

INTERVIEW OF WALTER J. HICKEL

by Howard P. Willens and Deanne C. Siemer

November 18, 1996

- Willens: Walter J. Hickel is a former Governor of Alaska and served as Secretary of the Interior during 1969 and 1970. He has very graciously agreed to be interviewed for our project with respect to Micronesia. Mr. Hickel, thank you very much for making yourself available. Without belaboring all the biographical data that I saw in Who's Who, perhaps you might begin by telling us a little about where you grew up and how you did find your way to Alaska.
- Hickel: Well, I grew up in central Kansas. My folks were tenant farmers of German heritage. I was the oldest son of ten children. I had two older sisters. I started working when I was very young, behind a gang plow when I was eight years old. I always had a sort of picture about the land and the country. I was born in 1919. So when the Depression came, I was in my young teens. We weren't poor; we just didn't have any money. We were rich in all the things that God could give you, enthusiasm, competence, all those things. My parents taught us that. We were poor those ten years. I mean America was poor; there was no money. On December 6, 1941, we still didn't have any money. On December 7, we had billions. I always asked the question, "Where did the money come from? We didn't have any money last week; today we're rich." I wanted to get out of that mentality. I had a beautiful family. So I had sort of been looking for a country and kind of wanted to go to Australia, but I wasn't old enough for my passport and visas. I'm getting ahead of myself. The reason I got to California is because the Golden Gloves boxing used to not be in the Olympics. It was a separate thing. That was one way to travel. I had never boxed in my life. So in 1938 I decided, "Well, I'm going to travel," and I entered the Golden Gloves in Kansas and I won the championship at the first tournament. I sort of was a natural. If you won the championship, you went to the next five-state tournament. To make a long story short, I ended up in California in January 1940, where I fought Jackie Brown, the California State champion, and I beat him. But I did that to travel. So then I went down to the White Steamship Company and asked where could I go.
- Willens: What company was that?
- Hickel: The White Steamship Company. I'd never heard of it before. It was a place that you could go and find someplace where you could go.
- Willens: What was your weight class?
- Hickel: Welterweight.
- Willens: You were a welterweight.
- Hickel: Welterweight, yes.
- Willens: And you still are.
- Hickel: Still a welterweight, yes.
- Willens: So then you went to the steamship company?
- Hickel: Yes. They said I'd have to have a passport and visa to go to Australia. "Well, where can I go without passports and visas?" And they told me. But anyhow, I waited until I was 21. On August 18th I was 21. I went down there the 20th and told them I was ready to go. They

said well now you just apply. I said how long would it take to get my passport and visas? Anyhow, I was young and impatient. Where can I go without passports and visas? So they named the Philippines, Guam, Hawaii, the Panama Canal, the Virgin Islands. The last place they mentioned was Alaska. I said “Hey, how far up in Alaska could I go?” I didn’t know. They said “Well, if you’d come in here a couple of weeks ago, we could have taken you to Nome.” They had one ship a year. We can take you to Seward. I said “Well I’ll go to Seward.” So that’s how I arrived in Seward in November 1940—in fact, 56 years ago this month.

Willens: So you’ve been a resident of Alaska for 56 years?

Hickel: Yes. There wasn’t much here. There were only 70,000 people in Alaska and 3,000 in Anchorage. So I just started in and did a lot of things. But I always had that thought about freedom, democracy, ownership and responsibility. It’s just in me—something I can’t quite describe.

Siemer: How was Alaska governed back in those days?

Hickel: On a Territorial basis. The federal government appointed everything, appointed the general manager of the railroad, appointed the governor. We paid taxes but had no voice whatsoever. So we started this movement. Bob Atwood really started it in the late 1940s. I got involved in the late 1940s just as a kid. Bob’s 89 now—he’s 12 years older than I. He used to own the *Anchorage Times*. I had to take him on this one bill, because he wanted statehood—period. When that bill passed in 1950, I went to Washington, and I said this isn’t going to work.

Willens: Were you in the building business at the time?

Hickel: Well, yes. I’d been with the Air Force out here as a civilian inspector, a flight inspector. I went in business in 1947 starting with one house. I arrived in Anchorage with 37 cents. I never knew a soul who was here. But I got in the building business and always just built for myself, not for anyone else. I built this hotel. But I never took contracts. I just always did those things.

Willens: What got you involved then in the Alaska statehood issue?

Hickel: Just because of the abuse that the Territory gets, that you couldn’t imagine unless you lived there.

Siemer: Is it abuse in the kind of people who were appointed?

Hickel: Well, just the lack of decisions. Now Hawaii didn’t have the same problem because it had been a republic. This is North; this is not like anything in the United States. I don’t care if you live in Washington, D.C. or in Moscow or in Oslo or Ottawa or Seattle. When you think North, you think up and back. It’s an exploited mentality. We in the North think around. But they think up and back. So if there’s a problem in Matanuska Valley and some Senator gets hold of it, he’s going to solve it just like they do in Kansas or Oklahoma. That’s his mentality. Building a road’s the same way. And North of 60 degrees, whether you’re raising a child or raising hell or raising a family or raising turnips; it’s different. Around the world, North of 60 degrees; it’s different. It’s collective. And it’s rich. So they’d come up here, I remember, to build the first road to Fairbanks in 1944. There were two military cars and three civilian cars, and I was one of the civilian cars. They built it (and their hearts were good) and they went across Donley Dome up here, about 450 miles to Fairbanks. And the road literally slid off the mountain in about three weeks time. They’re doing it like they think they ought to do it. And they don’t listen. That’s okay and I understand it. That still goes on to a great degree a little bit today in the mentality

of people who go North, especially if they're in some kind of a business venture. Well, that's the way we do it in Houston, you know. So that mentality was very hard to put up with. And then all the appointed things. I can remember when the only place you could buy a stamp (this was 1950) was at the Post Office. The only place you could mail a letter was at the Post Office. The only place you could get your mail was at the Post Office. No delivery. So I got mad in 1950, and I called—what's the fellow's name of the National Committee in Washington? But anyhow, I wanted Herbert Hoover to come up. I just demanded Hoover. Governor Langley called me and said if you ever come down this way, I'd like to talk to you. I flew down to see him. You know, in 1950 and 1951, it was 12 hours to Seattle or 9 hours.

Willens: He was Governor of

Hickel: Washington State. He was the top man in Eisenhower's Administration.

Willens: Were you an active Republican at the time?

Hickel: I was an active Republican because the Democratic Party was literally owned. The absentee owners owned the thing.

Willens: Who were the absentee owners?

Hickel: Basically the canned salmon industry and the miners.

Willens: The miners?

Hickel: Yes. And the canned salmon industry. But the Democrats were the organized party, and the outside economic interests had a tremendous influence in that party. So anyhow, I went to see Langley. He told me that Hoover's getting quite old and all that. To me you're young, you're fighting, you bleed. He said we have a couple of Senators we could send you up there. One is Senator Welker from Idaho and Senator Nixon from California. I said who's Nixon? I'll never forget that. So they sent Welker up. Welker was on the Post Office Committee. He came up as my guest, and I told him about the Post Office thing. Did he ever get that changed! They froze all the funds of the Post Office Department until they could get a spot for us where we could mail letters outside of the Post Office. So they got jackhammers out there and they put one post office box out there in front of the Post Office. They called me up, the Postmaster did, and said Senator Welker said until you have satisfied this young man, nothing's going to happen. I said, "Is that the only thing you could do? Why can't we have mail delivery service?" To make a long story short, we got mail delivery service. Then we could buy stamps down at the grocery store or something. You used to have to stand in line to buy postage. It was cold. That's a colony, you know. So we changed all that. That got changed. But that's an old story. Getting back to this statehood thing and this battle. We could give them a copy probably of "Hickel's Heckles." Do we have that? And the article that we wrote for that and the one after that.

Siemer: That would be excellent. Thank you.

Willens: That goes back to the 1950s?

Hickel: This was in 1952 during that battle when I went back to recommit that bill.

Willens: Were there two or three principal deficiencies in the proposed legislation?

Hickel: Well, it didn't give us anything. It gave us 23 million acres of land out of 365 million. Not any resources. Nothing.

Willens: All the so-called public land was to be retained by the federal government?

