

Alaska, the 49th State, and Hawaii, the 50th State:

USIS Films and the U.S. Hegemony in the Pacific in the Early Cold War Era

「アラスカ—49番目の州」と「ハワイ—50番目の州」

—冷戦初期のUSIS映画と米国の太平洋地域におけるヘゲモニー

Yuka Tsuchiya

(土屋由香)

【要旨】 アラスカとハワイがそれぞれ米国の49番目と50番目の州に昇格した1959年、米国広報・文化交流庁 (USIA) は、「アラスカ—49番目の州」「ハワイ—50番目の州」と題するドキュメンタリー映画を世界各国で上映した。これらは、米国政府が1940年代後半～1960年代中ごろにかけて世界80カ国以上で上映した、1600本以上の「USIS映画」の一部であった。USIS (米国広報・文化交流局) は、各国の米国大使館の中に置かれたUSIAの在外機関であり、この映画部がその国にふさわしいUSIS映画を本国から輸入・上映した。アラスカとハワイに関するUSIS映画製作・上映の目的は、冷戦を背景として米国の太平洋における軍事的・経済的・文化的プレゼンスを世界に向けて明示するとともに、急速に成長しつつあった民間航空会社と提携してこれらの地域に観光客を誘致することにあった。それと同時に、これらの地域における人種の多様性を米国の豊かさや寛容さの象徴として描くことにより、多様性の中にも統一性のある国家イメージを醸成しようとしたのである。しかしながら、実際にはハワイの昇格過程においてネイティブ・ハワイアンへの「忠誠」が疑問視されたことにも見られる通り、多様であることと「アメリカ的」であることの間には、常に緊張関係が存在していた。さまざまな矛盾を内包しつつ、アラスカとハワイは冷戦初期米国の広報外交の最前線となったのである。

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1. The Northern Pacific in 1959

In 1959, the same year that Alaska and Hawaii acquired statehood, the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) released government-sponsored films titled *Alaska, the 49th State*, and *Hawaii, the 50th State*. These were part of the "USIS films," the U.S. overseas information films to win the "hearts and minds" of people over the world in the Cold War setting. From the late 1940s through mid 1960s, USIA distributed more than one-thousand six-hundred USIS films to over eighty countries¹. About 60 percent of these films dealt with U.S. society, culture, technology, industry, etc., and the remaining 40 percent featured countries other than the U.S. All the films were shown outside the U.S. because the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948 had prohibited materials for overseas information activities from being used domestically. The U.S. Information Service (USIS), USIA's overseas office set up in the U.S. embassy in each country, selected and released USIS films suitable for pursuing U.S. interests in that particular country.

My paper will examine the portrayal of Alaska and Hawaii in USIS films, by using the scripts and actual films stored at the U.S. National Archives, and explore why USIA decided to film certain aspects of these new states and show them overseas. My paper will demonstrate that the Northern Pacific had become the frontline of U.S. public diplomacy, where cultural diversity, tourism, natural resources, and national security all formed important themes of the U.S. Cold War propaganda.

The U.S. government purchased Alaska from Russia in 1867, and officially annexed it into the U.S. territory in 1912. It was not until January 3, 1959, however, that it acquired statehood. Hawaii became U.S. territory after the Spanish American War of 1898, and it acquired statehood on August 21, 1959, seven and a half months after Alaska's statehood. The 49th and 50th states were radically

¹ RG306, Entry A1 1098, box 1-59, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, Maryland. Hereafter abbreviated as NARA.

different in their geographical settings, climate, and ethnic/cultural features. These two states, however, shared something important in common. In the northern Pacific, Alaska and Hawaii are located halfway between North America and Asia, both between approximately 150 and 165 degrees west longitude. This location made them key to U.S. Cold War strategy in the Asia-Pacific region. They are both open to the ocean, making them vulnerable to enemy attack from the air and the sea. Both of them were rich in natural and agricultural resources. Alaska produced oil, gas, and gold, and also exported fish, fur, and lumber. There was almost no important mineral in Hawaii, but it was a major producer of pineapples and sugarcane. Lastly, they both emerged as popular tourism sites after the Second World War. Although Hawaii was the more popular destination, Alaska also attracted international visitors interested in salmon fishing, hunting, or exploration. Tourism and military facilities had a lot in common. They both required airports and airline companies, basic infrastructures such as water, electricity and gas, and also amenities and recreations such as hotels, bars, restaurants and shopping centers. So construction of military facilities and tourism development went hand in hand, both in Alaska and in Hawaii².

