taiwan Strait war going on between the mainland and Taiwan. Taiwan was looked at—most of the people in Congress, maybe that's not fair, but anyway a large number of people were very much pro-Taiwan, because that was the Nationalist group that we had supported in World War II. Then they had been ousted from China, which was when I was out there before and we ended our tour there, when Marshall's peace team withdrew from China. When the squadron and I went down to Shanghai and then out to Okinawa. Marshall's peace teams pulled out when they were not successful in the negotiations.

So that was the background of the Taiwan Enabling Act. We were always afraid that China was going to exercise what they said they might do. That was to go out and take Taiwan by force, because they saw it as a state that had broken away, that the Nationalists now controlled. So there

was always that, but there was a background of us having been the backer of the Nationalists in Chiang Kai-shek. The people that went out to Taiwan, we had historically backed them against anything that the mainland wanted to do.

Back in those days, of course, it was strictly Communist China. It was only Communist. So gradually through the years we have gotten into a situation between the mainland and Taiwan that has become much better. Back in those days, though, when we were trying to get the Taiwan Enabling Act through, it was to set up some sort of a process that would establish the relationship without going to war and without an enforced repatriation of Taiwan, if you will. That was the fine line we were trying to walk. At that time a person could not even—if you sent a letter from Taiwan to one of your relatives back on the mainland it could not even go direct. It went to Singapore and then be sent through a Singapore address into China because Singapore and China did have relations. It was that tight.

The Taiwan Enabling Act, it set up a means of contact, at least, with the hope that they would be able to work out some of these things through the years between them. While it didn't solve all of our problems, I think it did help to a large extent in the ways things have gone through the years.

Fast forward now to 2009. I think the biggest single investor in mainland China now is money from Taiwan. All this new area has

developed—the Fudon areas it's called in Shanghai, which is a huge industrial area they've developed across the river from the main part of Shanghai. That's all mainly Taiwanese money and companies and factories and so on. They now even have the mail going direct. Just a short time ago they started active air service back and forth to travel from the mainland to Taiwan. So, while their problems are still there, and mainland China still looks at Taiwan as one of their states that they want to see come back in sometime, they haven't been willing to alienate the rest of the world by really doing that militarily.

Of course we still retain a policy in this country of supporting Taiwan and I'm not sure how far we would go with it at the moment. But you know, during the Clinton years we had to send a carrier down there when there was a period of high tension. We sent a carrier down there in the straits to show our presence there. But I think that our work back there at that time, used to establish some of the contacts that we did, has grown a lot of fruit through the years. It's a gradual process and you can't say that there was one part of it that was more responsible than others. But I think, in general, it established the framework that let them develop more of their own contacts back and forth. That's been very, very productive. I was mainly involved with that because I was chairman of the East Asian Sub-committee.

THOMAS: In July 1978, you headed the U.S. delegation to a ceremony marking the independence of the Solomon Islands. Do you want to talk about that experience a bit?

SEN. GLENN: Yes, that was quite a trip. President Carter knew I had been in the Marine Corps and had been out in the Pacific in World War II. The Solomon Islands was getting their independence from Great Britain. The Solomon Islands, of course, was where there had been some of the toughest fighting and Marine fighting in World War II. Especially on Guadalcanal, which was the capital of the Solomon Islands. That's where the government is located. So they were getting their independence and the United States was going to send a delegation to be there and show the flag and be part of their celebration and so on.

President Carter asked if I would go and be the leader of the delegation because of my connection with Guadalcanal and the Marine history of Guadalcanal from back in World War II days. The old air field at Guadalcanal, where the Marines were based at that time, it's just a few miles, five or six miles, out of Honiara, the capital. I had never been there. I was in a different spot in World War II, out there in the Marshall Islands. But I was more than glad to take that trip. Dick Holbrook, once again, went along. He was the East Asian officer who was going along on that trip representing the State Department. There were a number of other people who Carter had named to go on the trip with us. He knew I had an interest in that part of the world. So we wound up with a delegation of, I

guess it was maybe 20 or 25 people. We met up at Honiara for the celebration and met up with one of Holbrook's friends from international relations days, Andrew Peacock, who was the foreign minister of Australia. He was there to represent Australia during this turnover. We were there for a number of days and they had all these celebrations.