- Hickel: Yes. I'm not an attorney or anything. I only have a high school education. But I have a good education, you know. I read this thing. I said this isn't going to work. But the Statehood Committee and our delegate to Congress—Bob Atwood, who was a very prominent man in the town and owned the newspapers—they were all for it.
- Willens: Figuring they could get statehood and that would....
- Hickel: Yes. Statehood was all they wanted. I said no, it won't work. You can't make a country like this work. It's too big. So I went back to see Truman and Taft. I never saw the President. I saw the Vice President twice. If you aim high enough, you're going to make something. I had never been there before.
- Willens: Never been to Washington at all?
- Hickel: No. Never in my life. The Vice President said, "Young man, statehood is a step forward." I said, "Yes, but if we get it and don't get it right, it's too difficult."
- Willens: This was Vice President....
- Hickel: This was Barkley. Vice President Alben Barkley under Truman.
- Willens: A very experienced legislator.
- Hickel: Yes. So then I got to see Senator Taft personally, and I literally spent five days at his office. I remember once he went down to the Senate floor, and I shouldn't have heard this. I was in the cloakroom, just happened to be down there. It kind of hid me from him. He came walking through and he said, "You know, we ought to listen to that young man from Alaska. He's telling a good story." And he walked out on the Senate floor. And after about a week, he said, "You know, we assigned I. Jack Martin (his top chief of staff) to this thing." We became friends and stayed that way for all these years. And he said, "We have this in pretty good shape. I think you can go home now." In those days, to get home was a long way; I went through Denver, and finally Los Angeles, then came up this way on a plane. I got paged at the Los Angeles Airport. Who would page me? I didn't even know where I was, let alone anybody know me. So I took the phone. It was I. Jack Martin. He said, "The Senator said to call you and tell you that we recommitted that bill by one vote. Now you have your work cut out for you." I'll never forget that. In the Senator's office, I told him about the land thing and all these things I was concerned about. He said, "Well, how much land do you think you should have?" And I blurted out, "100 million acres."
- Siemer: Out of the 365.
- Hickel: Yes. But I didn't know how much land we had. And I walked out of that office, and Senator Welker was with me. I said how much land do we have up there? Anyway they checked—we had 365 million acres. I said I should have asked for half of it. But to make a long story short, we got 103 million acres. We got the ownership of the resources on that in a common collective way. We can't sell them or give them away. If we do, it will go back to the federal government. So finally we became a State. One time I made 12 trips to Washington, D.C. in one year.
- Willens: So with respect to the land that the State did get, the State may lease it and exploit it in that way, but the State cannot transfer the land to private hands?
- Hickel: No, not the resources. You can some of the surface, but the resources stay collectively. So we became a State, and I became the second Governor. And that's why I opened Prudhoe Bay. Here it was a little different thing. In the normal State of the union, the other 49 states, the government's basically regulatory; it's a democracy and a capital intensive monetary system, and the private sector does all the work and all that. But the government's a

regulatory thing. Here the government is regulatory and an owner. It has to manage its land. That's why I say the Governor here is like the foreman of the ranch. We put together in a Constitutional Convention a very simple strong Constitution. They debated whether we should elect an Attorney General and all this stuff, but they only elect one person, that's the Governor. If he screws up, they'll replace him. But the responsibility is his. He's the foreman of the ranch so to speak. I gave it that title. So I came in 1966 and opened Prudhoe Bay because all the oil companies in the world (or all the wealth in the world) can't do anything about it unless the government says yes. Because that's the owner. See my point? And that revenue then goes to the state collectively, not to individuals. When we were putting this thing together, the battle was tough. Senator Butler of Nebraska was Chairman of the Interior Committee. He came up in 1953 and had a hearing here, and I testified. Oh boy, I testified. He came down to see me. I had a little office out in Gambell Street. He was Chairman of the Senate Interior Committee. He came down to see me. He said, "Young man, you got a good idea." It was the conservative Republicans that finally came around to giving us the 100 million acres of land and they said there will be no statehood bill unless this is all in there. And there will be no bill unless the Alaskans agree with this, and your colleagues must understand that this is very unusual legislation. This speech was given by Butler of Maryland I think, in 1957. He said your colleagues must understand this is very unusual legislation and will not be able to be changed by this body alone without the consent of the Alaskans. They made it very tough, thinking well it may not go through, because the Democrats were basically interested in just getting statehood. So all these things were in there—the 103 million acres of land, the resources, those other things (such as 90percent of royalties on Federal land). And we became a State, and we had to vote to accept that. So we did that. There was nothing like it in any other statehood contract. That's why I filed those big billion dollar suits when I was Governor this last time, because I knew that, you see. In fact, one suit was for \$29 billion, if you can imagine that.

Willens: Was the proposal that you made opposed by the Department of the Interior?

Hickel: No. We got them on our side. Governor McKay of Oregon became Secretary of Interior, the first one under Eisenhower. In fact, he had me down there in December 1952, and he was thinking of appointing me Governor. I had Judge McCarrey with me, and I literally told him I didn't want to be Governor. That was 1952, and I was a pretty young guy and had a lot of things to do. To make a long story short, he appointed Heintzleman. But McKay was against statehood. So then I had to take him on. And that was a battle. He finally resigned in 1956, and [Fred] Seaton came on. Seaton was very strong on our side and became a very close personal friend of mine. So that battle was fought and we had Interior on our side.

Willens: So Interior was willing to depart from the usual format?

Hickel: Oh, yes. I think Eisenhower appointed him knowing our concern. I had led a group in to meet Eisenhower, 17 of us, in 1954. Sherman Adams was Chief of Staff. I had been elected National Committeeman. We had changed the law up here in January 1953 so that the National Committeeman and woman of both parties had to be elected by popular vote. That took it out of the absentee ownership. And for this meeting with the President I had to clear (because I was in that position) the people who went in there. I was allowed to talk as long as I wanted to, and I could name one other person to talk. So Eisenhower was sitting at the edge of his desk in the Oval Office and I was standing over on this side of him, Sherman Adams was standing next to me, and I started talking about how they were going to divide Alaska up. The military wanted to have everything north of 60 degrees in

a reservation kind of thing. So I took that on pretty hard (but pretty decent I thought) but Eisenhower's face was getting red as was the top of his head. By the time I thought it was red enough, I tossed it to Johnny Butrovich. And Johnny Butrovich, he really took him on. And he was so strong he made me look good. And Eisenhower just cleared his throat when he was through and he looked at me and he said, "At least I'm glad you think I'm an American." But we won. And I learned something very young in life: don't ever aim for something and forget why you're there. Just don't be overwhelmed by whatever is there. When you shoot to go someplace, get there. Be sure you remember why you're there. And so we did that. Eisenhower and I became great friends.

Willens: Had you ever heard of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands before you were appointed Secretary of the Interior?

Hickel: I did, yes. As I told you, the French General Counsel for other reasons asked me to go with him to Tahiti in 1961. That was about seven years before I was Secretary.

Willens: Did you go?

Hickel: Yes, I went. I spent about a week down there.

Willens: And it was all business?

Hickel: It was business but it was different. That was before you could fly into Papeete. But anyway, that was the first flight into Papeete. We flew from Honolulu down on a Constellation. Took 11 ½ hours. They landed us there and they came back a week later and picked us up. So he was there a week whether he wanted it or not. But it was a French colony. The British probably do the best job of running a colony. The French colonies approached it a little different than American colonies and the British are also a little different. The Americans had the best system if you're part of the total. The United States has the best system on earth with all its faults. It brings it all together. But if you're not part of that, like living in Alaska without a vote, it's a disaster. So the French (and the British) probably have a more historical balance, especially the British, of having colonies around the world. The United States system never approached it quite like that.

Siemer: Did you see anything else of the Pacific while you were out there?

Hickel: No. Only just at that time Tahiti, Bora Bora and those places around close there.

Siemer: How did you come to be Secretary of the Interior?

Hickel: Nixon appointed me.

Willens: Was it based on any of your prior dealings with Mr. Nixon?

Hickel: I was elected Governor in 1966. I was very active, and very much had the Owner State in mind. Took it to Prudhoe Bay, told them what they had to do and ran the show. Took the Russian ship in, which had never been done before in history. President Johnson announced in the press that he was going to meet in Kodiak to solve this thing and was sending a warship out there. (To give you some of these battles.) I called the President, talked to him right away on the phone. I said, "Mr. President, this is my part of the world. I took that ship in. I'm going to solve that problem." He canceled the meeting. So about a week later the State Department called and said when am I coming back to settle this Russian thing. I said I'm not. We're going to settle it here. The Russians loved it. They loved that independence. They loved that freedom. We just had to do a lot of things. We had to break the Jones Act because we couldn't find American-built ferries. And Johnson gave us a waiver on it. In fact about two weeks after I called the President on the Russian ship, Ermalee and I were invited to the White House for dinner. He wanted to meet this

guy. Johnson and I became great personal friends. It was really great. But Secretary of Interior, I never dreamt it! My life was Alaska. I'd made a deal. You take care of me and I'll take care of you. When I came up in 1940, that was my commitment. I was nominated for President as a favorite son in 1968 and withdrew immediately in favor of Nixon. And Nixon had me as one of his top surrogate candidates. I traveled the country. So I never dreamt, believe me, I would be a Secretary of Interior until I received that phone call. I was just locked in and with no way out. So I went.

Willens: Were you one of the first Cabinet members to be confirmed and assume your responsibilities?

Hickel: No. I was the last one to be confirmed. Now where's that book I had? Anyhow, that was the worst hearing. The record was 450 pages long, and I knew it was going to be tough, because I was from way up here. I was sort of out of the crowd, you know. It went on for days and I wouldn't allow an attorney sitting with me. I would allow no staff. Not a sheet of paper on my desk in front of me. And I just answered those questions with my heart. I'll show you the book on that thing.

Willens: The principal objection was simply that you were from Alaska?

Hickel: Well, and I was pretty independent, you know. So here is the hearings. I have a pretty good sense of humor. I'm going to show you some of that. For Christmas of 1969, I invited all the Senate Interior Committee to come over for a little meeting, right before Christmas. And Senator Jackson knew I was just going to put the heat on him for something or another. I took this book and I had a little cover put on it. I paid for it myself. This is an official book: "How to Get a Job in Government Without Really Trying." And I had them all wrapped up and I presented each one of the Senate Interior Committee one of those books, including the Chairman. But that's the kind of thing it was. That was quite a hearing. In fact, Senator Tower wrote a book before he died. He mentioned in there that the confirmation hearings of Secretary Hickel forever changed confirmation. I wasn't even confirmed for the Inauguration. The amazing thing, of the 20 some Senators voted against me, all but one came to me within two years and said, "Mr. Secretary, if I could redo my vote, you'd have it."

