

INTERVIEW OF PEDRO Q. DELA CRUZ

by Deanne C. Siemer and Howard P. Willens

April 11, 1995

- Siemer: The Secretary of Commerce, Pedro Q. Dela Cruz, has agreed to be interviewed for this project. Mr. Dela Cruz, could you tell us about your family history? Your mother's family and your father's family?
- Dela Cruz: Well, basically, my mother and my father are both Chamorros. Our family is not originally from the Commonwealth. My grandfather migrated from Guam in the early 1900s. So has my mother's side.
- Siemer: What is your mother's family name?
- Dela Cruz: The main name is Quitugua. But this is after the second marriage of my grandfather. My grandfather married a family that was already from Rota. That's how we came here. And I was born in 1946. At an early age in my schooling, I moved to Guam.
- Siemer: Your family moved originally from Guam to Rota?
- Dela Cruz: This is my grandfather.
- Siemer: So the family was then on Rota?
- Dela Cruz: Yes. And then I was born on Rota. When I was in the fourth grade, I moved to Guam and I attended my primary education in Guam. This is elementary school. Then high school. Then after that I went to the States.
- Siemer: Where did you go in the States?
- Dela Cruz: New Mexico. And I majored in economics and sociology.
- Siemer: At the University of New Mexico?
- Dela Cruz: At Western New Mexico University.
- Siemer: What years were you there?
- Dela Cruz: I was there from 1966 through 1969.
- Siemer: And what did you do when you came back in 1969?
- Dela Cruz: I was hired directly after graduation from the college in the States at that time.
- Siemer: For the Trust Territory government?
- Dela Cruz: Right.
- Siemer: And where were you working at that time?
- Dela Cruz: I was working for the Marianas District.
- Siemer: In Saipan?
- Dela Cruz: Yes.
- Siemer: Who was your boss at that time?
- Dela Cruz: My boss at that time actually was Dave Maratita. Then he was moved out and I became the district economic development officer reporting to the District Administrator, Frank Ada.

- Siemer: What kind of economic development work was the TT government doing at that time?
- Dela Cruz: During TT time mainly what we're doing was promoting a lot of exports in agricultural products to Guam. It actually had a beginning when the Trust Territory moved into the Marianas during 1962. We were very much involved in doing a lot of the economic planning. This is the Five Year Plan for the Commonwealth. And also I served at that time as the Chairman of the Foreign Investment Board.
- Siemer: How long had you worked in that capacity?
- Dela Cruz: I worked in that capacity for six years.
- Siemer: How long were you the economic officer working for the TT?
- Dela Cruz: Well, I started off in 1969 and then I left that office when I was appointed Director in 1978, so almost a 10 year period.
- Siemer: So in 1978 you went to work for the Commonwealth government?
- Dela Cruz: Yes.
- Siemer: And that was in the Department of Natural Resources?
- Dela Cruz: Right.
- Siemer: So, you were working in the Trust Territory government at the time that the Covenant was negotiated?
- Dela Cruz: Yes.
- Willens: Let me ask about the time when you were working with David Maratita and as Chairman of the Foreign Investment Board. As I understand it, the District Administrator had a Foreign Investment Board that made recommendations up to the TTPI regarding requests for foreign investment?
- Dela Cruz: Yes.
- Willens: Did you believe that the TTPI was favorably inclined toward foreign investment in the Northern Marianas in the late 1960s and the early 1970s?
- Dela Cruz: No. In fact, being the Chairman of the Foreign Investment Board, I had to really try to convince the Trust Territory government at that time that in order for the Northern Marianas to move forward, we should adopt a favorable investment climate.
- Willens: And was there opposition to that in the TTPI?
- Dela Cruz: Well, not much in a sense, but during that time the TTPI was a little bit more cautious of the type of investments that they wanted to approve. And the only type of investment that they wanted to approve was sort of U.S.-owned food corporations. But I had to try to convince them that the Marianas is in the vicinity of the Orient, and we should gear ourselves to the development of all our neighboring nations. We started out essentially real slow and then as we progressed we have approved a lot of investments. Like for example, Duty Free Shoppers. When we processed and reviewed the permit for Duty Free Shoppers, for example, there were a lot of objections.
- Siemer: Opposition because there was no local ownership?
- Dela Cruz: No, because of the fact that they are afraid that if Duty Free comes in, that that would wipe out their investments. But I came out and said this would, in fact, increase and expand their opportunities. And then the same thing with the hotels. Because at that time, you know, the people were sort of very closed. They just don't want anybody to come in

because they're afraid that their business, that commerce itself, would be taken away from them. It took us a lot of effort, you know, trying to sell our ideas that that's not the case.

Willens: There was opposition from Joeten Enterprises?

Dela Cruz: Joeten Enterprises and practically all the members of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce at that time. And then the government itself, through the influence of local businesses, at that time [was] trying to stall that.

Willens: Who tried to stall it? The District Administrator or the TTPI?

Dela Cruz: TTPI. In fact, there were some court cases in which I was named as a defendant in my capacity as the Chairman of the Foreign Investment Board.

Willens: Was there a challenge to your proposal that money had to be put up by the concessionaire that was going to be used to help build the terminal?

Dela Cruz: No.

Willens: Where did that come from?

Dela Cruz: Well. Say that again?

Willens: Well, wasn't there some requirement that a million dollars be provided by the concessionaire in order to contribute to the funds to build the terminal?

Dela Cruz: No. In fact, the terminal, that was when there was a bid. That was a bid status. I was also a member of the [Airport Authority] at that time. And Duty Free came in with their proposal to advance \$6 million as pre-payment.

Willens: What happened?

Dela Cruz: And this is what happened. This is how the first airport terminal was built, because of that. What we did was we took that money and we placed in a local bank in an escrow. At that time we were getting as much as 9-12 percent interest per year for \$6 million. That's a lot of investment. And as a result of that interest alone, we were able to expand. So those are the things we tried to go out and try to explain to them—the multiplier effect of those investments. Let me just say that it was a totally different type of thinking; it was very provincial. You know I hate to say that, but it was very provincial. But then after a few years of their operation, a lot of people are being employed and then we see the expansion that we see now. Even those people who objected to us, their operations have expanded about ten or twelve-fold. It was just that there was no vision, actually.

Willens: In 1974, the Secretary of the Interior announced a change in foreign investment policy.

Dela Cruz: Right. In 1974, it changed the whole concept and American citizens, U.S. corporations, do not have to go through the Foreign Investment Board.

Siemer: Prior to that.

Dela Cruz: Prior to that they have to go through the Foreign Investment Board.

Siemer: Everyone? Everyone who wanted to invest had to get a permit from you?

Dela Cruz: Right.

Willens: Did the change in U.S. policy foster increased economic development?

Dela Cruz: Very little.

Willens: Why was that?

