



# INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

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DEVLIN: Today is April 1, 2010 and we're in Buka, Bougainville in Papua New Guinea with Mr. John Momis. Mr. Momis was elected National Member of Parliament in 1972 and has since been a many time member of Parliament, Cabinet Minister and also Deputy Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea. Most recently, Mr. Momis was Ambassador to China and is currently competing in the 2010 election for President of the Bougainville Autonomous Government. Mr. Momis thank you for joining us.

MOMIS: *It's a pleasure.*

DEVLIN: I thought we might begin by asking you to give us a sense of some of the main positions that were being staked out when decentralization was first debated here. Many countries consider options such as provincialism, regionalism, or very local level government. How did that debate take shape here in Papua New Guinea?

MOMIS: *Well in the first place I was elected by the people of Bougainville to represent them, to present their views and their interests before PNG (Papua New Guinea) became independent. Prior to that, the people were not at all happy with the way the national government treated Bougainville despite the fact that Bougainville was a major contributor to the national purse.*

*So my background is to actually plug for or fight for a certain measure of autonomy for Bougainville because even at the time the people were already talking about the need to have a referendum to determine the final political status. And so when I was sent to Parliament it was with a mandate and the mandate was not only to protect the interests of Bougainville in the constitution but also to more or less demand that Bougainville be given a certain measure of autonomy according to the principle of subsidiarity which stipulates that smaller bodies should not have their powers usurped by the national government and that is something that very small number of people appreciate. For me, it's something that I had learned in sociology many years ago, that participation, human participation is such an important factor in the process of development and in the process of governance. So for me it was an ideological position as well as a practical position being a member of Bougainville.*

*So when I was elected I was very fortunate that Chief Minister Michael Somare appointed me the de-facto Chairman of the Constitutional Planning Committee. He being the ex-official chairman. So I was—I ran the committee and I actually managed to convert what was set up as a government committee into a parliamentary committee giving it greater power and status to represent all the factions, factional views of Parliament.*

DEVLIN: Now you mentioned that you managed to convert the CPC (Constitutional Planning Committee) from a government to a parliamentary committee, was that by lobbying the then-Chief Minister or how did that come about?

MOMIS: *No by practice it was just sheer practice, you know by the way we operated the committee, which for example we—the Prime Minister, when Chief Minister Somare and Mr. (Gough) Whitlam, the Prime Minister of Australia, had agreed that PNG must become independent not later than 1975. And as far as they were concerned, the constitution was just a legal document that should be prepared in Canberra or elsewhere to be handed over to an independent nation.*

*We took a different view, we viewed constitution making as an inalienable right of the people that should be tailored and should be made by the people themselves and tailored to their specific needs and aspirations. And therefore, the Constitution of PNG is considered by many people as not only a great legal document but a great moral document because it enshrines the national vision, the directive principles of the government that should drive and motivate and help policymakers to design specific policies to meet the specific needs of Papua New Guinea.*

*Papua New Guinea being a highly diversified country in terms of geography, language, you know culture and so on. We saw that a for a highly diversified society only a decentralized form of government would accommodate the diversity and at the same time create a common thrust for national unity as a community and not as a regimentation.*

DEVLIN: Now you mentioned the diversity of the country, there was also diversity in opinions about decentralization. It's often commented that the Highlands for example were far less keen, can you give us a sense of some of the positions on the other side of the argument from gentlemen such as yourself at the time?

MOMIS: *Yes, well we started off, the government of course, the colonial government was very much centralist you know it was a highly bureaucratized and centralized unit and they only believed in dispensing services to the people without really giving them—creating the environment and the conditions for effective human participation. That is something that we rejected from the outset, from the word "go" and the Highlands – because of the lack sophistication and lack of education at the time were really taken advantage of by the central bureaucracy, the colonial bureaucracy and were told look if you accept independence too early the central—the coastal people will dominate the government and therefore you would not be, you know you would not have your own way of doing things, which was not the case you know.*

*So consequently, the Highlanders were not really pro-decentralization. They were more in favor of a more dependent third level, local level type of government, third tier of government, which people like Sir Barry Holloway are still pushing that view. As far as he is concerned, decentralization should be administrative delegation of powers and not actual decentralization of political power. My view is that decentralization is about structural, equitable distribution of power. Empowering people to take their proper positions as agents of change and development and not mere passive recipients of goods and services, which the likes of Sir Barry Holloway and many of the national ministers including Sir Julius Chan who now ironically, paradoxically is asking for or demanding more autonomy. He was one of our biggest impediments in terms of decentralization.*

DEVLIN: So you mentioned Sir Julius and I would like to come back to him and the resistance you faced and overcame. But firstly, I'm wondering many governments when faced with a similar situation will try and incorporate leaders from a region that's pushing for more autonomy or more power into their cabinet as a way of demonstrating a sensitivity to those demands for inclusion. Now there were some leaders from Bougainville brought into that first Somare cabinet but there seems to have—a split seems to of developed, they seemed to have lost their base here on Bougainville when that happened. Could you talk a little bit that, where that was indeed the case?

- MOMIS:** *That was the case, yes. Sir Paul Lapun and Mr. Donatus Mola were the, were the, were two Bougainville ministers—very senior ministers in the first Somare cabinet. And by virtue of a, of a, you know the cabinet solidarity I suppose, they were very conservative they were not really the spokesmen for decentralization. Consequently, the people of Bougainville, especially the decentralist and those who were demanding greater autonomy were very much against him.*
- Now I do not know what would happen—what would have happened had I been made a minister. I would find it very difficult because I would have been a lone ranger amongst a bunch of centralists. So, in a way, I was very fortunate that I was not a minister, so that I enjoyed that autonomy as the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee to push what I, you know what I saw a very legitimate form of uniting factor. By the way, decentralization to me at the time was something that was responding to Bougainville's demands and aspirations but at the same time accommodating national government concerns about breakaway moves. So we managed to contain Bougainville's interests within the parameters of the national constitution.*
- DEVLIN:** Now, people sometimes treat political power as a zero sum game, one's gain is another person's loss. And when it comes to decentralization usually, the people who lose are cabinet ministers some because they are effectively delegating some of their responsibilities. Now then, Chief Minister Sir Michael Somare had just cobbled together a coalition and in the process of doing that, he had awarded cabinet posts to bring certain parties in. Was there a sense that decentralization posed a threat to that coalition because it would be undermining the value of those, of those posts he had just assigned? Was that a complicating factor?
- MOMIS:** *I guess from their point of view central authority is always very suspicious of those who are asking for a share of power and the central bureaucracy supported the ministers of the central government, which made my job very, very difficult because I was very fortunate I had people like Sir John Kaputin, Bernard Narokobi, who just passed away. He was not a member of the CPC but he was a young, newly graduated lawyer for Sydney University and he was a Melanesian kind of philosopher so we had a particular niche to work together for decentralization.*
- It was not easy because and I sympathize with Michael Somare in a way because he was trying to put together a nation out of a conglomeration of tribes and we were trying to say to him look you've got to trust these tribes, you must give them some more autonomy. So you can understand the problem.*
- DEVLIN:** Certainly. And one of the most interesting parts about decentralization here in Papua New Guinea is that the state was in fact or at least discussions about decentralizing the state occurred even before the state existed, I mean we're still talking pre-1975.
- MOMIS:** *That's right.*
- DEVLIN:** So I'm wondering how, I mean this is always an issue with decentralization but it must have been particularly acute here. How do you decentralize and at the same time ensure you can maintain that idea of national unity, that national identity? Because here you were, not only—you weren't maintaining it you had to build it in the first place, but at the very same time, you're talking about essentially fragmenting?

