



# INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

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Interviewee: Julius Chan

Interviewers: Matthew Devlin and Rohan Mukherjee

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DEVLIN: Today is March 29, 2010. We're in Port Moresby with Sir Julius Chan. Sir Julius is currently governor of New Ireland and two-time prime minister of Papua New Guinea, many-time cabinet minister. Sir Julius, thank you for joining us.

Sir Julius was at the center of events in the late '70s and early '80s, and indeed after that, when Papua New Guinea was first establishing its decentralized system of government. Sir Julius, if I might, in 1977 Papua New Guinea enacted the Organic Law on Provincial Government. In your view, what did this offer to Bougainville, an island that had been pushing quite strongly for decentralized powers? What did this law offer them in their eyes?

CHAN: *Basically, general decentralization of internal powers that the Bougainvilleans felt at that time that they needed because of its dominance, particularly in the economy of Papua New Guinea at that time. They felt very strongly that they need to somehow control that economy because of the Bougainville copper mines that contributed almost about, you can say, 90% of the total wealth of Papua New Guinea, or export earning of this country, and maybe some more qualified people advising them than as normally what exists in the Bougainville copper agreements.*

*The greater say or decentralization of power will enable them to have a bigger say in how that portion of wealth, or benefits, are being distributed. The Bougainville agreement was constructed by the then administering power, which was Australia. They designed the agreement prior to independence. There were circumstances at that time that dictated that the Australian government wanted to lead Papua New Guinea towards self-reliance. It just needed to do something to attract foreign investment. Maybe because Australia also is quite a relatively raw country to deal with independence, they're not that experienced in administering colonies at that time.*

*Anyway, to cut a long story short, they designed the agreement. It was very much in favor of the development. The mine contributed, as I said, probably up to 80% of the total wealth of this country. Bougainvilleans wanted more say in the sharing of the benefits and therefore felt very necessary that it ought to be treated quite differently, with greater powers.*

DEVLIN: And the amount of revenue that Bougainville would have control over following the Organic Law, was that the total amount that Bougainville had initially wanted? Or was that a middle ground that was found between a central-government position and Bougainville position?

CHAN: *It is the construction of the structure of decentralization that mattered at that time. I don't think even those who were claiming for greater powers knew exactly what kind of powers they were going to get, as long as in principle there is a decentralization of the central government power. As to what extent, in which area, I don't think anyone was very familiar, but I think at that time Bougainvilleans must have got some international advisers to assist them—some people who are very familiar with developing Peru and other countries and some international experts on constitutional law.*

DEVLIN: If the, as you said, the push was somewhat broad—they wanted a decentralization of power but they weren't necessarily too specific on what that would look like—were there nevertheless certain issues, certain topics that they were pressuring the government on, certain concessions?

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- CHAN: *The greatest say in the way Bougainville—as a district then, I think—would be developed. As you know Bougainvilleans are slightly different in pigmentation to the rest of Papua New Guinea. They are darker than most and ought to be treated quite differently physically. They are the furthest away also from the rest of the country, especially from Port Moresby. So I think the core was generally greater sharing or decentralizing certain powers. As to what extent, for what particular sector of decentralization, I think we were all very raw. We were all very new to government at that time.*
- Don't forget, preliminary discussions already took place well before self-government and independence. Although it came in after independence, the call for greater decentralization and more say for Bougainville already developed well before that.*
- DEVLIN: So as you said, that generation is a historic generation of politicians such as yourself. It was a pivotal moment in Papua New Guinea's history. But nevertheless many players were new to the game, by virtue of where Papua New Guinea was in its development. Looking back now, you said some things were done well, some things were done not so well. Are there things that stand out that, despite the fact that it was a new government, that even now look to have been done well to you?
- CHAN: *I think generally speaking we conceded, or the prime minister at that time who is now the prime minister, (Michael) Somare, conceded at that time to devolve some powers to the provinces to keep the country together. I was not altogether for it, but I was running the finance portfolio and of course naturally I was more concerned about economic independence, not just political independence. I already saw, even at that time, that we just did not have qualified, experienced politicians to be able to usurp and exercise those powers at that time. It would be very, very costly to allow that sort of situation, of fragmenting the whole country, because we have so many different languages and islands throughout the country. So I saw problems existing in trying to decentralize even a certain amount of powers at that time. So in many respects I stayed either neutral or more towards the right of agreeing to that decentralization of power by virtue of the fact that I was holding that economic portfolio.*
- DEVLIN: So would it be fair to say that your concerns about decentralization were twofold, firstly from an administrative point of view there weren't the capacities at the provincial level and from a political point of view this might exacerbate tensions between different groups within the country?
- CHAN: *Certainly, and probably would cause instability, especially in the distribution of wealth. So my whole responsibility was to bring this country towards economic independence and Bougainville, which contributed at that time up to, over 70%, was a very crucial part to carry Papua New Guinea towards that transition, to stabilize political as well as economic independence.*
- DEVLIN: Now, as you mentioned, you were very much at the center of financial decentralization with your portfolio. And financial decentralization, as with nearly every other country, is at the center of decentralization. It is where the power is, with the money. What was most important about the way you chose to decentralize the financial setup of Papua New Guinea?
- CHAN: *We didn't. We didn't, the only form of real meaning to decentralization is to share greater royalty benefits back to Bougainville. How they dealt with at that time, with that money, was programmed into projects. Also, you've got to realize that*
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*even I, or any one of us at the time, just, government is a totally new object to us, is a new, completely new world. We were just going, listening to the big African drums for self-governance and independence and influence of all those countries that won greater power and all that. So we were caught in that wind of change, you might say, that all colonies went along with, and we just went along with it.*

*As to what extent financial powers—we didn't. It was just a matter of more money tied to royalty and projects that were given to Bougainville. The other area of course is that if it's tied, then Bougainville must be able to come up with the preparation of these projects. At that time, looking back, they did not have the capacity to do that.*

DEVLIN: Even though they were one of the more capable provinces, is that correct?

CHAN: *No, I mean in terms of technical capacity to prepare projects for funding, we just did not have that kind of bureaucratic network in Bougainville to do that kind of work to qualify for funding.*

DEVLIN: Now there was a situation where full financial responsibility took quite some time to reach in some provinces, is that correct? It came sooner to some provinces and later to others.