Those common features attached major propaganda value to Alaska and Hawaii in the Cold War setting. The U.S. government felt it necessary to propagate that these two states were authentic parts of the U.S., and that the federal government offered protection of their land and people. The government also wanted to show how "American" these states were. They reflected not only racial diversity and tolerance, but also unity, classlessness, affluence, and social order. Furthermore, the government tried to bring tourists from all over the world to Alaska and Hawaii, as the American commercial airlines flourished and international tourism increasingly

² For the history of tourism and military buildup in Hawaii, for example, see Yujin Yaguchi, *Hawai no rekishi to bunka: higeki tohokori no mozaiku no nakade* (Chuko Shinsho, 2002). 矢口祐人「ハワイの歴史と文化：悲劇と誇りのモザイクの中で」(中公新書、2002年)、pp. 70-72, 102, 116-117.

became a popular pastime among the wealthy.

From the strategic point of view, Alaska and Hawaii both occupied crucially important locations in a crucially important time. In 1959, Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam all presented hazardous situations for the U.S.-led Western bloc. Korean War armistice was reached in July 1953, but tension remained high throughout the 1950s, and U.S. troops stationed in South Korea kept on guard. In Taiwan Strait, the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis took place in 1958, in which the People's Republic of China (PRC) shelled the islands of Matsu and Quemoy in the Taiwan Strait in an attempt to seize them from the Republic of China (ROC), and ROC fought back. In Vietnam, the anti-Communist regime led by Ngo Dinh Diem was established in 1955, with the support of the U.S. government. Violence and terror continued both in the North and the South. Although it had not yet become America's Longest War, the Eisenhower administration was already sending military advisors and weapons to South Vietnam. Japan was America's most important anti-Communist ally in East Asia, but issues such as U.S. nuclear testing in the northern Pacific and the U.S. military bases in Japan had stimulated anti-American public opinions there. Incidentally, the U.S. Japan Security Treaty, concluded at the end of the Allied Occupation in 1952, was to be amended and renewed in 1960. Especially among Japanese students and intellectuals, the anti-Security Treaty, the anti-nuclear, and the anti-American movements were reaching their peak. The U.S. government was worried that Japan was "drifting away" from alliance with the U.S.³

This was the general situation of East Asia and the Northern Pacific in 1959. So, if Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam "fell" to the Communists, and if Japan was not that reliable, Alaska and Hawaii would inevitably assume increased importance as the U.S. defense line in the Pacific. These two states, therefore, emerged as extremely

³ "Progress Report on Japan (NSC 5516/1)," February 25, 1957; March 6, 1957, White House Office, NSC Staff Papers, Special Staff File Service, box 4, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas.

important strategic locations, and at the same time, symbolic icons of the U.S. hegemony in the Pacific. USIS films concerning Alaska and Hawaii were produced and shown overseas in this context.

2. Alaska, the 49th State and Hawaii, the 50th State

Alaska the 49th State was originally produced by Pan American World Airway System as an advertising film in 1958, shortly before Alaska became a state. USIA "acquired" it from Pan Am in 1959, as it often did from various American companies when it found some propaganda value in advertising films. USIA rewrote part of the scripts of these "acquisition films" to downplay the advertisement and add some public diplomacy messages. Basically, however, the interests of the private companies and the U.S. government conflated in these "acquisition films." In *Alaska, the 49th State, and Hawaii, the 50th State*, for example, modernity, high technology, and affluence symbolized by the commercial airlines and international travel overlapped with the U.S. state images that USIA wanted to spread overseas.