**MOMIS:** *Yes, yes, very, very difficult it's a very, it's a complex issue which a lot of people don't understand. As you said we were trying to build a nation, create a new nation out of a conglomeration of tribes and at the same time based on this principle of subsidiarity we were trying to empower people in the periphery who were up until now were just passive recipients of goods and services. But the people in the provinces and in the periphery were already resenting that fact. They didn't like the fact that they were being told from Konedobu, which was the old capital by kiaps who were the government officials who absolutely—the people had absolutely no say in the appointment and so on and so on. So the people of Papua New Guinea were, from early days showed a sense of democracy. They wanted to have their own representatives in whom they had played a major role in their appointment.*

**DEVLIN:** Now you were the effective head of the CPC and all these points came about through the very consultative process you were doing on that committee. There was another institution at that time, the Bougainville Special Political Committee which was largely led by Mr. Leo Hannett. Could you talk a little bit about the role that that played and perhaps how that influenced your own work on the CPC, was there an intersection there?

**MOMIS:** *Well actually, I recommended Leo Hannett to be the head of the Bougainville Special Political Committee.*

**DEVLIN:** Why?

**MOMIS:** *Because he had just come out of Hawaii and he was, here at the time when two Bougainvilleans were murdered in the Highlands and he took advantage of the emotions to mobilize the people against the national government. And he was saying a lot of things, which were not in the best interest of unity and not in the best interest of stability and law and order. So my view was—he was saying a lot of other in—on the other hand, he was saying a lot of things, which the people of Bougainville wanted. So I recommended to Somare to appoint him as Chairman of the Special Political Committee.*

*And because of the role that Bougainville Special Political Committee played, Bougainville people were mobilized you know the diversity the different points of view were mobilized and called into a common position, which they then presented to the—well first of all CPC and the national government and that made our job very easy because had the people of Bougainville not come together and there was common position I think it would be, would have been very difficult for the national government to respond to them. And I think in the long run would work against the people of Bougainville.*

*So Leo Hannett had played a very important role, we turned him into a more responsible young man and that forced the national government to take notice of what the people of Bougainville were saying.*

**DEVLIN:** And what were the key factors in that Bougainvillean position at this early point?

**MOMIS:** *The key factors were there were we must have a referendum, we must have a certain measure of autonomy before that and because of the Panguna mine revenue the people of Bougainville deserved according to them and to us, to me, deserved the much bigger funding commensurate to what Bougainville was contributing.*

DEVLIN: Now in November of '73 Bougainville was allowed to form an interim provincial government. Why did—why was it allowed to do so and who effectively made that happen?

MOMIS: *Well we were working very closely with the Bougainville Special Political Committee and the national government advised us unfortunately, deliberately or otherwise misled the government to take a very negative view of this, of the position of the Bougainville Special Political Committee, which then made it very difficult for the national government to deal with them because they had rejected a lot of things that the Bougainville Special Political Committee were advocating as something legitimate for them.*

*So fortunately the CPC, which I headed because I had a better understanding of Bougainville, we came into play and supported the Bougainville Special Committees' position. And the CPC was not just me, you know we had Highlanders. CPC in the end we were able to mold a very strong political grouping and they understood the Bougainville position was very fair. Bougainville position in fact had moved away from demanding succession to a position of asking for autonomy.*

DEVLIN: And what do you think tempered that initial demand for succession?

MOMIS: *I think that the fact that they were allowed to work as a group you know Leo Hannett was able to mobilize all the north who were against the south and against central Bougainville especially. And they were able to work out I guess by a law of averages a common position, which resulted in demanding autonomy. Which was a very, very big—was a big compromise, which the national government did not appreciate.*

DEVLIN: Now when people talk about the CPC a frequent remark is that there was a divergence somewhere along the way between the CPC and the Office of the Chief Minister. Initially the two were supposed to be working together or I mean for example the Chief Minister was on the CPC?

MOMIS: *Well the Chief Minister was ex-officio chairmen but he never really—well the Chief Minister really didn't have a vision, he was not an ideologue that was his problem or as far as we were concerned. He was a pragmatist, a very practical politician who was dealing with practical issues of transference of power from Canberra to Konedobu. Trying to hold together a country and so on and so forth, which are quite legitimate but he didn't have a clear vision of a Melanesian society. Although he wanted independence, no doubt but whereas the CPC we were more—we wanted to deal with—Somare and Whitlam just wanted a piece of paper to give independence. We said no, we want to develop principles that would enable us to build a special—a Melanesian egalitarian society in which we would enjoy participatory democracy, sustainable development, equitable distribution. These concepts, which even your own country, talking about sustainable development, I'm sure President Bush never really thought—believed in it but PNG in those days before independence we were all ready talking about sustainable development, ecological balance, participatory democracy. But Somare didn't understand these, I mean he didn't—he was told not to bother with those things, you know that's really something that should come later. It hasn't come yet, but we were more ideological I suppose here.*

DEVLIN: Now when Bougainville was allowed to form its interim provincial government. Somare also said in Parliament I believe, there would be a Highland and a Papuan pilot, pilot case as well, yet those never came about. I'm wondering if you can recall what—why that was since Bougainville went ahead by itself as the only interim government?