CHAN: *Yes, quite true. Firstly, government or governance is a new thing all together. It was totally new. We are asking, by virtue of this decentralization of powers to the provinces we actually provoke all the other provinces to come up with the kind of people to run the kind of government they didn't know anything about. It's not like—it's a completely different phase to your situation in the United States where states were formed first and then through conventions and continental conventions they came together slowly over a period of time to form the union. Here it is completely reversed. We formed the country first and then tried to create provinces, then tried to pull the whole thing together.*

DEVLIN: As you said the capacities were very limited in the provinces. I'm wondering, when you were in charge of the Department of Finance and you had your team, your staff under you, what was the feeling among your staff towards the idea of passing financial responsibility on to others? Was there opposition? Because they must not have had a very high opinion of the technical capacities of the people who would be taking over.

CHAN: *I think they were caught, both by the constitutional advisers advising the government on decentralization and the need to keep Bougainville, so I can't be just straight point blank to say what the opinion is. But generally speaking finance people are always very conservative in the way they deal with money. Naturally, I may have been influenced by those people at that time, too. But I think the concern was there, although everybody worked together to ensure that we have a country that is united and that giving that power would enable Bougainville to stay part of this country.*

DEVLIN: When you became prime minister and you were prime minister in the early, the first years of the 1980s, the decentralized system at that point was somewhat up and running. But I gather the problems were already evident, things weren't working quite how they should have been. Could you give us a sense of how that looked from your position as prime minister?

CHAN: *Yes, we already had some problems at that time. Bougainvilleans wanted more. As I said, it was the wealth of Bougainville that keeps this country together and*

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*we can only afford to give that much, and it was never enough for the demand from Bougainville. The demands were greater than our capacity to deliver to them. But under the agreement, the Bougainville agreement, the review comes every five years. My government took a position, and we had the review in place for consideration by Bougainvilleans, but I think that at that time the leaders of Bougainville at that time thought that the offer was far too short.*

*Although we were prepared, I took, by the way, the whole cabinet to Bougainville and held a meeting in Bougainville. The big players in those days were John Momis, by the way he was still Father John Momis at that time. He was the regional member. He did not really physically play the real part in presenting the case for greater share, although the cabinet was in Arawa to deliberate at that time. In other words, I was ready to listen. We had the proposal in place, but we were prepared to negotiate. The proposal by itself was a little bit more than what we thought was enough. Within the capacity available in Bougainville to do a lot of work in Arawa and to begin the process of getting the province ready to do more for themselves and to have that capacity to implement those projects with the money that we're going to give.*

*So rather than just giving them cash, we again tied it to projects that would advance the infrastructure, etc., from Bougainville—.*

DEVLIN: Now one of the problems that often comes up when people speak of provincial government in the '80s is financial mismanagement, and obviously you have a pretty unique appreciation for the finances of Papua New Guinea. Was financial mismanagement a real problem in provincial government? Was it sometimes distorted, exaggerated?

CHAN: *No, no, it's real. I like to pin that to individuals rather than the system. I prefer to pin it to individuals. Unfortunately, we have a lot of individuals who were very, very new to the game, about governance. So even to run a government was very difficult. We're taking people who were only 60 years from civilization—I'm talking about the Southern Highlands now, at that time, about 60 years old from the civilization, to come together and run a government of the type that would represent some form of democracy—which is completely a new thing—and to ask them to run the portfolios is even harder. To even go to the election is something completely, diametrically opposed to the system of leadership in the traditional way.*

*So I think the system has a lot to do with it as well as the individual trying to run the system. It is very complex. We are actually bringing them into a new world. It is really—we're trying to catch up with the rest of the world in a lifetime. So individually incapable, not ready yet, and influenced, of course, as I said earlier, by the African drums of independence, so therefore we just got into it and we just realized that this is the way to run a government.*

*So at the center here, the national government was better coached by Australia to be able to somehow capture the structure of government and run with it. But the provinces, the Australians didn't go as far as the provinces. They had this administrator, they were very powerful and controlled and dictated the terms and everything. They are the judge, the prosecutor and everything all at the same time. But that was not contrary to the leadership system we have at that time.*

DEVLIN: One last question before we move in to the '90s where again you played a very pivotal role. On either side of your prime ministership, there were governments led by Sir Michael Somare. Could you perhaps give us a sense of how you saw

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your government's approach to decentralization differing from that of Sir Michael at the time, or were you broadly in line with his take on issues?

CHAN: *Decentralization was not something that continued to boil all the time. The period was relatively tranquil, so it was not really an issue at all the stages of governance. So there were tense moments but otherwise it was just one of those things. Firstly, I already declared I was not altogether pro decentralization of powers, but having had the system in place and the Organic Law passed, I have to live with it and try to make the best of the circumstances at the time. We just build on it. But coming back to the first question, yes, there were a lot of misappropriations and I said, it's more individual, who didn't really know how to run it or becoming a little bit too much centered in the provinces and capture all the money and not distributing it out again. It is the distribution of that decentralization must be meaningful, not only between the national and the provincial government, but between the provincial government and the local level government. There is a blockage there.*

*So the premiers in those days kept all the money and did everything, and nothing trickled down to the local-level government.*

DEVLIN: Well, I'll hand over to Rohan and we'll move it forward a couple of years.

MUKHERJEE: So I am Rohan Mukherjee, and I will be talking to you, sir, about the late '80s and the early '90s when you came in, in 1992 as deputy prime minister and then later on as prime minister yourself. In specific terms, I'd like to focus on the 1995 Organic Law on Provincial Government and Local-level Government. Now, as you mentioned to Mathew already, problems were cropping up in the 1980s with the system of provincial government. So when you entered office as deputy prime minister in 1992, what were the challenges or the deficiencies in the system that you perceived which your government tried to address through the Organic Law?

