**“Glen’s Parallax Perspectives”** is a series of TV programs offering fresh ways for people to see issues such as foreign policy, social and economic justice, governmental functioning, the environment, and so forth. We provide voices and viewpoints that are rarely heard in mainstream media.

**Mainstream media, politicians, and culture see the world in conventional ways. Therefore, in order to solve problems, we need to see things in fresh ways.** Glen Anderson created this TV series to help people see things differently so we can solve problems at all levels from the local to the global.

This series title refers to “***parallax***,” which is the view you get by looking from a different perspective. For example, put one finger in front of your nose and another finger farther away. Close one eye. Then open that eye and close the other. Your fingers will seem to move. This is called a “parallax” view. **This TV series invites you to look at issues from fresh perspectives.**

Each program airs three times a week (currently every Monday at 1:30 pm, every Wednesday at 5:00 pm, and every Thursday at 9:00 pm) for the entire month on Thurston Community Television (TCTV), channel 22 for cable TV subscribers in Thurston County, Washington. TCTV is part of Thurston County Media. You can see their schedule at [**www.tcmedia.org**](http://www.tcmedia.org)

**You can also watch the program described below through your computer** at [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org). All episodes of “Glen’s Parallax Perspectives” are posted on this blog’s “TV Programs” part and also in one or more of the categories listed in the right side of the computer screen. Also, see information about various issues at the category headings at [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org).

**This summary includes additional information and insights that we did not have time to include during that hour. Many resources are added to the end of this document.**

**🡪 I saved this document in Word format with live links.** If this document does not load or print properly for you, please e-mail me at [**glenanderson@integra.net**](mailto:glenanderson@integra.net) and I’ll promptly send you the links you request.

**🡪 Please invite other people to watch this video and/or read this thorough summary at these parts of my blog,** [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org)**: “TV Programs” and “Nuclear Weapons.”**

**“Marshall Islanders Still Suffer from U.S. Nuclear Weapons Testing (1946-1958)”**

Glen’s Parallax Perspectives

August 2021

**Introduction to this month’s topic and our guests:**

This month’s interview on “Glen’s Parallax Perspectives” provides the public with information and insights about something that almost no Americans know much about. We discuss the U.S.’s testing of nuclear weapons in the Marshall Islands in the Pacific Ocean from 1946 to 1958 – and how that affected the people and their lands and waters.

The U.S.’s nuclear weapons testing caused horrible problems that still hurt people’s health and environment and disrupted their traditional culture. Two guests help us explore this topic. Both guests are part of the Marshall Islanders’ community now living in the Majuro Atoll. Majuro is their nation’s capital city.

**Jack Niedenthal** was a Peace Corps volunteer from 1981 to 1984. He fell in love with the people and their culture, so he stayed, married into the community, and now is the Secretary of Health & Human Services for the Republic of the Marshall Islands. He has worked for 33 years for the people of Bikini on Kili Island, served for 30 years as their Trust Liaison.

**Alson Kelen** lived on Bikini Island for 4 years while he was a child and enjoyed playing on the beach. He is a traditional canoe builder – and a former Mayor of Bikini and former Council member. Also, he is a commissioner on the National Nuclear Commission of the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

Glen welcomed the guests and said he is glad we are   
using Zoom video instead of making them drive to the TV studio in Olympia, Washington, USA.

**Basic information about the Marshall Islands:**

Glen said this interview discusses the Marshall Islands based on the experiences of people who have been living there.

He showed three maps to help you see the Marshall Islands – and the Bikini Atoll, which is near the NW corner of the Marshall Islands.

To find the Marshall Islands, head SW from San Francisco. When you get to Hawaii, you’ll be half way there. Continue SW for an equal distance to reach the Marshall Islands.

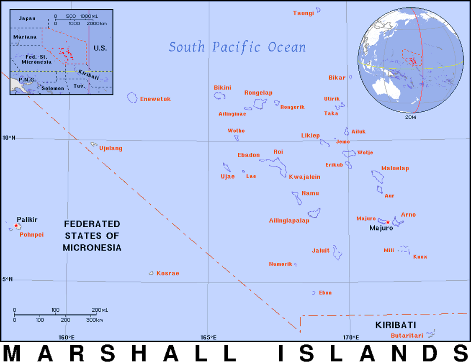
It is slightly north of the equator, and just west of the International Date Line.



The second map shows the arrangement of the Marshall Islands.

The Marshall Islands consists of 29 atolls and 5 islands in the Pacific Ocean. Three other islands were totally vaporized by U.S. nuclear testing there.

The Marshall Islands are scattered widely over 357,000 square miles. That vast area of ocean is about 1 1/3 the total size of Texas.



The third map shows the layout of Bikini Atoll, which is near the northwest corner of the Marshall Islands.

The actual land area of Bikini Atoll is only 3.4 square miles – about 1/5 the size of Tumwater, Washington.

The U.S. tested many nuclear weapons at Bikini. You can see the crater caused by the Castle Bravo explosion in the NW corner of Bikini Atoll.



From 1946 to 1958 the United States tested 67 nuclear weapons in what is now the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), a nation of 29 atolls and5 islands located nearly halfway between Hawaii and Australia in the Pacific Ocean.

At the time, the islands and their people were under U.S. protection, but instead of protecting them, the U.S. exploded nuclear weapons there and made some of the lands too radioactive and dangerous for people, so the U.S. forced the people to move to less desirable islands in the region.

Before getting into the specifics about testing nuclear weapons, Glen invited Alson to tell us about growing up there as a child.

Alson said he was born on the island of Kwajalein, where the U.S. still tests nuclear missiles [but without nuclear warheads]. He said that in 1968 the U.S. said Bikini Island was safe from radiation so people could move back there into the thirty new houses that were built. He said the land was very beautiful and the beaches were long.