MOMIS: *The reason why the Highlands and the Papuans never got it was because they never pushed for it. They were not prepared for it where as Bougainville because Bougainville Special Political Committee under Leo Hannett's leadership had done a lot of work and especially when I was heading the CPC. So there was a lot of, I can't say collusion but there was a lot of cooperation and we, we had special advisors who were helping to advise the Bougainville Special Political Committee to come up with an arrangement prior to the government's—in fact prior to the Parliament's decision to approve the system of provincial governments. So Bougainville really played, what do you call it the—it was the prototype in a way.*

DEVLIN: Now in 1974, the CPC came out with its final report and shortly there after or pretty much at the same time the government came out with its White Paper. Now this is, this is usually portrayed as a clash of two competing visions for how, how decentralization for example was going to work out. Can you talk a little bit about how those two sides stood against each other on the issue, what was the debate here?

MOMIS: *The national government, the White Paper which was Somare's version of what the constitution should be about was what I would call a mere delegation of government power whereas our position was actually decentralizing – giving a certain measure of autonomy – not just merely delegating. Not just administered delegation but actual giving of power to the provinces.*

DEVLIN: Could you—does perhaps a specific example come to mind that would highlight a power you wanted to see at the provincial level that the White Paper and the government stance wouldn't have allowed?

MOMIS: *We wanted to have an elected Premier, the White Paper wanted an appointee, the national government similar to the district commissioner's position which was a public servant, which the people of Bougainville or any other province had nothing to do with his election, his appointment.*

DEVLIN: And one thing in the run-up to the final report or actually through all this time there is often to reference to the fact that PNG leaders were looking to Africa and its experience, certain countries there informed the way leaders here approach the topic of decentralization. If that was the case, could you perhaps give us a sense of which countries you thought relevant and why?

MOMIS: *We, as you know, I was—under my leadership I did not agree to our—the CPC members visiting outside countries. I thought you know if we are going to tailor a specific, the PNG constitution to meet specific needs of Papua New Guinea we should visit Papua New Guinea. That's why we visited; we in fact carried out probably the most comprehensive political engagement with the people, ever in Papua New Guinea. We visited every sub district level, which was the first time ever and we did not allow people to go overseas. We said if you want overseas experience, we will bring in the consultants and we did from Canada, unfortunately nobody from America because America is so different. But Canada, Africa, England, you know Jamaica and so on, Australia of course.*

*We, the PNG decentralization process is probably unique in many ways. We did not—the African model is more administrative decentralization, ours is more political decentralization. I guess we went further than the others. That doesn't mean that the government in power then succeeded in building the capacity of provinces and that's where things failed. The government deliberately didn't want to build a capacity of the administration, the provinces, financial capability and so on and so forth. And that's why after offloading many of the political responsibilities and functions they did not transfer commensurate funding and manpower and that's why the decentralization process had a lot of difficulty.*

DEVLIN: Well I would definitely like to come back to that administrative aspect in a second but to stay in 1974 one other thing I was hoping to talk about was the first, perhaps the first major piece of legislation on decentralization was the Provincial Governments Preparatory Arrangements Act. Now this is often described as a knee-jerk reaction, a response to a de-facto provincial government that already existed on Bougainville and there was a need to just legalize that entity. Could you talk about whether that was the case and how that had come about?

MOMIS: *There was to a certain extent yes, it was the case. They engaged the government, engaged this American company called—it slips, slips my mind—and they prepared a legislation which gave similar powers—exactly the same powers to other provinces and yet the other provinces were not ready for it. By trying to legalize Bougainville they—and there was some push you know, a demand from other provinces to do the same even though they were not ready for it and their situation was certainly very different from Bougainville and the government under pressure I think made a mistake to give willy-nilly every province the same, same measure of autonomy.*

DEVLIN: Well that's fascinating because that's a recurrent theme, legislation that is targeted as a response to something that has happening specifically with regard to Bougainville is universalized, it's applied to all exactly as you said regardless of discrepancies. That happens in the future as well and it seems this was an article of faith among some members of the cabinet at the time that Bougainville would not be allowed to emerge as a special case. Why was that and can you give us a sense of which actors were so passionately committed to that line?

MOMIS: *Well most of them were centralist and they didn't like the fact that Bougainville was being given a special arrangement. They did not understand that Bougainville was a special case, very different from other cases and therefore it deserved a special case, a special treatment. And it has now happened in the current situation with regards to autonomy but at the time in trying to please the Highlands and the other parts of Papua New Guinea, the government then introduced provincial government or made it available to everybody. And that then worked against Bougainville because when those provinces who were not ready messed it up, made a mess of it, the national government reacted against decentralization and actually in some cases started to withdraw or slow down transfer of functions and funds and Bougainville really suffered.*

*Now had the government—I guess it was hard for them because they were not very ideological you see. Now had the government dealt with Bougainville as a special case they would have contained Bougainville and then introduced a similar thing in other parts when, when and where and when they were ready, which didn't happen. See introducing it to every province really worked against*



*Bougainville and that is why there was—we had this second problem you know that resulted in the current Bougainville crisis.*

DEVLIN: Now soon there after there was a rather surprising moment when Michael Somare moved in Parliament to delete the provision for provincial government from the constitution. Now that seems to have come as something of a surprise. Can you shed some light on why that happened?

MOMIS: *I think that was because of what Leo Hannett was doing here. Leo Hannett and the Bougainville provincial government—when the interim provincial government were making a lot of demands, which I think were fair like in view of the contribution that Bougainville was making to Papua New Guinea we were getting something very small in return for what we were contributing. And of course we were also supporting the Bougainville case and Somare was very much influenced by the centralist lawyers who had decided to delete that chapter on provincial government and that forced me to resign from Parliament and then came back to Bougainville. I was then sent to the United Nations to present our case to the committee on decolonization.*

DEVLIN: Now the change seems somewhat sudden because before this point the central government and Michael Somare they seemed to have been very sensitive to the bargaining position, shall we say, of Bougainville. They recognized the latent power in Bougainville yet this is a, I mean, this is a complete turn of face from that. What, what made the central government so confident all of the sudden or perhaps so rash?

