

INTERVIEW OF DON A. FARRELL

by Howard P. Willens

October 27, 1993

- Willens: I have the pleasure of interviewing Don A. Farrell, who is the author of a very important historical study of this part of the world. Don, I appreciate your time and your willingness to be a part of this program. I'd like to get on the record a brief biographical sketch, how you first got involved in this part of the world, and what began your career as an author of histories of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.
- Farrell: All right. I am 46 years young. I came to the Marianas as a contract school teacher for the Department of Education on Guam, beginning teaching in January of 1977 following the wrath of Typhoon Pamela in 1976. I taught for the public school system in science and math for two and a half years. During that period, I began my amateur study of the history of the Pacific, especially World War II and especially as it applied to the Marianas. When I left the Department of Education, I went to work for then Senator Kurt Moylan, former Lt. Governor of Guam. He was actually the last Secretary of Guam from 1969 to 1970 and then the first elected Lt. Governor of Guam with Governor Carlos Camacho from 1971 to 1974. In my work for Senator Moylan, I was involved on the periphery of the original political status plebiscite for Guam. But I dealt more specifically with issues before his committee, which was the General Governmental Operations. I did participate extensively in negotiations with the Navy for the return of the PITI Power Plant to the Guam Power Authority.
- Willens: Which power plant?
- Farrell: The PITI Power Plant, which is a part of what is known as the Navy power system. It should have been turned over to the government of Guam along with other essential civilian facilities after the signing of the Organic Act and transfer of power from the Department of the Navy to the Department of the Interior. During that period of time, I studied the interior workings of the Republican Party, especially the long-term political relationships in the Republican Party, and the business associations of the Republicans on Guam at that time. After 1982, I went to work for Speaker of the Guam Legislature, Carl T.C. Gutierrez and served as his executive assistant during the four years of his two-term speakership of the Guam Legislature. During that period, I spent a considerable amount of time working on the personalities in the leadership of the Democratic Party and the leadership of the Democratically-owned businesses on Guam. More importantly, it gave me an opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C. with Speaker Gutierrez, to participate in the budget hearings, and to begin extensive research in the Library of Congress, the National Archives, and the other important collections in Washington, D.C. I should mention that during that time I also worked for former Congressman Antonio Borja Won Pat, Guam's first and then only delegate to the House of Representatives. I was instrumental in helping to formulate the meeting in Albuquerque with Manuel Lujan, which was the beginning of today's Commonwealth Act of Guam.
- Willens: Could you place that in time for me?
- Farrell: I believe that that meeting was held in 1983. It was originally created by Congressman Won Pat's office as a result of letters drafted by me from Congressman Won Pat to the Governor of Guam suggesting that a political status meeting was in order to initiate what

Guam wanted as a future political status. Unfortunately, that meeting was overtaken by Governor Bordallo and an extremely large staff of people who wanted to ensure that Carl Gutierrez, who was also at the meeting and a potential gubernatorial candidate in 1986, would not gain the glory. As a result, when we returned, Carl Gutierrez did publicly state that he would not use political status as a campaign issue throughout his tenure as Speaker of the Legislature or during his gubernatorial campaign. And he did not.

Willens: Based on your experience in Guam and your observation of Guamanian political affairs since you've lived on Tinian, how would you assess the efforts by Guamanian political leaders beginning in the early 1970s until recently to deal with their desire for an improved political status?

Farrell: That is obviated by the turnout at plebiscite elections. In the plebiscite election that was held in (I believe) 1981, several political status options were available—all the way from statehood to independence, but also including commonwealth status with no definition being given for commonwealth status. As I remember, the turnout was something less than 33 percent of the registered voters, and the majority gained by commonwealth status was nominal. So therefore, less than 16 percent of the registered voters on Guam chose commonwealth status as the status that they wished to achieve.

Willens: During the 1970s, there was a steady stream of complaints from Guamanian political leaders regarding the inadequacies of their political status, and it was contrasted unfavorably from time to time with the commonwealth status that had been negotiated with the Northern Marianas. Were there real grievances that the Guamanians had that underlay their desire for an improved political status?

Farrell: Oh, I would say they had some extremely legitimate gripes.

Willens: What are the principal deficiencies?

Farrell: The problems that they face have consistently been internal political battles, where support for a particular political status was led by a particular faction of leaders in the Guam Legislature. Voting for that political status was perceived as a vote for that person or that political party and not necessarily perceived as the people's choice of that particular political status. The Organic Act as it was written provided a great step forward for the people of Guam in 1950. It gave them, first of all, a legislature which could create their own laws. It made them quasi-self-governing in that, although they had a legislature that could make laws, they had a governor appointed by the President, who could be changed every four years based on the President's political party. Quite often people was appointed not because of their great desire to do something for the people of Guam but as political patronage from Washington, D.C. Therefore the island bounced back and forth between whatever political agenda was eventually achieved by whatever governor was appointed, and that governor had the authority to veto any law passed by the Guam Legislature. So it was extremely limited self-government that was given to them by the Organic Act. It required a great deal of effort on the part of Guamanians and particularly Antonio Won Pat to be able to achieve the Elected Governor Act and then the act creating a non-voting delegate to Congress, which position was then assumed by Congressman Won Pat.

Willens: My recollection is that during the 1970s there was at least one effort (and perhaps more) to have a constitutional convention through which to develop a Guamanian constitution in order to improve their measure of self-government. It was my understanding at the time that the issue of a constitution was often merged with a question of future political status and that the Guamanians would more often than not treat the two as part of the same issue.

Farrell: Right.

Willens: What is your recollection of that set of questions?

Farrell: Having spoken to many of the people who were still in the Legislature when I got there in 1980, who had been there for 10-15 years before, the political status issue was an important issue, at least as far as the publicity of the legislator was concerned. Because it always got headlines for them. All the way from 1950, the people of the Northern Marianas had attempted to reunify with Guam, and there were some members of the Guam Legislature and some executives who were also interested in the concept of reunification. They recognized that the larger population with the larger economic base would give them more leverage for a better political status. Many of them were looking towards statehood and the concept of a Micronesian state with Guam as its capital was very popular with several of them. But due to various political reasons, in 1969 when the joint plebiscite was held between the Northern Marianas and Guam, Guam rejected that concept of unification, forcing the Northern Marianas to go its own way on its own political path, which eventually arrived at commonwealth status. All of this was observed by the people of Guam, as the Northern Marianas went forward with its political status negotiations and Haydn Williams made public the U.S. side at the initial meetings and Eddie Pangelinan made his side public. This then became backyard barbecue talk—political rhetoric all over Guam. The people of Guam could see that the people of the Northern Marianas were going to advance politically beyond Guam. The people of Guam frankly have a pride of being the center of leadership, culture and development in Micronesia and particularly in the Marianas. So there was a degree of jealousy that entered into this as people began to discuss the direction that we should be going. Look at what they're going to get. They were saying then in petitions to the President and petitions to Congress that, if you're going to give this to the Northern Marianas, don't we deserve it even more, because we've been Americans since 1898. Good, powerful letters and petitions—nine times out of ten with all 21 Senators voting in favor of the petition and countersigned by the Governor who would then send it on to various people. The problem was that, as right as those issues were, they could never formulate a political status commission—and they have had several political status commissions over the years—that could motivate the people to come to a unified position that they could carry forward to Congress.

Willens: I do not understand why not. The grievances with respect to the dealings with the federal government were fairly well known and long standing. Why was it that, particularly after the Covenant had been approved by Congress in 1976, Guam was not provided with a unique opportunity to unite behind a status that was similar in most respects with the Covenant?