Alson said that when they arrived they started planting breadfruit trees, papaya trees, and other good food sources. They raised animals. He said it was like a farm on a peaceful, beautiful tropical island. The fish were so abundant that you’d catch fish as soon as you put your hooks in the water. When they ran out of fishing hooks they bent nails and used those successfully. The island was very abundant with food.

The people on the island were his extended family, including his grandfather and other relatives. He said everybody knew each other, so it felt like the extended family had this beautiful private tropical island for themselves to share. They were not aware of radiation.

Glen said that when Jack was in the Peace Corps there, he fell in love with the culture, learned the language, and devoted his adult life to helping the people. He asked Jack about that transition from Peace Corps volunteer to active member of the Marshallese community.

Jack said he came from a very small nuclear family in Pennsylvania and arrived in the Marshall Islands in his early 20s. He started living his first six years in the outer islands with only a few hundred people. The island of Namu was very isolated and did not have an airport. Then he lived for three years on Kili Island with the people who had been removed from the Bikini Atoll.

He said he fell in love with the place because everybody treated each other as family. With such a small population, that was the only way people could interact. Even though he was actually an outsider, they welcomed him into their community as a member of the family. People took care of him. They took care of each other when a typhoon nearly wiped out the island of Namu.

When he moved to Kili, the Bikini elders there told him their stories from having lived on the Bikini Atoll. They included him in everything, including their meetings. They made him feel very welcome. When he met the woman whom he later married, this brought him even more fully into the community. Now, 33 years later, he has five kids and five grandkids, most of whom live in his house. He said he is very happy with this.

**Basic information about Bikini Atoll:**

Glen showed again this map of the Bikini Atoll.

From 1946 to 1958 the U.S. tested 67 nuclear weapons in the Marshall Islands – including 23 at the Bikini Atoll.



An **atoll** is a ring-shaped coral reef, island, or series of small islands. An atoll surrounds a body of water called a lagoon.

The Bikini Atoll is long and thin with a land area of only 3.4 square miles.

Glen said it’s important for the American people to understand the culture of this area. To prepare for this interview he read a lot that reinforced what Alton and Jack said: a dominant feature of the culture is that the people interact extensively and intimately, with great caring and compassion. This is very different from the United States, where more than 330 million people live – and most of them do not know each other.

Jack added that when he lived on the outer islands, boats would sometimes arrive. If an American happened to be on any of these boats, the Marshall Islanders assumed that the American must be a relative of Jack. He said the Marshallese perceive that everything in the world is an island. Nowadays people do not assume that all Americans are related to each other in an extended family.

He said many Marshallese have visited America, but decades ago when he was new there, most of the people living on the outer islands had never been off their own island.

**Nuclear weapons testing (1946-1958): Basic information:**

Glen said he wants the people watching this interview to understand the history of this area. He said Japan occupied Bikini Island during World War II. The U.S. captured it from Japan before the war ended. The United Nations assigned the U.S. government the responsibility for protecting the Bikini Atoll and its lands, waters and people.

But instead of protecting them, the U.S. tested nuclear weapons there starting in 1946. This disrupted everything!

Jack said that that when the Marshallese talk about the nuclear weapons testing, they explain it in two tracks. One track is about the nuclear weapons. The other track is about the people.

He said 67 nuclear weapons were tested in the Marshall Islands, including 23 on Bikini. He said 20 of the 23 were hydrogen bombs, which were very, very powerful – the most powerful ever tested by the U.S. On March 1, 1954 the U.S. tested the most powerful of all (15 megatons), named Castle Bravo. It irradiated the northern Marshall Islands and the people who were there.

The U.S. tested weapons in the Marshall Islands from 1946 to 1958. Besides the 23 tests on Bikini, the U.S. tested 44 other, less powerful, weapons on Eniwetok.

He said the first hydrogen bomb was two stories tall, so not really usable, but others were of sizes that could be carried in airplanes and dropped on targets.

**Nuclear weapons testing (1946-1958): The forced moves, relocations, etc.:**

Glen said it’s important for the American people to understand that the U.S. government forced the entire population living on the Bikini Atoll (about 167 persons) to move to another island 125 miles away that was smaller, less habitable, less able to grow food, so these nuclear refugees suffered severe malnutrition. The U.S.’s nuclear weapons explosions made Bikini’s land and water and plant life and fish so horribly radioactive that it was very dangerous for people to move back there or to eat any plants or fish that grew there.

He said that ever since 1946 Bikini’s people have suffered disruption, rootlessness, and sicknesses caused by the U.S.’s testing of nuclear weapons. Problems continue even nowadays.

Alson told about the people’s experience during their first move. He said that when the Americans came to the Marshall Islands, all of the atolls looked the same to them. They all looked beautiful, so the Americans did not see the significant differences. The Americans forced the Bikinians to move to the Rongerik Atoll, but that was not a suitable place for people to live. Not enough food could be grown there. Many of the fish were poisonous to people. The Bikinians suffered badly then.

Since that move was disastrous, the U.S. moved the people to Kwajalein – right next to the noisy airport – but that was bad too, so next the U.S. moved them to Kili. However, Kili is very swampy, so it’s not good for growing food. Also, people could not fish offshore because 90% of the year the water was too rough to go out in boats. He also said that nowadays when “king tides” [very high tides] occur, half of the island is underwater.

Glen said that while he was studying about the Marshall Islands in preparation for producing this TV interview, he kept seeing how ignorant and insensitive the U.S. government was to the realities and the interests of the people there. The U.S. was quite clueless about the people, the culture, and the livability – and lack of livability – of the different islands and atolls there. The U.S. government’s ignorance and insensitivity have been recurring themes since 1946. He said he is glad the Republic of the Marshall Islands is an independent nation now, so they can make their own decisions and try to recover from the many traumas.