MOMIS: *I think it was Australia; Somare came under a lot of pressure from Australia to hurry up and get independence. We were—Somare didn't want to waste time arguing with, you know, with the dissenting voices I suppose. And he thought that that the other members of Parliament would not support Bougainville. And even though they may have not voted against Somare's move it also—Somare's move alienated many of them, many especially the CPC members because they, they saw CPC as a very, as a special body that has played an important role in getting independence for Papua New Guinea because by involving everybody the people felt—people took ownership of independence and you know government as such.*

DEVLIN: Now Bougainville issued its unilateral declaration of independence before Papua New Guinea declared its own independence and then a period in late '75 into early '76 of mounting tension occurred and culminated in events in January of '76 where some infrastructure here was sabotaged if you will. Can you give us a sense of the feeling at that time, was Bougainville really breaking away, was this the beginning of an independent nation state?

MOMIS: *Yes, yes, I was a lone wolf, I was against violence, I discouraged—in my view Bougainvilleans are Christians. They are intelligent; they should go the negotiating table and negotiate. I did not believe that resorting to violence would in the final analysis achieve what we wanted. So I worked against it, but I did take a stand and actually rang Somare and told him that he should declare a truce to enable the two sides to negotiate and that's what happened because of the position I took even though I was not the Premier, remember I was the national government, I mean I was nobody then I had resigned from Parliament but I was still the leader of Bougainville.*

DEVLIN: And how would you characterize Somare's handling of the situation because some people say he played it rather coolly that there was pressure within his cabinet to take a more hard-line approach and yet he didn't?

MOMIS: *Yes, that's true, yes, Somare when I rang him he said to me, he said this is not only a coincidence it's providential he said only last night my wife and I were seriously discussing ringing you up—finding where you were to talk to you about a truce. So he himself was, although he was under pressure from Ted Diro and the others you know the hawks, the army he was also advised by people like Bernard Narokobi, Dr. (Gabriel) Gris was the Vice Chancellor, first Papua New Guinea Vice Chancellor of the University, Ignatius Kilage who was the famous—he later became Governor General. They were totally against military use of military power and Somare did play it well, yes.*

DEVLIN: So as you said it was your firm belief that Bougainville should come to the negotiating table and it did or more accurately, Michael Somare came here, I think he flew here. Once you got to the negotiating table what happened then?

MOMIS: *The problem with Michael Somare is that well I guess he's a leader, he's not au fait with details you know. So with his good intentions I think he allowed people to use the opportunity to take certain measures which were not really in response to Bougainville's demands. And so we had a every, we had a tussle for a longtime, but then it ended up in a fairly amicable agreement in which the agreement was called the Bougainville, I think it was the, not the Bougainville Peace Agreement it was the Bougainville Agreement, yes. The Bougainville Agreement, which stipulated that certain powers should be granted to the government of Bougainville and as Bougainville developed capacity for demonstrating its capacity for further devolution of powers it should be granted, greater devolution. And this is where the national government failed to honor their commitment. When Bougainville—it was Bougainville was by far the most, the best run provincial government in Papua New Guinea for many years. The national government failed in accordance with the Bougainville Agreement to transfer greater powers, which were stipulated in the so-called Bougainville Agreement.*

DEVLIN: Now correct me—

MOMIS: *So in my, so in my view it is the national government again after agreeing reneged on its commitment that led to the current crisis. And the national government reneged I guess because of its concern that other provinces might demand the same measure. But the problem—but the thing is the other provinces never developed the capacity. They were nowhere near Bougainville's demonstration of capability, financial responsibility, political responsibility and so on and so forth. And this was independent assessors from outside who said that Bougainville was doing very well.*

DEVLIN: Now from—

MOMIS: *And deserved to be given more.*

DEVLIN: Now from the outside, the Bougainville Agreement it seems as the central government pretty much folded, I mean it seems like Bougainville really did get nearly exactly what they wanted out of that document. Is that true or were there some areas where the central government nevertheless retained power or—

MOMIS: *Financial power.*

DEVLIN: Financial was the big?

MOMIS: *Financial power was very much—the national government retained a lot of power.*

DEVLIN: And why was that one area—why was that acceptable to your side of the table that finances might not be?

MOMIS: *It was acceptable on the condition that as Bougainville developed its capacity the national government would automatically transfer powers, which they didn't.*

DEVLIN: Now please tell me if this is apocryphal but there is, there is supposedly a story where negotiations were, were looking pretty dire and then you heard a radio broadcast of the Prime Minister announcing that provincial government would be, would be provided for? Is that true because that would imply a rather erratic style of negotiations?

MOMIS: *Sorry I didn't quite get that.*

DEVLIN: I have come across a mention that the negotiations had come to a rather dire point, they weren't going so well and you heard a radio broadcast by Somare announcing that he would indeed be—he was indeed committed to provincial government and this was a somewhat out of the blue concession. It seems as though that's kind of apocryphal?

MOMIS: *No, I can't remember that.*

DEVLIN: You, you.

MOMIS: *I was out in close contact with Somare in fact it was in Rabaul when (Sir Rabbie Namaliu) was the District Commissioner.*

DEVLIN: Okay.

MOMIS: *And we—it was in Namaliu's house, residence of this commission that Somare had, Somare had agreed then to grant Bougainville what it wanted.*

DEVLIN: So as you mentioned there were people like the commander of the defense forces and the Minister for Finance at the time, Julius Chan, they were fairly committed centralists and some others. How was this agreement sold to them because it seems like they couldn't have been very happy with it?

MOMIS: *I guess people like Namaliu because I would not be—see Namaliu was seen as a national government man and therefore he was in a better position to deal with the central government ministers who were not too happy. And also we had at this time we still have the two Bougainville ministers who were I suppose at heart you know, Bougainvilleans and they would have had some sway.*

DEVLIN: Now you mentioned—

MOMIS: *Then also, we had Professor Yash Ghai who was—who is considered a world authority on autonomy and he worked for the national government as well as Bougainville so he played that bridging role.*

DEVLIN: Now you mentioned Sir Rabbie Namaliu and it's exactly at this point a lot of people point to him as a key figure. I think its September '76, he is made Chairmen of the Public Service Commission and people talk about him using that position to champion decentralization in a way. Can you give us a sense of how true that was and if so how he was able to do it, what he was doing?