Farrell: I think that's a function of the changing population and demographics of Guam. After Guam was open to international trade and commerce, I believe in 1962 with the lifting of the security clearance, gradually progressive larger numbers of non-Chamorro U.S. citizens began to move to Guam. These were Filipino Americans, as well as stateside Americans, to open businesses. Lawyers finding positions, acting as advocates or advisers to various political factions, and as well acting as advisers to businessmen on Guam. Ken Jones established a million-dollar base of operations in Guam, brought in several management people with their families to operate these businesses and attorneys to represent each of the different businesses. These people didn't participate directly in political activities, but they were respected by their employees. If they took a position that commonwealth status would not be good for their business, that statehood would be better for their business, those people would listen to that issue. Not only that, but larger and larger numbers of

Guamanians began joining the United States Armed Services after World War II, seeing it as an opportunity to get training and experience outside of the island. More and more scholarships became available for young Chamorros to go to school in the States, Hawaii or the mainland. Many of these people did not return. Many of those who did return, though, came back with a real strong feeling for the power of the State, having lived in a State for several years. So the issue of political status—as to whether or not the island of Guam should progress towards statehood, or it should progress toward independence, or it should progress toward some other in-between political status, or that it should remain status quo—was divided among the people fairly equally.

Willens: Is it your judgment that each of those status alternatives had respectable support within the community?

Farrell: Oh, yes. There is a very strong pro-Chamorro Nation group on Guam who believes very firmly that their only political status is independence.

Willens: Is it that group that had special influence in drafting of the so-called Commonwealth Act and in particular those provisions that limited the right of vote to persons of Chamorro ancestry?

Farrell: I think a good person to answer that question on a more first-hand basis would be Dr. Robert Rogers from the University of Guam Political Science Department, because he was the political status adviser to Governor Bordallo when the Commonwealth Act was being drafted. Governor Bordallo appointed a commission based on legislation passed by Carl Gutierrez with an appropriation of \$200,000 to support the commission during its drafting stage. Open meetings were held by Governor Bordallo at his conference room in the Civil Defense Headquarters in Guam. In the early stages, draft portions of the Commonwealth Act were created by Bob Rogers and other advisers to the commission. And then those were opened up to the general public, and anyone could attend those meetings and give their input to the Governor and the committee while it was being formulated. As the years 1983, 1984, 1985 progressed, and as the Commonwealth Act progressed toward completion, more and more pro-Chamorro, pro-Guam-for-Guamanians advocates began to appear at these meetings and give their input and campaigned in the media for their position on commonwealth status for Guam. Yes, I believe very firmly that Governor Bordallo was swayed politically that he had to support some of these issues and therefore the Commonwealth Act became skewed in that direction. That caused a very negative backlash among the Filipino Americans, who felt that they would be immediately disenfranchised from Guam if the Commonwealth Act was ever implemented in its current format.

Willens: You referred to Philippine Americans.

Farrell: Filipino Americans make up 25% of the voting population of Guam.

Willens: How about other Americans from different backgrounds?

Farrell: Maybe 10% stateside Americans in the total voting population. About 50% of the population of Guam are indigenous Chamorros, native Chamorros. The rest of it is 25% Filipino, about 10% stateside Americans, and the rest of it being other U.S. citizens in the voting population. So that block of 25% Filipino voters was a very strong negative voting block when it came to the approval of the Commonwealth Act.

Willens: Let's turn then to the Northern Marianas and how it was that you were selected to write the first history of the Northern Mariana Islands.

- Farrell: That was of my own instigation. I had written three volumes of history of Guam that had been fairly well accepted, and I was quite pleased with that work. When I got to the Northern Marianas, again as a contract school teacher at that time, an adequate history of the Northern Marianas did not exist. There was by legislative mandate a required class at the high school level in history of the Northern Marianas.
- Willens: I remember you mentioned that your son was studying the subject and you saw some of the materials that he was using.
- Farrell: That's right. He was a sophomore at the time at Tinian High School taking history of the Northern Marianas. When I asked to see his textbook, it was a xerox of something that was created by a man named Gutchiari back in 1981, I think, and slightly edited and updated in 1985. But essentially it ended after World War II and did not deal with the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas. It had no photographs, illustrations, charts, appendices, and I simply suggested to the public school system that, given the opportunity, I could create a better history book.
- Willens: When was it that you made this proposal?
- Farrell: I came to Tinian in 1987. I made the proposal early in the spring of 1988 and was given the contract in 1989.
- Willens: And you worked on the book full-time for nearly two years?
- Farrell: Full time for two and a half years. The book was published in September of 1991.
- Willens: Do you and members of your family own and operate the firm that published the book?
- Farrell: No, that is not true. I own a firm called Micronesian Productions. We have published the three-volume pictorial history of Guam, and we have also published several tourist-type books with brief histories of the islands. This book was published by the public school system. I worked under contract with the public school system, and it was printed by competitive bid, and was edited by Phyllis Koontz. All of the illustrations and charts were done under my direction by Barry Wonenberg, an artist on Saipan who is married to a Chamorro.
- Willens: Could you describe briefly the research that you conducted with particular reference to the period beginning in the late 1950s and extending through the First Constitutional Convention? I note from reading those sections of the book that you did interview numerous political leaders who were active during that period. Could you describe what your methodology was for doing that?
- Farrell: The first six months that I was on the job were spent in literature research. The public school system was quite generous, understanding of the need to gather documents. No history of the Northern Marianas had ever been compiled before. Various articles had been written by different people about different stages in the history of the Northern Marianas, but no one had compiled them. We made the basic decision that the book would cover the entire history of the Marianas beginning with its geology, geologic formation all the way up to the status of the current administration. So I spent six months in intense literature research compiling documents and breaking down how the book would be organized into various chapters. That literature research included work, first of all, at the Northern Marianas Archives with the help of Herbert Del Rosario and then to Micronesian Area Research Center, where I done considerable amount of work on my other publications and with their full cooperation, and then to the University of Hawaii, where I worked with Karen Peacock at reviewing all of the Northern Marianas files and photographic files that I could find there.

- Willens: Could you describe what materials are available in Guam and Hawaii?
- Farrell: The Micronesian Area Research Center has extensive files; it is one of the finest collections I've ever seen; and they are very dedicated people working hard at compiling the history of Micronesia. Their files are not extensive as far as vertical files on any one item. In other words, I could not go to a drawer and open a drawer that was called Tinian. Or there was not a drawer that was called political status of the Northern Marianas. So it was a little bit rough. I spent more time actually at the Nevis Flores Library, which has a complete set of the *Pacific Daily News*.
- Willens: Which library is that?
- Farrell: The Nevis Flores Memorial Library in downtown Agana. It has a much better collection than most people realize. They have a complete collection of the *Pacific Daily News*, as well as the *Territorial Sun*, *Guam Times* and some other journals that have gone out of publication since then, such as the *Tribune*. So I reviewed those extensively. And then at the University of Hawaii, where the Hamilton Library has a Pacific collection that is quite extensive, and they also work very hard at collecting documents. They're very helpful; their computer system is outstanding. From there on to Washington, D.C.
- Willens: Did any of those collections include relatively recent material from the 1960s and the 1970s?
- Farrell: Yes. They collected most of the publications. Norman Meller's work was there and most of Leibowitz's work was there. There was a lot of material that I passed over because it was done on the political status of the other islands. I was specifically working on the history of the Northern Marianas, and therefore I confined myself to articles about the history of the Northern Marianas. There were probably other papers there that had chapters on the Northern Marianas that I didn't get to see.
- Willens: Did either of those locations have what purported to be the negotiating papers from the negotiations between the United States and the Marianas Political Status Commission?
- Farrell: They had a few of them, but certainly not all of them. The only place that I found all of them was in the Governor's office here in Saipan. They have the bound volumes there, and I also was able to get copies of each of the publications that were done after each of the sessions.
- Willens: Did you do any documentary research in Washington?
- Farrell: When I traveled on to Washington, D.C., I began at the Library of Congress with just a general review of the card catalogue system there, looking under every title I could think of that I had seen so far and xeroxing everything that I could get my hands on and boxing it up to go back. I did not do extensive reading while I was there, unless I came across what I felt to be a particularly important document that would have footnotes that gave me further references. So between my wife Carmen and I, we did an extensive amount of xeroxing. From the Library of Congress, we went to the National Archives, where I found the people to be very, very helpful, and boxes of information there that apparently very few people had looked at. We found several boxes of information there on political status.
- Willens: What did you find at the National Archives that pertain to political status if you can remember generally?
- Farrell: We found extensive reports, most of them filed by either the Office of Territorial Affairs or by the High Commissioner's Office on Saipan that had ended up in a National Archives

box. These were reports on political activities, especially the burning of the Congress of Micronesia, the march up Capitol Hill, the burning of the flag, tearing up of the Code book, possible physical confrontations, reports on various political leaders and their positions and their speeches, particularly those of Ben Santos, comments by Bill Nabors, and those things that most often end up in the media. And it appeared to me that these were advice from the High Commissioner to his Washington counterparts on what they might see in the media the next day.