- Dela Cruz: Because the fact, like I said, that the area along here, our vicinity here, it's [in] closer proximity to Japanese investment, Hong Kong investment, Taiwan investment, and not this. U.S. investment here would have to deal with the time difference, the distance and all this. That is the main factor.
- Willens: It was during your time as Chairman of the Board that permissions were given for both the Saipan Continental and the Intercontinental hotels. What do you recall about any controversy associated with those two hotels?
- Dela Cruz: Not much. Except after it was built, it was sold. But actually the deal was—when Continental was awarded the route—that they're supposed to build hotels within the six districts. That's why the Continental hotel was built here. It was not because Continental wanted to build a hotel, but because that was part of the package.
- Willens: How about the Intercontinental?
- Dela Cruz: The Intercontinental Hotel was built through a group which David Sablan formed and they associated themselves with Intercontinental. That is the Pan Am investment.
- Willens: While you worked for the District Administration, did you become affiliated with one of the political parties?
- Dela Cruz: Well, I was impartial.
- Willens: Let me put it this way. Did you have any views in the late 1960s and the early 1970s about the Popular Party desire to have separate status negotiations with the United States?
- Dela Cruz: No, I don't think so.
- Willens: Did you have any position at the time as to whether separate status for the Marianas was a good idea or a bad idea?
- Dela Cruz: At the time?
- Willens: Yes.
- Dela Cruz: Of course. I felt that it was the right move. Because we talked about it. We knew the reason why we wanted to separate from the rest of Micronesia. You look at Micronesia overall and, being an economist, we know and we see how much contribution each of the districts are contributing to the revenue of the Trust Territory. You look at the Marshalls—because of the revenue from Kwajalein—and the Marianas; these were the two main contributors to the revenues for the whole Trust Territory. And then during the years of the Congress of Micronesia, we have seen a lot of the developments that are centered in the large areas, you know, where there's more representation. You know the construction of the Palau Bridge, which was useless at that time; the construction of various projects in Truk; and all this was of very little use. We felt at that time that we have been—let's just use this word—that we have been used. We talked at that time, the only way for us to move forward is to separate, to be on our own. And at that time also you know we were very much pro-U.S.
- Willens: Do you remember ever reviewing the recommendations of Robert Nathan Associates, which filed a report here in 1966?
- Dela Cruz: Yes.
- Willens: What was your assessment of that Report when you looked at it?
- Dela Cruz: Well, you know, the Nathan Report actually, if you look at it, became obsolete before we can even implement it. That was one of the issues also that led us to be on our own,

because we felt like we can never move, we cannot move, if we are to be together with the rest of Micronesia. It was not just a political issue at that time. At that time when we decided to move in the other direction, there was no politics at all.

Siemer: In the sense that most people supported that view?

Dela Cruz: Oh, yes. Very much.

Willens: One of the points that the Nathan Report made was that potential investors are concerned about making commitments in the Northern Marianas until they know what kind of future political status was going to be implemented.

Dela Cruz: And it is still the same thought right now.

Willens: Could you elaborate on that?

Dela Cruz: I just wrote a letter to the Senate yesterday. This is in regards to what they're doing in terms of trying to do some piecemeal legislation. If the government is not steady or firm on the direction that we're giving, then we're not giving the right direction to the investor. This is one of the same issues here—especially Article 12. I still say Article 12 is one of the best provisions that we ever did, because Dr. Palacios and I worked on that thing in [the] Natural Resources [Committee]. And I've been discussing this issue with these delegates [to the Third Constitutional Convention]. I said: "Don't touch it, just leave it the way it is." It's just a matter of each of the individual attorneys that are trying to either—let's say, that it is a difference in interpretation. And I believe that the court has made some decisions which are favorable and which are conclusive of what we were discussing. I hope, and I even told the Legislature, that in order for the matter to be resolved that legislation should be introduced requiring the creation of a real estate board of licensing. This way it will keep up some standards.

Siemer: To license all the people who deal in real estate?

Dela Cruz: Right. Because right now every Tom, Dick and Harry can be a realtor. My friend was up there, you know, he can find somebody, and he says, "Hey, I want to sell him your land so I'll get my commission." And in the end, you know, the landowner gets the lease, especially the way the Japanese do it whereby the front man is actually making all the deals. But actually it is not his money. But if you establish some standards, I believe Article 12 should stay the way it is and I don't want it changed.

Willens: Just a question or two about the Covenant. Did you have any views in 1975 when the Covenant up for a plebiscite as to whether you thought it was a good document or had some weaknesses?

Dela Cruz: Well, you know, any document, it doesn't matter what, there are some good things about it and some weaknesses. That's why there are some provisions for renegotiation. And I believe right now, and that's where the big problem is, that the U.S. Congress is trying to legislate some issues which it has dealt with in the Covenant. This is the way it is. But some members of Congress are trying to overrule that. If we're going to have to oppose those things, we might as well go back and renegotiate the Covenant again. And I believe the renegotiation would be another five years.

Willens: It might well be.

Dela Cruz: Then we got this 902 negotiation and this 501, 502, which are laws that are applicable and all this. But the sanctity of that document has to be respected.

- Willens: Did you feel in 1975 that the people had sufficient opportunity to know what was involved in the Covenant before they voted on it?
- Dela Cruz: I don't think so. You know why? I don't think the sophistication of the people at that time really—they didn't so much want to know what the documents are; they just wanted to become part of the United States. And that was the euphoria. And I use the word euphoria in a very strong sense.
- Willens: Do you recall what the basis was for opposing the Covenant in 1975?
- Dela Cruz: Opposing?
- Willens: Yes. There were some active politicians who opposed the Covenant.
- Dela Cruz: Well, you know, I believe that those people who have opposed the Covenant, they foresee that there might be some problems like this now.
- Siemer: What was your own feeling at the time about the Covenant?
- Dela Cruz: Well, at that time I supported it. And I knew what we were going into.
- Siemer: Back then, at the time of the Covenant, did you have an appreciation of the powers that had been given to Rota and Tinian and how those might work out?
- Dela Cruz: Well, let me go back to my feeling about the Covenant. You have to understand that I grew up in Guam. I picked up the way I do things. I'm very used to it. And furthermore, I went to school in the United States. So you see there's that partiality on my part, knowing all of those things.
- Siemer: When you ran as a delegate for the Constitutional Convention, was that the first time that you had run for political office?
- Dela Cruz: Yes.
- Siemer: Which party were you affiliated with at the time?
- Dela Cruz: During the Constitutional Convention, there was no party.
- Siemer: There was a good deal of campaigning done by the political parties, though, at the time.
- Dela Cruz: Well, you know, we were supposed to be grouped together. You know, this time also, there are some groups.
- Siemer: Why did you decide to become a candidate?
- Dela Cruz: You know, I was very much aware of the concept and the work of the Constitutional Convention, because briefly I helped and was involved in helping the Constitutional Convention for the Congress of Micronesia.
- Siemer: The previous year in 1975?
- Dela Cruz: Previous year.
- Siemer: What did you do with that?
- Dela Cruz: You know, sort of just helping around. And I thought that that would be a good experience on my part and also to try to formalize and draw up a constitution, which is the original document, and that got me interested actually.
- Siemer: What do you recall about the campaign?
- Dela Cruz: At the time?
- Siemer: Yes.

- Dela Cruz: We didn't campaign that much.
- Siemer: What did you do yourself? What do you recall?
- Dela Cruz: Well, I went out, you know, drew up a small group, pocket meetings. That's about it.
- Siemer: Once the election was over, did you have any dealings with the pre-convention committee?
- Dela Cruz: No.
- Siemer: How was it determined which committee the Rota delegates would be on?
- Dela Cruz: Well, you know, I didn't even know how that decision was made. It was just that I was selected to serve in Natural Resources and Finance. In fact, I served as the Vice-Chairman for both of them.
- Siemer: You were on the Finance Committee presumably because you were an economist.
- Dela Cruz: Right.
- Siemer: ... and you knew about tax and debt and some of the things that the Finance Committee was going to concern?
- Dela Cruz: Yes.
- Siemer: Once the delegates had been selected from Rota, did the delegates get together before the Convention to talk about what they wanted to do?
- Dela Cruz: We met twice. And the main issue there that we had to deal with, which I did not support, was to try to get more power or to create a mini-government for the islands of Rota and Tinian. And that was actually the start of our disagreements among the delegates from Rota and then Tinian, how we wanted to run local government. Because I felt at that time that the central government must be strong. We had to have a strong central government in order to run the entire system. I thought at that time, if they are to create a local government, it would be the same concept as what it is in the United States where you have your county government, mayorship, and your county and all that. I tried to explain that to them, but they didn't have any concept at all of the differences between the city government, the county, and the State.
- Siemer: Different levels of power or ...
- Dela Cruz: ... at each and every level. Yes. What they wanted to do is to have what is run in Rota is Rota, what is in Tinian is Tinian. But see, those things don't work. Because, like for example, I've been the Secretary of Commerce and I issue the public rules and regulations that would be uniform within Saipan, Rota and Tinian so that there's established policy. I cannot be making some regulations here, and then the Mayor or someone on Rota or Tinian can make separate regulations, because we're all in one government. And that's where they fail to understand.
- Siemer: Were there others on the Rota delegation who had the same or similar position to yours?
- Dela Cruz: Yes.
- Siemer: Who was that?
- Dela Cruz: David Atalig and Pete Atalig.
- Siemer: They had both been educated in the United States as well, had they not?
- Dela Cruz: Yes, in the United States.