Willens: You had about 20 who voted against

Hickel: I think it was 24.

Willens: ... you and they all indicated differently in later years.

Hickel: Yes.

Willens: That is quite a compliment.

Hickel: Yes. And they became my friends, Jackson until he died, and all of them. But I went there different. I was sort of independent but I had this vision of the world. Associations I like, colonies won't work.

Willens: You mentioned in your 1971 book that, shortly after you were on duty as Secretary, you became aware of the Trust Territory problem and you assigned some staff people to work on it. How did you first become aware that there was a situation out there that needed your Secretarial attention?

Hickel: Well, so many things happened at once. Santa Barbara blew right after I was sworn in. And that got me taking more time than you can shake a stick at. And then the Trust Territory issue came up. Evidently we hadn't sent anyone out to the Trust Territories for seven years at that time. Nobody had been out there.

- Siemer: Nobody from the Interior Department or
- Hickel: No one from the Interior Department. But the way I got it, there was a lack of real communication between the authority and the island.
- Willens: What you say in the book is that you were the first Secretary to go out there in seven years.
- Hickel: That's right.
- Willens: So there were lower levels of people.
- Hickel: There were lower levels of people who went, that's right.
- Willens: Did President Nixon actually talk to you about the Trust Territory early on in the Administration?
- Hickel: Yes, early on, because I went out in April.
- Willens: That's right. He talked to you; and you said you would not have gone if he hadn't asked you.
- Hickel: That's right.
- Willens: But how did it come to his attention that this needed Secretarial activity?
- Hickel: Well, it had become sort of an administrative problem long before Nixon was there. And I don't know whether there had to be a report made to the U.N. or something
- Willens: There were annual reports made to the U.N.
- Hickel: ... that's right. And so Kissinger sort of opposed, not to me personally, but he opposed the idea of us getting involved. And Nixon, I remember (and maybe you'll find something in the file back there), he said, "I'm sending Wally out there because he's lived in a colony and he understands the problem." So that was one of the reasons he wanted me to follow that up, although it was in our jurisdiction.
- Willens: That's one of the interesting points. There is no indication of President Nixon involvement in the matter for several years. There's some evidence of Kissinger's involvement later on that we'll come to. But you apparently had a briefing paper prepared. It's the first document in this book that I gave you. It is a very good summary of the problem and what had happened in the previous Administration and the different views of Interior and State and Defense. There was a sense of urgency that got brought to your attention.
- Hickel: That's right. As I read this stuff early on when I was in the Administration, there weren't any goals, there weren't any conclusive ideas of what to do with Micronesia. The Secretary of the National Security Council and Secretary of Defense dominated policy. There just didn't seem to be any human concern for it. It was all a military thing. So Nixon said go on out there. He told me that. And the reason he said, "You've lived in a colony most of your life. Go on out there."
- Willens: How did it happen that Edgar Kaiser came to work for you?
- Hickel: I was sort of a young entrepreneur. I've known people like Bill Lear (founder of Lear Jet), or Morrison of Morrison Knudsen, or the old man Henry Kaiser. Henry Kaiser wanted to see me once in the late 1950s or early 1960s. It was in Hawaii. He was a great old gentleman. He went over there to retire. He said we have to change these islands. He said they need 5,000 hotel rooms. Nobody's doing anything. He showed me these great plans. And I'm just a kid. I'd never met him in my life. The only time I'd met him in my life was that time. But he was a genuine person, and he wanted some of my thoughts, and he was

showing me what he was going to do, and he was old enough to be my father I think. That was the last I heard of him until I became Secretary of Interior. And a young White House fellow in Johnson's staff was Edgar Kaiser. I said hey, send him over here. Young kid about 25 or something. Bright young kid. Looked like he wanted to do a lot of things and didn't have a lot of focus. I could read him like a book. I read people. I read faces. I'll tell you a little story. I don't want to read what a man says, and I don't want to hear him say it. I want to see him say it. The U.N. even had me do this at the first Stockholm Conference in 1972. I'm digressing a little bit here. But the Red Chinese showed up without being on the schedule. The Conference Secretary-General Maurice Strong said go down, sit down right in front and you read his face. And I did. I'm watching him. The Chinese are hard to read because their face is very clear. But the eyes reflect the mind and the face reflects the heart. If you have an open mind you have a clear eye. You have an open face, you have an open heart. The Chinese are hard to read. I had Malcolm Roberts sitting next to me. He's still here in town. They just wanted me to interpret what he's saying, from the standpoint of does he mean it? I watched him and I said now he's leading up to something now. And I said now he really means what he's saying now. So it came back with the interpretation a few days later. At that point, he said we must realize that all people are human and humans are the most precious things on earth. He was addressing the environmental conference, the first one. I was one of six world observers. Not representing the United States. I was one of six world observers. And I went down and read this Chinese. So young Kaiser walked in, and I said, "Hey, here's a guy I could put trust into." And I always hired a lot of young people. Mead [Treadwell] has been with me since he was 17. Weren't you 17 when you came up?

Treadwell: 18.

Hickel: 18?

Treadwell: Yes. I'd just turned 18.

Willens: A few years ago, right?

Hickel: Yes. He was just out of school. Then he went to Yale. Then he came back. Then he went to Harvard. Then he came back. He went to Juneau with me. Anyhow, I've always had young people. You get a bright young guy and he doesn't have a lot of thoughts that keep you from doing what you're supposed to do. They'll help you, you know. So I sent Edgar Kaiser out there.

Willens: Did you send him out right away? Did you decide to use him on this project?

Hickel: Yes.

Willens: From the very beginning?

Hickel: Yes.

Willens: So was he one of the people who you sent out right away to find out what was going on?

Hickel: Yes.

Treadwell: He was a White House fellow, right?

Hickel: Yes. Right. But he stayed with us then after Nixon came in. And I sent him out there. I knew deep down he liked it, but deep down he was concerned whether he could handle it. And I think it kind of scared him.

Willens: It was a big assignment. Did you send any other staff down? There was a Mrs. Farrington. Did you appoint her?

- Hickel: She went with me. She was from Hawaii.
- Willens: Had you appointed her to the job as head of the Office of Territories or had somebody else designated her for the job?
- Hickel: No. I think she was our appointee. And she went with me on our trip down there.
- Willens: But she wasn't one you sent out there to help find out?
- Hickel: No. I sent Edgar Kaiser out there and Ron Walker. I sent Edgar Kaiser a couple or three times I think.
- Willens: Before you went.
- Hickel: No. Before I went I only sent him out once, I think.
- Willens: What did he report, if you remember, based on that trip?
- Hickel: Well, I told him just give me an idea, just get a feel for what they were doing. He talked to the people. You'd have to talk to Edgar to get a real close figure on this.
- Willens: We had an appointment with him in Vancouver just a few days ago which had to be rescheduled because he was stuck down in San Francisco. So we hope to interview him later this week.
- Hickel: Okay. I can't say specifically, but he knew my goal, and so he went out and just sort of got that thought out there. He was young enough that he could talk to a lot of people in his own way and with his own thoughts and not be influenced by position or anything like that.
- Willens: Did you have a goal right at the outset of what you wanted to accomplish?
- Hickel: The whole idea was the land thing. I didn't like the land [arrangements]. They could expropriate the land. They could just take it. They didn't have to talk to them. They didn't have to lease it. They didn't have to do anything. They could just take it.
- Siemer: They being
- Hickel: America.
- Siemer: Any U.S. agency.
- Hickel: Yes, right, especially Defense.
- Willens: But they had to pay for it.
- Hickel: No, they didn't.
- Willens: I see.
- Hickel: No, they didn't. That was my point. You could literally just take it. So I sent Edgar out. He got the basic idea that they'd like to work with us. You know, they'd like to. He didn't get any specifics because I didn't get that detailed with him. But that association idea they liked. But they didn't like the dominance. They'd lease their land. They'd do anything. They'd sell the land. But they didn't just want them to come down here and take it. It's just like the United States today. Just took 100 million acres away from us. So I ran in 1990. They took it away in the Carter Administration. I filed a \$29 billion lawsuit. Now dammit, this is what America does even to its own States. So you'd have to understand now they wouldn't do this to Kansas, because it's too close. It's right there. It's one of the family. We're up here. We're orphans. We should have been a country, but we didn't have an opportunity. That's right.