Willens: Did you copy those materials?

Farrell: I copied every one of them.

Willens: What is your general position with respect to your research materials? Are they available to Commonwealth officials or to other historians?

Farrell: As far as everything I have is concerned, and I've always been very liberal about it, they are public documents. I got them from the public domain. I'd be very happy to share them with anyone. And we've done that. We just sent two photographs yesterday to the Historic Preservation Office on Guam for a publication they're working on. As long as we have time. Of course, my files could use some better organization for that purpose, but yes, anything I have is available. I would like to say though that I did not come close to being able to review all of the information that I am sure is available. At the Federal Records Repository in Suitland, there are literally hundreds of boxes of files in the basement that I simply did not have time to go through. I pulled boxes at random because they are not catalogued. They were brought to me with, conservatively, a quarter-inch of dust on it, which mildly irritated the well-dressed man that had to go down and get them off the shelf. But he told me that nobody that he knew of in all the time that he had worked there had ever requested them before. And we found very significant documents in there. Unfortunately, it was late in my working timeframe, and I was not able to go back and review them all. But I suspect that there are very valuable documents there, not only there, but there are other federal records repositories on the West Coast of the United States. I've heard of some in the midwestern states.

Willens: And the subject matter that would drive you to those materials was Micronesia as a whole, or were you focused more specifically on the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas?

Farrell: I had attempted to focus myself specifically on the Marianas, not just the Commonwealth but Guam and the Northern Marianas. As an amateur historian, I made up my mind a long time ago that if I ever really wanted to do something significant, I would have to maintain focus, and that if I got myself diffused out into those other lovely islands, which I would dearly love to visit again, I would lose the focus and therefore not be able to write something significant—something that would have valuable first-hand information. So I have maintained my entire focus on the Marianas.

Willens: After you engaged in the documentary research of the kind you've described, did you turn to identifying people that you wanted to interview?

Farrell: What I did then was I returned home with all of this information, opened up all of the boxes, and created stacks of related information—a stack for archaeological surveys, a stack for Spanish archives, etc.—until I got up to the current political status. Because I had no direction on the creation of the book and was simply given the latitude of creating a book, I had no idea how much information was going to be available. I felt that, because it was a high school history book, it should be written at a level to where a high school student could use it and it would be functional for a teacher. Being an educator

by training, I created what I considered to be an educational tool. Being a member of the community, I also felt that it was important that it should be a general history of the Marianas because no such thing existed for anyone to be able to use. Therefore I would be providing a dual service to the people of the Commonwealth. At the same time, I could not take all of the information I had on political status negotiations because that would be a book in and of itself. But I had to try to create within a relatively few pages (which would be illustrated) the story of how the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas was created, maintaining as much as I could a balance between the American perspective and the local perspective.

Willens: Who were you able to interview on the U.S. side with respect to the status negotiations?

Farrell: Unfortunately on the U.S. side, the only people that I was really able to get meaningful information from was former Congressman Antonio Won Pat. Although he did not participate directly in it, he was kept well informed of it, and I spoke to him at length on his attitude toward it.

Willens: What was his general attitude?

Farrell: Oh, he was very pleased. He always believed that, if reunification could not occur and the Marianas brought back together again, then the only way that Guam could achieve a better political status than the Organic Act was to see the Northern Marianas become successful. If the Northern Marianas became successful, he felt in his heart, as you mentioned earlier, that the people of Guam deserved at least as good a political relationship with the United States. So he was very favorable. I spoke with Richard Taitano from Guam, who is now an elderly man but whose mind is still very, very sharp. He was Director of the Office of Territories at the period of time when the reunification plebiscites were held.

Willens: Was he able to recall how U.S. policy toward the Trust Territory was being reexamined in the early 1960s?

Farrell: Oh, yes. He was a very radical person when he took over the office. He believed that the best thing that could happen would be to eliminate the Office of Territories. He felt that it was an unnecessary stigma preventing the political and economic development of the islands. The response that he received from the Secretary of the Interior was that it was the responsibility of the Department of the Interior to protect these people and guide them through political and economic development.

Willens: How did it happen to be that a Guamanian was appointed by the Kennedy Administration to be head of the Office of Territories?

Farrell: Actually, Kennedy appointed several Guamanians to Federal posts. He appointed the late Dr. Pedro Sanchez to be the Director of Education for the Virgin Islands. I can't remember all the titles now, but several Guamanians were appointed to significant positions during the Kennedy Administration. I think it was simply part of the entire movement that was instigated by the Solomon Report, which convinced the President or his advisors that significant changes, pro-island changes, need to take place for the United States to be able to gain the lasting confidence of the people of Micronesia.

Willens: One of the issues that divided the Federal agencies in the 1960s was the perceived ability of the Micronesians to govern themselves. There were those in Washington who maintained that the people in Micronesia, including those in the Northern Marianas, did not have sufficient political education and skill to be given the right and responsibilities of self-government. There were others who felt differently. Based on your interviews with

people who were knowledgeable participants in those years, do you have a basis for some judgment as to the level of political sophistication that existed in the early 1960s?

Farrell: Richard Taitano told me that he felt that the best way to test it was to simply give it to them. He felt that they were sharp enough, and if he's a representative of the people who were in government at that time, they had the ability to do it. I've met several of these people, Richard's colleagues, and they were sharp people, and they were running the government.

Willens: Who are you thinking of? What kind of people?

Farrell: The people who were in political leadership of the islands in those days—Joe T. St. Augustine, who's now Speaker of the Guam Legislature, Kurt Moylan.

Willens: How about the people in Saipan and the Northern Marianas? You interviewed some of those as well. I'm particularly interested in getting any assessment you can offer as to the level of political experience and maturity that existed in the Northern Marianas at that time.

Farrell: Again, I have to judge by the people that I interviewed, and, of course, I was only interviewing what obviously became the cream of the crop, because they were the ones chosen for the Political Status Commission; many of them had been former district administrators, department heads, and they ran the government in the Northern Marianas. The people of Tinian and Rota had run their government for years, because Saipan has always ignored Tinian and Rota. But Francisco Ada, who became Lt. Governor ...

Willens: How would you characterize Mr. Ada?

Farrell: An extremely effective administrator. Like Pedro Agulto Tenorio, Lt. Governor under Pete Tenorio's administration. Again, extremely effective administrators. The only thing that may have given the political leadership of Washington, D.C. a conservative attitude towards the political leadership of the Marianas was these people serving in legislative positions in the old Marianas District Legislature. Many of them were not experienced administrators. The people who became experienced administrators were people who were specifically chosen by the various high commissioners to be their public works director, to be their director of public safety, to be their district administrators, and they were trained first of all by the Navy. Many of them grew up during Navy times and began their first job with the government as a Navy administrator, and so they learned the Navy way of doing things. And then when it was transferred to the Department of the Interior, they learned the Department of the Interior's way of doing things.

Willens: Were there different ways of doing things?

Farrell: Yes. Very much so. And you could see it in the different people. Every now and then you'll have somebody say, "Oh, yeah, no wonder they did that. That person's still got the TT mentality."

Willens: What do you think based on your research were the principal factors that persuaded the Northern Marianas leadership to seek a political status separate from the remainder of Micronesia?