CHAN: *I think the problem of Bougainville again surfaced, and it began in the late '80s. They took a harder line. My predecessor—well, I think even in Somare's era, he was still in government at the time—that this Bougainville crisis came in. Then it was taken over by Paias Wingti and then Paias was disqualified by law and I sort of succeeded him. But we already established the Constitutional Planning Commission to start reviewing the process of decentralization and how much better it can be improved in law, the whole system, so it is relevant to the legal conditions at that time and to take us to the next phase.*

*So the Constitutional Commission was established by my predecessor. I took it over and tried to mold it and make it really work—not only for Bougainville, the result of the Bougainville crisis, but once you give one, then it will have to be available to everybody else, so we have a unified provincial-government system right throughout.*

*Look, there are quite a number of things at play. First, the cost. As I told you, I was always concerned about the cost. So that provincial- government system that we established took into account the political structure as well, which a lot of people don't realize. Government, as I said, was quite a new thing. Everybody wanted to be in government, to be in power, so everybody wanted to be a member of—to become a minister or member of the cabinet. Well, this was impossible. So there was a little bit of constant movement of instability. So how do we create a structure that is financially responsible, without too much cost,*

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*and also try to introduce some stability is to create this position for governors. So we established, under the reform, the 20 positions for governors.*

*By doing that we created those positions so that those regional members won't be seeking ministerial posts and therefore there will be less demand on the prime minister to take into account 20 positions. The demand will be less by 20. That part of it I think we did it very well as you can see today. The success is, the only regional member in the national government is Somare himself. So it has taken away that demand by all these 20 other members on the pressure of the prime minister to include most of them to be ministers of cabinet. So that part is done.*

*The second part of course is, how do we make the level of governments work and to ensure that we meet the problem of distribution at the provincial level. So we included in the Organic Law that we have to fund so much per head of population at the local-level government. We think, if we decentralize, not only from the center to the province but from the province down to local-level government, we would then create a situation where there will be more say, not only at the provincial level but at the local-level government. But not only say, but with the financial capacity to do a lot of projects on the bottom-up planning.*

*So built into the Organic Law is 20 kina per head of population, which successive governors violated the Organic Law. We have never done that. So that is now the situation and probably this government is trying to meet that through the district distribution of monies, hoping that these open members will be able to meet that law. But of course they're using the joint planning committee at the district or electoral level to give more power to the open members who sit as chairmen of JDP (Joint Declaration of Principles) and who dictate the project instead of going down to the local-level governments, we have another problem again. Really my vision at that time is to create a law that will enable the local-level government to have that much money so they can call the tune and start this bottom-up planning.*

MUKHERJEE: So you mentioned that a lot of the provincial politicians would try to become national-level ministers. Would it be fair to say that their attempt to do so was in some ways a distraction from the task of governance at the provincial level? Was it keeping them from actually fulfilling their duties to their people?

CHAN: *No, no, the system changed. We used to have a completely—the previous Organic Law, completely. The premiers—at that time, we followed the Australian system; they were called premiers—the premiers were voted by the people within an electorate and then the Assembly votes the premiers in. He just becomes a provincial member and then elected premier. So it is completely separated from the national government.*

*The members of Parliament, we tried, because of the cost factor, I thought that it would be nice if the premiers are voted by the people and through the regional electorate to become automatically regional member in a national parliament so we reduce that cost. There was a lot of instability when the people themselves are able to elect the premiers, the constant change of government at that level, at the local level. Am I in tune with you?*

MUKHERJEE: Sure. My concern was though with the sort of often-stated problem at that time which is that provincially elected premiers would often be making plans to then be elected to the National Parliament by using their funds as it were to gain influence in the provinces and then be elected to a national seat in the Parliament. That has often been cited as one of the challenges of the system,

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that they were focused more on trying to get in to the National Parliament than focusing on provincial development.

CHAN: *It wasn't a big issue. It was not. That was not the big issue. They were really quite satisfied as premiers, voted in by their own electorate and then the Assembly put them in. No, I tried to save money by creating all regional electorate automatically become governors. In so doing I gave more powers to the head of the provincial government. He is elected by the people and therefore cannot be tossed around by votes of no confidence and things like this. So we stabilized. But having said that, the regional members, and they're qualified to become national ministers—but to hold them back, the Organic Law enabled them greater powers and they seem to be quite satisfied, as they are now, as I told you earlier, that Somare is the only regional member in the national government.*

*So I have achieved that part of it, and I have achieved the cost. And the stability, right throughout the whole system of national and provincial government is now a lot more stable under that reform than we were before. Premiers were changing all the time, because they were voted in by Assembly and therefore the powers that appoint is the power that removes, so they can do that and change premiers all the time. Here, because the prime minister can never satisfy all the members of Parliament and I am that law, enable me to move out 20 members of Parliament to be quite satisfied to hold a governorship rather than to become members. So there's 20-persons less demand for ministerial posts.*

MUKHERJEE: I have a question about the timing of the reform. Many prime ministers in the past, before 1992, had expressed the need to reform the system of provincial government, but it was only when your government under the prime ministership of Paias Wingti and yourself as deputy prime minister came in that it really became a serious issue and was pursued in Parliament. Why do you think that that may be the appropriate time to do it?

CHAN: *It wasn't the appropriate time—it was the establishment of the kind of unit or commission that had the teeth to carry on. Everybody talked about reform, but the committees that they set up—Constitutional Planning Committee, Constitutional Committee—but the one that I set up with Paias Wingti is the one that was established by law and it gave the commission extraneous power to deal with specifics and to get regular approvals from the national government and to actually legislate to make that reform into a legal reality, entity.*

*The other committees were just committees, reform, review committees, all this. That's why they never succeeded in actually having a legal change of the whole system.*

MUKHERJEE: Why do you think it was that former prime ministers before you or before Mr. Wingti had not taken the step of putting it in law, to create a commission in law to look at this?

CHAN: *I don't think there's any reason. It's just simply, again, we were just caught by the fact that we were all relatively new in the game. Although provisions were made for review, we just didn't really know how to do it properly. So there were reviews. There were always in existence a constitutional review commission, all the time. But it never came to fruition and it never came into real practice, simply because of the lack of legal entity of those committees established at that time. But the cost in reviews, provision was in place all the time.*

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MUKHERJEE: Again, in that period between '92 and '95, in the thinking of your government, was there ever a concern for national unity as a motivating factor behind the reforms, in that the New Guinea Islands always tended to be better performers as provincial governments, they were better able to utilize the funds and deliver services. Was there a concern that because they were good at doing this, they might eventually take a steps towards secession or asserting their identity as they had done in the past during independence?