One of the side trips—that was one of the most interesting trips that I had ever made in my life. We arrived out there with a day to spare in the port in New Guinea, because the airport at Guadalcanal was not big enough to handle the jet transport that we were flying. So we went into New Guinea and were going to fly over on a C-130 turbo prop, which we landed on the island's runway later on, so we had a day to spare.

The prime minister of Papua, New Guinea was gone on a trip, but his foreign minister was sort of the one who suggested, through our consul there, what we might do on this extra day. Those were days when they were still discovering tribes up in the hills of Papua, New Guinea that we never had any contact with before, even though our people had been in there in World War II days. There were still tribes, several hundred different languages, and things like that in there, that we were still making contact with. They knew of one spot where there was a village. A missionary had been there in this one village. There was no prior contact with that village until the missionary went in there. He had gone in and lived with them for thirteen years. He had translated the New Testament, even though they had no written language.

The way you got back and forth to this place was a little short grass strip that went up the side of a mountain. So when you went in there, you went in a STOAL airplane, a short take-off and landing airplane. You landed up the hill and took off down the hill no matter what direction the wind was blowing from, on this grass strip. So you'd fly up the hill and take off again down the hill. The missionary had a radio, so we could call him and let him know that we'd like to come, would it be okay. He radioed back, "Yes," and he would welcome it.

So we flew up there on this day we had to spare—Dick Holbrook, Annie, me. There were about five. We had two airplanes I guess. There were these STOAL airplanes that had special modified wings for high lifts, so you landed at very slow speed going up this strip. Then we walked about two miles down through a valley on a little trail and up to another ridge on the other side of the valley. That's where this village was located and the missionary, that's where we met him.

Dick Holbrook as I mentioned before, went on this trip. I took along with me some of these bicentennial gold medallion medals. We were past the bicentennial by this time, of course, but these were leftover medals with a big red ribbon. I had taken some of these along to give as gifts if it was appropriate out there. Well, we had some of those and we came up and the missionary introduced us to the honorary chief who was about 4 ½ feet tall, not much more than that. He had on a grass skirt type thing and a bandoleer, a feathered necklace around his neck. It was a little

beaded thing they had made out of some shells that indicated to them that he was the honorary chief. He had been the chief for a number of years and now was the honorary chief. We were there and we were introduced to him. They had sort of a long hut there with a thatched roof, very primitive. We went in there and the missionary had to do all of the interpreting because he knew the language of these people. He had learned their language by just going in there and living with them. Then he translated the New Testament phonetically into their language, and it was the first written language they had ever had there that expressed their phonetic language.

So we met the chief and through the missionary being the interpreter we told the chief how much we appreciated this visit and letting us come to his village. I presented him with this gold medallion. Well then he took off his honorary chief feathered necklace and the beaded thing he had and gave it to me, which I thought was just to wear while I was in the village. But it turned out that he wanted me to keep it, which I did. It is one of my most prized possessions now. I had it over my senate desk later in Washington. He then made his little acceptance speech. He said that he was glad to have us come there and that the missionary had been there with them for a long time. He said, "Before the missionary came, we used to fight all the time." He pointed to his legs and his arms and there were scars in places where he had been cut.

[Begin Tape 2, Side A]

THOMAS: Okay Senator Glenn, you were talking about the necklace.

SEN. GLENN: Anyway, the little chief that gave me the necklace and I still have that as one of my most prized possessions. At the end of his little speech, he said they used to fight all the time when he was a younger man. He showed scars on his legs and arms and so on. He said that before a missionary came and they stopped fighting, sometimes they would eat parts of each other. We were standing there talking to an honest to goodness practicing cannibal at one time in his life. It was hard to believe. He said a missionary came and they don't do that anymore and it's much better now. And that was it. I wanted to almost cry.