- Siemer: How about anybody on the Tinian delegation? Was there anyone there who shared your views?
- Dela Cruz: I believe there were only two of them.
- Siemer: Who's that?
- Dela Cruz: I think Henry Hofschneider and the other one was Esteven King.
- Siemer: Had Henry been educated in the United States?
- Dela Cruz: I'm not sure. But that was the start of our disagreement, because they felt that we should follow their concept. But I told them it's not going to work. Because if that's the case, then Rota should be on its own. Tinian should be on its own. It is just that it makes it hard to try to manage and try to run a government when you have that system. The state of Hawaii runs well. And I keep telling them, I said: "Look at Hawaii. Why can't it be run that way? You know there's a State and a mayor." The mayor runs the local programs. But see, to me, so as long as they are being financed by appropriations by the Legislature, and they are running the show and they are representing our services, they are employees of operations of the Commonwealth government. The mayor's office should not even be getting financing or appropriations from the Legislature. They should raise their own revenue. As long as that thing has not been resolved—like the person who said, I draw the line in the sand, you're still going to have the overlapping. And it's not going to be resolved.
- Siemer: Was there any document at the time before the Convention that kind of laid out what the Rota plan was?
- Dela Cruz: No. None.
- Siemer: Mostly was just talking?
- Dela Cruz: Mostly just talking. It was just Senator Manglona and his brother trying to draw a plan of how everything works.
- Siemer: When the Rota delegation came to Saipan for the Convention, were there then meetings before the Convention started to try to explain what the Rota delegates wanted?
- Dela Cruz: No.
- Siemer: So the Convention started and shortly after that, five or six days after that, Ben Manglona made a speech announcing what the Rota delegates wanted. That was the first time that people began to hear what the plan was?
- Dela Cruz: And, in fact, Ben Manglona made that speech on his own. The good Senator did not even ask us our opinion.
- Siemer: You had not seen it before he gave it?
- Dela Cruz: No. You see, it so happened that they have this attitude that when they speak, they speak for the people. This is why we tell them: "Speak for yourself."
- Siemer: Benjamin Manglona certainly sounded like he was speaking for the Rota delegates.
- Dela Cruz: Up until now, he thinks that when he speaks he speaks for the people of Rota. And that's where our differences are. And remember the time when we, and I voted, David voted, and Pete voted, for different government arrangements to be established? That we went along with a strong central government and they walked out? They expected us to walk out. But I said: "Hey, I'm not walking out."

- Siemer: Why did they expect you to walk out if you had been of a different opinion from the very beginning?
- Dela Cruz: Because they thought that whatever they do, that we will do.
- Siemer: They were fairly senior at the time, the two Manglona brothers, and you were somewhat more junior at the time. Was that why they thought you would follow?
- Dela Cruz: Yes. I presume that was the case.
- Siemer: Justice Atalig told us that they asked his father to speak to him. Did anyone do that to you?
- Dela Cruz: Yes. Justice Atalig's mother is my first cousin. They called up his father and his father flew up to Saipan. His father took the three of us, David, him and myself, out to try to tell us about this. We said: "Hey, sorry, but this is the way we feel. We feel that this is how the government should work."
- Siemer: What were his father's arguments? Why did he think that this was something you should do?
- Dela Cruz: Well, his father was saying that because of the affiliation, the family—you have to understand also that Mayor Manglona, and Benjamin Manglona, they were all one family. They're all my first cousins. So he thought that bringing him in here, being the Mayor at that time, would change our position. And if we would have changed our position at that time, he would have been worse off because of the separation of authority and responsibilities would have been more of a legal tangle than what it is now.
- Willens: Well, it's become a more complicated relationship because of Amendment 25.
- Dela Cruz: And that's another one that came in. You know, Amendment 25 is just another monkey that they threw in. I was telling them that if they are to stand as local governments, it would be a separate entity. The Mayor would have to be dealing just within his municipality. He will have his own Council.
- Siemer: From the tax revenues that he raised?
- Dela Cruz: From the tax revenues he raised. And he can do whatever he damn please with that. But so as long as he is getting appropriations for the Commonwealth-wide measures, then that becomes a central government issue.
- Siemer: Were the Rota delegates who did not agree with the view that you and the two Ataligs espoused, were they concerned that the Commonwealth Legislature would not be fair with Rota? Back then before any of this was formed, and before any of these decisions were made, were they concerned that no matter what government was set up it wouldn't be fair to Rota even when the Marianas was running its own government?
- Dela Cruz: I wasn't even sure what they were thinking. It is just that they were sort of trying to ensure their future career. That's my belief.
- Siemer: Then that is a traditional political view.
- Dela Cruz: Yes.
- Siemer: That you accommodate change in a way that will perpetuate your power. That's perfectly understandable
- Dela Cruz: Right. Sure.
- Siemer: ... way of going about it.

- Dela Cruz: And that is what politics is all about here—trying to perpetuate your power and trying to make sure that your power is passed on to your relatives.
- Siemer: Let me just ask you a couple of side questions. OTSP, the Office of Transition Studies and Planning.
- Dela Cruz: That's a waste of funds.
- Siemer: I was going to ask you if you had dealings with them?
- Dela Cruz: I did not have any dealings with them. To me, that was a waste of funds. The plan that they did, the economic development plan, became obsolete before [it was] even used.
- Siemer: Had you had an opportunity to comment on that or work on that at all?
- Dela Cruz: You know, I had an opportunity to talk to those people that were hired to do the economic development plan. I even argued with them because at that time what they wanted to do—the plan itself was to establish some small industries all over the island.
- Willens: What kind of industries?
- Dela Cruz: Light industries. And I told them, it's not going to work. I said what we got to do is to try to invite large industries, viable large industries so that the revenue, so that there will be room for—well, let me just say this, that they were discouraging. Okay, if you read their report, they try to discourage large industrial-type of businesses. They only wanted to have small industries. And then the plans, the overall economic development plan, the land use plan that they did, all just became obsolete.
- Siemer: Was any of that used once... .
- Dela Cruz: None.
- Siemer: ... the Constitutional government was formed?
- Dela Cruz: None. It was just shelved. There were five plans that have been done up until now and none of them have been used.
- Siemer: Counting the Nathan plan?
- Dela Cruz: The Nathan plan, yes, right.
- Siemer: The OTSP also had some responsibility with respect the funding for the Constitutional Convention and in some sense they had the purse strings with respect to the Convention. Were there any problems with any of that administration that you recall?
- Dela Cruz: No.
- Siemer: The Constitutional Convention ran pretty smoothly?
- Dela Cruz: Well, you know, I wasn't involved with the financial [matters] at that time so I wasn't really paying much attention to whether bills were paid.
- Siemer: But the arrangements that were made for delegates and so on seemed to work out alright? You folks from Rota had an additional problem because you had to go back and forth to consult with your constituents. And I wondered if anything that OTSP did affected your ability to do that?
- Dela Cruz: Not that I recall.
- Siemer: How about your recollections of relations with the press at the time? Occasionally there would be an executive session or there would be a session where some of the Rota delegates would speak their mind.