CHAN: *Yes, well, Bougainville was going to secede anyway, with or without New Guinea Islands. Then the New Guinea Islands got together really, all of them got together and they were going to move towards a greater separation from the rest of the country. I'm from New Guinea Islands, I was the prime minister, so while I promoted greater autonomy, at that time I just refused to fragment the nation, because it would be a nightmare if it happened. I actually took out an order to prevent them from seceding, to prevent them from coming together. I didn't prevent them from talking about greater autonomy, but more like secession. I prevented them, and took out an order preventing them to secede.*

*Now I don't know, it's either by accident or God-send, they were meeting in Rabaul, at that time in 1994. The islands' governments got together, they were very strong. As you said, they were more sophisticated than the rest of the country and they were more capable because of the exposure of them to the white man much earlier, a hundred years earlier. They were therefore much more conversant to be able to run their own government. So they got together and moved towards secession.*

*I took out an order preventing them. I'm from New Guinea Islands. Within a week of their seceding, Rabaul volcano blew up. I think the Rabaul volcano blew up around the 18<sup>th</sup> of September 1994 and they seceded one week earlier. That was something like a bad omen for everybody because they wanted to secede. That's why, for the first time in 37 years the Rabaul volcano blew up and they all dispersed and Rabaul, being the host, started to feel, probably a little bit of—I don't know—but it must have permeated their minds that we may have done something wrong and that's why nature was against us.*

*So they were more concentrating on rehabilitation rather than on separation and that sort of cooled down the whole thing. I was in power and although I was doing it rightly, it was also in favor of the national government because having opposed the coming together, we went in and took very deliberate and selective approach to rehabilitation and concentrated more on the people's lives than on the politics of things. That sort of helped to soften everything.*

DEVLIN: You mentioned that you had an order against the island premiers coming together towards secession. Was that—what type of an order was that? Was that an arrest warrant, or how did that work exactly?

CHAN: *I can't give you the legal thing, but I think it is in the book if you wish to pursue it and research into it, if they actually recorded it.*

DEVLIN: But it was something—

CHAN: *I took an injunction you can say, some sort of thing, an injunction, to prevent them to come together to talk about independence.*

MUKHERJEE: So the New Guinea Islands clearly were opposed to this reform, the 1995 reform, as you said. What were their specific demands and how did they express them to

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the government? Did they make a petition, did they put forward a counterproposal to the one that you were considering?

CHAN: *It wasn't just New Guinea Islands. You can never get all of them. And you still don't have that in the United States. They weren't all opposing it. There were some areas of opposition but not in totality. Emirau Island where I come from, OK, sanctioned it. Again, don't forget that although they want secession, those who want the secession don't really know exactly what sort of situation they will end up with. They just think of power, that's all. But they are not—they have never lived to know that power means greater responsibility. But as a national government we have to take account of both. Concomitant with power is responsibility, and a lot of them have no financial capacity to manage that power. So I just had to take a position at that time, and I did.*

MUKHERJEE: And among the individuals who did oppose the reforms, maybe not everybody, but those who did, what kinds of arguments did they put up against the proposals that your government was considering?

CHAN: *I can't really recall exactly what kind of real arguments, I think they just simply wanted more, more than what I was prepared to give. That's all I can say. To the extent that some members of the commission were appointed, including some of the ministers in my government, they were prepared to have one step, one leg on both sides, to have the best of both worlds. Some of them, including John Momis, and Bernard Narokobi, and one or two others, Bart Philemon, they were part of my government and they abstained from voting with the government, so I removed them from office. Momis, Bart Philemon, they were ministers and I said you can't have the best of both worlds. You're in government, our system is a democratic system that the majority rules. The cabinet has ruled. You will vote for it, and if you don't then you have to resign and if you don't then I have the unfortunate duty to remove you and I did. So I removed five of them.*

MUKHERJEE: And on the issue of the New Guinea Islands, at one point they formed a Federated Melanesian Republic and they sort of raised a flag, had a constitution prepared and tried to declare secession as it were or independence. Did you ever consider that to be a credible threat? Would they be able to do that successfully?

CHAN: *Oh yes. They could have done it, they could have achieved a political status, but not the financial status. That's why we came down very strongly. The things that you talk about are the things that were deliberated about three weeks before the volcano blew up.*

MUKHERJEE: Did you take any steps to maybe initiate a dialogue with that group to sort of incorporate their concerns into the Organic Law?

CHAN: *Certainly. We always do that. The great thing about this country is that although we were in disagreement, we were always talking all the time, we were talking all the time. Because of the traditional system of respect of our chiefs—and I happened to be in the chair and become their chief—there was no violent threat of any kind. So there was constant friendly dialog going on all the time.*

MUKHERJEE: Was this through the Premiers' Council or what was the institutional mechanism through which you had the dialogue?

CHAN: *Yes, we had the Premiers' Council. The Premiers' Council is not only for New Guinea Islands. They had the regional Premiers' Council. We promote that for*

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*them to get together regionally as well as collectively, nationally. We have a Premiers' Council in which the prime minister is the chairman. We allowed them to have what they say they want to have to improve the regional aspects of things so long as they remain part of the country.*

MUKHERJEE: And the constitutional commission that you mentioned, it was chaired by Mr. Ben Micah, is that correct?

CHAN: Yes.

MUKHERJEE: And he himself was also from New Ireland. Now was his appointment in some ways deliberate to include the concerns of that region, of the New Guinea Islands?

CHAN: *Partly, I think, partly. But Ben Micah, he is a very vocal person and he cut across boundaries, meaning that he can talk with his enemies as good as he talks with his friends, and he was physically structured, he's a pretty heavyweight. Those heavyweights are able to ameliorate, they're able to get to talk to anybody. He just happened to be, at that time, probably a good choice. I can't say absolutely the right choice, but certainly a good choice because he can have a dialogue with both parts, because he came up from the university and was very active in the university students' representatives and led quite a number of protests against the government and my government. He was just the right man to put in charge so he can now, instead of protesting, started looking into the system more properly. So—.*

MUKHERJEE: And was the commission able, under his leadership, able to achieve the kind of consensus that was required with the provincial premiers and the national members of Parliament, were on opposing sides of the debate?

CHAN: *Oh yes, otherwise we would not have got 82 votes to pass the constitutional change. The Organic Law with much less votes, but like your system, to get through the constitutional amendments, we need 83 votes. So yes, in that respect he was very successful because he was able to grease up both sides. There was no need for him to do that with the government side because we were in control. But to persuade the opposition to join forces he was very successful in doing that.*

MUKHERJEE: And did you yourself use your office to influence those who were opposed to the reform to try and win them over to your side of the argument?