Jack agreed with Alson’s excellent summary and added that the people suffered tremendous hardships that the American people did not understand. He said that while the people were on Rongerik, a front-page article of the New York ***Times*** did report that the people were starving. He said the U.S. government did visit and see what was happening, but failed to take meaningful actions to help. The government totally neglected them – and considered them “nomads” even though they had lived on their own atoll for centuries.

He said the U.S. used its vast propaganda machine to promote nuclear weapons testing as scientific marvels that were wonderful and necessary for world peace and the U.S.’s security. The U.S. and its propaganda machine totally neglected the people. Jack said the American people would be disgusted if they understood what our government had done to the people and their lands. Two of his kids went to school in the U.S., but the school curriculum failed to teach what really happened, so when his kids wrote school reports about nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands, people were shocked to learn what his kids had reported on.

Also, he said, the U.S. has obligations to the people that it still has not fulfilled to this day.

Over the years, the U.S. moved the people several times – including experimental returns to Bikini, but the land, water, plants and fish were still too radioactive, so the U.S. kept moving the people around to several places in the region. Several times they suffered severe malnutrition, so the U.S. started shipping food to the people.

**Castle Bravo:**

Glen showed this image on the TV screen. This blast (called Castle Bravo) was by far the most powerful nuclear weapon explosion the U.S. conducted. Of the 67 nuclear weapons tests in the Marshall Islands, 23 occurred on Bikini Atoll.

The Castle Bravo test occurred on March 1, 1954. This hydrogen bomb was about 1,000 times as powerful as the Hiroshima bomb (15 MEGAtons vs. 15 KILOtons). That’s equivalent to 15 MILLION tons of TNT. Castle Bravo produced a fireball measured to be millions of degrees. The fireball shot into the sky at 300 miles per hour. The radiation – and the radioactive debris – spread over a very wide area. It contaminated many innocent people with radioactive debris.

Jack summarized how Castle Bravo affected the Marshall Islands. He said Castle Bravo did much of the damage in the Marshall Islands. He said the U.S. warned U.S. troops but did not warn the Marshall Islanders who would be exposed. He said when people woke up in the morning of March 1, 1954, in addition to the sun rising in the east as usual, they also saw something extremely bright rising in the west, so the people call that day “the day of two suns.”

It vaporized three islands and sent radioactive ash a hundred thousand feet into the air. In just a few hours the people of Rongelap experienced this ash falling on them like snow. They had just seen a second sun rising in the west, and now they were experiencing ash falling like snow. The kids started playing in this “snow” and were having a great time. They had no idea what this was. But promptly they started showing the effects of high-level radiation poisoning. Their hair started falling out. Their skin was burning. They started vomiting. Nobody knew why these horrible things were happening to them.

The U.S. government had not warned them and still told them nothing. The people had to stay on their island for two days before the U.S. government finally went there and removed the people. During the Clinton Administration the government declassified some documents, so finally the public learned two things:

1: All throughout the decades, the U.S. government kept saying they did not know that Castle Bravo would be 15 megatons. They thought it would be only 3 megatons.

2. All along they had said they didn’t know which way the wind was blowing.

Jack said the declassified documents showed that both of these were lies. The knew the megatonnage would be huge. They had monitored the weather closely and knew the wind was blowing toward the people who were living on those islands. The government did not tell those people anything, but they did tell the U.S. military people on ships in the area to go below deck to avoid the fallout. He said the Marshall Islanders learned to be very skeptical of what the U.S. government says even nowadays.

Alson added that science knows that radiation hurts the human body. He said radiated fallout fell on people and caused very serious birth defects including what’s known now as “jellyfish babies.” Even now people are still suffering from the effects of the nuclear testing from 1946 to 1958 – and he said people might continue suffering forever.

**We did not have time to discuss this information:**

* When the U.S. government forced the population of Bikini Island to evacuate for a distant location, the government promised that the move would be only temporary. But that became permanent after the gigantic 1954 Castle Bravo blast, because returning to Bikini would be far too dangerous.
* Beyond what Jack had said about the U.S.’s failure to evacuate Rongelap’s people from their endangered island – or even to inform them that the nuclear weapon test would occur – the U.S. waited two days after the blast to evacuate all 64 persons to Kwajalein Island. The U.S. did not allow them to return until three years later. Residents of several other islands also were seriously hurt. These islands’ food and water were not safe to consume, even after they returned.
* A Japanese fishing boat and its crew were very severely contaminated with radiation. One crew member died soon, and the others – and their boat – remained radioactive. A Geiger counter measured radiation 100 feet from their boat after it returned to port. The fishermen suffered serious illnesses. They brought radioactivity home with them, so their homes became contaminated. The fish they brought back – and other fish that were caught in the area – were radioactive, but some of this problem was not recognized until after some people had eaten the fish. American officials understated the seriousness of the problems.
* After Castle Bravo, it was obvious that for the Americans in charge, the main problem was not the health or safety of people in the Marshall Islands. The responsible Americans felt the main problem was negative publicity about testing nuclear weapons there. U.S. public relations image – not the Marshall Islanders – is what mattered.

**Health problems caused by the testing:**

Glen expressed appreciation for Jack’s important role in his national government. He is the Secretary of Health & Human Services for the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

Jack provided some more information about the health problems that the people have suffered as a result of testing nuclear weapons there. He said, “every family can tell cancer stories. It’s very prevalent here.” He gave a few examples from the family of his wife, who is a Marshall Islander. He said they do not have an oncologist there – nor the equipment for treating cancer – so they have to refer people out for expertise and treatment.