- Dela Cruz: What press?
- Siemer: Well, it would show up in the *Marianas Variety*.
- Dela Cruz: There was no *Marianas Variety* at that time. There was practically no press on the island at that time. In fact, at that time you could scream your head off, and nobody cares.
- Siemer: There were some reports in the *Marianas Variety* at the time of what delegates were thinking and what constitutional issues there were, and I'm wondering what your recollection was as to whether that had any effect on your work?
- Dela Cruz: Well, the only thing that really got in my mind was when the late Senator Joe Cruz from Tinian—in fact, he died about two months ago—made his first delegate proposal to establish the Office of Lieutenant Governor for Rota and Tinian. I thought that was a funny proposal—which is, how many lieutenant governors do you want?
- Siemer: In fact, there was a proposal for lieutenant governors supervising Commonwealth services on Rota and Tinian. At the same time there was a proposal for mayors to work and supervise these services.
- Dela Cruz: You know, I'll tell you this, that if lieutenant governors for Rota, Tinian, Saipan [had been] established to supervise all these government services, I think that would have been better than the mayors.
- Siemer: Do you?
- Dela Cruz: I think so. I thought it was funny at first, but then let the mayor just run his program.
- Siemer: If the lieutenant governors ran on the same ticket as the governor, they would all be from the same party?
- Dela Cruz: Right. I don't care whether they ran on the same ticket. But at least it shows where the delineation of power is, the authority. But I keep saying, someone should look at the way Hawaii does it. It works well.
- Siemer: Hawaii's State powers as opposed to the federal.
- Dela Cruz: Yes. The State power within the counties, county of Maui, county of Hawaii, all this.
- Siemer: Oh, I see, State powers opposed to the county powers.
- Dela Cruz: Right. So, you could establish a county or two. County of Tinian, County of Rota, Saipan can be maybe two or three counties.
- Siemer: One of the things that David Maratita tried to do was to do away with local government altogether. He made a long speech to that effect but was not able to get very much support for that in the Committee. One of the other proposals made, as I recall by John Tenorio, was for a professional executive in charge of essentially county governments. He had seen that model when he was in the United States.
- Dela Cruz: What was that?
- Siemer: His idea was that you'd have a government on Rota and Tinian and Saipan, but it would be run by an appointed professional executive, instead of an elected executive, and that didn't seem to get anywhere either.
- Dela Cruz: No.
- Siemer: When the mayor proposal was discussed, there was also discussion about municipal councils and whether they should be continued.

- Dela Cruz: Yes. In fact, there was a decision that it was abolished.
- Siemer: What was your view about that?
- Dela Cruz: Well, my view at that time was to abolish it because we were trying to create a strong central government. That way laws and legislation can be established. The less laws that we deal with, the better. And then we thought the local legislation can be enacted by the respective legislative delegations. And that's where the main problem is right now with Amendment 25. There are established municipal councils but they do not have any legislative authority. Yet, if local legislation is to be enacted, it is the respective legislative delegations that are enacting those [laws].
- Siemer: They have the power?
- Dela Cruz: They have the power. You know, so to me, the municipal council is just a body like a goddam, excuse my language, boy scout club, you know, or a—what do you call it this business of—social club or bowling club.
- Siemer: One of the constitutional provisions that you had a lot to do with was the provision that extended professional licenses. Do you remember that debate? When that first came up you were actually chairing the Finance Committee at the time. Ben Fitial was off the island. I wondered what you can recall now about that discussion, which I think started with extending the licenses for health professionals?
- Dela Cruz: You know, we talked at that time that health professionals are to be governed by professional licenses. And in particular, because of the experience that I had before, being the Chairman of the Foreign Investment Board, that when such applications to provide health care like this, that the Board at that time was at a loss of who is actually to license them—whether they go to the Foreign Investment Board or they would just go direct. Because at that time the Trust Territory Code allows the licensing be done by the District Director of Health Services himself.
- Siemer: In each district?
- Dela Cruz: In each district.
- Siemer: In the Trust Territory?
- Dela Cruz: Yes. So that's why we thought that in order to have a more controlled pattern of licensing and to keep the standards up, a professional board of licensing should be established. Not just on the doctors but also attorneys, professional engineers, and all that. Because probably that was from the experience I had, that there was no system and no way to license these professionals.
- Siemer: Dr. Palacios and Dr. Camacho [delegates to the Convention] held professional credentials that were not M.D. credentials in the United States.
- Dela Cruz: They are M.O.s. [medical officers]
- Siemer: Right. And Dr. Palacios introduced a delegate proposal that came before your committee to continue those licenses after the Commonwealth government came into effect no matter what.
- Dela Cruz: To grandfather them.
- Siemer: Yes.
- Dela Cruz: Well, that is usually the case, you know, since we grandfathered all of those.

- Siemer: You were, I believe, successful at the time in suggesting at the time that not be a constitutional provision but ...
- Dela Cruz: But [as provided] by law.
- Siemer: ... be put off in the schedule on transitional matters..
- Dela Cruz: Transitional matters, yes.
- Siemer: Remember there was a transition schedule at the end?
- Dela Cruz: Yes.
- Siemer: And after you were successful doing that, then Felipe Atalig introduced a delegate proposal covering nurses and teachers. He wanted their licenses extended.
- Dela Cruz: I don't think we followed that.
- Siemer: No, you were successful in getting that one out.
- Dela Cruz: Getting that out, yes.
- Siemer: And then after you successfully did that, Pete Ogo, who was a member of your Finance Committee, and Dr. Camacho, who was also a member of your Finance Committee, came back and they wanted the doctors licenses reinstated.
- Dela Cruz: But you see we acknowledged that the doctors are a different group. They are considered more of a professional group than nurses and teachers. Because at that time, we also acknowledged the attorneys don't have to come to us to get their license. They could get their license to practice law by the chief judge of the High Court. So we established that those are the licensing authorities.
- Siemer: Did Dr. Palacios ever come and talk to you about this?
- Dela Cruz: No. But you know we acknowledged it actually.
- Siemer: Were people concerned that if the United States medical standards were imposed that there simply wouldn't be any qualified doctors on the island?
- Dela Cruz: True.
- Siemer: One of the things that happened when the Convention began to consider each of these articles was a hearing, which I think that you chaired, in which some doctors actually appeared and testified. Do you recall anything about that? Who came before you?
- Dela Cruz: Oh, I think Dr. Kaipat came before us Dr. Chong. Dr. Peck at that time was the Trust Territory Director of Health Services. Dr. Peck was the one that really got us going on that.
- Siemer: Do you recall what he wanted you to do?
- Dela Cruz: It was to acknowledge that the medical corps within the Trust Territory are capable people, and that if we don't grandfather them, that there would be a problem after that. Dr. Peck is in Rota now. He's staying there now.
- Siemer: You and Howard Mantel got together to put together some language that would accomplish this.
- Dela Cruz: Yes. This is why I asked about him, because we worked together in that way.
- Siemer: You crafted some language that continued the incorporation of corporations and continued the health professional licenses.