Farrell: Well, there were several different factors. First of all, the people of the Northern Marianas had decided long before that they wanted to be U.S. citizens and to have a permanent relationship with the United States. They gained this attitude from either their personal knowledge of having lived on Guam, having visited Guam, or having observed the economic and political development of Guam after World War II. They wanted part of that

action in Saipan. Secondly, when Saipan was finally designated as the capital of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, provisionally in 1962, there was economic development in Saipan, and it was primarily spurred by the level of American investment and American development in Saipan. Most of the administrators in Saipan were Northern Marianas Chamorros, and they continued to have what I consider to be an age-old feeling that the Chamorros and the Marianas are the intellectual and cultural center of Micronesia. Some of them, few of them, but some of them had traveled to the out-islands and seen how people were living at that time in the early 1960s in Ponape and Kosrae, and they saw themselves as being a level above that life. And to get to that next standard of living would be to become a U.S. citizen and to have a permanent political relationship with the United States. The people of the rest of Micronesia didn't want to become U.S. citizens. They had made up their mind that that was not the best thing for them to do. You have to keep in mind that this was at a time when American political image was at an all-time low, during the Vietnam era. When they could visit the States, what they were seeing was people burning American flags, and this may have affected them negatively. This was also at a time when they began to see television, and what did they see on the news every night but Americans in Vietnam and the negative influence that was having in the mainland United States.

Willens: The Congress of Micronesia was created in 1965, and Professor Meller and others have written extensively about it. Some commentators have suggested that it was one of the most important developments in Micronesia with respect to self-government and that it provided a vehicle for beginning to generate some sense of national unity within Micronesia. What is your sense of the contribution that the Congress of Micronesia made or could have made?

Farrell: I don't believe that there was ever a snowball's chance of having a Micronesian state. The people are simply too diverse in their cultural backgrounds. They don't speak the same language, other than they were forced to speak English just as they were forced to learn to speak Japanese just as they were forced to learn to speak German. There had never been a unity among the islands. The Congress of Micronesia did serve a purpose in that it forced the United States to face the issue of the political status of Micronesia. I don't believe it forced the Micronesians to look at political status. Just the reverse from what I've seen. It forced the United States because, as the Congress of Micronesia was instituted, its primary goal was to achieve a political status for Micronesia. The United States assumed, possibly ignorantly, that simply because they had given all of this money to Micronesia, had created some schools and some clinics in the islands, then created the Congress of Micronesia and allowed them to fly around Micronesia and some of them to come live in Saipan, that they would all automatically say yes, we're going to be Americans. I don't think that was ever in their mind from the beginning, except here in the Northern Marianas, and that was because of the long-term relationship with Guam. Many of the people, most of the Chamorros from the Northern Marianas are Guamanians in their ancestry, most of them only here for a couple of generations, many of them here since World War II. But their fathers came here during the German Administration or the Japanese Administration and stayed. So they remember the American Administration of Guam. Out in the islands, that didn't occur. There were very few Americans out in the islands and no real reason why suddenly a Yapese living on, not the main island of Yap, one of the out-islands would ever have a thought of being an American. As long as he's got a school built, that's fine, we'll take that, but that doesn't automatically instigate them to be Americans. What the Congress of Micronesia did was give political leadership to

these islands and create a forum whereby they could all get together and consider political status. Based on what I could get from the literature and talking to a few people, I think the United States was very surprised to suddenly see there were some quite brilliant people that came out of those islands, and suddenly what they created to try to drive Micronesia towards statehood or commonwealth status backfired on them.

Willens: What are you thinking of specifically in that regard?

Farrell: Well, within a year they formed their Political Status Commission. They attempted to get the United States to form a Political Status Commission, but the United States chose not to do that. So they finally turned around and said "If you can't do it, we'll do it." Then the United States found themselves on the other end of the ball. Now they said "Okay, we're ready to go. Are you ready to go?" and the United States realized that they were not ready to go.

Willens: I happen to agree with that assessment. That doesn't necessarily make it right, I gather. When the Congress of Micronesia established a Future Status Commission and it issued two reports, in the final report it recommended a status of free association or, in the alternative, pursuing the option of independence. That was 1969. There was some surprise within the United States agencies with respect to that report for some of the reasons that you suggest, and there were for the next year or two repeated expressions of not knowing what the Micronesians wanted. It seemed abundantly clear from the report. Did you learn anything in the course of your work as to why it was that the United States had so much difficulty in understanding what the Micronesians seemed to be aspiring toward?

Farrell: I'd like to finalize one point here that we've kind of touched on. In 1969, two significant events happened almost simultaneously. One, the Congress of Micronesia came out with its report saying that in their opinion the best political status was free association; if not free association, independence. This was happening exactly the same time that the Northern Marianas was attempting to join Guam in territorial status and become U.S. citizens with the Guamanians. These were two completely dichotomous positions and one that frightened the people of the Northern Marianas. The people of the Northern Marianas consistently, either on their own or with Guam, wanted to become U.S. citizens and a part of the United States. They were being told that they could not separate from the Congress of Micronesia, from the TTPI, and that they would have to go along with whatever decision was being made by the TTPI. And that vote was not being based on population votes but being based on the votes of the districts, so the people of the Northern Marianas felt at that time, when the Congress of Micronesia said they were going with free association or independence, that they were going to be forced to take a political status that they didn't want. And that's what caused the very violent reactions that occurred over the next couple of years.

Willens: Why was it that the Guamanians rejected the concept of reintegration during the plebiscite in 1969?

Farrell: The most often given reason is that they were afraid that the people of the Northern Marianas, who were at a much lower standard of living, a much lower minimum wage scale, would flock to Guam to look for employment.

Willens: Are there other reasons why the Guamanian vote on the plebiscite in 1969 proved to be negative, at least from the Northern Marianas standpoint?

Farrell: One of the important factors is that the issue of reunification was not brought successfully to the people of Guam. They started on their campaign to promote it late, and the issue

did not get out well to the public as to what would be the culminating political status between the islands.

Willens: Did the legislature really care affirmatively?

Farrell: Yes. There was a strong reunification group within the Guam Legislature. It had headed up by then Speaker of the Guam Legislature Joaquin Arriola who was very strong about it. He felt very strongly about possible statehood for the Marianas, if not all of Micronesia at some point in time in the future, and that that should be the ultimate political status.

Willens: What are some of the other reasons then?

Farrell: That leads to one of the reasons. At this point in time, we were also headed for the first election for the Governor in Guam. Joaquin Arriola was going to be a candidate. Joaquin Arriola was strongly in favor of reunification. Some of the other political candidates at that point suggested to their supporters that a vote for reunification was in essence a vote for Joaquin Arriola because it was then give him a platform to stand on for the future, that is, statehood for the Marianas. So they said, if you don't have a good reason to vote for reunification, just don't vote at all. So that was one of them. The turnout on Guam for that plebiscite was very poor, something like 30 percent of the registered voters. Other significant reasons given were, first, that the people of the Northern Marianas were even less developed and had a lower minimum wage and that they would flock down to Guam to take jobs away from Guamanians. Also, Guam was having difficulty with its own infrastructural development and did not have enough money to pay for its own schools. How could it devote some of that money to the less developed islands of the Northern Marianas? Also an issue, that was a sincere issue on the part of some Guamanians, was they still had hard feelings against the Chamorros of the Northern Marianas who had been sent to Guam during World War II as Japanese translators and had implicated Chamorros who were still loyal to the United States, causing the death of some of them and certainly the beating of others. All of those reasons came together in a very poor turnout for the plebiscite and a no-vote. Had there been a better campaign, a more publicized campaign, it may have turned out differently, it may not have.

Willens: You mentioned two very important events in 1969. In the following year, the United States presented what it termed a commonwealth proposal to the Congress of Micronesia's political status delegation. That delegation rejected the proposal out of hand and that decision was subsequently confirmed by the Congress of Micronesia. Was that a development that you think also drove home to the Northern Marianas the need to take a different course?