Anyway, the missionary said that when he first told people I was coming he had made a mistake. He had said that he told the people that I had been to the moon, which I had not. But he thought I had. He told the people and that was a big thing to them, because in their old animistic religion of the far past, they thought the moon is white because all the spirits, everything that dies, their spirits go to the moon. That's why it's white. Nobody had ever come back from the moon. This was like resurrection, coming back. So the first thing they asked him was would they be able to touch me, because I would be a spirit coming back from the moon. He said, yes, and oh that was big thing for them, also.

So that's the kind of thing you run into with some of these tribes—absolutely fascinating thing. That was a one-day visit back up there, and

we've wanted to go back there ever since. There are some tours you can go on now. The Guinea government has opened up some of those rivers, the Sepik and the Fly Rivers that go up into the highlands, up on the ridge, where these little remote valleys are located. They think they've discovered most of the areas where people live now. But at that time they were still discovering different groups of people up in there.

THOMAS: We were talking about the New Guinea natives. They were very impressed with you because they thought you had been to the moon.

SEN. GLENN: Yes, that's where all the spirits went, and that's the reason the moon is white. So I came back, according to what the missionary had told them, I had been to the moon and came back. That's the first time that had ever happened. That was a big deal, needless to say.

The missionary wanted me to explain space flight. Well, can you imagine trying to explain space flight to people who literally know nothing about it? So I tried to talk about going around the Earth. Well, they didn't know the Earth as a ball. All they knew was their area; from their ridge up here to the next ridge over here some place. And that was it. The biggest trip they make every year—they have an annual trip they made down through a bunch of trails and stuff. This is very thick matted jungle type stuff, like you see in pictures, just impenetrable type stuff. It was a distance of about forty miles to the nearest water, from where their village was located. They make that trek once a year to bring back shells and little things they picked up down there or something.

I tried to explain the speed of how fast I had gone. How for a distance of forty miles you would make that trip in eight seconds, 1, 2, 3… Well, that didn't work either because they had no sense of time. Their time is when the sun comes up, and when the sun's gone down, seconds meant nothing. So you're back to Stone Age, bam, just like that. That was very informative.

So anyway, the trip to the Solomons was interesting from World War II history, also. Right off of there [Guadalcanal Island] was what they called Iron Bottom Sound, where there were so many ships sunk coming down through the straits, where President Kennedy was in a torpedo boat and all that. We talked to the skipper of one of the cruisers that came down to be there during this celebration, and he said they had their underwater sonar, underwater detection things on coming across there, and it was just ping, ping, ping—just one ping after another coming across there.

One of the things I remember most vividly about the underwater stuff, there was an area about right off of Honiara, the capital. This would be maybe five, six miles from the airbase at Guadalcanal. The water was very clear and you had these glass bottom boats that went out for tourists to look at things. There was an airplane out there and they had a big argument about whether it was an F6, a Hellcat, or an F4U, a Corsair. I had flow both of them in the war. They needed a Corsair, so they wanted to know if I would identify this one. There wasn't any big deal to it.

But one better than that, and I'll always remember this, too. We borrowed some scuba equipment off of the cruiser and I went out and went over the side and went down to this aircraft that was on the bottom. It was an old F4 Hellcat, like they had way back in the days of the fighting at Guadalcanal in World War II. It was out there in about 35 or 40 feet of water, very clear water. I could go down and see it. It was upside down on the bottom and broken off just behind the cockpit.

But one of the most eerie things I've ever been in, I went down and went up in the cockpit. There was this sort of light filtering down through the water and little fish swimming around inside this cockpit upside down. And all the instruments that had been made out of magnesium or aluminum or whatever it was, they all had disappeared a long, long time ago. Just the seawater had come in. So you just had these blank instruments spots on the panel down there, and had this sunshine coming down. Here you are all these years later from all the way back during World War II days. That was some experience.

We had a good time on that trip. It was where we got to know Holbrook and travel with him and share views with him. We still keep in touch with him every once in a while.

THOMAS: I think this would be a good place to stop for today.

SEN. GLENN: Okay.