- Dela Cruz: Yes.
- Siemer: And then it came to the floor. When it came to the floor, Dr. Palacios and Dr. Camacho were not happy with what you had done, apparently because what they wanted was a provision that their licenses not only were going to be continued but could never be taken away. They wanted that in the Constitution and they seemed to be particularly after you to get that done for them. Do you remember the discussion or debate about continuing their licenses so that they could not be taken away?
- Dela Cruz: I don't recall that.
- Siemer: Let me show you the constitutional provision, the way it came out.
- Dela Cruz: Oh, the Journal. Let me see that Journal. You know what, I used to have those Journals. And you see I moved so much. I moved from here to Rota, and then to the States, and then from States and back. I couldn't find them anymore. Because what we wanted to do here is that all these corporations, which have already been incorporated under the Trust Territory, won't have to be [newly] recognized as legitimate corporations doing business in the Commonwealth.
- Siemer: And that wasn't controversial.
- Dela Cruz: No, but the other controversy was also with these land surveyors, the ship captains, and health professionals. Or, except for incompetent, unethical conduct, yes. We thought that these people are not to the standards, that their licenses can be revoked.
- Siemer: How did the land surveyors come to be included in this?
- Dela Cruz: Well, you know, to understand during that time there were no standards for land surveyors to be licensed. They get their license only from the Trust Territory Land Surveyor Board [as] to their training. And we thought at that time that they should continue serving. But then again, after a few years, they would have to take the test. Right now they have to take the test.
- Siemer: Let me show you a couple of pieces of the debate with respect to this. One is on page 275 and then one is on the next page 276, where you were quite eloquent with respect to your committee's wish to keep this simple.
- Dela Cruz: My purpose at that time was just to protect only certain licenses that our people have.
- Siemer: Take a look at the piece on the next page, I think it's page 276, just over one page here.
- Dela Cruz: You know, if you look at it, our doctors at that time were Fiji-trained and those were to British standards. And if they are licensed, and they grant it under the British standards, this is why I was very adamant, that they must be as qualified as anyone. Let me give one example. The Chief Judge of the Superior Court, Alex Castro, is a graduate of the law school in New Guinea. Alex never went to a law school in the United States. And that is a British standard, and he is a pretty good damn lawyer. So I say, it doesn't matter where you go to school.
- Siemer: Once the subject of health professionals was on the table, however, then several other people like Jose Borja wanted protection for ship officers.
- Dela Cruz: Well, I guess because Joe Borja was very partial.
- Siemer: And then somebody wanted protection for land surveyors.
- Dela Cruz: Yes.
- Siemer: I wonder who it was who wanted protection for trial assistants?

- Dela Cruz: And then I thought I said that was going down too much.
- Siemer: You did?
- Dela Cruz: Yes. You know, this [the Journal] is something we should have. I used to have all this.
- Siemer: When the Constitutional Convention was finished, you had a copy of the Journal and all of the documents [from the Convention]?
- Dela Cruz: I had them. I even had all the copies of the delegate proposals. But like I said, I've moved so much. I moved to Rota, and then we went to the States with my family.
- Siemer: When did you move to the States?
- Dela Cruz: We moved back to the States in 1984.
- Siemer: Were you working there?
- Dela Cruz: No, I was on my own there. That was when the economy really went bad and I thought I'd move back to Rota again. And that's why I'm here.
- Siemer: How long were you in the United States?
- Dela Cruz: Oh, it was about 6 years.
- Siemer: 1984 to 1990?
- Dela Cruz: No, I'm sorry. 1986 to 1993.
- Siemer: Oh, so you just came back recently?
- Dela Cruz: Yes.
- Siemer: Where were you in the United States? Where did you live?
- Dela Cruz: Santa Fe, New Mexico. That is where my wife is from. Actually that was an opportune time, because our two boys were just going to high school. And then I got involved in some investments there which I am still part of, a bank that we established in Belen, New Mexico. This is a city south of Albuquerque.
- Siemer: South of Albuquerque?
- Dela Cruz: B-E-L-E-N. Yes. Belen, New Mexico. I got involved with that because of a friend. And it's going very well.
- Siemer: One of the other subjects that you commented upon often were the special assistant positions—the special assistant for Chamorro affairs, the special assistant for Carolinian affairs.
- Dela Cruz: Well, I didn't like that, you know.
- Siemer: Why is that?
- Dela Cruz: Because you are very much aware that I just didn't like that from the beginning. Because once you start doing that, you polarize people. And then you try to draw a delineation of race. So if you're going to have to have a special assistant for Carolinians, you might as well have a special assistant for Chamorros, and have a special assistant for all people, and all that.
- Siemer: Why did the special assistant for Carolinian affairs pass? Most of the Chamorros were against it.
- Dela Cruz: I don't know. I guess just that they felt sorry for them. And it's not working, you know. It should be abolished actually.

- Willens: Why do you say it isn't working? Each Governor has appointed a special assistant for Carolinian affairs.
- Dela Cruz: Because of the fact that that was a constitutional requirement. But here it is. I haven't seen any concrete development that they have done.
- Willens: Do they organize special programs or issue publications?
- Dela Cruz: Publications are the only thing, you know, just a weekly paper.
- Willens: What's been your experience with the special assistant for indigenous affairs?
- Dela Cruz: Same thing.
- Willens: And the special assistant for women's affairs?
- Dela Cruz: Same thing.
- Willens: You think the Governor finds that these offices provide jobs for political supporters or friends?
- Dela Cruz: Well, the indigenous affairs office is a constitutional office under the Second Constitutional Convention. Like I said, if I had my way I would abolish them.
- Siemer: There were relatively few Carolinian delegates in the First Constitutional Convention, however. Only three I think—Mr. Limes, Mr. Igitol, and Mr. Fitial.
- Dela Cruz: Yes.
- Siemer: Was there a concern that the Carolinian community would vote against ratifying the Constitution if this provision was not in it?
- Dela Cruz: Yes, and it was a concern also they were supposed to be given some special privileges because of the elections, you know. Remember they are in the so-called group that could really swing the elections.
- Siemer: When the executive assistant for Carolinian affairs was debated in the Constitutional Convention, none of the Carolinian delegates came to its defense, but it passed anyway.
- Dela Cruz: Because like I said, votes.
- Siemer: Going back to the composition of the lower house, which is what caused your colleagues from Rota to walk out of the Convention, I want to go to the second part of that debate. The first part of that debate was over a relatively large house; it was 25 members for Saipan, three for Rota and two for Tinian. Then in the second part of the Convention there was an amendment suggesting 16 for Saipan, two for Rota and one for Tinian.
- Dela Cruz: And they would change that.
- Siemer: That's correct; to 12, 1, 1.
- Dela Cruz: Because it [the legislature as originally proposed] was very big. You know, the island vision at that time was that when we establish a government, we don't want a big government. We just wanted to have a government that's able to provide services. But it's the opposite now.
- Siemer: What do you mean?
- Dela Cruz: Government is so big in terms of the number of people working. And at the same time back then, they were thinking of trying to cap the salary of government officials.
- Siemer: What was your view of that?

- Dela Cruz: And I told them, I said: "Hey, don't. Let salaries be established on a composite price index. And it requires that. The first composite price index that we did was in 1977. That was when I was with the Marianas District, and then I left Commerce. It had been done, and we're going to try to do it now again. You know, those are the measures that should be used.
- Siemer: How many total employees are there in the government these days?
- Dela Cruz: I'm not real sure. I have to reference a copy of my letter to [Senator] Demapan yesterday. That will show you that is not improving.
- Willens: We have been off the record. Mr. Dela Cruz went to look at his book and said that as of 1990, 48 percent of the total work force worked for the government. And in response to my question whether it had grown or declined since 1990, Mr. Dela Cruz said that he thought it had grown.
- Dela Cruz: Had grown, yes. And if you look at this also, if you look at the total population of the island, it's the same thing, that 40 percent have high school level education and only 11 percent have college experience or higher degrees.
- Siemer: As of 1990?
- Dela Cruz: Right.
- Willens: You're reading from the Census of 1990?
- Dela Cruz: I'm reading from the Census. And this is the report that I put together.
- Willens: Well, why do you attach such significance to the minimum wage when even if it's increased gradually to the federal level, it basically only governs entry-level positions?
- Dela Cruz: I didn't catch you.
- Willens: Well, why do you attach so much significance to the minimum wage?
- Dela Cruz: Well, because of the fact that wages in the private sector are not better practically [as to] benefits and all that.
- Willens: You think that if the minimum wage was increased as has been proposed up to the federal standard that all the...
- Dela Cruz: Minimum wage to the federal standard, also to the standard industry classification (The SIC). That if we apply the same level of what a carpenter is making in the United States and here, that will encourage that. Let's say that a finishing carpenter makes as much as \$14 to \$16 [an hour in the States]. Here he'll be lucky if he gets four dollars.
- Siemer: Is the government absorbing many of the college graduates as well?
- Dela Cruz: Yes.
- Siemer: That's a drain also, is it not?
- Dela Cruz: It's a drain. You know, Deanne, in fact, right now I will pick up any college graduate with a degree in business and economics who walks in here.
- Willens: You will hire anyone who comes in with those degrees?
- Dela Cruz: Anyone who comes in, I will use them. Because right now I've got within my staff about five MBA's, two attorneys. About 80 percent of my staff are MBA and up.