MOMIS: *Rabbie Namaliu was District Commissioner when the negotiations were taking place and also before that, he was on the national governments team negotiating with us. I was leading the Bougainville team; this was after I had resigned from Parliament and so when, when the agreement was reached to grant Bougainville provincial government I then stood for Parliament, you know the people allowed me to stand again in 1977. And Somare appointed me the first minister, yes the Minister for Decentralization. Fortunately Namaliu was then brought back as the Chairmen of the public service commission and that's were he worked with this Barry Stewart the Canadian I was telling you about. And he did because of his understanding you know he then pushed it because it was—I was the Minister for Decentralization and Namaliu with the Public Service Commission Chairman we were able to use the agreement to push for transfer of functions and powers and financial power. Against people who didn't like it, I mean it's quite obvious they didn't like it at all.*

DEVLIN: Now names can be misleading but there was all ready a provincial government section set up in the Prime Minister's office I believe it was headed by a man by the name of Jack Kariko and then there was a, there was also a department of provincial affairs, Oscar Tammur was heading that. That doesn't seem to of, neither seems to have played that central of a role in the decentralization process, could you help us understand why?

MOMIS: *Because they were—the Provincial Affairs Department was the old Native Affairs Department which was all kiaps, so they, their role—they just changed the name and they maintained the same role that that did not believe in decentralization of powers. They were you know political, political distribution of powers they were just talking about appointing agents down the line like they did before with District Commissioners and ADO's down the line. And that's why they were sidelined because what Bougainville was talking about was more than just administrative you know, administrative what you call delegation of powers.*

DEVLIN: Now of course the key law—

MOMIS: *And when I became minister by the way that Provincial Affairs Department remained and because we couldn't, we couldn't get much out of them, we couldn't move much with them because they were—it was staffed by kiaps. I then decided to set up an office of decentralized—an office of what do you call it, Office of—*

DEVLIN: Implementation?

MOMIS: *Implementation and that really took on the onus of driving decentralization.*

DEVLIN: Now, now before—

MOMIS: *And Doctor, I then recruited Doctor Gabriel Gris who had been the Vice Chancellor of the University of Papua New Guinea.*

DEVLIN: Now before, before we get on to that and that institution was absolutely crucial there was the key piece of legislation in '77 was the Organic Law. Can you, can you give us a sense of what is most important to understand about that piece of legislation?

MOMIS: *The Organic Law on Provincial Governments not only, yes its important because we couldn't get the national government, the cabinet ministers to agree to have decentralization entrenched in the constitution. So we had to create this level of entrenchment with the Organic Law, so that its not just an ordinary law that can be changed easily but it's a—but at the same time it was acceptable to the centralist because it is not quite—it doesn't have the same strength as the constitution but it does a very, you know you need special—it has special entrenchment to protect the, protect the provincial government system. And that is why the Organic Law on Provincial Governments—I think it was the first Organic Law because we had to cater for the needs of the provincial governments to make sure the national government just couldn't change their—because the national government had enough members of Parliament to move to change an ordinary law. But they did not want it to be entrenched in the constitution.*

DEVLIN: Now.

MOMIS: *But the principles were entrenched in the constitution but the law itself was outside of the constitution.*

DEVLIN: Now one of the, one of the key aspects of it was how decentralization would work administratively, how the public service would look. And what was settled upon would be one national public service and personnel matters would be controlled in the capital by the Public Service Commission. How did that come about because that seems to be, it seems the central government retained a sweeping degree of power on that count. So why was that acceptable given the bargaining power of you and your colleagues at the time?

MOMIS: *The problem was lack of capacity in the provinces, as you know we were trying to create something new and we were being, we were being denied the resources to setup our own public service. So the only—that's true the only bargaining power we had—I mean the only thing that we were able to force the national government to give us was that to have public servants working in a province answerable to the Premier to the provincial government, which they would be basically national government public servants but while they operated in the provinces they would accountable or answerable to the provincial government executive.*

DEVLIN: Now another fact—

MOMIS: *And the appointment of their administrator was known as, I think it was, yes was it administrative secretary, we had two see. In Bougainville, we had the provincial secretary who was—you had a number of positions, I think six or seven or eight whatever they were, they were key positions at the provincial government fully controlled. Whereas the administrative secretary the fellow in charge of all the public servants was the national government appointee with the approval of the provincial government.*

DEVLIN: Now you mentioned the provincial policy secretariat six, seven or eight people in reality it worked out to be a lot larger. Is that correct?

MOMIS: *That's right, yes.*

DEVLIN: How did that come about, was the national government still picking up the bill for all those people?

MOMIS: *That was part of the provincial government budgetary allocation.*

DEVLIN: And what was the, what was the relationship between the provincial secretariat and the administrative secretary, was there competition there was it?

MOMIS: *Not really, because they are also quite different. The provincial secretariat's role was to come up with good creative provincial policies. The administrative secretary was responsible for the—in fact the management of the public servants, that's what they did. In Bougainville, they worked well.*

*Bougainville, for example later on under Leo Hannett did something which was quite good, they decided to abolish the public works department, roads and they created a small unit, engineering unit in the provincial government, which they funded themselves, which was responsible for policy and for working—deciding, planning bridges and roads and on and so forth and then giving it—giving contracts to private companies. And they did that and with provincial budget, money from the provincial government there were able to build first class bridges which with which the national government thought were really superior then what the national government was able to provide.*

DEVLIN: Now one thing that you mentioned earlier was the idea that despite decentralization the public service wasn't decentralizing it was still large amounts of people stuck in the capital, they weren't moving out to the provinces. What, I mean what was the nature of that problem and what was some of the, what was some of the solutions you tried to that. Were there pay incentives or promotion incentives or—?

MOMIS: *The problem with that was the Public Service Commission that was their responsibility and when Namaliu got out, you know pay incentives were never really offered. When transfer of functions took place, commensurate funding and personnel were never released to the provinces and that was, that was a main reason why in many provinces things did not work out. And resulting in the national government decision to take a very negative stance against all provincial governments including Bougainville. Even though Bougainville was the best, the best run provincial government and East New Britain and a few others. It was the national government, the national government insisted on maintaining the powers for training, for certain thing and they never really transferred, they never trained the public servants who were sent to the provinces.*

*You take for example local level governments; the power was transferred to provincial government you know the third tier of government but the money and the personnel were never transferred. Now so when the local level governments didn't work, the provincial governments were of course blind for them not working.*

DEVLIN: Now you mentioned, you mentioned training. We're not missing some training program that's hiding in the history here. There was simply no commitment to training is that fair to say at this point for the public service?