CHAN: *Yes, well, as I said, a good thing about this country is that people almost adore Somare, that's why he is able to escape so many things. Some people use it, come don't. But yes, the office of the prime minister was always, if your time is available, very much like what (Barak) Obama is doing now. He is able to talk to both sides, at least talk. He didn't get the final support but at least his office is open to both.*

*So we were dialoguing. The office of the prime minister was seen as a national office rather than belonging to a sector in government. Of course, it depends on the leadership at that time too. We've got to display some form of neutrality and give your ears to the people that disagree with you, though you may also disagree with them. You've just got to render your ears to them. I was at all relevant times conscious of that all the time, that I must give more time to the people that oppose me at that time than those who are already inside the fence.*

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MUKHERJEE: What kinds of members of Parliament were the ones who opposed? They had provincial ties, or why were they so pro retaining the provincial government? I mean in Parliament or in your cabinet you mentioned a few ministers who were not in favor of the reform, or at least had a foot in either camp. What do you think motivated that?

CHAN: *They were in favor of reform, they just wanted more—a greater, maximum autonomy, almost just on the borderline of independence. I don't think they were opposing the reform or opposing decentralization, it was just that they wanted more than what I was prepared to give. What I was prepared to give was just greater say but not too close to saying good-bye.*

MUKHERJEE: In the run up to the passing of the law, the final shape of the law took rather—that was just one possibility of removing the elected officials from the provincial level of government. There must have been other options that would have been debated by the constitutional commission and by Parliament. Do you recall any of the other possibilities that you considered of different ways of reforming the system?

CHAN: *No, the Constitutional Planning Commission sat for almost two years. They went around and they were legally funded. Most committees were established but unfunded. This one was legally funded because we were positive we will bring about a proper, legal review and change and amendment to the constitution as well as the Organic Law. So we were really heart and soul into this one. It went around the whole country and talked to everybody. So it wasn't as if it were all centered in Port Moresby, no. So really I think the commission was well established and consulted the maximum number of people and that's why we had the majority necessary to pass the law.*

MUKHERJEE: In the consultations did it emerge that the best option for the country was to remove the premiers and establish the national M.P.s as the governors of the provinces or was that something that came up later in the discussions of the commission?

CHAN: *No, that was something that my cabinet sort of pushed for; it was not something that came from consultation. It was something that we made the decision. As I said financially responsible, less cost, as well as the ability in the national and provincial government by having the people elect the governors because of the constant changes, if the Assembly itself—and there was no—this so-called integrity of political parties that restricted members from moving. So everybody is independent, just like you. We were truly democratic and truly exercising the rights of the individual, the right of the individual to determine at that time.*

*Since the introduction of that law, things would have been different then. We may come up with something a little bit different but it was done at that time. That law did not exist. So the idea of having the people elect the regional member who would automatically become governors was a proposal that came from my government.*

MUKHERJEE: Was this one of a range of proposals that were considered or was it always the case that this was going to be what you did? Did you consider other possible solutions to the problem?

CHAN: *No, this was a solution to the existing problem at the time. This was what my government thought would remove the constant instability in the provinces and would also lessen the demand in the national arena. So we actually tried to kill*

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*two birds with one stone. So we used the Constitutional Planning Commission to consult people on that idea which really never got rejected. The idea of electing the governor for the province was something that was welcome.*

MUKHERJEE: I'd like to just go back to that, to zoom in on that moment when you said you issued the orders against the people, against the premiers who had met and decided to secede. I believe there was a meeting at Kimbe at the time in West New Britain when the order was issued and these individuals had collected over there. Now it was the NEC, the National Executive Council, I believe that had issued the order for their arrest. Were they actually arrested?

CHAN: *No, no. It was more a threat rather than actual physical implementation of that order. Actually, I can't recall specifically the events surrounding the meeting in Kimbe. It was more in Rabaul—they may have sat in Kimbe; I can't recollect that, that I put any emphasis on the meeting in Kimbe.*

MUKHERJEE: I see.

CHAN: *It was more in Rabaul, as I said, one week before the volcano blew up that I took out the order then to prevent them from any further meeting.*

MUKHERJEE: Ultimately was that what caused them to stand down from the extreme stance that they had taken?

CHAN: *No, I don't think so. I think it was more the supernatural happening where they sat at Matupi is only about one mile from the volcano and it blew up. So that, don't forget we are very superstitiously minded. Things don't just happen naturally; there is some intervention of some kind. When that happened, I can't tell you what has gone on in the heads of those people at that time, but generally, I think it has affected the minds of the people around that area that something must be wrong.*

*Here is a group of leaders wanting to secede from Papua New Guinea and then all of a sudden the mountain blew up. So I can't go deep into that. Let's say it was never written and probably will not be written, but at the back of my mind, me, that must have impacted the operation of the total independence that was going on at that time.*

MUKHERJEE: Earlier in the interview you mentioned the sort of technical capacity that had always been a problem at the provincial levels. Was there a concern now that this would also be a problem at the local level in a law that gave a lot more power to the local governments?

CHAN: *Oh yes, it has. It has. Because the system is all right—it's the implementation of that system to make it work that didn't come smoothly. And that is the root cause of what is happening today, because we did not fill the gap to enable the system to work. We failed to provide the funds and without the funds they cannot engage the right people to implement at the local-level government and therefore there is a lack of bottom-up planning. So that is probably the cause.*

*In my province now, because I happen to create that system, I am now backtracking and taking the government to the people and building up the local government capacity. With the cooperation of two open members, they are pumping a lot of this funding for open members back to local-level governments so the local-level governments now have some—in one district they have almost 1-1/2 to 2 millions of the resource now for them to begin to plan.*

*Here again, it comes back to the know-how, the technical know-how of planning. So I am now bringing the senior team from the provincial headquarters right down to the grassroots and we're building big capacity by instituting that we now have district planner and also local-level government planners. So each local government in my province now has a planner. Now we go and engage with the ward recorders, the ward members, the local-level government manager and the local-level government planner and the district planner. We start to help them to build up that capacity and that is happening in my province now.*

DEVLIN: So the innovations you're doing today, these reforms, they're brand new. It's fair to say there was nothing like that going on in the '90s and certainly nothing like that in the '70s?

CHAN: *That's correct.*

MUKHERJEE: Aside from providing the funds to the provinces, was there any effort at actually building up skills at the provincial or even at the local levels immediately following the 1995 law. Training in accounting or things like that?