He added that – because of the many, many cancers and other health problems – the nuclear weapons also affected people’s psychology, so they are suspicious of the origin of diseases that might not have been caused by the nuclear weapons testing. He said the distant island of Namu was not affected by testing, but they might assume that a disease might have been caused by that. About 25% of people get cancer anyway, so when cancers occur, people tend to assume that nuclear weapons testing was at fault. Generally the people think of themselves as “survivors,” but some people think of themselves as “victims.” This has sapped some people’s motivation and energy.

Glen said when he read Jack’s book and other background materials, he was impressed with how seriously the nuclear testing and evacuations have hurt the people’s culture and weakened the society in profound ways. This can have the kinds of ripple effects that Jack had mentioned just now. Besides the physical health and mental health effects, when a people’s culture is disrupted so severely, this takes away their whole world.

**Resulting harms, loss of culture, etc.:**

The U.S. government forced people to move several times to locations that were much less desirable – and less sustainable – than their traditional homeland had been.

Alson has lived in the area his entire life, so he was able to discuss some environmental problems that have been caused by the U.S.’s testing of nuclear weapons there.

He said people from the outside world might think the people who were forced to relocate could simply return to their original islands. Most people in the outside world do not know how seriously the Marshall Islanders’ culture was disrupted. He said they used to be “the best navigators and the best canoe builders in the world.” He said they lost those skills because their environmental destruction and their forced relocations had so seriously disrupted their culture.

**We did not have time to discuss this information:**

When people were forced to move away from their homelands, they lost access to their natural traditional food. The U.S. provided food is processed and unnatural, so this hurt their health and further weakened their culture.

They were moved to Kili, which was considered a prison island. The people were very seriously malnourished for years, because the land and waters did not produce enough decent food. Alson’s first birthday occurred while living on Kili. His birthday meal was half a pound of flour.

Bikinians valued owning land, but they could not own land on Kili. The older men could not find meaning on Kili. This also weakened their culture.

Memories of 1946-1958 and afterwards died out with older people. Younger people did not know, but now they are learning and sharing the history with other people.

People interact extensively and intimately, with great caring, compassion, etc. These aspects of their traditional culture did persist.

**Political changes: Republic of the Marshall Islands, COFA, etc.:**

Glen said he wanted our TV viewers to learn some of the historical and political changes that have occurred. After he summarized his understanding of a few facts he invited Jack and Alson to correct him or add to what he said.

In 1946-1947 the United Nations designated a large area around the Marshall Islands to be a Trust Territory and made the United States responsible for caring for the area and its people.

In 1979 the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) formed a constitutional government. In 1986 the Republic gained formal independence. Here is their nation’s flag:

Their independence occurred soon after the 1985 Compact of Free Association (COFA) ended U.S. trusteeship over the former Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI) and established a new relationship between RMI and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM).

Glen invited Jack to summarize what the Compact of Free Association accomplished – and how this relationship with the U.S. is working nowadays. Jack said that soon after the U.N. had made the U.S. responsible for protecting the Marshall Islands and their people, the U.S. started destroying them with nuclear weapons tests that irradiated the people and their lands and waters, so “you can imagine how we felt about that.”

Jack said he was living in outer islands in the early 1980s when the vote for the first Compact of Free Association (COFA) occurred. He watched closely how it played out.

He said the U.S.’s main priority for the first COFA was to get rid of the lawsuits that a great many Marshall Islanders had filed in U.S. claims court related to problems caused by the nuclear weapons testing. The first COFA provided a cash settlement in exchange for dismissing all of those lawsuits and preventing any future claims related to the testing – past, present or future – and preventing any Marshall Islander from suing the U.S. government about anything related to nuclear weapons testing.

He said their lawsuit had a very strong legal basis because the U.S.’s trustee role had made the U.S. legally responsible, so the U.S. lost every attempt to get the lawsuit thrown out of court. The Marshallese had Fifth Amendment rights under the U.S. Constitution, so they were holding the U.S. government accountable for having taken their land without compensation. The Marshallese people’s lawsuit was very strong, so the U.S. government’s main goal in the first COFA was to eliminate the lawsuit and prevent future ones.

The U.S. designed the first COFA to include many kinds of federal aid, grants, etc., and the U.S. turned the Bikinians into a minority voting bloc within the entire Marshallese population, so even though the Bikinians – the people actually affected by the nuclear testing – voted 85% against the COFA, they were outvoted by the other Marshallese people who could get a variety of benefits from COFA.

This COFA election caused all of the lawsuits to get thrown out, including one that had gotten all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, but in 2010 the Court decided that it did not want to break international agreements between the U.S. and the RMI, so the Court refused to hear that lawsuit, even though the Bikinians had not been fully compensated and their island still was not safe for them to move back onto.

A second COFA was enacted, and a third will be negotiated soon. He said the nuclear issues were not even allowed “onto the table” when the second COFA was being negotiated. He said Alson – who is a commissioner on the National Nuclear Commission of the Republic of the Marshall Islands – has been making strong efforts to get the nuclear issues onto the table for the third COFA that will end in 2023. Jack said the RMI is pushing hard now for adequate compensation related to the nuclear weapons testing.

He said many problems still remain, including deadly plutonium under a gigantic cement dome on the island of Eniwetok. The plutonium will remain radioactive for thousands of years. Jack said this is at sea level – and people live just across the lagoon from that gigantic plutonium hazard. He said nobody in the U.S. would allow such a hazard to persist in their local community.

He said many other problems remain too that the Marshallese people want to be cleaned up and solved. He said Alson and others are pushing hard on the U.S. government to do what’s right.

Glen thanked Jack for adding much new information beyond what Glen had learned from recent readings. He said Jack’s insights about the politics related to COFA were fresh beyond what he had not previously known.