- Willens: Were you aware when you came into office the prior Administration had spent the last couple of years trying to get Congress to approve by legislation the creation of some kind of presidential commission to look at the future status of Micronesia?
- Hickel: I was aware of that.
- Willens: Did you give any consideration to that as an approach, or did you reject it?
- Hickel: No. I rejected it because Udall hadn't been out there in seven years. Nobody had focused on it. I wish I would have had the time to focus on it, but in my two years I literally focused on the world. Man, I had so many problems, from taking Standard Oil to the Grand Jury, which had never been done before in history. And the Santa Barbara thing, the Cambodia thing, and the environmental thing. It was hard to focus. But I had a great group of young guys. When I read that thing (I think Harrison Loesch brought it into me; no, it was Carl McMurray).
- Willens: Brought what into you?
- Hickel: The Interior report on Micronesia. I said my God, they've been wasting all these years on that. And all they're talking about is another Commission. I'm not a Commission kind of a guy. So I said, "Hey, listen, we're going to straighten this thing out." I don't know whether we got the White House involved, or the White House had been involved and said let's have Hickel do it. I'm not sure of that.
- Willens: Well, that's an interesting point. The paper record that we have which is fairly complete, but we are missing some things, seems to indicate that at the early part of the Administration, Kissinger created a mechanism that used the Under Secretaries Committee. And your Deputy, Mr. Train, was a member of that Under Secretaries Committee. So, after you indicated you were going or simultaneously, the staff from all the Departments started working together to reexamine policy and decide what your instructions were going to be.
- Hickel: I knew what my instructions were going to be.
- Willens: That's what's interesting. Did your decision to go force the agencies to develop a position?
- Hickel: I think so.
- Willens: It could be construed that way from the paper record.
- Hickel: I'm a great believer that if you don't want to do something, have a study. If you do want to do something, make a point and get right there and they all come in. I do that. I don't care. I do it. I'll get Prudhoe Bay or going around the world or putting together a Northern Forum or getting admitted at the U.N. You make it happen. So the minute I said, "Hey, I don't like this land deal, I don't like the way it's happening," boy, then they started to come in. Government in a democracy doesn't focus until a leader says this is where we're going. Then they start to focus. That leadership had been missing. I'm not criticizing any one person. As Mead knows, I take all my stuff, and I say you read it and you highlight it and I want a digest in a couple of minutes. That's the way I operate. Otherwise you spend all your time [reading]. So I said go through these things, and I had Jack Horton and Kaiser and McMurray. McMurray had been my Chief of Staff down in Juneau. They brought this thing to me, and I said this doesn't have a focus. I remember that.
- Willens: I don't think Harrison Loesch was on duty yet. I don't think he had come in yet.
- Hickel: No. I said it was McMurray, Kaiser and Jack Horton. I think it was Jack Horton. It was McMurray I know. Ron Walker was there.

- Treadwell: What was Walker's job for you at that time?
- Hickel: He just came over as an assistant. He was such a bright political person, the White House took him in six months.
- Treadwell: Do you all know Ron?
- Willens: No. Ron Walker? No, and I have not seen his name in the materials.
- Hickel: He went out to Micronesia. He was out there a week ahead of me and came back with me. He went out with Kaiser. Kaiser went out by himself.
- Treadwell: But Ron Walker was an advance man for Nixon in the 1968 campaign and later ran the Republican National Convention for the Reagan years and so forth. He heads Korn-Ferry International, a major headhunting firm in Washington right now. He was head of the National Park Service in the second Nixon Administration and has been a great friend of the Governor.
- Willens: Mead, why don't you identify yourself for the record so our secretaries don't get all messed up.
- Treadwell: Okay. My name is Mead Treadwell. I'm assistant to Governor Hickel. But Ron, being the quintessential advance man, would have been a great guy to send out on a mission at that time...
- Hickel: He was good.
- Treadwell: ...to help set something up. Literally, when I say quintessential, he's the one who Republican campaigns drag in today to teach the advance men what to do.
- Willens: And he's still there. Maybe we ought to try to locate him. I do remember the name now as a Republican advance man. What happened apparently from the documents is that there was an Under Secretaries Committee meeting on March 24, 1969, and one of the recommendations that came out of that meeting was that the President appoint a special assistant on the status of the Territory. We have a memo here suggesting that after the meeting they learned that Secretary Hickel disagreed with that recommendation rather strongly. Do you recall disagreeing with that proposal?
- Hickel: Yes. The basic thing was when I saw the lack of focus on there, and when I read some of these documents about the U.N. Trusteeship and how the Defense Department had the right to literally take the land for bases and all this stuff. Nobody was focusing on education, nobody could give a damn about the living conditions in that part of the South Pacific like I've seen in the French part of Polynesia. They were only focusing on that one issue and missing the whole point of the people. I saw that very clearly.
- Siemer: Did people think of all the islands in Micronesia as an entity, as a community?
- Hickel: They thought of it as one thing but in essence it's many things. I did a lot of things just because I didn't think they were right, and Nixon supported that. I appointed the last Governor of Guam, Camacho. Then I said now you elect your own. I just did it. I appointed the last Governor. He was a dentist with six kids. I appointed the last Governor of the Virgin Islands. He was a black M.D. I said now you elect your own. So I went in with that mentality of taking this thing from an appointed thing from far away and make it local. Micronesia's a small amount of land, but it's a big area with many different parts. Before I went there, I knew that part of it. When I went there, I saw the lack of attention.

- Willens: The other agencies had been pressing for many years to have the White House get involved.
- Hickel: And apparently the White House didn't.
- Willens: By getting some prestigious person to represent the Executive Branch. Was it your view that this was not necessary and that leadership from the Interior Department could deal with the problem?
- Hickel: If I'd have been the Secretary of Hobunk, I'd have done the same thing. I just operate that way. Yes, it was in my Department. But I'm a great believer that one guy has to take the lead and make a decision and then they'll start to focus. When I gave that speech out there (I think you have a copy of it), and then that Christian Science Monitor report said a very important thing. I think it's here someplace.
- Willens: Was that the one about your going to visit under Tab 4 or later on?
- Hickel: No, it was after Tab 10. Here's what it says. It's about the way I do things. "Hickel's address amounted to a low-profile manifesto directed not just to the Micronesians but to the United Nations and the world as well." And that's the way I operate, whether I'm in Rio talking or what. I address the world. Because you have to get a lot of minds set to make something happen like that. So I wasn't addressing this to Defense or Nixon. When I talked to Micronesians, I address them as part of the world. I know the world can't take care of them, but you address that mentality.
- Willens: Your presentation out there did talk in terms of inviting them to discuss an affiliation with the United States. Some of the papers indicate that the Executive Branch at the time believed that there was a lot of support for independence out in Micronesia and that we could not afford to give them the option of voting on independence. Did you have a view on that issue?
- Hickel: Yes. I never found that. When I first sent Edgar out there (and he could tell you about this), they liked the idea of an association. It wasn't spelled out, but they liked the idea of being associated with but not dominated by us. To put many meetings in a perspective way, that was basically the thought.
- Willens: The State Department in earlier years had felt that you always had to offer the people the option of independence. Otherwise, the United Nations would disapprove of any relationship.
- Hickel: That's basically true.
- Willens: What was your view of the United Nations concerns that influenced the State Department to some degree?
- Hickel: I don't know what the United Nations reasoning was outside of just the best thought when they gave it to us as a Trust Territory. And I think that Trust Territory (you can check this out) was for a 20-year duration. Wasn't that right, the first Trust Territory?
- Willens: It really had no duration. It was unique.
- Siemer: It was a strategic trust.
- Hickel: It was?
- Siemer: It was a different kind of a trust.
- Hickel: It was.
- Treadwell: Was it approved by the U.N. Security Council?

- Willens: It was under the governance of the Security Council rather than the General Assembly, that's correct. But it looks in the Nixon Administration as though the State Department views did not carry the day, that Interior and Defense developed a proposal to go out there and try to get them affiliated in some permanent way with the United States. Is that what you had in mind?
- Hickel: That's exactly right. One of the things I told them that brought the thing sort of collectively together was the land issue where I said that we would deal with that. They wanted that association with us. They would lease their land, yes, they liked the American thing. They would sell us the land if that became what had to be done. They just didn't like America to come in and take it.
- Willens: They were issuing a Status Commission Report from the Congress of Micronesia at about the time you went out there, and that report recommended to the Micronesians that they elect some kind of free association with the United States or in the alternative independence. Those recommendations seemed inconsistent with the idea of a permanent relationship with the United States. What was your sense as to whether they wanted a relationship but only a very loose one that they could always terminate at their option?
- Hickel: I never felt it that way. I always felt that they liked the association with the United States but they didn't like the abuse of the domination. I always felt they really liked the association with the United States. There were some groups out there that were a little more radical.
- Willens: Do you remember who they were or where they were located?
- Hickel: No, I can't remember what group. There were about four or five groups out there, and I can't remember which ones now.
- Siemer: Do you remember meeting with people when you were out there?
- Hickel: Yes. We had several meetings, and I gave one major talk. Most of them had to do with the relationship with America and had to do with the one thing that I saw that was really in their craw. With our coming out there with a dominant factor, especially the Defense Department saying this is what we're going to do. We're not going to ask you about anything. This is what we're going to do. It's the same thing they did up here to us. It's not foreign. But that's the way they did it. But out there, it was a long ways away, and there wasn't any communication. They could get by with whatever they wanted.
- Willens: You announced a fairly far-reaching action program that dealt with such matters as land, eliminating a dual pay system for the Micronesians, putting more Micronesians into the government of the Trust Territory, and a very significant infrastructure construction program using military forces or Seabees as it developed.
- Hickel: That's right.
- Willens: Who developed that action program?
- Hickel: I did. Basically we did. And where I'd come from is the same thing we have here in rural Alaska. My God, today I've got villages out there, and we have to live by the American regulations. You bury your waste in the land. I went out to Hooper Bay where they can't do this because of permafrost and the water table. I videotaped this and sent it both to Clinton and to Bush. We still have to do it the wrong way because that's the law. All you get out there is frozen crap. Nothing works. You just can't make it work. So the South Pacific is easier to make it work like that, but I've seen so much of that here, the Federal Government saying that this is the way you're going to do it. Well, screw you, it won't

work. I say that. I have known every President since Roosevelt except Kennedy. I've been in the Oval Office with seven. And I don't find malice in the American thinking, I don't, especially at that level. But I find a complete lack of knowledge. I don't care if it's in the South Pacific or where. It's that lack of knowledge. So we become so dominant in the world and such great leaders that we forget that there might be a different thing that has to happen in India, you see? So we make these decisions based on New York to California and Canada to Mexico. That little thinking in there. And that happens out there. It happens here. So when I made those decisions and saw places that weren't habitable for the people there. We had responsibility for Micronesia for about 20 years by the time I was out there I think. And we weren't focusing on that.