CHAN: *No, it's just impossible. As the nation started to become more and more self-reliant, we have to concentrate also at the center, and that alone is enough to take away all the skills from the provinces to concentrate on nation-building rather than provincial building. We just cannot balance both. It would have been the right thing to do to stabilize at all areas of development, but because of the scarcity of the technical resources available, we had to look after the center first.*

*Also, as the country begins to move away from external aid and become more self-reliant, we started to get greater investment in the country. Then it needed greater skills at the center to focus on these things. More and more we are pulling the people away from the provinces, so the provinces now are very weak, very, very weak. It is all centered around here. And it is more attractive to be here. That is why it is quite oblong at the moment.*

*In order for my system—the local, the reform—to work, you need an overhaul of the public service system, complete overhaul. You need to trim down the top which is bloated at the moment and fatten the bottom. At the moment it is just like an arrow upside down. It is fat at the top and very thin at the bottom, so it continues to deplete the capacity at the local level, whereas the population is at the local-government level. So in my province now I have completely realigned the public service. So we don't really have a public service proper. We have a system that is completely different from the public-service structure now. I call it the commercial structure. So we trim down at the top, thin it and fatten the bottom. So I improve the capacity of the local-level government to be able to implement the reform.*

DEVLIN: So would you say your current work in New Ireland is born out of a dissatisfaction with how the '95 reform was eventually implemented?

CHAN: *No, it is fulfilling. That system would only work if we fulfill the vision of having decentralized powers and systems backed up with the technical capacity so that the people can have a better, greater say, in prioritizing the kinds of project they want. But first, we've got to bring some sophistication and understanding to the local level government so that people know that you can have all priorities all at the same time. So we are now out there telling the people, set out your priority but this is all the money you've got in the budget for this year. All right? Let's say*

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*you have 50,000 and you want about 10 different projects that are probably 500,000. Now it starts to—the thinking, what comes first? That is now what we're introducing. It is up to you to plan, and planning means setting your priorities correctly and within the budget available for you to do it.*

*It is going to take a lot of time to do it, because people think just because you have a say you can work miracles. Not on this planet it won't. You can wish, but it won't happen unless you have the money and the capacity to deliver and convert this money into reality.*

MUKHERJEE: So would it be fair to say then that the 1995 reform is still very much a work in progress—that it hasn't achieved fully yet what it was meant to achieve but it will in the future?

CHAN: *If they don't toy around with it, it is far from, I think we have not—because of the changes with government, too. I created it and I was out for 10 years. All right, I'm coming back now. But you know, those who succeeded me didn't really know what was at the back of my mind to create this system, so they have put it to bed also for those periods. So I'm going to try to make that system work, and I'm beginning to do it. It's not easy because it was dormant for all this period. You know, to try to shake up the system and the public servants—it's like bringing Lazarus from the dead. It's not easy. The people that took over me actually put the whole system to sleep. So I'm trying to shake it up now. So I can't say that we've, in terms of success, that we have achieved 20% of it. Far less.*

MUKHERJEE: Then what would be that 20%? Which aspects of the law have actually been successful since '95?

CHAN: *Stability. Less changes in the system of governance at the provincial level. There is not one provincial government that has changed the governor. Stability there, stability in the national, because now it is 20 people less demanding for ministerial posts. So hidden behind all this, is that stability has crept in that did not require any one to really implement it; it is just the law made it happen. But at the functional level, yes we are lacking, we have achieved maybe 20% or less.*

MUKHERJEE: Those who were displaced by the 1995 law at the provincial level—what happened to them, the people who were elected at the time whose positions were then scrapped by the law?

CHAN: *We didn't scrap anything, we didn't scrap anything. Everything existed. It's just that instead of the provincial electorate that elect a person and then they go to the Assembly to appoint a premier or governor, say governor, now it doesn't. Now the system, when you elect a ward member, you also elect the president of the council and you elect the regional member who will automatically become the governor. First he is regional member for the National Parliament, but automatically by law he is also the governor of the province, unless he elects to become a minister. Then he cannot hold two posts.*

DEVLIN: What about, for example, the people who—. Following on that point, though, for example someone who was, say, before the '95 reform, was on a provincial executive committee, say was the minister for a certain portfolio in a province. What happened to individuals such as that after the reform?

CHAN: *That is abolished.*

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- DEVLIN: The type of person who occupied a post like that, did they—are they now competing for National Parliament posts?
- CHAN: *Yes, they go national, local-level government. Under that system all local-level government presidents are members of the Assembly in the province. You see, so they are involved. Then it was up to the governor to appoint how many ministers, but they are not called ministers, they are called chairmen.*
- DEVLIN: So they're still very much in politics, but the power is at the end of the day definitely with the governor on the province level?
- CHAN: *More in the hands of the governor rather than in the hands of those members of the Assembly because the governor is now elected by the people. So yes, he has greater mandate to stay in power, whereas if it was the previous system—that councilors come in and elect the premier—they can change him anytime.*
- MUKHERJEE: In 2006 there was a move to create district authorities as an administrative tier in the system of government.
- CHAN: Yes, yes.
- MUKHERJEE: Has that been achieved yet, and what was the objective behind that?
- CHAN: *That was a total failure, and the less talked about the better. Really, that was a total failure. That was a very selfish—that was really—the intent of all that really is to completely localize power to the authorities that be, like the open members of Parliament, become governors. That's basically what it is, and really starting to chop it all up. The power of the province is being chopped up into authorities. That one would not work, I think there would be disparities in the provinces and you would see another problem shooting up. No, that law is disastrous. It exists now. It is a law now because Somare compromised with the then opposition leader, Peter O'Neil, to make this law, which I am certain beyond doubt that he lived to regret it. That law will not work.*
- MUKHERJEE: Has the implementation of that law started?
- CHAN: *Thank God, it hasn't. And we should get rid of it as quickly as possible.*
- DEVLIN: Did the pressure for it come from those open members?
- CHAN: Yes.
- DEVLIN: Were they the ones pushing it?
- CHAN: *Those open members and also because of the political nature at that time compromization was just a little bit too far. The opposition leader wanted something, Somare wanted numbers to pass certain things, so they compromised. They just didn't think about the consequences of that law. He was looking for it to have some sort of absolute power within that authorities under his electorate. Somare was looking for numbers to pass a particular constitutional law. I forgot what law he passed now, but thank God nothing happened. But it is a law. So it has had great impact in my province. It is a stupid law in which I cannot have the presidents of local governments sitting in the Assembly. It is a very dictatorial law that gives the governor the absolute power of appointing members to the Assembly and also to the cabinet. It is totally undemocratic and I think over time it just will not function. As sophistication of the people improves,*

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*they want a greater say. This law is very dictatorial and gives absolute power to the governor.*

MUKHERJEE: I mean it would be fair to say that it also conflicts with the objectives of the 1995 reform. It's sort of a step backward in many ways.