- Siemer: Going back to your views at the time of the Constitutional Convention, as an economist, what did you think was going to happen under constitutional government? What did you expect with respect to the economy, if you can remember back then?
- Dela Cruz: Well, then I expected an expansion of industry, particularly because I was really concentrating more on an expansion of tourism. I saw that thing, and I knew it was going to happen.
- Siemer: Back in those days, did you think there would be a significant Japanese presence here?
- Dela Cruz: Oh, yes. You know, we acknowledged that since 1972.
- Siemer: And how about other delegates? Do you think that they appreciated that there would be a significant Japanese presence here?
- Dela Cruz: I'm not sure. But we knew that since working with economic development. And we would do a lot of investment promotion. We have more interest coming in from Japan, and I knew that was going to happen. But the only disappointment I had at that time was that the entry level of investment was really low.
- Siemer: What effect did you think the land provisions in the Constitution were going to have on that investment?
- Dela Cruz: First, I was very protective of land; knowing what would happen to land when there is investment. You know, that's the reason why I was very much in favor when Dr. Palacios and I started talking about land alienation.
- Siemer: What was Dr. Palacios' view at the time?
- Dela Cruz: Dr. Palacios' view at that time was that he was afraid that if we open this market, the land would just be bought up, right away. And by getting this Article 12 into the Constitution, we would protect land ownership in terms of land [speculators] and all this. Because we used the rationale—remember when we were discussing this—Dr. Palacios in fact sat right next to me. We usually discussed this, that here we have a family of 12, income of let's say about \$1,500 a year, land-rich. And here comes a Japanese, or just any Tom, Dick and Harry, who flashes out \$10,000 in cash. He says: "Mr. Diaz, I want to buy your land, want to use it, and I'll give you \$10,000." That was the biggest money that this guy has ever seen in his life. And he has worked for his life for \$1,000 a year. It would take him almost ten years to make that. You know, that's what we were afraid of. That's the reason why we pushed that [Article 12], not because we lacked confidence but because the land resources are very small.
- Siemer: There was a debate at one point about what the limitations should be on leases of land. One proposal was 25 years and another proposal was 40 years and so on. What was your view about that?
- Dela Cruz: My view at that time was that I wanted a long-term lease. Because if you would check in the Journal, my argument was that for a large investment you need to have perpetuity, know what I mean a long time-frame.
- Siemer: And that's what you saw coming, some large investments?
- Dela Cruz: Yes, right. Because, you cannot say I'm going to lease land from you just for five years, and what are you going to do with that? That's why we fought for the long-term. Not more than 40 [years]. 25 plus 15 for government but in terms of [private lease] it would be longer.

- Siemer: As an economist, what was your view of that 40 year lease? Did you think that that would be sufficient for big investment?
- Dela Cruz: That was sufficient at that time. And that's why I was happy that it was extended.
- Siemer: To 55 [years]?
- Dela Cruz: To 55. Because at that time I fought against the short term.
- Siemer: What was your view about the restrictions on selling homestead property?
- Dela Cruz: I liked that.
- Siemer: What was your expectation at the time, if those restrictions were not there? One restriction was you had to hold the land for three years to get title and then
- Dela Cruz: Another five years...
- Siemer: . . . to sell it.
- Dela Cruz: In fact we recommended that. Because we foresee already at that time that even when you get your homestead permit, you know, that homestead permit is sold already. And still is right now. Right now, I've seen some documents that they would lease this for a number of years, and all they have to do is pay a dollar, and then you issue it for sale.
- Siemer: Now those could be transactions among Chamorros or among Chamorros and Carolinians. Those don't necessarily have to be transactions with outsiders.
- Dela Cruz: Outsiders also, now.
- Siemer: Now, that's right.
- Dela Cruz: I've seen some, okay.
- Siemer: Did you think it would be a benefit to the economy requiring the homesteaders to keep their land?
- Dela Cruz: Well, you see, the reason why we did that was that those lands were public lands, to receive which was a privilege. Why should I sell a certain piece of property when I received that land in a privileged status? But then after you have completed all of your requirements, you have invested in the land and all that, and then afterward, you know, you will be allowed to do that.
- Siemer: Was it your view at the time that all the public land should be disseminated to the homestead program?
- Dela Cruz: No. I thought that the land use plans would be established for some homestead, some areas for industrial purposes, and other things.
- Siemer: What did you think at the time was going to happen in the Northern Islands? What kind of development did you think might happen there?
- Dela Cruz: Up there? Nothing.
- Siemer: There were a number of proposals to give the Northern Islands a mayor, and to deal with public services in the Northern Islands and so on. What was your view of that?
- Dela Cruz: Up until now my view is the same. I kept telling the District Administrator at that time and the Governor, bring everybody down here. It's very costly to maintain them and serve them every year. Because at that time my office was responsible for the quarterly field trip and for us to service those people, less than 20 people, it's costing us almost like eight to ten thousand dollars per quarter at that time, to charter a vessel and everything. I keep

telling them, you should all bring them down here. Just stop giving them provisions.

Siemer: If you did that, they'd probably come down here, wouldn't they?

Dela Cruz: Yes.

Siemer: Let me just go back. When you went to work for the Commonwealth government, what department were you in?

Dela Cruz: Natural Resources.

Siemer: And how long did you stay there?

Dela Cruz: Four years. The Department of Natural Resources was a new department. It was composed of lands and surveys, popular recreation, agriculture, fisheries and all that.

Siemer: What was your job at the time?

Dela Cruz: I was the Director. It was a new department. Governor Camacho called me in and asked me to head the department based on the experience that I had. I thought it was a challenge, so I took it.

Siemer: It was a substantial challenge, setting up a whole new government.

Dela Cruz: Oh, yes, a substantial challenge setting up a new department, when you establish new programs, you set up new policies. It was a very, very interesting job.

Willens: Did you have to be confirmed for that job?

Dela Cruz: Yes.

Willens: Did you have any difficulty being confirmed?

Dela Cruz: I didn't have any difficulty being confirmed because I was qualified. But I had a little bit of difficulty being confirmed because Benjamin [Manglona] and I didn't see eye to eye.

Willens: That's Senator Manglona?

Dela Cruz: What happened, Senator Manglona at that time wanted to have his say so. He thought he wanted to just hold the remote control, just touch the keys and we'll move.

Siemer: With respect to the people from Rota?

Dela Cruz: Yes. I told him, sorry, not this one.

Willens: Well, what happened? Was the confirmation delayed for some time then?

Dela Cruz: No. It was not. I went through the hearing very well. It's just because of a difference of our opinions that they waited for the last two days for the . . .

Willens: One of the questions that we've been exploring is the extent to which the first Commonwealth government was prepared to assume the responsibilities imposed by the Constitution. The Lt. Governor was Mr. Ada, who served as District Administrator for many years, and you had the experience of working with him for many years.