- Willens: Did you have any judgment at the time as to how well the Trust Territory had been administered?
- Hickel: I knew that it had been administered well from the standpoint of security and obligation on our part from the standpoint of Defense. But from the standpoint of looking at humans as humans and problems as problems and solutions, depending on who was in charge, it wasn't any good.
- Siemer: What did you think of the people that the Interior Department had sent out there?
- Hickel: You mean before I was there? I didn't know them that well. I knew Udall, but I didn't know a lot of people in the Department. We deal with the Secretary of the Interior because he was the Czar of Alaska prior to statehood. The Secretary of the Interior was our Czar, not the President. The Secretary of the Interior appointed the Governor, the Secretary of the Interior appointed all the Highway Departments, the Secretary of the Interior appointed the man who ran the Alaskan Railroad, the Secretary of the Interior was the Czar.
- Siemer: The Micronesians were in the same kind of situation, because the Secretary of the Interior appointed all the people who ran things out there.
- Hickel: That's right.
- Siemer: When you were there, did you meet with some of those people who were actually running the Interior Department's affairs there?
- Hickel: There probably was some staff there, but the person I worked with was Johnston. Wasn't it Johnston?
- Willens: You went out there with Johnston to swear him in at the occasion.
- Hickel: Yes. I don't remember the Micronesians I was meeting with. They weren't so much part of the United States as they were part of Micronesia. Those were the people I met with.
- Siemer: What did you actually do when you were out there? Did they take you to other islands? Did you get to Tinian or Rota?
- Hickel: Yes. We went to Tinian. We went to others. I can't remember right now.
- Treadwell: I've asked Yvonne to get the schedule out of the warehouse ...
- Siemer: Oh, great.
- Treadwell: ... and when we go through the transcript, we'll try to match some things up with the schedule so you can have them.
- Siemer: Oh, excellent. Thank you.
- Treadwell: There's also a *Saturday Evening Post* or a *Look* magazine article that we gave you there that...

- Hickel: You mean in *Esquire*?
- Treadwell: The *Esquire* magazine article.
- Hickel: That was in 1971.
- Treadwell: Oh, that was in 1971 when you went back?
- Hickel: That's when we did the whole South Pacific.
- Treadwell: Okay.
- Siemer: This trip was how long? About a week?
- Hickel: A week to ten days.
- Siemer: Who did you have with you from Washington besides Johnston?
- Hickel: I had my secretary, my wife, Ron Walker was out there, I had some other staff people. Kaiser was out there.
- Willens: Now your book says that you included Mrs. Farrington, Mr. Johnston
- Hickel: Mrs. Farrington was based in Hawaii.
- Willens: But your recollection was that Mr. Kaiser was out there waiting for you to come.
- Hickel: He and Walker. Yes.
- Willens: Someone we've talked to recently remembers this event as being a very warm day in Saipan when you made the speech and has a recollection that you did concentrate on the land issue. He understood you to say that from this point forward there should be no power of condemnation.
- Hickel: That's right.
- Willens: That may be an overstatement, but
- Hickel: No. I said that.
- Treadwell: The Christian Science Monitor report pretty much reported that.
- Willens: The one we have in the book?
- Treadwell: Yes.
- Willens: Yes. Well, I wondered whether you meant that they would no longer have the authority to take for military purposes ...
- Hickel: They could go buy it.
- Willens: ... without compensation.
- Hickel: Yes, right.
- Willens: But they'll still be able to use it if they lease it or purchase it for a fair market price. Was that your position?
- Hickel: That's exactly right.
- Siemer: It would have to be a commercial deal? The government could not use its eminent domain power and then compensate the land owner?
- Hickel: Well, I suggested that they take it in conjunction with the Micronesians agreeing, and then they would pay them for it.

- Siemer: So it would have to be a consensual commercial deal.
- Hickel: That's right.
- Siemer: You couldn't go in and
- Hickel: Just take it.
- Siemer: With the eminent domain power and say I'm going to take that and we can now argue over how much we'll pay you.
- Hickel: Yes. That was the gist of it.
- Siemer: The question that people had was how
- Hickel: Defense, yes.
- Siemer: Well, no, it wasn't Defense. You had a strong emphasis on infrastructure and people didn't understand how you proposed to build the roads and build the schools without eminent domain power, without the power to take the land to do that.
- Hickel: Well, you wouldn't go out to build a school if they didn't want it. You wouldn't go out to put in a road if they didn't want it. You wouldn't go out to put water and sewer in if they didn't want it. We have the same problem here. We can't get them to do it. They don't come out and say we're going to put water and sewer in whether you like it or not. That isn't quite the way it works. Military-wise it would.
- Siemer: That's the way it works in Kansas. If you want to put in a road from here to there, the Government can condemn the land from here to there, put the road in
- Hickel: And then pay you for it.
- Siemer: And then pay you for it.
- Hickel: Yes. They can for those public things. That's absolutely right.
- Siemer: And that was the question. People wondered how you were going to do public works projects across private land if the private landowner simply would hold you up.
- Hickel: Oh, I didn't mean that. I really meant that you can't use eminent domain just for your own use. You can do it for public use, yes.
- Siemer: Okay.
- Hickel: See, I was talking about Defense.
- Siemer: Their public use.
- Willens: You did obviously focus on the land issue and the unfairness of Defense taking the land.
- Hickel: Well, if they're going to take it for the collective use, they have to do that. But if they're going to take it for their own use . . .
- Treadwell: Maybe, Governor, if I can interrupt?
- Hickel: Go ahead.
- Treadwell: An example here. You mentioned in the earlier part of the interview you were meeting with Eisenhower on the statehood issue. What that meeting was about was called the PYK proposal.
- Hickel: Yes. North of 60 degrees.

- Treadwell: And the idea was that you would take a line in Alaska with the Yukon, the Porcupine and the Kuskokwim Rivers, and everything north of that would remain a military reservation, almost like what was talked about here.
- Hickel: Yes.
- Treadwell: And that group of 17 Alaskans went back to see the President to say don't divide our state in half. And literally DOD said for all the same purposes that DOD was talking about in Micronesia—keep the northern half of Alaska for our use.
- Hickel: That's exactly right, and I said no. Yes, I'm for condemning land for the collective good of the people to build a road from here to there. But not take a country as big as three New England states, or four, and say this is just for Defense. The heck with you guys. That was the battle.
- Willens: Actually the Washington Daily News article that's dated April 29, 1969 that I provided you seems to have been some kind of a leak.
- Hickel: Where was that?
- Willens: It's under Tab 4, and it's obviously a few days before your trip out there. And it says that the United States may try to "annex" the 2,000 Micronesian islands, and you'll be interested to know that as a result of this story, the State Department hurriedly had to consult with New Zealand, Australia, and Great Britain to assure them that the United States was not about to annex something inconsistent with its U.N. obligations. Do you have any recollection as to how news of your trip out there got into the hands of the press.
- Hickel: No. Is this after I got back or before?
- Willens: No, this is before. This was a few days before you actually went out, and I just wondered whether you or your public information person might have put out some notice of your trip and that people generated this kind of a story about it.
- Hickel: I don't know.
- Willens: The paragraph at the end of the page there that you were just looking at refers to General Walt's visit. That visit stimulated some of the Micronesians to think that there was a great Defense Department interest in their land, and they thought they could use this for bargaining leverage in negotiations. Did you ever talk to General Walt or Secretary Laird about the specific Defense Department needs in Micronesia?
- Hickel: Not that I can recall. I don't remember General Walt. I might have met him; I just don't recall it.
- Willens: How about Secretary Laird? Did you ever try to suggest to him that it would be useful if Defense Department needs were more specifically defined?
- Hickel: I'm sure I talked to him about it. I'm just trying to think. I can't recall. The greatest battles I had were with the National Security Council. Laird wasn't that kind of a person. Let me give you a little background of the Nixon Administration. I don't know if I had this in *Who Owns America* or not. But Nixon was a very brilliant guy, but he had a dark side and a light side, and I played his light side. I loved the people playing his light side. The people that were on his light side were Secretary Rogers, Secretary Shultz, and to a degree Laird. On the dark side was Kissinger. And Kissinger I remember was, "Mr. President, Mr. President, you know, you just don't know what that is like." "Henry, take care of it." I remember that. Henry did. He put the first White House taps on.