CHAN: *Oh yes. To differentiate between the two, ours is participatory government, theirs is absolute. This one is absolute.*

MUKHERJEE: You came back into politics in 2007 very much looking at it now from the other side as a provincial governor. Looking back on your time as prime minister when you passed the 1995 reform, do you feel that you may have done something differently back then if you were to do it again?

CHAN: *If I had the chance to continue after the election, I would have made it work. I would have been in authority to force the governors to implement my vision of localizing power to the full and build up their capacity to plan at the local level government, which is nonexistent at the moment. We will make New Ireland a model and it will work. It will work.*

*So in short I have no regrets of introducing this law. Regretted, that I was not there to implement it. It is going to work in New Ireland but probably needs five to 10 years to wake up the people in it because you're not just dealing with objects, you're dealing with the people who have been isolated for those 10 years, who really don't really know what this system is all about because they've been isolated completely. In some provinces some—in my area, my predecessor created a system, on his own, which is totally illegal, an illegal structure that completely isolated the public service, and he ran the government, using the law, the Organic Law, to get the administrator to give the power to his personal staff to authorize everything. He just built up his personal staff and they ran the government.*

*The bloke is very smart, he's a very smart person, very well-off person and he thinks running a government is about giving handouts to the people, it is not about giving the people, building up their ability to make their own decisions. So his view of government is just handouts, you create a [Indecipherable] cult sort of mentality. So it will take me probably about five years to do it and of course you know the election is coming in 2012 so I don't have the—I don't have that privilege for another five to 10 years. But it will take that time because we're dealing with people, the public service.*

MUKHERJEE: New Ireland is clearly ahead of the curve as far as the provinces and the entire country are concerned. The freedom that you've had within the Organic Law, the 1995 law, to make these innovations and delivering services that in your province are quite sort of progressive compared to other provinces. Is there a concern that there might be regional imbalances going forward, where some provinces do innovate like yours and they pull ahead of the provinces that don't innovate and that creates some sort of problems for national unity?

CHAN: *Oh yes, it will happen. But just like everything else, it's a contest. I think that will be necessary to bring this country forward to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It will be competition that will bring us up. Without that kind of competition we will never improve. So it is very much a contest. Now I think at the end it can only do good for Papua New Guinea; otherwise, we will all just sit back, talk about government, talk about democracy that doesn't work, without proper participation. We will continue to just sit back, exercising the Melanesian way, looking to the sun,*

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*chewing beetle nut and singing halleluiah all the time. [Indecipherable] was going to put the cross on top of the Parliament. You see the extreme, Parliament being authority, perhaps we can build a pyramid like the Egyptians up to the sky wherever the Creator is. So you know, I think competition is good.*

MUKHERJEE: I have one last question. You're also, along with being governor of New Ireland, you're also the chairman of the New Ireland autonomy committee. I was wondering if the setting up of such a committee and also calls for autonomy in other New Guinea island provinces has been motivated by the Bougainville agreement, the most recent one, the peace agreement that gave Bougainville a great degree of autonomy. Was your committee, the setting up of that motivated by what happened in Bougainville?

CHAN: *No, I think it was—it's really working backwards again. As I said, like your system, you formed the states before you formed the union. Without the strong state you can never have a strong union. So really it is giving greater power back to what should have happened in the first place before coming together.*

*I'm not the chairman of the autonomy committee. Somebody is, I have appointed the committee, an autonomy committee. I've moved to the second stage now, it is the Monitoring and Implementation Committee now. We have gone past the first stage. We have adopted the proposal for greater autonomy, we have done it. The kind of autonomy we want is absolute, something equal to, no less than Bougainville.*

*I'm looking forward. Once you allow Bougainville to happen, it will happen all over. It happened in 1977. We created it for Bougainville and everybody else got it, and those people who already had 60 years of civilization also got it and that's why the system collapsed. So I see now, some people never learn. By allowing Bougainville to determine for themselves through a referendum, it is going to actually happen for every province. Some of them are restricted by virtue of location, but New Ireland is an island and we're not restricted. So we can follow Bougainville to the fullest, if not beyond Bougainville.*

*So if Bougainville will go for independence, we will go for independence. For me, it is just as sure as the sun coming out of the east. If it happened in Bougainville, it will happen right throughout all the island provinces. It cannot happen on the mainland, you and I know, just like it can never have peace in the Middle East because of the common land borders. You can never have peace. But in the islands we are isolated; we can have peace. And in the case of New Ireland we will be probably one hundred times better off on our own than as part of Papua New Guinea, because democratically speaking, forever and a day we will always be small and minute. We will never be able to participate in an ideal, democratic situation where the small is cared for and is given some form of equal power and is treated specially.*

*We will always have three members and producing the wealth for this country. So I can see that if it happens to Bougainville we will help the whole way.*

MUKHERJEE: How has the national government responded to this claim?

CHAN: *Well, at the moment I don't really care what the national government thinks, because the national government is very, very disorganized at the moment. It has so many problems. They should not take New Ireland as another problem, because they couldn't handle the existing ones at the moment. The national government currently is externally driven; it is not internally driven. Most of its*

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*policies are externally driven. It has very little time to think about the internal affairs of the country and everything else. It is completely externally driven.*

*So, what do I think about the national government? Really, let them do what they want to do, and I do what I want to do. I only spend about 5% of my time nationally in the Parliament. You don't see me doing anything, because I know whatever I say means nothing. They are so dominant they have become dictators. Unlike in the real ideal democracy—you will allow everybody to have an equal say in this—there's no such thing at the moment. We are very dictatorial at the moment.*

*When you reach that stage somehow, unknowingly, you don't listen anymore; everything you do is correct. You forget everybody else. So I don't pretend they're going to listen to me; I just do things my way.*

DEVLIN: A couple of the points you had just mentioned just drew me back to your earlier remarks on the '70s. You said that you and maybe a couple of your colleagues were not exactly for decentralization per se in the mid '70s and late '70s. You were, as you said, one of the more conservative voices. Looking back, what would you have done differently at that point? What was the option you were more in favor of?