- MOMIS: *There was some kind of training but not really, no real commitment.*
- DEVLIN: Nothing with substance?
- MOMIS: *Nothing with substance.*
- DEVLIN: And.
- MOMIS: *I think one of the—in hindsight maybe one of the mistakes that we made, people like myself, you know, we got rid of the kiaps because they were the, you know they were the administrators, they were the people who ran the administration of the provinces. So when they left, when they were taken, when they were placed under elected political leaders they did not like it. Because prior to provincial government, the setting up of provincial governments they were the kingpins. They were the politicians, they were the judges, they were everything and they didn't like that and I think that's probably one reason why they wouldn't care less. You know they took that attitude and really didn't—the government should have really insisted on their staying on and training, you know getting them to work under political leaders. That didn't happen.*
- DEVLIN: And a big part of this administrative side of things is the—was the McKinsey Report, a report commission.
- MOMIS: *McKinsey Report unfortunately I was—that's the company of consultants that I'd forgotten the name of. Unfortunately, they recommended a one for all and that was a bad move and that really put Bougainville with the rest of the country, which really worked against Bougainville. Because Bougainville was doing better, so Bougainville was judged for or punished for the sins of the other provinces.*
- DEVLIN: How was it punished, how was that a drawback for Bougainville?
- MOMIS: *Well when the other provinces like Simbu and others failed to measure up to the standards that Bougainville had set, national government started to withdraw some powers and of course they setup these—there were moves to, parliamentary moves to get rid of provincial governments.*
- DEVLIN: So perhaps could you say that the poor performance of other provinces cheapened the idea of provincial government?
- MOMIS: *Yes, that's right.*
- DEVLIN: And why was this, why was that option the big bang—
- MOMIS: *McKinsey Report.*
- DEVLIN: Yes, the crash decentralization, why was that opted for. I mean everything we're talking about is so rushed to begin with and suddenly we decentralized the whole public service or in theory within a year. Why was that settled upon?
- MOMIS: *I think that was, not I think, I believe that was so because the ministers wanted to have a piece of the cake. Every province must be the same you know without appreciating that the Bougainville case was different. The people had worked hard for, the people in Bougainville were politically, politically prepared and they were better motivated so they were prepared for provincial government. Other*

*provinces were not ready for it and that's why they messed it up. And I think that McKinsey Report recommendation was in hindsight I think was a bad decision.*

*It was already, Namaliu was the one who because of his contacts with the Canadians, I'm not blaming him but, he was trying to do it to also say Bougainville in the process but I think it really disadvantaged the better prepared provinces.*

DEVLIN: And we, we've mentioned a couple of times here the idea of resistance to decentralization on the part of some of the central ministries that's nearly always a problem when countries decentralization. Can you give us a sense of what the resistance looked like here, what were the types of obstructionism that one could expect to see from line ministries?

MOMIS: *Mainly from finance, Public Service Commission and Justice Department they were very, very reluctant to further devolve powers and as I said Bougainville was promised in the Bougainville Agreement that they would get more powers as they demonstrated greater capacity and responsibility and that never happened. The national government reneged on their commitment.*

DEVLIN: On that point of promises, correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe there is also a provision that the whole system of provincial government would be reviewed at a future point and those reviews never happened. Is that correct?

MOMIS: *Some measure, some review was done but no not quite, not quite extensively as we expected.*

DEVLIN: Now can we talk specifically about the Ministry for Decentralization and your role there. You were appointed minister beginning in '77. What authority were you, what authority were you vested with as Minister for Decentralization and what was your mission there?

MOMIS: *My mission was to convince cabinet to implement the Organic Law on Provincial Governments. I did not have the expertise in the department because I took over the Provincial Affairs Department, which originally it was comprised of kiaps who were not, you know, who were not some of them, well a lot of them were not pro-decentralization. So we had to depend very much on other departments like Public Service Commission, Justice, Finance and we had great difficulty dealing with them. But fortunately, I had the support of the provinces; you know when we had the Premier's Council Conferences, chaired by the Prime Minister but ran by myself, run by myself.*

DEVLIN: So was that a, was that a recurring problem, you mentioned you did not have the expertise on staff that was something that was never really solved?

MOMIS: Yes.

DEVLIN: And what were your priorities in terms of, you said you were, you were looking to push the other ministries to implement decentralization. What were some of the main steps that you had to take?

MOMIS: *Main priorities were to get the line departments to train or to assist with the training of provincial government finance, develop the financial capacity of provinces, administration. Mainly those two, you know administration, how to run provincial government and finance which was quite difficult.*



- DEVLIN: So without the staff yourself you had to convince the line ministry to train the respective people?
- MOMIS: *Try to train, yes.*
- DEVLIN: An when you could manage that what was, what allowed you to do that, I mean what were some of the tactics you could use to make that happen?
- MOMIS: *It depended very much, on who was the people available, personnel in finance department for example. If you had good people, I mean they would not say no, but they probably send some junior officer but if you had a committed minister they would make sure that a capable senior officer would go to try to train people in the provincial government division—administrations. And quite a number of them were working quite well but at the same time, there was a lot of abuse in the provincial governments and that really worked against us.*
- DEVLIN: And in terms of the ministries were you came up against that stiff resistance were there any ways, anything you could do to overcome that or was that just you would have to move on and wait for the ministry itself to change its approach?
- MOMIS: *Many a time we, we didn't have time to waste so we had to just move on and do things on our own.*
- DEVLIN: And the Office for Implementation that we mentioned before can you tell us a little bit more about that and how that related to your work?
- MOMIS: *The Office of Implementation had some, yes we had very good officers who were politically committed to this thing and we were—you know we managed to setup nineteen provincial governments but the line departments who were responsible for training and for financial strengthening of the provinces let us down. And many of the national politicians who did not like competition from Premiers then mobilized to go against provincial government system. Many national government because they before the provincial government system they were kingpins. You know, the member had everything, he was the distributor you know of goods and services but when the provincial government were setup, he was sidelined and they didn't like that.*
- DEVLIN: Now you mentioned you had very good officers in this Office of Implementation how did you, how did you find them, where did you find them?
- MOMIS: *We advertised. The head of the office was Doctor Gris who was the Vice Chancellor of the University when he resigned, I mean when he finished his term. There were other young lawyers and graduates that we recruited and we had some overseas officers who worked with us.*
- DEVLIN: And you said that part of the offices mandate was to help setup provincial government, what type of services were you providing them? Was this advisory or consultant?
- MOMIS: *Mainly advisory.*
- DEVLIN: Advisory? And what were some of the issues that they struggled most with, that they needed your help with on?