The film opens with the moving image of the airplane and the bird's eye view of Alaska's landscape. It is a Kodachrome color film, approximately 35-minutes long. It shows the ocean, glaciers, the plane, wild flowers, a stream with salmon and so on. Finally, the camera focuses on an "Eskimo" family. According to the narrator, those native Alaskan people are "proud of their old way of life," while at the same time "ready to adopt the new." The film shows a native Alaskan carpenter, mason, metal worker, caulker, church officer, and girls playing baseball. On the fourth of July, they celebrate "their nation's birth" and "reaffirm their heritage of freedom." Their children enjoy doughnuts and ice cream, just like any kid in Maine, Florida or Texas. Next the film introduces Alaskan agriculture, mining, forestry and fishing, especially focusing on how modern technologies are introduced in each field. "Alaskans depend on the airplanes for practically everything," and "the pulse of progress can be traced directly to the airplane." Tourists from the U.S. mainland

also travel to Alaska by planes. They enjoy salmon fishing, hunting, boating and exploring nature. The film ends with a Pan Am plane taking off from Alaska, with a narration of "Alaska - 49th of these United States of America⁴."

Hawaii the 50th State was produced by a documentary film company (Hearst Metrotone News, Inc.) for USIA. In contrast to *Alaska the 49th State*, it is a black and white film, approximately 15-minutes long. It was produced in September 1959, a month after it acquired statehood. It also opens with the moving image of the airplane, and the narration saying that "swift modern planes have made a lake" of the Pacific Ocean, and San Francisco and Honolulu have become "neighbors." Although Honolulu was far from the mainland, "the streets of the mid-Pacific city are typically American." People live in modern apartment houses and shop in supermarkets - "familiar sights in most large American cities." The film focuses on racial and cultural diversity of Hawaii, portraying it as a multicultural paradise. The City Board, the State Government, and U.S. Senators and Congressmen from Hawaii, all represented multiple ethnic groups, including native Hawaiian, Japanese, Chinese and European.

Next the film emphasizes the importance of aviation, explaining there are "four airlines and thirteen airports" in Hawaii. The narrator says that "flight over the Islands offers some spectacular views," and a stewardess introduces Hawaiian industries such as pineapple growing, poultry farming, stock farming, and sugarcane growing. Strangely, the stewardess points out the smallest island of Molokai, and says "Of course it is uninhabited." It is well known today that Molokai was actually inhabited by patients of Hansen's Disease who were forced to move

⁴ "Alaska the 49th State" December 8, 1958 (original version), March 4, 1959 (revised foreign version), movie scripts, RG306, Entry A1 1098, box 1, NARA. The film script was sent to Copenhagen and Bonn, but it is not clear in which other countries the film was actually shown. It was at least shown in Japan and Korea, since it was included in the USIS Film Catalog of both countries (1959 and 1967 versions, respectively).

there, until the Federal segregation policy was lifted in 1969. It is not clear why the film singled out Molokai and emphasized that it was "not inhabited." Perhaps USIA intended to deny any rumor that might damage the U.S. state image as the champion of democracy and equality.

Toward the end of the film, once again the theme of racial equality and diversity recurs. It introduces a Korean American doctor helping Hawaiian women athletes. Religious services are conducted in Korean, Japanese, Tagalog, and English languages. Because of such diversity, it is explained, statehood of Hawaii enriched and empowered the U.S. as a whole:

Statehood does not change Hawaii so much as it changes the United States. Differences of race, religion and culture are enrichments for all Americans. It is possible that someday, a President of the United States will call Hawaii his home⁵.

The final remark sounds somewhat like a prophecy of Barak Obama's election to the Presidency. Just as Obama simultaneously symbolized diversity and unity of U.S. society in the 2009 election, the two films emphasized both the diversity and unity of Alaska and Hawaii. On the one hand, the racial and cultural diversity of Alaska and Hawaii were explained as a factor to enrich and strengthen the United States. On the other hand, "American-ness" portrayed in the Fourth of July celebration, apartment houses and supermarkets, erased the racial and ethnic differences and presented a homogenized, conflict-free U.S. society outwardly. Native Alaskans, as well as Japanese and Korean Americans in Hawaii, were shown

⁵ "Hawaii the 50th State," movie scripts, RG306, Entry A1 1098, box 13, NARA. The film was included in the USIS film catalogue in Korea (1967), but not in Japan (1959). Since the film was produced in the latter half of 1959, it was probably not in time for the 1959 version. Since I do not have any catalogue issued after 1959, however, it is not possible to confirm if the film was also shown in Japan.

as American citizens fully enjoying their freedom and affluence just like anyone living in the mainland states.