CHAN: *A united Papua New Guinea that just happened to be pushed into self-government and independence. We should just go as a united front because we're entering the unknown. It would be really good to cling together and move forward together without going into any other important issues. We are entering the unknown. None of us really know exactly where we're going and really, you know, the whole process of self-government to independence was very short. By any comparison to any other nation on this planet, we were just caught up in the African race, that's all it is. We had to do it in the shortest time available.*

*That's why we were somehow politically pushed and economically unprepared. We didn't have the economic structure in place. As soon as we said we're going to self-government in '73, we had nothing. We don't even own our own currency, we don't have a central bank, we don't have any commercial banks. We haven't got a clue about anything. So we were walking into the unknown all the time.*

DEVLIN: Another thing you had mentioned was this idea of discrepancies, differences between different parts of Papua New Guinea and how that could become a tension. At this early point, there was additional unconditional grant, which you're certainly familiar with, and a National Fiscal Commission that was set up that was very much linked to that. Now a lot of people have commented on the National Fiscal Commission, saying that it didn't function as intended, as it had been hoped to function. What's your opinion of that body, how that worked?

CHAN: *It is a volume of books to read here, that's all I can say. It is a volume of books. We've got so many consultants coming in, preparing and all kinds of assistance. It is so big that if you ask me any more I haven't got a clue. I really have no clue. I just simply know it exists and from time to time they tell us what happened and where we are. I just accept what they say. I haven't got time to read anything about what they say.*

*When they do come out with a pictorial thing and say this is where New Ireland is in terms of delivery of services, I say, "Oh, that's where we are? Great. We're not at the bottom. We're somewhere up there and we're better than most, so I'm happy." That's it, really I don't translate it into what happened on the ground.*

DEVLIN: Sure. Now one of the things you said, your push around '90, '95, a main commitment of yours was to strengthen local-level government which does beg the question, why was that missed the first time around in the '70s and early '80s when decentralization was first done. It seemed a lot of the power stagnated at the provincial level. It didn't go down to the local level. Was that intentional or was that a failing in implementation?

CHAN: *No that was actually the traditional system of government, that the big man had the final say in all these things. So democracy was very, very—hey, that's a—it was something completely unrelated to the system of governance that we had. If you own the land, then you become the boss, you are the boss. What you say just goes. So really, it wasn't by accident that we created an animal like that at the time. What really aligned with the traditional big-man, wealthy-person type of control; that was the sort of system we had.*

DEVLIN: Another thing that you're addressing now in New Ireland is to readdress the public service balance, you said it was an inverse pyramid. The way decentralization is talked about at the beginning, when there is that first decision to maintain a national public service rather than separate ones for the provinces, is that the public service never got out of the capital, that central ministries maintained large staffs and there was never really a successful staff transfer out to the provinces. In your opinion is that a fair criticism and, if so, why did that happen?

CHAN: *Simply, look, simply put, it just really, we're very new to government. We established Papua New Guinea to get the nation moving and not necessarily the population moving. It was a question of national survival and what happened on the ground are two different things all together. We have never even perceived that—I think it would be fair to say we were talking about self-government and independence, we were talking about the national self-government and independence. We did not relate that to the individual—of the human part of greater power and authority right down to that level of the people. Because as I said earlier, democracy is a completely new animal to us.*

*Just before you go, why is it that the national government built up the bureaucracies at the center? It is again related to the fact that we did it completely different to you. We are now going backwards. You had the states first established, fought all kinds of wars, had the capacity, had the soldiers, had everything in the states that came together. The only state we had was the national government. So that's why the center point of all bureaucracy is Waigani. It is really as simple as that.*

DEVLIN: Over the course of the years when you see laws like—there was the 1974 Provincial Government Preparatory Arrangements Act, then in 1977 the Organic Law—a lot of these laws were driven by Bougainville. They were a response to this back and forth between the central government and Bougainville. Yet, they were universally applicable; they applied to the whole country. There was a commitment on the part of the cabinet, or at least this is how it is portrayed, that Bougainville would not be allowed to emerge as an exception. Is that true? Was there that feeling that Bougainville, whatever went for Bougainville would have to go for all the country?

CHAN: *We haven't thought about that.*

MUKHERJEE: You never thought—

CHAN: *It was supposed to be just for Bougainville.*

DEFLIN: Just for Bougainville, OK.

CHAN: *You know, looking back, we would have done a lot better had we took that onboard in a different way, in a more positive way. Probably would have created a greater environment of trust, which we don't have here in this country.*

DEVLIN: So rather then, I mean, the course of events here in Papua New Guinea has been a very gradual, incremental increase in the powers that are being given to Bougainville. Are you saying that perhaps it would have been better from the start to recognize the situation and give them more of what they wanted sooner?

CHAN: *Sooner would not have done them any good, because they would have been incapable of doing it, because I think—right from the start, I said, it was the question of wealth that made Bougainville want greater power. It was not necessarily political power, it was greater sharing of that wealth, that they want to have a greater say in it. So I think we have to marry those two things very closely together. However, I must also qualify myself, I did point out to you that we did have some international constitutional experts advising us all the time. They could have, you know, instilled, indoctrinated us at that time to have that kind of system established and promoted that greater autonomy at that time and probably rightly so. But we were not in a position to question them because we just knew very little about government.*

DEVLIN: Sure, one last, and I promise it's the final question. You have said, and it is certainly true, the government at the time, you and your colleagues, you were, as many decades as you've now had in politics, at that point you were new in the game, as you put it. I'm wondering, given what you know now, after all these years, this experience of here in Papua New Guinea, what would you have liked to know at the time? Are there lessons that Papua New Guinea has learned over the years that it would have done well to have known all the way back then at the very beginning, admittedly when it couldn't possibly have been known. But I'm just wondering—.

CHAN: *It would have been nice to have come up the ladder. I'm not saying that the timing of self-government and independence were wrong; I think it's timely. But it would have been nice had we been more educated in the forms of government. It would have been nicer if we had been better qualified to take up those challenges at that time. We weren't. It was again externally pushed. It was the events of the time. Yes, well, that's the only thing I can say in retrospect, because I really don't want to look back. I'll leave it to you, the researcher to look back. For me, I'm too old now to look back. I just have to move forward all the time. If I spend too much time worrying about the past and quarrel with the present, I forget the future. I'm in the sunset years of my life and I want to do things more positive than looking back. You can look back and hint me that if I, because of that, if you had taken this thing, you could be right and we'll try to correct the destiny in which I want to go. So no, I am very confident if everybody had the same purpose and the same vision that individually or collectively we can get at a destination we went to go. For New Ireland, we can individually get there much faster if we are able to look after ourselves.*

DEFLIN: Well we'll certainly follow events on New Ireland with great interest over the coming years. Thank you so much Sir Julius for taking the time to speak with us tonight.