Farrell: Oh, yes, the Northern Marianas immediately, I think it was Ben Santos, turned around and said, "That idea doesn't sound bad to us." But the others were very leery in those years of having too close a relationship. We have to keep in mind the nuclear testing that was going on in the Marshall Islands. The Marshall Islands had a very small amount of land area to deal with and were fearful that accepting commonwealth status would take away even more of the land that they had for United States military use. Also, if they became a commonwealth of the United States, they would have no position to bargain with the United States as to what land they could take or could not take. So the Marshall Islands was consistently leery of any close relationship with the United States. Palau was consistently leery of a close relationship with the United States because of their proximity to Southeast Asia, and their foreknowledge, admitted at that time by Harrison Loesch, that if this thing was agreed on, not only would the U.S. want the Northern Marianas but

they would also want base operations in Palau, and this was at a time when the Vietnam crisis was escalating severely.

Willens: Did you hear any recollections as to how the commonwealth proposal was presented by Harrison Loesch or other U.S. representatives?

Farrell: No. I didn't meet anybody who could remember being at that meeting.

Willens: Could it have been a factor that in some of the other areas of Micronesia there also were traditional ways of governance, in particular the important role of chiefs, that would be difficult to accommodate under a political relationship with the United States?

Farrell: That's made obvious by Palau, which has not yet been able to achieve a political status. I was told that one of the primary reasons that they have not been able to achieve a successful plebiscite in Palau is because the traditional leadership is fearful of losing that long cultural heritage they have should they enter into a permanent political relationship with the United States.

Willens: Even a free association relationship?

Farrell: Even a free association. It has been deteriorating.

Willens: What has been deteriorating?

Farrell: The influence of the traditional leadership. They are, of course, just protecting or trying to protect their traditional role.

Willens: What did you learn about the formation of the Marianas Political Status Commission after the U.S. agreed to enter into separate negotiations?

Farrell: What do you mean?

Willens: Did you learn how the group was put together and what political forces in the community generally supported that objective?

Farrell: Oh, yes. The political party development of the Northern Marianas followed closely on that of Guam. Again, the Northern Marianas people looked to Guam as a model for development towards becoming U.S. citizens, and therefore many of the political institutions were modeled after those on Guam. Remember that in the early days the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands headquarters during the Navy time was first in Hawaii and then moved to Guam. And it was to Guam that everybody around Micronesia was brought for their first political meeting, which didn't occur I believe until the early 1950s. So it was to Guam that everybody came, and it was to the Guam Legislature that the High Commissioner brought, or the Governor brought, all of these representatives to watch a legislature in action. So it became a model. And various people from the Northern Marianas associated one way or the other with a certain political leadership on Guam. And certain Guamanians took an active interest in the internal political development of the Northern Marianas, wanting to promote their own political party. So the leaders of the Popular Party of Guam, which eventually became the Democratic Party of Guam, did their best to try to bring their party interests to the Northern Marianas, for whatever reasons, I'm not sure. And conversely, some people in the Northern Marianas looked at the Popular Party, which had been the most powerful political party on Guam since its conception, and said, "Well, let's bring that party to the Northern Marianas." So the Popular Party was created. Then on Guam the Territorial Party was created and the same thing happened in the Northern Marianas. The Territorial Party in the Northern Marianas was successful in gaining the support of the majority of the indigenous Carolinians in the Northern Marianas.

Willens: Why did you think that was?

Farrell: There was an early election in the Northern Marianas. I can't remember which one it was right off-hand now, but there was an early election between the Populars and the Territorials in the Northern Marianas, and I believe it had to do with political status. During that election, the Territorials campaigned that the Popular Party didn't care about the Carolinians and their association with the Caroline Islands and their cultural heritage, that they wanted the Northern Marianas for Chamorros only, and that the Chamorros would decide what the political status was. So therefore the Territorials catered to the Carolinian vote and gained that vote. Because of those early days, even though they were losing all of those elections back then and the Popular Party was winning all of the elections back then, those Carolinians came to associate with the Territorial Party. When it became the Republican Party, they then remained with the Republican Party. I should mention that since then the Territorial/Republican Party has dominated Northern Marianas politics.

Willens: They certainly have for the last 12 years.

Farrell: But to go back to that basic question. When the Northern Marianas Political Status Commission was created, it was supposed to be a non-political election. It was supposed to be independent representatives coming together to create a political status for the people.

Willens: Did you think it was?

Farrell: It was not. Nor was the First Constitutional Convention. Nor was the Second Constitutional Convention.

Willens: Taking one of those at a time, what do you think were either the strengths or weaknesses of the Marianas Political Status Commission as a negotiating instrument for the people?

Farrell: The strength would have to be that the Popular Party, which elected the majority of the representatives to the Marianas Political Status Commission at that time, was winning the island-wide vote on Saipan. There had been no Territory-wide vote other than the election for the Senate in the Congress of Micronesia. Other than that, there were no island-wide votes up until that time. There was no election for Governor. And the Popular Party was consistently winning all of those elections, and consistently winning them on a plank of closer association with the United States and U.S. citizenship. So they did clearly have the majority opinion on their side when they took the majority in the political status negotiations.

Willens: The Commission, as you may recall, was appointed, and there were specific slots provided for the Territorial Party, for the Carolinian community, and for the business community. Most of the other slots were assigned to political bodies like the District Legislature, the Municipal Councils, and the nominees from those entities were almost without exception Popular Party. But taking into account the fact that there were designated slots for the Carolinian community, the Territorial Party, and the business community, is it still your sense that the Commission may have been too one-sided in its composition?

Farrell: I don't think that I would be able to say that. The only thing is that I can say statistically the Popular Party did control the majority of the voters on Saipan at that time, and there was adequate representation from the Territorial side and from the Carolinian community to balance the decisions that were being made. I have had several people ask me why was this in the Covenant, why was that put in the Covenant, and that these things have skewed succeeding politics. Particularly, why was so little money requested for the lease of

- the Tinian and Saipan lands and Farallon de Medinilla? That has been a continuing major gripe. Why did they settle on so little money?
- Willens: Was that a gripe that you've heard throughout the Commonwealth or one that focuses on Tinian in particular?
- Farrell: Throughout the Commonwealth.
- Willens: So you think there's a widespread sense that the approximately \$20 million was less than could have been and should have been achieved?
- Farrell: Sold out too cheap. That is the singularly direct one. The people of Saipan are having a terrible time with the bicameral legislature, as I'm sure you've seen. Traditionally, we do not get a budget passed, and they blame it totally on the Rota-Tinian-Saipan delegation situation.
- Willens: What is your sense about the ability of the Commonwealth over time to deal with this organizational and political problem?
- Farrell: I believe we're looking at a very short-term phenomenon in that no significant economic development has happened on either Tinian or Rota. The island populations have remained essentially stagnant since those first days, whereas the population of Saipan has significantly increased. This is made obvious by the change in the representation in the lower House. There were (I believe) 14 members of the lower House, one from Rota and one from Tinian. Now there are 18 members of the House, but still only one from Rota and one from Tinian. Saipan has enjoyed, and I use that in quotation marks, a rapid economic boom, which has now caused them significant problems—delivering potable water, electrical distribution, building of roads. These things are being taken care of; money is now being used. But the significant problem is the budget process. What will happen to that? In the long run, economic development will have to occur on Tinian and Rota. Simply because the beaches are being used up on Saipan. There's no place left to put a hotel on Saipan.
- Willens: I've been hearing for 20 years about potential development on both Rota and Tinian. Why is it in your judgment that it has not happened?
- Farrell: Because the investors who come in are looking at not just basic infrastructure, but transportation and communications. Those exist on Saipan. It is the head of government; you can go in and talk to your legislature. It is the head of the various agencies; you can speak to the directors of the agencies that you need help from. And that's more difficult down here. There has been no effort made at the development of communications and transportation for Tinian and Rota. It makes it difficult for investors to come in. Investors come here. They look around. And then they make the decision that it's just too tough. Look at our dock. The dock is falling apart. How are they going to get containers and containers of goods if they need to?
- Willens: There was of course an explicit effort in the Covenant to make certain that a fixed minimum of development funds would be available to Rota and Tinian. I gather from what you say that the guaranteed minimum is far from what was needed to develop the infrastructure on those two islands.
- Farrell: Not only is it far from what was needed, but a major court case during the first Commonwealth Legislature considered Governor Camacho's insistence that he didn't have to send half a million dollars to Rota and Tinian, that that was his prerogative, and that the islands didn't deserve it based on their population.