Similar messages were observed in other USIS films concerning Hawaii. *Hawaii's History: Kingdom to Statehood* (1962) introduces the history of Hawaii from the years of Kingdom through 1962, ending with a remark:

Hawaii's people came from many lands and grew close to the United States... Now these islands are the 50th state. And the people of Hawaii? One people: Americans⁶.

Also, *Hawaii, U.S.A.* (1960) opens with the explanation that streets of Honolulu "look the same as they do in any prosperous city in the United States":

There is the same constant flow of busy people and bustling traffic. The people who live here look very much like those of any large American city where there are many races. You see Filipinos, Portuguese and Puerto Ricans - Japanese, Koreans and Chinese. The municipal building could be that of any other American city of a quarter-million population⁷.

Harmony and unity within diversity is emphasized in all these films. The harmonious order of American society corresponded to the Cold War consensus prescribed to the mainland American citizens in the 1950s. As Kenneth Osgood has shown in his study of President Eisenhower's propaganda policies, the U.S. government wanted to circulate the state image of affluent, classless, orderly society both domestically and internationally⁸. Racial equality was an especially

⁶ "Hawaii's History: Kingdom to Statehood," Movie Scripts, RG306, Entry A1 1098, box 13, NARA.

⁷ "Hawaii, U.S.A.," Movie Scripts, RG306, Entry A1 1098, box 13, NARA. 今回の調査で確認した USIS映画のうち、ハワイに関するものは少なくとも5本、アラスカに関するものは少なくとも2本、含まれていた。

⁸ Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower's Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (University Press of Kansas, 2006).

important message in the international context, however, in the face of Communist criticism of U.S. hypocrisy. Indeed, racial issue was “America’s Achilles heel” as the country advocated democracy and freedom, while maintaining racial segregation and injustice at the same time. By showing peaceful harmony of diverse races and ethnic groups, USIA tried to counter the Communist propaganda and save the U.S. state image⁹.

In sum, USIS films celebrated statehood as an opportunity for the U.S. to become a more attractive country – by absorbing diverse culture, beautiful nature, and unique industries. The two new states were the periphery in terms of U.S. political, economic and cultural order. The films emphasized, however, that the periphery was firmly tied to the center by sharing the common customs and material life. The two states were shown as the outposts of “American-ness” in the Pacific. Although their unique characteristics were celebrated, they were extensions of the mainland in every sense. In other words, statehood of Alaska and Hawaii amounted to the declaration of the U.S. hegemonic presence in the Pacific, culturally, politically and economically. Air technology assumed a tremendous importance in this scenario because it was the bridge to link the periphery to the center of hegemony. That was a reason why airplanes played such an important role in both these films.

3. Alaska and Hawaii as the Cold War Frontline

Alaska and Hawaii were not merely cultural, political, and economic outposts in the Pacific, but they were also crucial military outposts of the U.S. U.S. troops had constantly been stationed in Hawaii since its annexation in 1898, and the Pacific War had dramatically increased its importance as a military base. One focus of

⁹ For Soviet criticism of U.S. hypocrisy concerning racial issue, see Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton University Press, 2000).

debate over Hawaii's statehood was whether residents there – especially native Hawaiians – were loyal to the Federal government. Those who opposed statehood questioned native Hawaiian's loyalty to the U.S. government, and also pointed out the suspicion of Communist infiltration in Hawaii. Those who supported statehood also used the loyalty issue to support their argument. They drew attention to the bravery of native Hawaiian soldiers both in the Second World War and in Korean War. They also argued that Communist threat would decrease as Hawaii would become economically prosperous by being closely tied to the mainland economy through statehood¹⁰. In sum, the whole issue was focused on whether Hawaii was "American" enough, whether there were any traitors or unpatriotic elements that might endanger national security.