Dela Cruz: Yes.

Willens: What is your recollection now as to the transition from District administration under Mr. Ada to a new Commonwealth government under Governor Camacho?

Dela Cruz: Well, it makes it a lot easier. Because we were there already. We know what was going on in present programs. Yes, it's just a matter of an expanded responsibility.

Willens: That's an interesting point, because I've had some people tell me that when they began

- working in the first Commonwealth administration, they didn't know how to sharpen a pencil, or get a subordinate to take an order, or how to get a memorandum delivered from one office to another.
- Dela Cruz: Well, because of lack of experience. That's what you call the difference between a spring chicken and an old one, right?
- Willens: And you were a middle-aged one?
- Dela Cruz: No, I wasn't middle-aged, it was just that I was there. In fact, during that time when the separation existed already—that was when the Marianas was under a transitional government—I was also appointed as the Registrar of Corporations.
- Willens: That was by Mr. Canham.
- Dela Cruz: By Mr. Canham. And I was playing a major role in the development during that time. And also because of my exposure, I was sort of appointed as the troubleshooter. If there a problem in Public Works in terms of administration offices, I'd be sent there for about a week or two, you know, to try to work with them. A problem in Tinian, I'll run down to Tinian or Rota and all this.
- Willens: Did Governor Camacho and Lt. Governor Ada try to bring into the Commonwealth government people like you who had worked for the District administration?
- Dela Cruz: Yes. They did. In fact I was the first appointee to be made. I was the first Director that was appointed.
- Willens: Is it your judgment now that the first administration was on the whole a successful one?
- Dela Cruz: In terms of the resources, yes. But the people had a lot of expectations. Because we had our own government, supposed to be like the United States government, things were going to have to be a lot better, 100 percent. But they didn't realize that it takes years to plan that, you know. Now we are saying, where is it? You know, just the like the commercial of the old lady of "Where's the beef?" Exactly. That is how I always compare it, during our first Administration. People would say: "Where's the beef?"
- Willens: What differences did they expect to see? Was it in education, health care, infrastructure, or everything?
- Dela Cruz: Employment, services, you know, [as a] whole, you have to say, lock, stock and barrel.
- Siemer: Back in those days, when the Commonwealth government was formed, did people expect that like public land would become available for homesteads, government jobs would become available to people as a matter of right because now there was a Commonwealth government?
- Dela Cruz: Well, not just that. They thought they would be employed because they have supported some political candidates. This is where we started off. Our budget at that time was only \$35 million.
- Willens: That was the first budget of the Commonwealth government?
- Dela Cruz: \$35 million, yes. And we were saddled with a lot of problems.
- Siemer: How many people were there in your Department of Natural Resources at that time?
- Dela Cruz: I had close to about 100 because [we had] lands and survey, agriculture, natural resources; it was very big.
- Willens: Did you feel that the level of funding provided by the Covenant with the protection

against inflation provided a sufficient amount of money?

Dela Cruz: No. Based on the inflationary factor, no.

Willens: Was it limited with respect to CIP monies, or for government operations?

Dela Cruz: Both.

Siemer: Let me go back if I can to the Constitutional Convention. There are a couple of other things I wanted to ask you about. One was this continuing the discussion of the 12-1-1 proposal [with respect to the size of the lower house]. The issue that caused your colleagues from Rota to walk out was the difference between having two representatives in the lower house and having one. Why was that of such critical importance to them, the one extra person?

Dela Cruz: Power.

Siemer: And how would that power be exercised?

Dela Cruz: Political groups.

Siemer: So that if they had three votes and the....

Dela Cruz: No, not just that, you are going to have three votes. It is just one more person that would be in there, you know, that would give them a little bit more [patronage].

Siemer: Was there a meeting of the Rota delegates before this vote at which Ben Manglona said he was going to walk out?

Dela Cruz: No.

Siemer: So you didn't know ahead of time that he was going to get up and walk out?

Dela Cruz: No. You see, what happened was that Benjamin and Prudencio were saying: "We take this." They never say: "How are we going to do it." And we talked, I said: "Hey, this is not the way consensus is done. So we're going to vote the way we feel is right."

Siemer: Did Benjamin think at the time that he could get the Tinian delegates to join the walk-out? Were there any joint meetings with the Tinian and Rota delegates in which this was discussed?

Dela Cruz: No.

Siemer: To be successful, he had to get all ...

Dela Cruz: Right.

Siemer: ... of either the Rota or Tinian delegates to leave.

Dela Cruz: Right. And like I said, they have this mentality that what they say is the decision. And still is. Even right now they say: "You do this, you do this, you do this." They never ask: "Hey, what can we all do together?"

Siemer: Were there any repercussions against those of you who did not walk out?

Dela Cruz: A little.

Siemer: In what form?

Dela Cruz: Well, they went down and said that we're not supporting them, that we're not representing the interests of the people, as expected. And this is why I was wondering, sometimes I wanted to ask Benjamin [Manglona] right now: "Since you walked out in the First Constitutional Convention, why is it that you now want to be in the Third Constitutional

Convention?”

Siemer: Have you ever talked to Ben as to why he walked out?

Dela Cruz: No.

Siemer: What happened after he walked out? Were there any efforts made to get him to come back?

Dela Cruz: No.

Siemer: Did you expect that he would come back?

Dela Cruz: No. This is why we would all say: “Hey, that’s the vote, you vote.” But then they walked out. If they didn’t want to sign the final document, fine with me. And history will tell.

Siemer: What happened when the Constitution was presented on Rota for ratification? Was there significant opposition because Benjamin [Manglona] had walked out?

Dela Cruz: You know that actually they did not even object to it. They did not even try to tell the people not to vote for it.

Siemer: They did not campaign against it?

Dela Cruz: No. In fact, I was a member of the educational committee that went through this. We went to every village with Dr. Palacios as our chairman at that time.

Siemer: And the people of Rota actually supported it overwhelmingly, did they not?

Dela Cruz: And then also I was a member with Father Villagomez, Jesus Villagomez, and we translated the Constitution into Chamorro.

Siemer: And then that translation was circulated around all the islands?

Dela Cruz: Yes.

Siemer: Once you were finished with the Constitution, were you satisfied with what had been done?

Dela Cruz: Yes, I was. There was this feeling of satisfaction. And then it was working right, and then a provision of which there was an argument between—it was not an argument actually because the mayor at that time was powerless during the first Administration. Powerless. It has to do with the delivery of public services and all of that. And that was probably the reason they ran and passed Amendment 25. That’s when hell broke loose, because it confused the issue.

Siemer: But under the formulation that was passed in the First Constitutional Convention, when you were in the Commonwealth government, you thought that worked reasonably well?

Dela Cruz: I thought that worked. There was a clear delineation of authority.

Siemer: Were there other issues during the Constitutional Convention that you remember now that you had a particularly strong position on, things you were worried about, other than the ones we talked about?

Dela Cruz: No.

Siemer: When you were on the education committee chaired by Dr. Palacios, did anyone think that the Constitution was in particular danger of not getting the necessary vote?

Dela Cruz: No, because of the fact that we knew of the substantial support by the ratification of the

Covenant that the people were ready.

Siemer: When the work on the Constitution itself was done, the lawyers wanted the delegates to adopt a section-by-section analysis. Do you remember that?

Dela Cruz: Yes.

Siemer: What was your impression at the time as to whether that was a good idea?

Dela Cruz: I thought it was a good idea because it gives a true explanation of what it is.

Siemer: Did you think that people in the Convention had enough time to digest that? It was a fairly long document.

Dela Cruz: I don't think so. I don't think at that time that there were so many people in there that would understand the ramifications of a section-by-section analysis.

Siemer: You were one of the people, though, who seemed to have read it all. Was that the case?

Dela Cruz: Yes, because of the fact that we had to provide for public education and then at the same time we had to do the interpretation.