- Willens: Put the what?
- Siemer: Taps.
- Hickel: The first wire taps on.
- Siemer: By the dark side you mean his worries that people were against him?
- Hickel: Well, Nixon could really light up when you played on the optimistic side. But he felt very comfortable about well, we ought to—(you know) those guys, those guys, those guys, those guys. He'd go like this, you know. And that really was the Watergate thing, I couldn't focus on it because there were so many things going on during that two years, and then the Cambodia thing came up. But as long as you could debate the light side, Nixon would get enthusiastic. I'll never forget out in the Western White House. We had a meeting on parks. I made a presentation on the "Parks to the People" thing. Told them why instead of having million-acre parks, we ought to have 10,000-acre parks closer to where people are. And Nixon said, "That's what I want to hear. That's what I want to hear. Let's just get on with this program. Let's go." If you played on his light side. But if you played on his dark side, it was the opposite.
- Willens: Did you report to him after your trip out to Saipan in 1969?
- Hickel: I don't remember specifically, but I probably did.
- Willens: He subsequently went out and stopped in Guam on the way to (I think) a trip to the Far East in connection with the Vietnam War. In Guam, he made some statements that were later characterized as the Guam Doctrine. But he had a visit from some Micronesian representatives who delivered to him a resolution. Do you have any recollection of whether he ...
- Hickel: Was that after I left?
- Willens: No. It was in the summer of 1969. Do you have any recollection of briefing him in connection with Micronesia in advance of that trip?
- Hickel: No, I don't.
- Willens: That's another trip that I think Mr. Kaiser may have been present at, and we'll have to talk to him about that. What was your assessment then of the May trip to the Trust Territory?
- Hickel: Well, I thought that the people I met with were very enthusiastic about their relationship with America. They just didn't like the way the Defense Department had been treating them from a standpoint of their land and neglecting things like schools and roads and water and things like that. There was nobody focusing on that. Defense was probably doing a good job on defense.
- Willens: Did the Micronesians think that you personally could implement that action program that you outlined?
- Hickel: Oh, sure. I probably let them believe I could. That's just me.
- Willens: Did you think that the Interior Department personnel had the capability to implement that program?
- Hickel: Yes, because I'm a believer in that. The problem where it broke down, if it did, was that we had so many things we were focusing on in such a short period of time. If I'd had more time, because the big things, like I said, that would affect Washington the most were, for example, when I took Standard of Cal to the Grand Jury. It had never been done in

the history of America. That takes a lot of focus. And then the environmental things in Florida and the big chemical plant the Germans were going to put down on that beach. What beach was that? Anyhow, these were big battles. And then the pipeline for Alaska, when I got that oil pipeline. And so I remember, this is when I would tell Edgar, "Edgar, you do it," you know. And he'd go to it.

Siemer: How about Johnston, your High Commissioner? How did he come to you? Did you know him?

Hickel: No. I didn't. He just came to me as a person. I think there were two others, I can't remember who. But Johnston just sort of fit, Johnston to me was a little bit like Train, very gentle, very good, wouldn't really take on any head-on battles.

Treadwell: Have you talked to Train?

Willens: No, we haven't actually. Do you know where he is located?

Hickel: He's on the East Coast someplace.

Treadwell: He's in Washington and then down in Florida.

Willens: I've gotten the impression that you've relied more on Edgar Kaiser and on Harrison Loesch ...

Hickel: And the staff. I had a very young staff.

Willens: ... and the staff and that Mr. Train was not actively engaged in this particular project.

Hickel: No.

Willens: Mr. Loesch remembers your interviewing him and selecting him over another candidate because the other candidate had a number of young children and you suggested to the other candidate that the job was going to be so demanding that he shouldn't take it because of his family commitment.

Hickel: That sounds like something I would say.

Willens: Does that strike a bell?

Hickel: It sounds like something I'd say.

Willens: I had the pleasure of interviewing Mr. Loesch a couple of years ago, and we had a terrific interview, and I was very impressed in rereading his transcript as to his views. He recalls that he had a good working relationship with you ...

Hickel: He did.

Willens: ... and reported to you regularly, particularly as the negotiations unfolded.

Hickel: That's exactly right. He focused on that. And that's the way I still run my things today, whether it's the World, Arctic or what. I get a guy for a certain area, and that's him, you know, if he can focus.

Willens: At your meeting in Saipan, you invited the Micronesians to send a group back to Washington at some date in the future to discuss future status. After you returned, you learned (or your staff learned) that Congressman Aspinall had requested the Interior Department to draft an organic act and that he wanted to enact it promptly.

Hickel: That's right. And I remember his talking to me about that.

Willens: What do you remember about your discussions with Chairman Aspinall?

- Hickel: Well, he was a make-it-happen guy. He's from Colorado. We had a good rapport. He was a Democrat. In fact, he came up here shortly before he died to see me. Must have been 84 or 85 years old. But he was somebody that I figured his heart was right, he wanted to do it, he wasn't just saying we're going to do this for political reasons or something. Aspinall was a competent political person, he had an intuitive instinct for what was doable and what was right. I trusted him. He could grab the overall reasons for something. Some people can't, but he could. He was pretty good.
- Willens: Did you tell him that you thought it was necessary to negotiate with the Micronesians before there was any organic act?
- Hickel: I remember we were both saying you can't solve anything if you don't communicate, if you don't talk to them.
- Willens: He agreed with that?
- Hickel: Yes.
- Willens: Well, he seems to have backed off of that position, although the Interior Department did provide him an organic act without any consultation with the other agencies.
- Hickel: He probably found out that what he was trying to do may not have been legally possible or politically possible, I don't know. But I know his sense was that way. He could sense right and wrong. And that's a matter of interpretation of whether you think it's right or wrong. He could sense that.
- Willens: He had always taken the view in earlier years that the Trust Territory should not be given any status different than Guam or the Virgin Islands and that any talk of independence or free association was not in the cards so far as he was concerned. Did you ever have occasion to talk with him as to what was feasible?
- Hickel: He never actually talked to me about that because I probably I led the conversation, I don't know. But I always came from the standpoint of Guam, Virgin Islands, that they should have an association but that had to have some kind of equality. It's like Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico used to be. Now it's sort of a commonwealth.
- Willens: So you thought that the status that you were thinking of was something better than what existed in Guam and the Virgin Islands.
- Hickel: At that time?
- Willens: Yes.
- Hickel: Oh, absolutely.
- Willens: In particular you thought they should have more control over their land.
- Hickel: That's exactly right. And over their destiny. They could have an association with America. Commonwealth was one thing that we had looked for in Alaska, but that wasn't a possibility, because you go from a territory to a state, and that's the step you take. I had raised the issue along with a judge from Hawaii who came over here in 1950. He was going to try to set up an association with America but not like a state—an independent thing. We'd have owned all the land.
- Siemer: You'd had here in Alaska enormous resources and an enormous land mass.
- Hickel: Unlike that [in Micronesia].
- Siemer: What was your view at the time when you saw these islands about the likely viability of their economy and their ability to service?

Hickel: They basically had a marine environment, a fishing economy. The only importance they had was a unique geographical location in the South Pacific for defense or tourism. It's a little bit like when Hawaii came in, although Hawaii's much richer than that part of the South Pacific, but it was different. Yes, this was different in Micronesia. Different than the whole South Pacific, although that whole South Pacific is sort of a unique culture.

Siemer: But they were going to have a more difficult time.

Hickel: Economically.

Siemer: Yes. If they had to rely on their own economies totally.

Hickel: Yes. They couldn't be a state. I'm not saying that they couldn't. That didn't make any sense. A little bit like our battle here. We have a very unique thing here. There's no way with taxes alone you could run the state of Alaska. There's just no way. We have more coastline than all of the United States put together. How would you police it? It was just a vast countryside, so that's why we got what I call this Owner-State thing. I call it the Owner-State. We own our resources collectively.

Siemer: You have a little bit of the same kind of problem that Micronesia had in that you have a lot of distances between some of your people.

Hickel: That's right.

Siemer: And you need to maintain communication among all of them to keep them together.

Hickel: It's expensive. That's why the resources are owned collectively and not individually. If Prudhoe Bay were in the South 48, there would be 200 farmers on it. Then they'll beat up government here so bad so the owner can't operate. Now you have to have a regulatory state by the system. You've got to do that anytime. But on the ownership side, they beat it up so bad that there's just not enough people watching it. So if that were owned in the South 48, let's say by 200 farmers, they'd have their own accountants, their own attorneys, and everybody fighting their battle. So when I came back in 1990 (that's the reason I tried so hard in 1978 and lost by 98 votes), I collected nearly \$4 billion without going to court, just from the oil companies for what they didn't pay the owner side. See, this is foreign to government. This is like the farmer. I collected nearly \$4 billion. It's a matter of record. Never went to court. In fact, Dick Oliver, the head guy in London, wrote me a note right after I got out of office thanking me for bringing that to a head. They paid us nearly \$2 billion because we are the royalty owners. We are the owners like the Kansas farmer. So they'll beat up government—too much government you know with the beat it, beat it, beat it to death. And there's nobody watching that ownership side. That's the reason I put together the Institute of the North, to get this information out about how it operates to the world through this Institute. This piece of real estate here is the most unique thing on Earth. It's the bridge between the Anglo Western Judeo-Christian European society that came over 400 years ago, which is basically private, and exists in all of North America, part of Australia, a few little isolated places. And we're that bridge between that Anglo Western Judaic Christian mentality and that vastness of Russia, China, Mongolia, Southeast Asia which is not that. We're that bridge. We sit there and we see it. Hell, I worked with the top Communist people way back in the early 1960s. It's that mentality. So we are that bridge between that Communistic part of the world—it's not all Communism but that collective government thing—and this freedom. And we're that part that is collective, but we run it just like America. The only difference here is that the stuff is owned by us collectively, but we don't drill the wells, we don't build the gas lines. They do it the same here as they

do it in Texas, except that it's collective ownership not individual. That's the way it is over there.

Willens: Do you recall participating in the ...

Hickel: I didn't mean to get off the subject.

Willens: No. It's very valuable for us. I was going to refer to the first round of discussions with the Micronesians that took place in Washington in October of 1969. Do you have any recollection of participating or giving direction to Mr. Loesch or others in advance of those negotiations as to what the U.S. objective ought to be?