National security was even more directly related to the discussion of Alaska's statehood. The Department of Defense was outright against the statehood. President Eisenhower was also concerned about the security hazard caused by statehood, because he thought that the federal government might lose free access to the land once the state government was established. Eisenhower expressed his concern in a letter to Henry Jackson, chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Territories and Insular Affairs:

[T]he admission of the Territory of Alaska to statehood ... has a number of troublesome aspects. Among these is the problem ... of providing adequately for our national defense needs.

You are aware, of course, of the tremendous strategic importance of this region to our nation's defense. Our military programs and plans oriented to

¹⁰ "Statement on Hawaiian Statehood by Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton before Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, as Delivered by Under Secretary Hatfield Chilson," April 2, 1957, The Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum Website. Hereafter abbreviated as DDE Website. http://eisenhower.archives.gov/Research/Digital_Documents/Alaska/Alaska.html, accessed on January 10, 2010.

this region and to the threat facing us there are premised upon full freedom of Federal action both for defense and for peacetime policing action.

Conversion of the Territory to a State cannot but raise difficult questions respecting the relationship of the military to the newly constituted State authority. Neither the nation nor Alaska could afford any impairment of the freedom of movement and of action by our forces in large areas of this critical region¹¹.

Those who supported statehood – businessmen interested in Alaska and the Senators whom they supported – argued that statehood would rather strengthen the security on the U.S. Arctic front, since it will more closely tie Alaska to the mainland economy and policy¹².

Eisenhower mentioned that he would accept statehood "if the area north and west of Yukon, and the Aleutian chain, were excluded from the new state and thus left open for military withdrawal.¹³" Ultimately, a decision was reached that the north-western frontiers of Alaska, amounting to two-fifths of the Alaska's whole land, were reserved under the direct federal rule for the purposes of national security. With this condition, Alaska's statehood was finally achieved. In the above-mentioned zone, a radar trap system called the "Dew Line" (Defense Early Warning Line) was constructed by the Department of Defense. The Dew Line System consisted of 63 stations stretching from Alaska to Baffin Island, covering almost 10,000 kilometers. The Eastern part of the Dew Line ran through the northern coast of Alaska. In addition to the Dew Line, the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) built nuclear testing facilities in this federal-controlled area. Furthermore, the government regarded this area as the "storage" of natural

¹¹ Letter from Eisenhower to Henry M. Jackson, March 31, 1955, DDE Website.

¹² Letter from Henry M. Jackson to the President, March 15, 1955, DDE Website.

¹³ From Henry M. Jackson to the President, March 19, 1955, DDE Website.

resources, for digging oil, natural gas, and precious minerals over the future¹⁴.

In July 1959, USIA released a documentary film, *Dew Line Story*, in the above context. It is a color, approximately 40-minute film originally produced in 1958 by the Western Electric Company, the Manufacturing and Supply Unit of the Bell System. The film explains from the outset that Arctic presented "a stark menace to the very existence of millions of men, women, and children" because the "air age" has made the Arctic the "quickest routes for attack from a wide sector of Europe and Asia." Confronted with this "nightmare of threat," the U.S. government took to the construction of the Dew Line. It was an effort to "conquer that unknown frozen wasteland and transform it into a vital outpost of Western Civilization"¹⁵.

The film emphasizes the government-private cooperation in building Alaska's military preparedness. The construction of the radar system was carried out by Western Electric Company, under the supervision of the U.S. Air Force, and with the cooperation of the Royal Canadian Air Force. Machines, materials, and supplies were ordered from "more than 4600 different business enterprises" all over the U.S. and Canada, and they were air-lifted by the Air Force C-124 Globemasters cargo craft. Engineers were recruited from all over the country, and "the Eskimos too were recruited, and they did a good job." Just like in *Alaska: the 49th State*, native Alaskans were included in the picture of Alaska as an outpost of U.S. hegemony, with or without their consent. Unity of private companies and the government, as well as unity of diverse people, were portrayed as an important factor to resist Communist threat.