Siemer: And people seemed to turn to you for an assurance that document was alright. Was that the case?

Dela Cruz: At times.

Siemer: At the beginning of the Convention the legal consultants delivered some briefing papers. Do you remember those?

Dela Cruz: Yes.

Siemer: What was your view about those? Were they too long, too difficult?

Dela Cruz: Well, I thought it was too thick and too much to try and comprehend for the number of days before the Convention. But that thing did not surprise me because I've had some experience in college, when you've got to have about this much stack, read it and refer, okay? So that thing didn't bother me.

Siemer: It did bother some delegates, though, didn't it?

Dela Cruz: Of course, yes.

Siemer: It was just too much to read.

Dela Cruz: Yes.

Siemer: Did you think at the time that there was a better way to do it than the briefing papers?

Dela Cruz: I don't think so, because if you were to try to get these people in for an orientation process, I don't think it would have served any purpose at all. I don't think it would make any difference at all because they would go in there and sleep anyway.

Willens: Were you aware in the late stages of the Covenant negotiations that representatives of Rota and Tinian were insisting on a bicameral legislature?

Dela Cruz: Oh, yes.

Willens: Did you have any feelings at the time as to whether a requirement of a bicameral legislature was a good idea?

Dela Cruz: Oh, yes.

Willens: What was your view?

- Dela Cruz: You know, I was supporting that, because that is the only way to provide for equal and fair protections.
- Willens: Did you think that the islands of Tinian and Rota had not been fairly treated by the majority on Saipan during TTPI days?
- Dela Cruz: I don't know, Howard. If I say something of those things, I'll be damned if I do and I'll be damned if I don't.
- Willens: Okay, that's a sufficient answer.
- Dela Cruz: That's a sufficient answer. (Laughs.)
- Willens: Well, what's interesting about your view is that you are from Rota, you have a history in the District Administration and serving at least two Administrations in the Commonwealth. You are a strong advocate of a strong central government.
- Dela Cruz: You'd better believe it.
- Willens: Do you think there's a way to achieve a strong central government while you have a bicameral legislature in which you have the power in Rota and Tinian.
- Dela Cruz: Oh, yes. That the system itself is just the republican form of government. But a bicameral legislature is fine with a strong central government. Establish it and run it the way it's supposed to be. Just establish a clear delineation. Because if I were to have my say, I would, like I said, draw a line. Just have the mayors deal on local matters, deal on the islands only, get their own municipal ordinances, get their own counsel, get all their own programs so that they can do a lot of things. Let the central government run the show.
- Willens: And the central government, though, would have to operate through appointments confirmed by the Senate.
- Dela Cruz: Right.
- Willens: And by laws that would require the approval of the Senate.
- Dela Cruz: Right. And at the same time, too, the central government would have to work on legislation and laws that are being enacted by the Legislature. Simple as that.
- Willens: But if it was as simple as that, we may not have some of the experiences that the Commonwealth has had.
- Dela Cruz: Well, you know why? Because, like I said, people are just trying to operate something of which they don't have any experience at all. That if they would have had some experience with some of what we have gone through—you and I understand the concept between the administration of the mayorship, the city government, the county, the state and the federal government.
- Siemer: There are a couple more things that I wanted to ask about. Things that didn't make it through the Convention.
- Dela Cruz: Yes?
- Siemer: One of them is delegate proposal No. 29.
- Dela Cruz: That was mine?
- Siemer: Justice Atalig identified it as one of your proposals. Was that right?
- Dela Cruz: You know, this would have been the best thing that could ever happen in the Commonwealth.

- Willens: Really?
- Siemer: This is a proposal with respect to selecting candidates by primary election. Why do you say that would have been one of the best things that would have happened?
- Dela Cruz: Because of the fact that this would give an opportunity for the people to select, for the people to represent themselves in their Party.
- Siemer: How did you get the Manglonas to sign that?
- Dela Cruz: How did I get it? I don't know.
- Siemer: Because that certainly was not in the interest of those who were already in power?
- Dela Cruz: I know that. Yes. I know that. But to me primary election is a process that lets the members of the political parties select their candidates, not by virtue of a meeting under the coconut tree, just because you're my friend, you know, this will let people select.
- Siemer: What happened to that proposal? Do you remember?
- Dela Cruz: It was not adopted.
- Siemer: There seems to be no record of it. It went to the Personal Rights Committee, but it didn't make it into the official record.
- Dela Cruz: You know, and I still maintain, and I keep bucking the legislature to establish a primary law.
- Siemer: Well, what was the process by which you went about . . . ?
- Dela Cruz: Well, this is my [proposal] that they will serve no more than two consecutive terms in office?
- Siemer: Yes.
- Dela Cruz: It didn't go through again.
- Siemer: What was the process by which you got your colleagues to sign up to those delegate proposals? Would they sign it if you put it in front of them?
- Dela Cruz: Yes. I guess I just asked them, I said: "You want to join me with this proposal?"
- Siemer: Look at the proposal No. 130. The numbers are in the upper right-hand corner there.
- Dela Cruz: 130. This is something, you know, that I wanted, 130.
- Siemer: 130. What is the background on that one?
- Dela Cruz: "It is proposed that this house provision will be the following provided Chamorro and Carolinian be the official language of the Commonwealth, and the official language shall be taught." Is this the one?
- Siemer: Yes.
- Dela Cruz: Because I thought that in order for people to really understand what's going on, that their official language should be part of government. When somebody comes in there, an individual cannot say that he cannot approach me here because he cannot speak English. He can come in here and speak Chamorro. He can write me a letter in Chamorro and I will accept that.
- Siemer: Yes.
- Dela Cruz: And also I find that in some states such as California, I believe, Texas also, and New Mexico, Spanish and English are official languages. And it was very important.

- Siemer: Were any of the delegates concerned that Chamorro would not be a principal language here, that the same thing would happen as has happened on Guam where . . .
- Dela Cruz: Oh, yes. Very true. And again, proposals that support collective bargaining which I still support, you know?
- Siemer: Did you support collective in the public sector as well as in the private sector?
- Dela Cruz: Oh, yes.
- Willens: Is there any other recollection that you have about the Constitutional Convention or your government service that you would like to make for the record?
- Dela Cruz: The only thing that really affects me in being in the Constitutional Convention now was the thing that I really cannot understand—the fact that even though the documents have been approved, documented, and ratified by both parties, by the United States government and here, they're still a lot of efforts to discredit those agreements. That instead of trying to improve the situation, or trying to correct the situation, there's a move to just destroy what has been agreed.
- Willens: You think there's a movement underfoot now?
- Dela Cruz: Oh, yes.
- Willens: Are you referring to recent differences between the federal government and the Commonwealth?
- Dela Cruz: Yes.
- Willens: Well, there's no doubt about it that the Covenant and the Commonwealth require constant attention and discussion with the federal government.
- Dela Cruz: Yes.
- Willens: And that's one reason why there was a Section 902 built into the Covenant.
- Dela Cruz: So let 902 take care of it. Don't just take this thing and shove this thing down my throat. For the United States to muscle their way through in here, that makes it hard for us. Let's just put it this way—it leaves a very bad taste in my mouth.
- Willens: Well, that's a very important point.
- Dela Cruz: And if it leaves a very bad taste in your mouth, that thing stays there for a long time. This thing reminds me of how the Indians fight for their land. We lived right across from the Indian reservation. We lived in the heart of Logan, New Mexico, where we have an Indian reservation all over us, Santa del Fonso, we have Nambe, we have Taos, you know, we have Oaxaquetezuqel. I will sit down and say: "See, that's exactly what's happening to us." You know, they keep on, they have never given up what they're doing. It's something that we have to keep on doing as well.
- Willens: On that note, thank you very much for your time.