He asked Alson to share information based on his role as a commissioner on the National Nuclear Commission of the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

Alson said in 2017 the RMI government wanted to push again on the nuclear issues during the next negotiations, so RMI created the National Nuclear Commission to develop and promote strategies. Other nations are looking at what RMI is doing. The Eniwetok plutonium dome is a concern – especially now that the climate crisis is causing sea-level rise, which threatens public health and safety. Alson said other islands and nations throughout Micronesia are concerned. He said now with the new U.S. administration’s concern about the environment and climate, the U.S. finally seems willing to listen to the Marshall Islanders.

He said the U.S. has been trying to avoid responsibility for protecting them from the plutonium in the dome, but RMI says it does not have the ability to deal with all of that plutonium, so the U.S. must protect RMI from that. RMI is trying to get the various radiation-related issues to become part of the new negotiations.

Glen said he has been tracking what the Biden Administration has been doing about these problems. He said the Biden Administration has said some good things, but far too often their actions are not following through from their good words. They do not “walk the talk.” He said they have been doing this on a number of issues. They make positive news by saying good things, but they often do not follow through with good actions.

**Current situation (politics, environment, health, culture, economics, etc.):**

Glen said many Marshall Islanders have moved to Washington, Oregon, and elsewhere throughout the Pacific region, including Japan. He said the issues we’ve been discussing are important for the people themselves – in addition to the lands and waters where they came from. He invited Alson to say anything else about the people – beyond what we have already said.

Alson said the American people should know about the history of the Marshall Islands, so they will understand what the Marshallese are talking about. Then we can all move ahead. Also, young people in the U.S. need to know.

Jack is their nation’s Secretary of Health & Human Services. He has already discussed the very high rates of cancer in the Marshall Islands. Every Marshall Islander can talk about the widespread cancer in their families. Many people have thyroid cancers – a kind of cancer that is especially caused by nuclear radiation. Many people have died young.

Besides that, people’s health suffered when they were forced to leave their traditional islands. The forced move prevented them from eating their natural food. Instead, the U.S. provided processed foods that are problematic, as Jack has mentioned in his book. Jack discussed this briefly now.

He said when he started living on Kili Island decades ago, along with most of the people who had been forced to move from Bikini, the people got USDA food – “canned everything” – “canned meat, canned fruit, canned juice,” etc. He said that although some of it was good, some of it was problematic, such as canned fruit in heavy, heavy syrup. The meat was like Spam. He told the mayor that the food was not very healthy, but the mayor replied that the people had been starving – and, since they never say bad things about food – people who had been starving recognize that food is food.

Jack said that when people move away from their traditional culture where they had been able to eat food fresh from the land, and eat fresh local fish from the sea, people’s health suffers. He said that originally the people living on Namu were very healthy, but over time that deteriorated, as did the health of people on Kili. He said that Marshall Islanders now have one of the world’s highest rates of diabetes. This – along with the cancers – leads to a very high rate of non-communicable disease.

He added that they do not have the resources in the Marshall Islands to deal with all of the health problems that occur there. So many people need dialysis, but they do not have that capability, so many of their people have to travel to the U.S. He said the Republic of the Marshall Islands is developing a plan for being able to provide dialysis in the future.

He said good number of their people go to Washington State for health care. He said that of all 50 states in the U.S., Washington is the best one for the Marshall Islanders. Their people are treated very well in Washington State. Washingtonians have been very friendly and accommodating for Marshall Islanders, and also have helped them get medical care. He expressed great appreciation for Washingtonians.

Glen said that the early 2021 state legislative session approved more Medicaid for Marshall Islanders, because they had not been served adequately before. He said people had successfully convinced Congress to improve Medicaid eligibility for Marshall Islanders nationwide here.

He also said he has been volunteering a lot for many decades in the movement to abolish nuclear weapons, and now our statewide coalition [Washington Against Nuclear Weapons – [**www.wanwcoalition.org**](http://www.wanwcoalition.org)] has been working in various ways to help Marshall Islanders here lift up their voices and also to improve the lives of Marshall Islanders in Washington.

He added that the peace movement is on the side of the Marshallese, and we could make more progress if more people were to join with the peace movement.

**We did not have time to mention this information:**

On December 20, 2020, Congress improved access to Medicaid for Marshall Islanders living in the U.S. It was included in the COVID stimulus bill that Congress finalized on that date. See the news in this article -- [**https://www.politico.com/news/2020/12/20/congress-restores-medicaid-pacific-islanders-449480**](https://www.politico.com/news/2020/12/20/congress-restores-medicaid-pacific-islanders-449480) -- and this Tweet: [**https://twitter.com/ddiamond/status/1340828360033914880?s=21**](https://twitter.com/ddiamond/status/1340828360033914880?s=21)

**The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is relevant to our topic:**

Glen said that currently more and more people around the world are strongly promoting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. [See [**www.icanw.org**](http://www.icanw.org)] By mid-July 2021, 54 nations have ratified it, so it is in the process of becoming part of those 54 nations’ domestic law.

He summarized what the Treaty’s Article 6 requires, because pertains directly to the Marshall Islanders and other people and places who have been hurt by nuclear weapons.

While most of the Treaty is about preventing nuclear war, the Treaty also draws upon international human rights law and establishes “positive obligations” to help victims and the environment.

The Treaty’s Article 6 obliges states parties to provide individuals affected by use or testing of nuclear weapons with a range of assistance, including physical and psychological care, rehabilitation, and measures to ensure their socioeconomic inclusion.

This assistance is not to construed as charity, but rather as a way to make sure victims can exercise their human rights. Nations that ratify the Treaty must also take steps to remediate the environment contaminated by the use or testing of nuclear weapons. The Treaty recognizes that it would not be possible to return the environment to its condition before the nuclear detonation, but states must take “necessary and appropriate measures” in that direction.