Willens: What was the basis for that position, if you know?

Farrell: He was the Governor. And it went to court, and Benjamin Manglona, the Rota Senator I think at that time, fought it along with some other people and won the case. Finally the money had to be sent down. I don't want to say that there was a thwarting of economic development for Tinian and Rota throughout that period of time. We heard about it every gubernatorial election. And they continue to turn around and say, "Oh, yes, we're going to develop the agriculture." Well, everybody knows we can't develop agriculture here. Where are we going to sell the agriculture, right? We can't compete with the Saipanese who's growing cantaloupe, because he can put it in the back of his pickup truck and drive it to the hotel. We have to put it on a boat, which we only just got two years ago, and take it up to Saipan, and then rent a truck, and drive it to the hotel.

Willens: You suggested though that the political problem caused by the bicameral legislature may be short term and that suggested to me that you believe that economic development would ultimately come to Tinian and Rota and to that extent the community of interest among the three islands might be more substantial.

Farrell: There will have to be a population increase. If we bring a hotel to Tinian, the infrastructural impact would be huge. First of all, we've got to build a new airport to be able to bring in 727s and 747s. That requires workers, requires cash, requires oversight people to do that. The dock facility is going to have to be improved. That requires workers and oversight people and the establishment of businesses to be able to handle that transportation. Communications are going to have to be increased. That requires more people being assigned here by IT&E and MTC to be able to handle the telephone lines that are going to have to go in and the fax lines and everything else that has to go in. And then the construction of the hotel itself requires workers, and if you've got a 300-room hotel, statistically it will take 450 people to be able to man and operate that hotel. That's hopefully 450 voters. So the population will change. And some people who were employed on Saipan will move to Tinian to be able to take those jobs, or people from Rota will move to Tinian, or people from Guam will move to Tinian, or statesiders will come to Tinian. And as the voting population of Tinian and Rota increases in relation to Saipan, then the representation in the House will have to increase. And once that's done, so that we can get a bill through the House of Representatives, it can be approved by the Senate. As it is, a bill can't get through the House of Representatives because the one representative from Rota and the one representative from Tinian have virtually no voice in that bill. Which means that by the time the bill gets to the Senate, where Rota and Tinian have a two-thirds majority, the bill gets completely reworked. That breaks the ego of the House, and when the bill goes down to the House, goes to conference committee, it doesn't go anywhere. It's blocked.

Willens: Is it your view that economic development on Tinian is related significantly to the current negotiations with the United States with respect to leasing back a portion of the land that was made available to the United States under the Covenant?

Farrell: I'm not sure whether that will be significant or not. It might be. There are lands available now that could be developed, so whether or not that is significant, I don't know. The essential problems that have to be dealt with now are Article 12 and ensuring that the investor has the confidence that his investment is secure under the American flag. Other issues that have to be dealt with, of course, are fluctuating minimum wages. When an investor comes in, they have to be able to make their proposal as to their project based on whether they afford the cost of labor. Now Saipan has already enjoyed that boom up there because investors knew that they could bring in laborers at \$2 an hour to build

hotels—qualified laborers from the Philippines, Korea, or China or from anywhere at \$2 an hour to build those hotels. If those hotels don't get built soon here on Tinian, then the investor is going to come in and see that he's got to pay U.S. minimum wage of \$4.35 an hour. The cost of construction doubles immediately with the cost of labor. What chance then does Tinian and Rota have? And then what's going to happen with the feelings of the people of Tinian and Rota towards Saipan?

Willens: Based on your research and analysis, did you reach any judgments as to the way in which the Covenant was negotiated over a period of two plus years?

Farrell: Certain things, of course. One, it seems to me that the people of the Commonwealth had every opportunity to follow along with the negotiations, that they were kept very open. They were dealt with on television, on radio, in journals, in publications done by the Commission itself. I find it hard to find somebody who lived through that timeframe who would not say, "Yes, I knew what was going on." And the turnout for the election was so high. The vote was so intense with political activity, with marches pro and against, that the people were certainly aware of the Covenant and what was happening—that they were going to become U.S. citizens, that there was going to be a payment made by the Navy of some \$20 million for the use of the land. The relationship with the United States and Article 12 and all that kind of stuff was very well known. So I believe that people were well informed of what was going to happen.

Willens: How about the substantive issues relating to such concepts as sovereignty or local self-government?

Farrell: I know that these were published in English, Chamorro, and Carolinian that tried to explain it. Again, most people told me that at the time sovereignty wasn't the question. It could be that people simply didn't understand some of the language that was in there, that they had heard land was not going to be sold to people outside of the Marianas, and so that's the way they saw that concept. Whether they fully understood the long-term implications of that concept, I'm not sure.

Willens: Do you think if the question of land alienation were put to a vote today that the majority of the local people would favor some continued restrictions on land alienation?

Farrell: Yes, I think they would favor some continued restrictions. But this issue is going to come up in the next constitutional convention; Article 12 will certainly be an issue in 1995. And in my opinion, it could go either way. The reason is that after the Article 12 cases took place, the wage and immigration issues were brought up by Congressman Miller, and the contest from the Governor's office against the Tinian casino gambling initiative—when those came down, the price of land, which had skyrocketed over the last few years, plummeted. No land is being sold today other than a small parcel here and a small parcel there. There are people now who are looking back to those days of having money to build concrete houses, buy cars, and send their children to college who got in on the deal.

Willens: What deal?

Farrell: On selling their land at a high price, and were suddenly elevated from a wood and tin shack to a beautiful concrete house with cars for all the kids. While the person across the street, whose land didn't sell for whatever reason at that time, is now wanting to sell his land, because he still living in a wood and tin house, driving an old pickup truck, and not able to send his kids off to college. So these people want to sell their land. These people over here have already sold their land, so to them it makes virtually no difference any longer. So I'm not sure which direction it would go. My opinion is, more people would

vote for, if not eliminating Article 12, certainly radically changing it so that these people over here have an opportunity to sell.

Willens: You mentioned a few of the principal issues or complaints that you've heard with respect to the Covenant. Are there any others that you think are of significant importance in terms of looking back on the Covenant as a vehicle for defining the relationship between the United States and the Commonwealth? Any particular strengths or weaknesses that you have identified?

Farrell: There is a misconception among the people as to this issue of mutual consent and continued negotiations—the 702 and 902 sections of the Covenant. I know that this came to a head between Haydn Williams and Lt. Governor Manglona just a couple years ago, when Haydn Williams said quite bluntly that he had perceived that these consent and negotiation things would happen once every ten years and that it wouldn't be a constant and ongoing process fueling the political fires from election to election. The local people, many of them anyway, who are not intimately familiar with how the negotiations on 702 and 902 take place, see only what is reported in the paper and in the news media, radio and television. They feel that the United States is trying to thwart or bypass or circumvent the Covenant by, first of all, coming out and doing things like Congressman Miller has apparently successfully done, and that is blocking 702 payments and the seven-year funding. The local people feel this is a unilateral action to contravene a deal, that the Covenant was a deal which has not been fulfilled yet, and, if you've got a problem, come and talk to us about it, but don't try to hold a machete to our neck.

Willens: The 702 negotiations are designed obviously to develop some agreement if possible as to continued multiple year support and, if so, at some agreed upon level. Do you think that the Northern Marianas people have contributed a fair share of their income via taxes to support the community?