Hickel: Basically I didn't really change the objective. There were some details, and I think Loesch said that the Defense Department would have had a hard time living with some of the suggestions I had on this thing. I can't remember distinctly. I remember I said, "Well, let's do the best we can and stay on the focus that we started with," and I never got into detail with him, but basically backed up the thoughts that we started with.

Willens: You seemed to have been the force trying to compromise after that first round of negotiations. The discussions were very inconclusive. The Micronesians came in with a variety of position papers on everything from federal laws to postal services to land. The United States delegation found some of that unacceptable, particularly the provisions on land. Mr. Loesch remembers that you directed him to compromise, to basically offer the Micronesians concessions on land if they would agree to a permanent affiliation with the United States, leaving for the moment undefined what a permanent affiliation might be. That was called the Hickel Compromise, and it was put to the Micronesians without clearance with any of the other agencies.

Hickel: They must have bought it, didn't they?

Willens: Well, some of the Micronesians said that they found it attractive, but Loesch and you had to circulate it and get the agreement of State and Defense.

Hickel: That would have been tough.

Willens: And there were discussions. Do you have any recollections now of trying to cut through the negotiations and work out some sort of a prompt resolution to the matter?

Hickel: I probably gave that to Loesch to do.

Willens: Was it your sense at the time that one should move quickly to bring these discussions to conclusion?

Hickel: Yes. Because whether I can remember exactly what I told him, my natural instincts when I'm on something like that is get it over with, otherwise it will drag on and government will never get it completed. So I probably told Harrison do what you have to do but bring it to conclusion.

Willens: Did you have any sense at the time that if the negotiations dragged on over the years the Micronesians might not be agreeable to some kind of association with the United States?

Hickel: I didn't think of that as much as I thought we'd just never get it solved, the longer it drags out like that in government. That's the reason you have wars, because wars are very decisive. You don't have to hold meetings. It's true.

Willens: One of the details that the other agencies met about endlessly was whether the Micronesians were entitled to self-government that included an elected governor. Did you have a view as to whether an elected governor was important?

- Hickel: Yes. I had no problem with that. That's why I told Guam to elect their own. I can't see any reason why a group of people—there aren't that many of them, but there's 90,000 of them—why they couldn't elect their own leader. I remember it was only 70,000 here in Alaska. There might have been some legal reasons why, but I was looking at the practicality of doing it.
- Willens: No, there was no legal reason. There was some concern that Chairman Aspinall wouldn't be agreeable to that degree of self-government for the Micronesians. Do you remember discussions with him on that score?
- Hickel: No, but if I'd have pushed him, I'm sure he'd have gone for it.
- Siemer: Were there other important Congressional players at that time on the Micronesia issue?
- Hickel: Biggest one was Aspinall.
- Willens: Senator Jackson didn't seem to get involved in the Trust Territory until several years later. Do you have any recollection of his being involved at this time?
- Hickel: He just acquiesced. I worked with him on so many things. This wasn't a priority in his department and he wasn't in fact personally involved.
- Willens: After your compromise was being circulated among the agencies, the staff people at Mr. Loesch's level decided that this first round of negotiations had not been as successful as they had hoped and they thought that the Micronesians ought to be given the right to have their own constitutional convention. The staff people met and recommended up to the Secretarial level that the United States change its position and advance to the Micronesians legislation to authorize them to have their own constitutional convention.
- Hickel: That might have gone through my office. I don't remember that.
- Willens: It was about at this time that you had a meeting with Dr. Kissinger and there's a summary of it under Tab 13 in the volume I've provided you. This is a memorandum prepared at the State Department by Samuel R. Peale dated December 16, 1969. He was not at the meeting, but Assistant Secretary DePalma of State was. This memo (with the redaction on the first page that you see) is the only record that we have of this meeting.
- Hickel: Here where it says something it sounds very true. Hickel was convinced that if we meet the Micronesians' request, we would be able to obtain all the land we need. That was made very clear to me when I first started talking to the Micronesians. You come and just work with us and talk with us about what you want, you could have literally what you need. That was their sort of mentality in the first meeting, because the land was a big issue, and that might have been a little misstatement but it was basically the thought.
- Willens: Well, you notice that there were brackets around that sentence. That sentence was withheld on national security grounds.
- Hickel: They withheld that?
- Willens: From us, yes, first time around until we persisted.
- Siemer: We litigated all of these things, all the national security....
- Hickel: That was a very important point at that point.
- Willens: That's why it was redacted.
- Hickel: Very important.
- Siemer: Very significant.

- Hickel: I didn't know it was deleted.
- Willens: Well, you see that word "release" on the right hand.
- Hickel: Oh, yes.
- Willens: They finally agreed. But I do need your help, if you can recall, because your compromise proposal which is described here as the Interior proposal was rejected by both Dr. Kissinger and Secretary Rogers.
- Hickel: Kissinger would influence Rogers.
- Willens: What do you mean by that?
- Hickel: Well, he just dominated him, sort of. Bill was a very good person, but Kissinger was a strong, brilliant guy. But he doesn't have that human feeling.
- Treadwell: Wasn't one of the reasons given (I don't think it was in that memo) but later, that you don't want to do the constitutional convention because we have the organic act process proceeding?
- Willens: Yes. There was a later memo that suggests there are arguments for not doing the constitutional convention. But in fact at the end of this memo Dr. Kissinger apparently came down quite hard against the constitutional convention approach.
- Hickel: Kissinger's a very strong person for the American prerogative, just thinking about that.
- Willens: Was this the same meeting that you made reference to in your 1971 book?
- Hickel: About 90,000 people out there?
- Willens: Yes. Was this the same meeting or was that a subsequent meeting?
- Hickel: No. The meeting with Kissinger (as I recall)—papers ought to show what date—there were Rogers and myself, Kissinger, my Solicitor. I was making my presentation, and it was getting very focused and it had to do with this land issue and the whole thing, when Kissinger made the statement finally to just put it to sleep. He said, "Well, there's only 90,000 people out there; who gives a damn?" You know.
- Willens: Would that have been then before
- Hickel: That would have been before that. I think that's when he became the adversary to some of these things I was trying to do.
- Willens: There is no record of another meeting with Kissinger, and that's why I just wanted to spend a little time on it.
- Treadwell: Didn't you say that meeting happened over at Rogers' office?
- Hickel: In Rogers' office.
- Treadwell: Is that meeting also at Rogers' office?
- Willens: No, I think this meeting was at Kissinger's office, but the memorandum doesn't indicate that.
- Hickel: No, it was in Rogers' office.
- Willens: I know the one that you wrote about in your book was in Rogers' office. My question is whether you would have been in there discussing land before the first round of negotiations or would it have been afterwards at about the time of this meeting? Because Mr. Loesch was not present at this December 16 meeting, but he was with you at the other meeting.

- Hickel: This is a meeting much later because I met with Kissinger and Rogers early on that year.
- Willens: I see.
- Hickel: I went through this in a hurry over the weekend. It shows it at the end that Kissinger had his mind made up that I'd be hard to whip. But he was working behind that. Then as soon as I got fired, he went to Morton and got his agreement out of Morton real quick to do what he wanted done. That's the way I got it.
- Willens: That's certainly true with respect to the appointment of a special representative, because that did in fact happen after you left.
- Hickel: I was fighting that, you know. I was trying to keep focus on where we were going. The last two or three months were quite difficult back there because of my letter to the President.
- Siemer: On Cambodia.
- Hickel: Yes.
- Siemer: That got a lot of attention.
- Hickel: I got a lot of attention, so while I kept on fighting the battles I'd been fighting, the other side of that, what I called the Kissinger faction, was generating their strength. That didn't bother me. That's the way it works.
- Treadwell: There's also an Alaska parallel with the constitutional convention idea which had me wondering when I read the papers where the constitutional idea came from. Because there was a guy named George Lay Lightner from Louisiana who came up here during the statehood battle and said write your own constitution.
- Hickel: That's right. We did that.
- Treadwell: The question was we're going to show them that we have the capability of self-government. In several cases here you had Kissinger saying don't do it, you had the Inter-Agency Committee saying don't do it. And I guess the question I was going to ask you, Governor, is why the heck didn't somebody just tell them to do it anyway?
- Hickel: Well, that's what we did here. We held a Constitutional Convention on a territorial basis and just did it. We elected our Senators and everything, sent them to Washington, they didn't have a vote, they didn't have nothing, but they stood around. You finally win by just doing those things.
- Willens: Yes. I think the Trust Territory was governed very rigidly, and I think the Micronesians would not have been allowed to have had a constitutional convention, and no funds would have been available to them to have a constitutional convention if the Trust Territory Administration subject to Department of Interior direction had not approved it and funded it.
- Hickel: The Secretary of Interior appointed the governor here, a man by the name of Heintzleman, and he had to be against statehood because they were. So we did all these things. We changed the law to allow national committeemen to be elected and everything like that, and we called a constitutional convention, and they finally replace him with Stepovitch who's on our side. We went through that thing. Interior told us we couldn't do it, so we did it anyhow.
- Siemer: Did you see Johnston again after you sent him out there? Did he come back at any point and report to you?
- Hickel: No. I never saw Johnston after I left Interior. Now some Micronesians came through here