The Treaty seeks to help victims and environments in order to address ongoing harm from past use and testing as well as any harm from future use and testing – which, of course, the Treaty seeks to prevent.

Glen said he hopes this provides an additional reason for more people to work with the worldwide peace movement in educating the public about the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and urging more nations to join the 54 smart, courageous nations that have ratified it already.

**The rest of the world needs to know about all of this:**

Glen said all three of us want the rest of the world to know about the U.S.’s testing of nuclear weapons in the Marshall Islands – in addition to what the U.S. had done to Hiroshima and Nagasaki – and to the many places throughout the U.S. and other nations where uranium has been mined, processed, and turned into weapons that can destroy life on earth.

He said many people and many ecosystems have been terribly damaged – cruelly damaged – because of a gross misunderstanding of how to feel “secure.” He said it is false and stupid to think we ourselves can feel “secure” selfishly by seriously hurting other people and places. He called for a mature and comprehensive sense of security for all people and places.

He urged the people watching this interview – or reading about it on his blog – to join the growing movement to abolish nuclear weapons. He said will post some information and organizational resources to his blog, [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org). ***See pages 10-13 below.***

Alson said that within the Republic of the Marshall Islands, some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) exist and are working at informing people and organizing good work. Many young people are involved and active in leadership roles. Some young Marshallese people are active in the RMI’s National Nuclear Commission, and some are working on the issues in Washington State, Hawaii, and elsewhere in the U.S. People of all ages are educating each other – and especially the young people – so they will understand what they are facing today.

Alton said they are educating people about the climate crisis too as another crisis facing the people and their islands. He said there is a huge movement of young people educating each other and also adults.

He said he went to high school in Hawaii, but the school did not teach anything about nuclear weapons testing. He said he hopes young people can put this history into the school curriculum. That would be a big step toward educating the world about nuclear issues in the Marshall Islands.

Glen said young people have been at the forefront of the climate movement, so putting these issues together could have a powerful impact.

Jack added that it’s important for people to understand that what happened on Bikini – and in the Marshall Islands overall – can be used as a reality check for the rest of the world to see what can happen when arrogance and ignorance are combined for testing weapons on people and their places. The Marshallese people were living peacefully, but nuclear weapons testing destroyed their happy, sustainable way of life and their health. He criticized the U.S. for thinking that its perception that its needs were more important than those of anybody else. Pay attention to this reality check.

He said there are some evil people in the world – and some political realities about nuclear weapons – so he said his prior experience as a leader in the Red Cross is relevant, and now he works as RMI’s Secretary of Health & Human Services. He said he and the Red Cross are very familiar with what Glen had read a few minutes ago about Article 6 in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. He said the International Red Cross has taken a very hard stand about these matters.

He added, “People really need to look at this. It’s forever.” The damage from nuclear weapons lasts forever – and so does damage from nuclear power’s problems, such as Chernobyl and Three Mile Island, the nuclear power disaster that occurred near his home town of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Once the radiation is released, it hurts people for thousands and thousands of years. It changes people’s lives forever. “Everybody in the Marshall Islands has been impacted by the nuclear testing – whether they were in the direct line of fallout or whether it was their ancestors or families or even if they were far away from the blast. Everybody was impacted by what happened, and that’s why there is this National Nuclear Commission that Alson is the chairman of.”

Jack said the Bikinians are vitally concerned that the truth must be better publicized, so their story will not die. It is important that people understand and that we prevent anyone from getting power and doing reckless things with those weapons.

**We did not have time to discuss this information:**

American political leaders do not seem to know or care that American military veterans were harmed too. Watch this powerful 22-minute video in which U.S. military veterans discuss their first-hand experiences of being forced to witness atomic bomb testing at very close range:  
[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\_continue=53&v=qbBu6cWczTY&feature=emb\_logo**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=53&v=qbBu6cWczTY&feature=emb_logo)

In 1946 a very skimpy bathing suit was invented, and – as a marketing gimmick – it was called the “bikini” because the manufacturer wanted to create the image that seeing this skimpy bathing suit would be as startling as seeing an atomic blast on Bikini Island.

**Glen expressed appreciation for Jack’s book, which shares Marshallese people’s authentic voices, experiences and stories:**

Glen said he very much enjoyed reading the fascinating book that Jack write. Jack had printing transcripts of what many Marshall Islanders had told him about their history, culture, and first-hand experiences, so Jack’s book provides authentic first-hand voices of the people themselves.

Jack titled his book ***For the Good of Mankind*** because that’s what the U.S. government told the Marshallese people was the purpose of testing nuclear weapons there. The U.S. said it needed to test nuclear weapons “for the good of mankind.”