Farrell: Yes, I do. And I'll explain it from this perspective. Every year, as you know, we get a 95 percent tax rebate. That tax rebate essentially is a forced savings account for the people, in that their money is held by the government. We pay the same level of taxes. Our taxes are figured the same as anybody else's are figured, and we pay them and they go into the Commonwealth Treasury. They are held there and accumulate for over a year. At the end of that year, after we file our income tax returns, we end up with an income tax rebate. People here have come to look on that as a savings account. When that money comes out, it is spent that moment or it has already been spent in a contract to buy a car, to buy a refrigerator, to build an addition to their house, for some capital expenditure for their family. That money goes right straight back into the local economy.

Willens: Yes, but the rebate percentages seem to be very generous. There's some current discussion apparently within the Commonwealth and between the Commonwealth and the federal agencies that there ought to be some reduction in the amount of the rebate.

Farrell: I have no doubt that that will happen, that there will be a gradual phase back on that, that it will go from 95 percent, to 90 percent, to 85 percent, to 80 percent.

Willens: Isn't it true also though that the Marianas residents are subjected to something called a gross receipts tax?

Farrell: Yes, a business receipts tax.

Willens: Does that apply to individuals like yourself?

Farrell: Do you mean with my company?

- Willens: Yes.
- Farrell: Oh, yes. When I order my books and they land at the dock, before I can get them out of the dock, I have to pay a 5% gross receipts tax. I write them a check right there at the Customs Office.
- Willens: How about the normal employed person who just works for an hourly or daily wage. Is that income susceptible to this gross receipts tax?
- Farrell: No. It's a business receipts tax. You pay it based on your business license. It's essentially an ad valorem tax. If I bring in for my company, let's say that I order from California a new computer, I would have to pay 5% on that to get it in the door.
- Willens: When you first came out to this part of the world and then subsequently moved over to Tinian, have you had the occasion to come to some judgment about how well the Covenant has worked?
- Farrell: I think it's worked extremely well. As a matter of fact, it's possibly worked too well, and that's the reason that it has run into problems. There was essentially no economic development in the Northern Marianas before 1978. It was a very modicum of business, and you must remember this from your days here. Saipan has changed radically between 1978 to 1993, and that is as a result of the Covenant. The Covenant specified that these islands were under the sovereignty of the United States. The American flag remained on Saipan, there were federal representatives on Saipan, there was a federal District Court created on Saipan, and this gave the investors the confidence that they weren't just investing on some island in the Pacific, they were making an investment on U.S. soil. That was number one. Number two, the ability of people of the Northern Marianas to govern its wage raise and govern its alien labor. Without that, none of that would happen, because it would simply be too expensive. Companies like Hyatt, Diamond Hotel, JAL and all of those companies have plenty of places where they could build hotels and fly in their guests, because they're all booked in Japan. But when they took a look at this place, they said, "Okay, this is U.S. soil, we have an opportunity to lease land, good beach land that is undeveloped so we could start from scratch, we can build a hotel cheaply using alien labor at a low wage rate, we have the security of the American flag, we can deal with this local government, and there are federal agencies here." That's what caused that to happen. It was the ability to build, the ability to construct large buildings at a very fair price that brought those investors to Saipan. If there had not been the local control over wage and alien labor, none of that would have happened.
- Willens: How about the quality of life with respect to health services, education, infrastructure?
- Farrell: They have certainly improved. The Commonwealth Health Center in Saipan, the little Tinian Health Clinic that my wife is the director of are obviously improved over previous years. When I first started visiting here in 1980, the health clinic was in the back room of the mayor's office practically. There was no physician, there was no dentist, the thing was only open eight hours a day, five days a week. Anybody that got a serious problem here could have been dead before they could get to Saipan.
- Willens: You lived in some parts of the United States, as I recall, that might be called not highly developed. How would you compare the standard of living here with the standard of living in an average rural community?
- Farrell: Rural Mississippi?
- Willens: Well, you pick the State.

Farrell: Okay. I would have to say all in all that the standard of living here is better than some parts of the United States. On the other hand, the Marianas, Guam and the Northern Marianas, are America's showcase to Asia. And I personally believe that just a little bit more largesse and flexibility toward ensuring that these people become proud flag-waving Americans would do a lot for all of America. And therefore, I'm very much an advocate of continuing economic and social development here supported aggressively by the United States. You will find very, very few Americans who have invested in the Marianas. It's a real shame.

Willens: Why is that?

Farrell: They don't know about it, one. Two, they maybe don't appreciate the climate as much as Asians do. Maybe they can't adjust. Maybe they feel slighted when they come out here and find that they are no longer able to vote for their President, that they don't have quite as much influence over the local government as they have back where they came from. But these islands are based on the economy of Southeast Asian and Japan. I just believe that the United States would be doing all Americans a favor if they spent more time promoting and developing these islands for a very small amount of money compared to what the United States spends. This should be the showcase of America to Asia. Where do all of our tourists come from? They come out of Asia. And they should go home saying "Wow, look what America did."

Willens: You have recounted an anecdote in your capacity as a teacher with respect to the students' comprehension of who they are. Could you sort of relate that?

Farrell: Well, we have to keep in mind that these people have only been U.S. citizens since 1986. The people of the Northern Marianas have only been U.S. citizens for a very short period of time. You also have to keep in mind that there are people still alive here who lived through the Japanese Administration, and that up until a couple of years ago, there were still some left over from the German Administration. I have short articles written by post-war Chamorro leaders in the Northern Marianas that recount their years in the last years of the Spanish Administration. So these people have gone from Spanish to German to Japanese, through a wartime government, to a post-war Naval government, to a Trust Territory government, until now they've come just recently to a Commonwealth government. And even then they weren't given citizenship until 1986. So they've only been U.S. citizens for a very short time. During all of that time, they have not looked at themselves as being Americans just because there was a Trust Territory here. Those were just the next group of people that were administering the islands, and those people changed from year to year, and their personalities changed. The impact of the Peace Corps is humongous. But anyway, the people don't look at themselves as being Americans, they weren't raised as Americans. And so they can say "Yes, I'm a U.S. citizen, yes, I have a U.S. passport, yes, I know what this passport means to me." But if you ask them what their nationality is, they will never say, or I've heard very, very few say, "I'm an American." Now if you go to Guam, you'll find more of them saying "Yes, I'm an American." In only this last legislative inauguration did I hear a new member of the Legislature say, "I don't want to hear any more of this talk about abrogating the Covenant. We are Americans, and we need to work toward a closer relationship with the United States, not farther apart." In just the few years that I've been here, there have been bills discussed and some of them introduced in the Legislature, limiting the right of U.S. citizens to vote in local elections. That we should have a ten-year residency requirement to be able to show our commitment to the island. Some of them have good reason for feeling that way, depending on how they have been treated by some Americans in the past. And those feelings of being second-class

people on their own island embittered people, and they accepted the Covenant, they accepted the U.S. citizenship, and they accepted the relationship of the United States with some degree of trepidation.

Willens: That's perfectly understandable. You mentioned before that the high school students when asked what their nationality is might still say, "I'm Chamorro."

Farrell: I'm a Chamorro.

Willens: You and I talked earlier about an effort during the 1980s to interpret the Covenant in what has been viewed by some as a revisionist manner. What do you believe were the factors that persuaded some political leaders and others to espouse that position?

Farrell: For some of them, it was simply an opportunity to gain notoriety in the press. That by standing up and saying, "The United States is not sovereign over us, the Covenant limited the sovereignty of the United States, and we have total control of this. I don't want to see any federal agent coming in here and trying to tell us how to run our island. They don't have any right to do that." Of course if they did that, particularly members of the Legislature, they knew very well that whatever they said was going to be in the paper the next day. They also knew that most of their constituents, many of their constituents at least, would believe whatever they said, because constituents don't have copies of the Covenant sitting around their household. They can't flip over to Article 12 and see what it really says. They can't read Article 702 and see what it really says. So whatever was espoused in the media, sunk home with people. At least it got them some notoriety so they could say, "See, I'm working for our rights." Whether they were really conscientious about the stand that they were taking that day could be two different things.

Willens: Were there any specific grievances with the United States that engendered that kind of rhetoric?