MOMIS: *Legislation, which was a major problem because we had to depend, I mean the only legal draftsmen available in the country belonged to the national government. And with nineteen provincial government you can't, you know the supply was not very, was quite thin. So legislating and trying to get the provinces to make laws, that was difficult. We tried to get provinces to develop their financial capability was difficult.*

DEVLIN: Now how did you get around that problem of the lack of legal draftsmen?

MOMIS: *Well the national government had to allocate, some provinces had to wait and we did have some legal draftsmen, some provinces had their own, you know and they—the better run provinces recruited overseas legal draftsmen for themselves.*

DEVLIN: And the financial training was that back to the problem of lobbying the Ministry of Finance too?

MOMIS: *In some cases it was okay, you know but for Bougainville they did things on their own and East New Britain. It's the lesser developed provinces, which you know really, which really moved at the snail's pace and needed a lot more help.*

DEVLIN: Now by the beginning of the 1980's the legal framework for decentralization is in place and it's underway, financial decentralization is underway, administrative decentralization, direct elections have happened for some provincial governments. At that point, you have the broad outlines of the decentralization system, as it will exist for several years to come. Did that system satisfy what Bougainville wanted at that time; was there a sense of satisfaction?

MOMIS: *Up until what year?*

DEVLIN: We are talking about the 80's at the moment, the system that prevailed there. Had that—were the desires expressed in the mid and late 70's were they met by the type of provincial government Bougainville received throughout the 80's?

MOMIS: *Yes, except for this lack of, lack of commitment by the national government to transfer certain powers especially financial powers because that then led to the provincial government to—North Solomons provincial government asked for funding for certain roads and the national government just said no under—I think it was under Chan and that really was the, was the, that really—even I—then the provincial government demanded that the Bougainville Corporate Agreement should be reviewed to give you know more—when the national government refused to give more finance the provincial government then said all right let's review the Bougainville Corporate Agreement because we are entitled to more. And even though it was overdue by fourteen years, Chan refused it and he got a very strong letter and I was in his ministry and he got a very strong letter from me condemning his decision telling him that he had now sewn the seed for a bloody revolution. And that practically happened.*

DEVLIN: Now one thing that some people were quite vocal on was that provincial Premiers were politicizing the public service that they were getting involved in appointments and promotions. Was that the case and if so—?

MOMIS: *Not in Bougainville.*

DEVLIN: No I mean but in the country as a whole?

MOMIS: *Maybe in some cases, yes.*

DEVLIN: But you didn't consider it a pressing problem?

MOMIS: *No I don't think it was no. The national government really failed to train public servants – that was the problem because they insisted when we asked, all right, if you can't do it give us the power and they refused.*

DEVLIN: Well that was one of the Bougainville arguments for growing the provincial secretariat, right?

MOMIS: *That's right, yes.*

DEVLIN: Interesting. And another thing that's often remarked is that we have been talking a lot about provincial government. Some people claim that local level government was the real loser in all of this.

MOMIS: *That's right.*

DEVLIN: That it never got the attention that it was supposed to?

MOMIS: Yes.

DEVLIN: How did that get lost in the mix, how did the focus?

MOMIS: *The national government—Bougainville wanted to take over local level government you know and Bougainville—so the rest of the country did the same and the provincial government because they were you know grappling with provincial government is something new, they didn't have their wherewithal, financial, administrative wherewithal you know to look out to the local level governments. And yet local level governments, training is part of the national government—it's a national government function, so and this is where I say the national government was very good in offloading its responsibilities but not following up with commensurate manpower and finance.*

DEVLIN: Now one institution you had mentioned was the Premier's Council and you said that it was important in your work as Minister for Decentralization because that allowed you a forum in which to gather the support of the provinces. On the other hand what's often remarked of the Council is that its resolutions had no binding force.

MOMIS: *That's true, that's true.*

DEVLIN: So could you, could you tell us how, I mean how effective was this institution it seems if it was effective if it was in a more informal pressure way?

MOMIS: *Yes, well you couldn't make it, you couldn't make its decisions to be legally binding it was a forum for a sincere national government to deal with provinces and the national government was just not committed that was the problem. They only wanted to use the forum when it suited them to explain to Premiers. But when the Premiers can up with genuine concerns and you know problems that they wanted to be dealt with the national government just didn't move.*

- DEVLIN: Had the national government taken a more constructive approach to the council did you believe that it was an institution that could contribute to lessening tensions between the two tiers?
- MOMIS: *Yes I thought, I didn't believe in having unnecessary legal tussles I thought according to the Melanesian culture you have to have consulted it by consensual form of methodology of making decisions and that's what we had. But unfortunately, national government people ideologically were not committed to this sort of thing.*
- DEVLIN: Now with the decentralized system up and running or getting up and running, national parliamentarians emerged as a pretty reliable group of opponents to decentralization and the provincial government. Could you speak about why that came to be?
- MOMIS: *Because before that they were the kingpins. When the provincial governments were established, the national parliamentarian's ability to deliver pork barreling kind of services was taken away from them. That's why they were very, very angry and now they've gone to the extreme of getting 10 million for each Member of Parliament, which is totally wrong.*
- DEVLIN: So you pointed out these, what I believe they are often lumped together as the electoral development funds that or to their critics the slush funds for parliamentarians to disperse. That's one way of perhaps for making decentralization more politician friendly but without going to those extremes were there ways perhaps in retrospect that relationship between the Parliament and the provincial government could have been engineered so as to be constructive rather than combative or perhaps by nature of the system—
- MOMIS: *Yes, yes in hindsight, we should have made, well I think there were, national member who were members of the provincial assemblies even though they could not become ministers. So they, you know, they were members, they could vote, yes I think so, yes if my memory serves me right. But that was the real, you know that's probably what we should of managed more carefully and that is how to get your national MP's (Member of Parliament) to work closely with the provincial governments because we thought that there was a frontal, you know, meeting.*
- DEVLIN: Now what that usually resulted in was it seems to have been allegations of financial misconduct, seemed to be a very common charge levied against the provincial governments. From your position as minister in those years and later was there substance to those allegations?
- MOMIS: *Bougainville no, East New Britain, no, New Ireland, not many provinces that were run properly, no. There was worse financial mismanagement in the national departments, much, much worse. As I—I think the problem was the national MP's got a lot of support from the, from Parliament I mean they—it was a club you know they decided to get together and the ministers of course supported them. And because there was no ideological commitment to decentralization they were able to work against provincial governments.*
- DEVLIN: Now misconduct aside there was the supposedly objective critique that provincial governments were performing poorly. Now Bougainville and East New Britain are often sited as exceptions to that but can you give us a sense how provincial governments as a whole performed and how anyone could even measure whether they were succeeding or not?