**More information:**

* Many good sources of information exist, but we did not have time to mention them during the TV program. You can see information on the “Nuclear Weapons” part of Glen’s blog, [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org).
* The link to this TV program – and the link to the thorough summary you are reading now – are posted in two parts of the blog, [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org). Please invite your friends to visit it and click either the “TV Programs” link or the “Nuclear Weapons” link to see various sources of information.
* **“Let Their Voices Be Heard: The Legacy of the Marshall Islands and Islanders in the Nuclear Age**” – This is aclose-up look at the Nuclear Experiences of the Marshall Islanders: [**https://www.uua.org/international/blog/disarmament/let-their-voices-be-heard-legacy-marshall-islands-and-islanders**](https://www.uua.org/international/blog/disarmament/let-their-voices-be-heard-legacy-marshall-islands-and-islanders)
* The Compact of Free Association (COFA) Act of 1985 (Public Law 99-239) approved a joint resolution between the United States, the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) which terminated U.S. trusteeship over the former Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI).
* In 2015 the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services produced this fact sheet about the Compact of Free Association (COFA): [**https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/news/Micronesia\_MarshallIslFS.pdf**](https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/news/Micronesia_MarshallIslFS.pdf)
* Washington State’s Health Care Authority produced this information about Medicaid for Marshall Islanders living in Washington State: [**https://www.hca.wa.gov/about-hca/apple-health-medicaid/cofa-islander-programs**](https://www.hca.wa.gov/about-hca/apple-health-medicaid/cofa-islander-programs)
* The information Glen summarized about Article 6 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was based on information from this source: [**http://hrp.law.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Impact-of-TPNW-Nobel-presentation-Dec-2017.pdf**](http://hrp.law.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Impact-of-TPNW-Nobel-presentation-Dec-2017.pdf)
* In addition to the U.S.’s 67 nuclear tests in the Marshall Islands, the U.S. also tested them on Shoshone Nation land in the SW part of the U.S. The Shoshone Nation in the U.S. is the most-bombed nation in the world. People in this part of the U.S.’s Southwest are still suffering cancers and other problems. Nukewatch published this article in their Fall 2020 quarterly newsletter: [**https://nukewatchinfo.org/a-message-from-the-most-bombed-nation-on-earth/**](https://nukewatchinfo.org/a-message-from-the-most-bombed-nation-on-earth/)
* “Downwinders” suffered in Washington State too. The plutonium bomb the U.S. dropped on Nagasaki on August 9, 1945, was built at the Hanford nuclear weapons plant in Eastern Washington. The U.S. government has shown reckless contempt for people living “downwind” from there too. Many years ago on my TV program I interviewed a “downwinder” who developed medical problems after the U.S. government deliberately released radiation from Hanford – just to see what would happen.
* Also, a nuclear power plant at Hanford is virtually the same model as the plant at Fukushima, Japan. In a recent TV program I interviewed very knowledgeable people. You can watch the video and/or read a thorough summary of what we said at this link: [**https://parallaxperspectives.org/tv-fukushima-hanford-and-dangers-of-living-near-nuclear-radiation**](https://parallaxperspectives.org/tv-fukushima-hanford-and-dangers-of-living-near-nuclear-radiation)
* Here is a link to a different blog post about downwinders. The website is a very reputable source of information about nuclear weapons and nuclear power. See it here: [**https://www.nirs.org/justice-for-downwinders-remembering-the-trinity-bomb-blast-and-church-rock-uranium-disaster/?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=901c2b7f-15fa-4006-a370-c46aef4981c2**](https://www.nirs.org/justice-for-downwinders-remembering-the-trinity-bomb-blast-and-church-rock-uranium-disaster/?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=901c2b7f-15fa-4006-a370-c46aef4981c2)
* On August 9, 2021, during the annual Hiroshima-Nagasaki Days event at the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action ([**www.gzcenter.org**](http://www.gzcenter.org)), a leader of the Marshallese community here gave the keynote address. This news release includes some of what she said: [**https://www.gzcenter.org/8-people-cited-at-trident-nuclear-submarine-base-at-bangor-washington-marking-the-76th-anniversary-of-hiroshima-and-nagasaki-atomic-bombings/**](https://www.gzcenter.org/8-people-cited-at-trident-nuclear-submarine-base-at-bangor-washington-marking-the-76th-anniversary-of-hiroshima-and-nagasaki-atomic-bombings/)
* Here is a link to a powerfully informative 24-minute documentary film from 2009 – with a mixture of viewpoints – about the U.S.’s current testing of missiles (without warheads) launched from California to Kwajalein Atoll, which the U.S. leases from the Republic of the Marshall Islands for this purpose: The U.S. crammed thousands of people into a tiny area, where they live in squalor: [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXMJVgctizA**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXMJVgctizA)
* **“Blundering Toward Nuclear Chaos”** is a 101-page report that explicitly explains how Trump's nuclear weapons decisions have seriously hurt world safety. It was published by Global Zero ([**www.globalzero.org**](http://www.globalzero.org)), a credible source that I support. You can read it online or print it out at this link: [**https://www.globalzero.org/blundering-toward-nuclear-chaos-2020/?link\_id=3&can\_id=1d662460c0abb8939c5044c82927552b&source=email-critical-mass-march-2020-news-from-global-zero-5&email\_referrer=email\_826110&email\_subject=critical-mass-june-2020-news-from-global-zero**](https://www.globalzero.org/blundering-toward-nuclear-chaos-2020/?link_id=3&can_id=1d662460c0abb8939c5044c82927552b&source=email-critical-mass-march-2020-news-from-global-zero-5&email_referrer=email_826110&email_subject=critical-mass-june-2020-news-from-global-zero)

**Glen encourages people to join the movement to abolish nuclear weapons. Please connect with any of the great many organizations, printed and online   
periodicals, newsletters, action alerts, etc. Here are just a few:**