The last one-third of the film documents the progress of construction in the

¹⁴ Memorandum from Ted Stevens to Governor Sherman Adams, July 4, 1958, DDE Website.

¹⁵ "Dew Line Story," Movie Scripts, RG306, Entry A1 1098, box 9, NARA. National Archives, *Radar: The Dew Line Story, 1958*. ARC: 52896, 306.6699, (Amazon.com). The film was included in the USIS Film Catalogue in Korea (1967). Again, its production was not in time for the Japanese USIS catalogue (1959) so it is not clear whether it was also shown in Japan.

bitter cold climate of the Arctic. Roads were built, snow was cleared out of the construction sites, water and electric supplies were developed, shelters for the construction crew were built, and finally, radar and radio equipments were installed. The crew erected radio antennas outside during the summer, and installed indoor electric equipments during the winter. The construction took thirty-two months, and by the second winter, "life on the Dew Line had become pretty civilized." The workers' quarters were "a pleasant room which had quite a few of the comforts of home," such as good meals cooked by a professional chef, baseball, table-tennis, poker game, reading and music.

On July 31, 1957, the Dew Line was officially declared operational. The film explains that the Dew Line "has done more than provide a vital warning system" — it has "conquered the far northern wilderness." Its "historical role" was "opening up ... of a vast new frontier above the Arctic Circle, the untapped resources of which we have as yet barely glimpsed." In other words, the significance of the Dew Line was not only providing defense against Communist attack but also marking the footsteps of U.S. "civilization" on the Arctic frontier. "Conquering the wilderness," an expression alluding to America's frontier past, seems to be used quite intentionally. Just like the other USIS films introduced above, *Dew Line Story* emphasized how closely Alaska (and the Arctic zone in general) was tied to the U.S. mainland, not only militarily but also economically and even culturally.

Conclusion

My paper has demonstrated that USIS films emphasized the economic, cultural, and military integration of Alaska and Hawaii into the mainland U.S., thereby regarding the northern Pacific as the U.S. sphere of influence. At the same time, these two states were portrayed as factors to make the U.S. more attractive, by adding to cultural diversity, natural resources, and tourism attractions. Alaska and Hawaii, as important military outposts in the Pacific, literally became bastion

against Communism. They also formed, however, the frontline of cultural and psychological Cold War. Alaska and Hawaii had multiple propaganda values in the eyes of the U.S. government. They symbolized U.S. hegemony in the Pacific; they highlighted diversity and racial tolerance in U.S. society; they offered natural beauty and tourist attractions; and they supported the American consensus of classless homogeneity. Alaska and Hawaii, therefore, provided ideal themes of USIS films.

The very racial and cultural diversity of Alaska and Hawaii, however, could pose a volatile issue of "Who are the Americans?" While USIS films celebrated diversity of Hawaiian society on the hand, loyalty of the diverse people in Hawaii became the focus of controversy in the government discussion on statehood, on the other. Those who supported statehood took up native Hawaiians' wartime contribution as the proof of their "American-ness." Similarly, USIS films portrayed Native Alaskan people as integral part of the new state, and a factor to enrich American cultural diversity. USIA felt it necessary, however, to show them celebrating the Fourth of July, or cooperating with the construction of Dew Line, to demonstrate their "American-ness." In other words, these people might disturb the government-prescribed images of American unity and integrity if they were filmed fishing salmon or hunting seals. Ethnic diversity was a double-edged sword in the U.S. Cold War public diplomacy. To celebrate diversity, non-white people's bodies needed to be carefully policed and controlled. Their "American-ness" was proved only by the symbolic acts of serving the military, celebrating the Fourth of July, or helping to build military facilities. This ironically reveals how shaky and artificial the notion of "American-ness" was, and foreshadows the various Hawaiian sovereignty movements burgeoning in the following decades. In 1993, the U.S. government officially issued an apology to the native Hawaiian people for the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy one hundred years before.