**MOMIS:** *Provincial governments, yes there were misdemeanors committed by provincial government MP's and that was responsible, that was directly due to the lack of support, financial and administrative, from the national government.*

**DEVLIN:** So at the, towards the end of the—

**MOMIS:** *But now, but now let me say after Chan and (Paias) Wingti re-centralized provincial governments there's a massive move here now against you know people are now complaining the national government is too strong, the national government is giving MP's 100 million to buy votes and you know its you know people are really not happy at all.*

*There is a very, very strong move now against this recentralization that has taken place.*

**DEVLIN:** Now at the end of the 80's when decentralization had largely taken hold in nearly every province what was your assessment of the process at the time. Was it— would it be fair to say at that point decentralization had been a success and if so how does one define success?

**MOMIS:** *It was a success in the sense that each province felt that they were in the club but it was a failure in the sense that we gave provincial governments to provinces even though some of us recommended strongly that we should not make it a uniform thing, should not introduce it uniformly. It should only be introduced in gradation and that didn't happen because there was so much pressure on the national government to give to the other provinces what Bougainville got, which was wrong and I had a lot of problems with that. But I think had we given it to provinces like East New Britain and those provinces which demonstrated political responsibility, I think it would have been better. Those provinces, which didn't have the capacity, would have had more time to be trained and to develop the capacity. But unfortunately, it was done so quickly that people got it and they were not ready for it and I think that was a mistake.*

**DEVLIN:** Now decentralization from the point of view of the central government can sometimes look like, like balancing a tradeoff. On the one hand, one would be pushed to decentralize in order to meet the aspirations of a regional group that may perhaps be threatening to secede. On the other hand, if you decentralize you may be empowering the very people you are afraid of. So there's something of a trap here, you're in trouble no matter what you do from the central government's point of view. How would you suggest looking back on the evolution of decentralization here, can those fears be balanced, can enough power be decentralized to met aspirations yet perhaps not too much?

**MOMIS:** *If—there was already, even in Papua, there was a sense that the national government was too far removed, the national government was insensitive to local aspirations and needs and the national government was not, was issuing edicts which were not justified. So and that is why, you know when Bougainville demanded greater autonomy there was a lot of support from other provinces.*

*They were not happy with the local level governments which the national government was pushing because they saw the local level governments as you know something glorified, you know, sort of local level setup run by the kiaps and they were agents of Konedobu. Whereas provincial governments are governments that the people elect, people have a say and they have—it gives*

*them the people of our province or other province it gives them a feel that they are part of the national thing because they are participating in something that is part of a big government.*

*And remember, you know, Papua New Guinea, of course provincial governments are also embellished to a certain extent. We are not the same people you know we have many nationalities, as it were, Bougainvilleans. So giving them a government of their own satisfied the sense of being indigenous, sense of being a—given a sense of ownership in the government.*

DEVLIN: And perhaps if you don't mind one last question. You were very clearly, I'd venture, perhaps first and foremost a Bougainvillean leader at this time but you were also a national figure at the center of cabinet action, would you have any advice to any other leaders who might find themselves in similar situations were there's a regional imperative and a national imperative that need to be reconciled. Is there a way one can strike the balance, any particular tactics or perhaps an outlook that one can bear in mind?

MOMIS: *It's a difficult task but like all negotiations you know you have to come up with, you have to analyze and see what is the substance of the regional position and what's the substance of the national position and you do away with the paraphernalia's, go to the substance and sometimes you feel you might find that there's a synergy you know when you bring the two substances together, they are the same. You take the Bougainville case now, you know Bougainvillean said independence, the national government said no, one sovereign nation. But it's by negotiating we were able to say all right we can still be one nation with some measure of autonomy being given to Bougainville.*

*What's the substance of Bougainville's argument? They wanted to have, to be the stakeholders of the government, they can do that without being independent and the national government can let go of certain powers without losing sovereignty. And they did that and they agreed to give Bougainville the police force, for example of its own, judiciary and still maintain national unity.*

*So my advice to people in the similar position, situation would be to analyze the two diametrically, supposedly, diametrically opposed positions, get to the root of them, do away with the paraphernalia and you know then you might find that through a process of synergy you can come up with a completely new thing like the Bougainville autonomy—like the Bougainville Peace Agreement.*

*If the national government refused to transfer certain things like the police and then you would have a deadlock and you wouldn't have Bougainville agreeing to autonomy and working out you know the three pillars of Bougainville Peace Agreement, you know, weapons disposal, referendum and what's the third one, good governance or something.*

*So I think it's—I'm a great believer of negotiations. You don't, you don't have to fight. I have always been against violence, in fact one of my—some of my critics today you know are saying that oh Momis if he becomes President will take us back to Papua New Guinea. You know forgetting keeping a close eye on the fact that the Bougainville Peace Agreement stipulates that independence is an issue for the Bougainvilleans. No leader can take us back to Papua New Guinea.*

DEVLIN: So on that point of negotiations you mentioned it really boils down to those moments are there particular tactics that have served you well over the years,

ways to find that middle ground you were talking about where it becomes a matter of substance and not the, not the heated emotions of both sides?

*MOMIS: I guess my case, as you know, I was a priest before so my training lends me and I pick up a lot of this from my previous training, I mean the priest vocation. This principle of subsidiarity, for example, is a well established Catholic Church principle that smaller bodies must not—who's powers should not be usurped by the big government and that is why I believe that you can argue that without ripping apart a country, without destroying the sovereignty of a nation, you can still give some measure of autonomy, some power to smaller bodies. Because it is, only by recognizing their role and empowering them that you give them the incentive to be more committed to the nation and to participate meaningfully and effectively in the process of national governance and national development and nation building. That was the I guess the underlying philosophy of decentralization you know its—you empower people, structurally empower people because giving goods and services alone is not empowering them it's making them dependent therefore vulnerable to manipulation and exploitation.*

DEVLIN: Well again, we've been speaking with John Momis, former Member of Parliament, Cabinet Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea and currently running for President in this year's election for the Autonomous Bougainville government. Mr. Momis thank you once again.

*Momis: You're most welcome Matthew.*