* See much information from many sources at **the “Nuclear Weapons” part of Glen Anderson’s blog**, [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org). The direct link is [**http://parallaxperspectives.org/category/nuclear-weapons**](http://parallaxperspectives.org/category/nuclear-weapons)
* If you live in the greater Olympia, Washington, area, Glen invites you to connect with the **Olympia Coalition to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (OCANW**). We meet every month and organize strategically smart activities in the Olympia WA area. Glen founded and currently chairs OCANW. You can connect with this savvy local organization and join our informative e-mail list by contacting him at[**glenanderson@integra.net**](mailto:glenanderson@integra.net) or (360) 491-9093.
* Sign up to take **OCANW’s free online course “Nuclear Weapons Nowadays: What You Can Know and Do.”** Four well informed members of the Olympia Coalition to Abolish Nuclear Weapons developed the course and present it for FREE several times every year ONLINE so people everywhere can take it. Information: Joanne Dufour (206) 550-1841 [**jduf234@gmail.com**](mailto:jduf234@gmail.com) or Glen Anderson (360) 491-9093 [**glenanderson@integra.net**](mailto:glenanderson@integra.net) and [**https://parallaxperspectives.org/sign-up-now-for-free-informative-fascinating-4-session-course-on-nuclear-weapons**](https://parallaxperspectives.org/sign-up-now-for-free-informative-fascinating-4-session-course-on-nuclear-weapons)
* More than 50 organizations throughout Washington state belong to our statewide coalition, **Washington Against Nuclear Weapons**, [**www.wanwcoalition.org**](http://www.wanwcoalition.org) or (206) 547-2630.
* In our Pacific Northwest region, a great many people appreciate and participate with the **Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action**, which is located immediately next to the Trident nuclear submarine base in Kitsap County, Washington. See much information at [**www.gzcenter.org**](http://www.gzcenter.org).
* **Arms Control Association** ([**www.armscontrol.org**](http://www.armscontrol.org)) is an excellent source of information. This link provides many fact sheets and other information: [**www.armscontrol.org/factsheets**](http://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets)
* **Back from the Brink** ([**www.preventnuclearwar.org**](http://www.preventnuclearwar.org)) is a smart campaign created in 2017 by two nationwide organizations – the Union of Concerned Scientists ([**www.ucsusa.org**](http://www.ucsusa.org)) and Physicians for Social Responsibility ([**www.psr.org**](http://www.psr.org)) to promote five smart public policy changes that would significantly reduce the likelihood of nuclear war. Many other organizations have joined this effort to prevent nuclear war by:
* Renouncing the option of using nuclear weapons first
* Ending the sole, unchecked authority of any U.S. president to launch a nuclear attack
* Taking U.S. nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert
* Cancelling the plan to replace its entire nuclear arsenal with enhanced weapons
* Actively pursuing a verifiable agreement among nuclear-armed states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals
* **Beyond Nuclear** ([**www.beyondnuclear.org**](http://www.beyondnuclear.org)) educates and activates the public about the connections between nuclear power and nuclear weapons and the need to abandon both to safeguard our future.
* **Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists** ([**www.thebulletin.org**](http://www.thebulletin.org)) is the exceptionally well-informed non-profit organization that created and sustains the Doomsday Clock ([**https://thebulletin.org/doomsday-clock**](https://thebulletin.org/doomsday-clock)) and continually provides smart information about nuclear weapons.
* **Federation of Atomic Scientists** ([**www.fas.org**](http://www.fas.org)) was founded in 1945 by scientists who worked on the Manhattan Project to develop the first atomic bomb. This non-profit global policy think tank uses science and scientific analysis to attempt to make the world more secure. Their work includes opposing nuclear weapons.
* **International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons** (ICAN – [**www.icanw.org**](http://www.icanw.org)) works worldwide to promote the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Their website includes much information.
* **Nuclear Information & Resource Service** ([**nirs@nirs.org**](mailto:nirs@nirs.org)) is an expert source of information about nuclear weapons and nuclear power.
* **Nuclear Resister** ([**www.nukeresister.org**](http://www.nukeresister.org)) networks the anti-nuclear and anti-war resistance movement while acting as a clearinghouse for information about contemporary nonviolent resistance to war and the nuclear threat. They emphasize support for the women and men jailed for these actions. This website is the online companion to the quarterly ***Nuclear Resister*** newsletter, a more comprehensive chronicle.
* **Nukewatch** ([**www.nukewatchinfo.org**](http://www.nukewatchinfo.org)) brings critical attention to the locations, movements, dangers, and the politics of nuclear weapons and radioactive wastes.
* **Physicians for Social Responsibility** ([**www.psr.org**](http://www.psr.org)) brings together medical professionals and other people for solidly well informed and bold efforts to abolish nuclear weapons, work on the climate crisis, etc. PSR’s Washington State chapter ([**www.wpsr.org**](http://www.wpsr.org)) is active statewide and created Washington Against Nuclear Weapons, which I listed above.
* **Union of Concerned Scientists** ([**www.ucsusa.org**](http://www.ucsusa.org)) puts rigorous, independent science to work to solve our planet's most pressing problems, including abolishing nuclear weapons.

**The list above is brief. Connect with some of these and you’ll discover links to many others. I encourage you to get involved and seek out more sources of information and action. If you live in a part of the nation or world outside of Olympia and Washington State, you will find excellent local organizations that do smart work at the grassroots level near where you live.**

**Glen’s closing encouragement:**

Glen thanked **Jack Niedenthal** and **Alson Kelen** for sharing their knowledge and insights with us.

He also thanked all of the people who have been watching this interview.

Nowadays – from thousands of miles away – and after more than half a century – we might say that what the U.S. did to the people of the Marshall Islands was insensitive and unjust. But for the people who were directly affected – the people who were forced off from their ancestral lands – the words “insensitive” and “unjust” grossly understate the realities that they have been experiencing. The U.S. government destroyed their world.

Over a very long historical time, the U.S. government’s behavior toward other nations shows that our government feels entitled to do anything it wants to people anywhere on earth, regardless of those people’s feelings or their interests. This has also been true ever since European explorers and colonizers came to our shores many centuries ago. We need truth and justice for our own indigenous people, the Native Americans who still live here.

You can get information about a wide variety of issues related to peace, social justice and nonviolence through my blog, [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org)or by phoning me at   
(360) 491-9093 or e-mailing me at [**glenanderson@integra.net**](mailto:glenanderson@integra.net)

Glen ends each TV program with this encouragement:

**We're all one human family, and we all share one planet.**

**We can create a better world, but we all have to work at it.**

**The world needs whatever you can do to help!**