Farrell: The 702 discussions, the 902 discussions, and recently the furor caused by Congressman Miller over insisting that the Northern Marianas had to change certain of its internal regulations to be able to fit into a mold that he felt was necessary for the islands, caused bitter feelings.

Willens: What's your sense as to how best to deal with that kind of a conflict with federal authorities?

Farrell: I think that there will be, first of all, let's watch this election that's going to take place. The election for Governor, for the Legislature, and for the Washington Representative could give us a trend in what is going to be the relationship between the next Administration and Washington, D.C.

Willens: How do you think the parties stand on that issue? I mean everyone I've heard either maintains relationships are fine and improving or that there have been problems but they can be improved. Do you think the political parties take different positions as to how to deal with the federal government?

Farrell: I have listened to the political speeches being given on the subject recently. At least the Democratic Party and their leader, Froilan Tenorio, is insisting that this Administration, and in particular Governor Guerrero, has been the cause of the recent poor relations between the United States and the Northern Marianas. He is campaigning very hard that what the Northern Marianas needs to do is to fire Governor Guerrero, sending a message to Washington, D.C. that the Northern Marianas recognize that a problem had developed politically and that they would handle it politically by electing a new leadership that could do a better job of handling our federal territorial relations. At the same time,

Governor Guerrero is saying that okay, mistakes were made and we're handling them, that we have addressed the issue to the Legislature, that legislation had been drafted and introduced that will handle these issues gradually over the next few years, but there's no need for radical change at this point, and that we can't allow Washington, D.C. to dictate how our political and economic development will take place. Generally I see a consensus that the people are willing to accept the concept that there have to be gradual changes in our minimum wages, and gradual changes in our taxation system, so that we will bear a larger infrastructural development burden. Also that our standard of living will gradually increase internally to the point that we will have the same minimum wage as Guam and the rest of the United States. And I see that as being the general consensus, the main question being how long should we take in this transformation from what we needed to get the construction going, what we need today because there is still no economy, no viable economy for Tinian and Rota, and still protect the need for Tinian and Rota to have those benefits for a few more years. At the same time we'll be able to accept the responsibility of increasing our internal awareness and internal ability to handle our own finances. I see that as the general consensus.

Willens: You mentioned earlier that you were working on a book or an essay with respect to the insular cases and more generally the way in which the United States treats its insular areas. I may not have described the project accurately, but my question is whether you see some common issues that unite the various insular areas in their dealings with the federal government that might be productively pursued as a group if the leadership existed?

Farrell: Wow, how do I keep that concise for you? One, most political leaders I've spoken to have felt that the Office of Territorial and Insular Affairs has not been a good advocate for the territories. They have essentially been a buffer between Secretary of the Interior and the territories, and that many of the people who have been appointed as assistant secretary for territorial and insular affairs have had little or no knowledge of the people out here and therefore had no real design to come out here and be an advocate for the territories and serve the interest of the people of the territories. Since the days of Congressman Won Pat, there's also been nobody on the subcommittee who has really promoted these territories out here. And so the islands have become lost in that. To become a little bit more specific with my position, there are certain issues that could be dealt with collectively. The recent issue of exclusive economic zones is a key issue. At this point in time, there's no real money to be made off of our water resources, our exclusive economic zones.

Willens: Don, you were responding to a fairly open-ended question about issues common to the insular areas that might be addressed. You mentioned one; do you have others in mind?

Farrell: No, not right off hand. Exclusive economic zones is one that comes to mind. I continue to follow that simply because of its political and economic ramifications in the future. The cobalt, manganese and nickel nodules that in our water are not yet accessible because of the lack of development of certain technical parameters that have to be taken care of. But they will become available in the foreseeable future. The United States has already passed legislation essentially saying that these valuable minerals are under the waters of the United States belong to all the people of the United States, not just those States that happen to be on the coastline. And they've made that applicable to the Northern Marianas and the other territories, and the people of the territories are very irritated about that because our economy is essentially based virtually totally on tourism. If we lose that tourism, we have nothing left, and that these mineral deposits out there should belong to the people of our islands. As far as I can tell, there are similar deposits of various minerals throughout all of the insular areas, and this is an issue that could be dealt with collectively

by all of the territories. Unfortunately, they are not being dealt with collectively but being dealt with individually by each of the territories. This has allowed the Office of Territories and Insular Affairs to simply go back to them and say, "Well, you all have to get together." As long as they don't all get together then the office does not have to deal with the issue, and it becomes a non-issue again. I don't believe that the Office of Territories and Insular Affairs therefore, with that one example in mind, has been a strong advocate of the territories. I believe that the concept recently forwarded that the responsibility for the territories should be shifted to the President's office, where a single policy could be guided out of the President's office, is a better idea, rather than having it under an obscure agency so far away from the mainstream of politics. That would only happen if the President of the United States felt that it was important to deal with the insular areas. If he doesn't feel that it's important to deal with the insular areas, then probably he doesn't feel that it's important to be able to have the Department of Defense hold on to land on Tinian and we ought to have it back. I mean, we either are important or we are not important. Nobody's been able to deal with that issue, again because the territories are separated. They're not together. They're not coming together into an annual meeting to discuss common issues. That would be a helpful thing to have. It all goes back in my mind to the way the territories were gained and when they were gained by the United States. In my mind, the acquisition of the Philippines, Guam and Puerto Rico is not constitutional, that there was no right for title by conquest in our constitutional philosophy, and they never should have been there in the first place. That was made obvious by the Jones Act of 1916, when the anti-expansionists gained control of both the presidency and the Congress of the United States and voted independence for the Philippines. They could have voted independence for all the rest of them at the same time, but for various reasons didn't. Guam was too insignificant to be considered; the Philippines was the only real problem at the time because it was considered a threat by Japan. Puerto Rico being just off the coastline, some felt it was necessary as a balance to other powers in the area as a protective barrier and part of the Monroe Doctrine. So ever since the insular cases came down, various administrations have used those decisions to be able to hold onto control of the islands, with only certain fundamental parts of the Constitution being considered applicable. They have simply drifted through the history of the United States with no real direction coming from the United States and no foreseeable final political status available to any of them. We are now approaching the 100th anniversary of the Territory of Guam and Puerto Rico, and at that point in time, nearly 100 years ago now, Congress was given the explicit responsibility of defining a political status for the inhabitants of these islands, and they have never done it. And I see no reason why they are going to suddenly decide that they are going to do it now or for another 100 years. So we'll see this political status, non-status, continue on throughout the rest of our lives. And I think that's unfair to both the people of the territories and unfair to the people of the United States and particularly the leadership in Washington, D.C.

Willens: Is there any lesson that one can learn from the negotiations that the Northern Marianas had with the United States?

Farrell: Yes. Of all of the territories, only the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas has any chance of legitimacy under the Constitution. And that is because only the people in the Northern Marianas were allowed the opportunity for mutual negotiation on political status. All of the rest of the territories became part of the United States by either acquisition by conquest or acquisition by purchase, and the people there had no say in whether or not they wanted to become Americans. Therefore, I see no justification for them being part of the United States at all. At least in the case of the Northern Marianas, the people here

asked to become a part of the United States. An open, fair dialogue occurred between the people of the Northern Marianas and representatives in the United States. The issue was debated and deliberated at least in the Senate if not in the House, and a very favorable vote came out of that decision. The Senate ratified it in essence, and so at least the people of the Northern Marianas got the political status they wanted at the time, with latitude being given within the Covenant to be able to handle problems that might develop in the future. Problems have developed. Unfortunately, in some cases, either the people representing the United States or the people representing the Commonwealth have not been able to come to viable political solutions to those problems. And they will continue. But at least it's a continuing dialogue.

Willens: I've described generally the nature of the project in which my wife and I are engaged. Are there any particular issues to which you would want to direct our attention to as we focus on the background of the Covenant and the First Constitutional Convention? Are there certain questions that you personally would have liked to explore or would encourage us to explore?

Farrell: I'd have to think about that.

Willens: All right. Don, I know that you consider the question to be open for the future and we'll be talking again. I want to thank you very much for your help.