- once years ago. I don't remember. It might have been the late 1970s. And said, "Governor, you still have the best idea. We should have gotten this thing going." I don't remember who they were, but they came in to see me.
- Siemer: You were out there twice?
- Hickel: No, just once.
- Siemer: Just once, the time that you made the speech.
- Hickel: Yes.
- Willens: There is reference in the materials to a later visit that you were scheduled to make.
- Hickel: I was scheduled to go but that was right before I got canned (I think).
- Willens: Harrison Loesch remembers a meeting with Kissinger where Secretary Rogers was present, Secretary Laird, but he was there in early 1970 he recalls because you were unavailable. He was trying to push a constitutional convention approach. He says he was "outranked and outvoted." But it's your recollection that the meeting written about in your book took place before the Micronesians came to Washington for negotiations.
- Hickel: Yes. I went in and informed Bill Rogers and the Security Council (Kissinger) of what we had done out there basically. And I told them of my concerns or my desire or goal that we should go for. It was well accepted by Rogers and it was toward the end of that where I was getting a little bit—say hey, this is the way we have to go—and that's when Kissinger made his famous remark. You know, he was trying to say don't push it so hard, there's only 90,000 of them out there, who gives a damn.
- Willens: Have you ever discussed with Kissinger this issue and how you reported on the meeting?
- Hickel: Well, no, but Don Hewitt called me shortly after that meeting. I don't know how he heard about it, I really don't have any idea, and says he heard Kissinger made that statement. I said, "Don, don't do that now, it would blow everything." I know Don well. He said, "Okay, Wally, but we're going to tell that story some day." He said, "Okay, Mr. Secretary." So they didn't do it. Ten years later, they had on CBS that whole show "Who Gives A Damn." They really said it just like it was. I was at a dinner in Washington (it was the early part of 1980 in fact, ten years later). Henry was there. And Henry says, "You know, Walter, that isn't exactly the way it was." I said, "Henry, that's exactly the way it was."
- Willens: Well, we haven't yet approached Dr. Kissinger for an interview, but we intend to do that.
- Siemer: Were there other kinds of things other than Micronesia on which you ran into Kissinger's world?
- Hickel: Oh, on the Cambodia thing.
- Siemer: But as far as Interior was concerned, really Micronesia was the only one?
- Hickel: No. That was the only thing.
- Treadwell: Tell the story of when Nixon announced at the Cabinet meeting that you didn't even know that you'd be invited to Russia.
- Hickel: Oh, yes. It was at one of the first Cabinet meetings, when we were all sitting in the Cabinet room. He said the Russians are going to invite Wally to Russia and they aren't going through channels. About a month later, here came Ambassador Dobrynin and Boris F. Bratchenko, Soviet Minister of Energy. Came to my office. When they set up an appointment, I immediately called the State Department to see if they wanted to sit in and listen. They couldn't talk or anything. They said they'd send a couple of guys over.

The President just said that. He must have known about it, and I didn't. They were going to invite him. So they came in and that's another story. Do you know the story?

Willens: No.

Hickel: To make a long story short, they invited me to Russia. Just being me, I said you know, if I'm going to Moscow for a cocktail party, I don't want to go. What's up, you know. Through the interpreter, I said, "I want to go to Vladivostok." I knew Vladivostok had been a closed city since 1942. (This takes about two and one-half hours.) Why Vladivostok? Well, I'm a student of the Trans-Siberian railroad, and I want to ride that Railroad through Siberia. They never called the Embassy but they went back. They stood by that fireplace, in this big office, and they talked a little bit the first time they came back. And then they went back again and talked. The State Department had told me before they got there, it would take about a year to set this trip up. And I said that after they agreed I could go to Vladivostok, I asked how long would it take to set this up? One week. It was amazing. He said there's three conditions: (1) I be your personal guide. I said fine. (2) At least ten days this side of the Urals in the Far East. I said fine. (3) We spend the last two days in my house at the Black Sea. And that opened up Vladivostok. They'd been trying to open up Vladivostok since God knows when. Well, Kissinger stopped that meeting. Kissinger stopped that. Dobrynin went to the White House and said if Secretary Hickel is not allowed to come to Russia, nobody in this Administration will be invited. Dan Schorr picked that up, and Kissinger was at the Western White House, Saturday night, and basically said that Secretary Kissinger does not want the Secretary of the Interior to be involved in exterior affairs. It was on national TV. Kissinger calls me on the phone and he said, "Walter, Walter, you know how those decisions are made in the White House." I said, "Henry, Henry, tell me how those decisions are made in the White House." And I hung up. My point was, there was nobody invited until I left. Then Ford had his meeting in Vladivostok. That's what opened Vladivostok. Ford came through here with Kissinger. I met with them. On their way to Vladivostok.

Willens: So your trip did not occur.

Hickel: Not at that time. Before I left Washington I went to see Dobrynin. He said whenever you want to take that trip, let me know. I'd put together many big things, including a conference about the Bering Sea Tunnel, I brought up to him in 1975 when it got going. Ten years later, and Mead went with me on this trip. I said I'm ready to take that trip. So we came in through Niigata, Japan. And then I told him every place I wanted to go, and they'd take us literally where we wanted to go. We took the train for four days and three nights or four nights, something like that. I remember when I was talking to Dobrynin about some of these places, he said, "You know, some of those places are closed off." I said, "Well, you know, come on." He said, "Well, you know, we don't have the facilities." I said, "Mr. Ambassador, have you ever been to Anatuga Pass, that's way up here in the Arctic here." He said, "You understand, you understand." So what I'm saying is it wasn't a closed country; they didn't want to be embarrassed. But they knew I understood. We went any place in the world we wanted to go. We spent three weeks this side of the Urals.

Siemer: You were cold.

Treadwell: No, it was fun, it was summer. You asked about other things with Kissinger, you also had a couple of disputes with DOD about land. You tried to take a [military] fort in Hawaii, didn't you?

Hickel: We made that into a park. We finally made that into a park.

- Treadwell: Okay. Then when you set up the Gateway Parks in New York and California you took a bunch of land, so occasionally you'd have set-tos with Secretaries about taking military land. But you won those.
- Hickel: Yes, but the President was on my side on those.
- Willens: The President was.
- Hickel: The President was, yes.
- Willens: Well, let's just finish up with the Micronesian negotiations because I know you have other things to do. After your meeting with Kissinger and the compromise was turned down, Mr. Loesch was given the job of going out to Micronesia to report to the Micronesians. He came back and reported to the other agencies.
- Hickel: I remember he was going out there.
- Willens: Do you remember any of what he told you upon his return?
- Hickel: No, not in detail.
- Willens: One thing he came back with was a sense that the Micronesians really wanted a constitutional convention. That was important to them. He tried to persuade the other agencies to that effect. Do you recall having any view yourself?
- Hickel: I would have probably have supported that.
- Willens: Well, again that proposal was rejected, and there was a second round of negotiations in May of 1970. It was at this meeting where a so-called Commonwealth Proposal was put before the Micronesians. In fact, it was the same legislation that they had developed earlier but given a new name. It was at this meeting that the Micronesians announced what they called their Four Principles involving sovereignty, constitutional convention, right of self-determination. Do you have any recollection of those Four Principles and what they meant to you?
- Hickel: Was that toward the end of 1970?
- Willens: No, it was in May of 1970.
- Hickel: May of 1970.
- Willens: It was a very strong statement by the Micronesians that these Four Principles had to be respected and implemented by the United States; otherwise there would be no opportunity for agreement.
- Hickel: I don't remember. See that's about the time of my letter to the President, early that May, and boy, I just didn't focus on that.
- Willens: Is that when your letter to the President was written—in May of 1970?
- Hickel: Yes.
- Willens: So do you have any further recollection then with respect to the situation in the Trust Territory or the negotiations?
- Hickel: As I recall in talking to Loesch, I can remember him distinctly being still on that, but it didn't seem like anything was going anywhere. Probably because the originator of the thought wasn't focusing on it—that was me. If I could have just kept on focusing on that. That's probably the reason, but I don't remember. I remember it just sort of becoming weak and nothing happening.

- Willens: Is it your recollection now that you really got involved in a variety of other high-visibility matters in 1970 so you did not focus on this to the same extent that you had earlier?
- Hickel: That's exactly right. I had so many things to focus on. I know the failure if you don't focus on something you start, you know. There were just too many irons in the fire.
- Siemer: Have you been out there since?
- Hickel: No. I did the whole South Pacific thing with Esquire Magazine in 1971, and I didn't stop in Micronesia on that trip. After that though, the U.N. sent me down to Australia on something and brought them in, which we did.
- Willens: Well this Commonwealth Proposal that I referred to proved to be an event that precipitated a division among the Micronesians. The Northern Marianas people thought that that relationship with the United States was something that they wanted, and the other Micronesians did not agree. Did you become aware during any of your time at Interior that the people of the Marianas were much more eager and enthusiastic about becoming part of the United States than the other Micronesians were?
- Hickel: No. I wasn't as aware of that. When I first got involved, it seemed like they were all looking for an answer and any kind of an idea was sort of collectively accepted. They didn't get down to the detail.
- Willens: One of these early memoranda that your staff prepared has a very interesting paragraph where it characterizes in a sentence the people in each of the six districts and it suggests there are some rather serious differences of attitude and background among them. Did you have any sense of those differences?
- Hickel: You always take your experiences and try to carry them out. We have the same thing here in Southeastern Alaska down 900 miles south. They were totally against statehood. Hardly could be different. So you get this small population. I thought well, we could just bring it all together. That was my thought. I knew there were differences, but we accepted that.
- Willens: You probably know now that as it's turned out there are four separate entities. The Northern Marianas is a commonwealth, and Palau is a republic
- Hickel: It must be working. I don't know.
- Willens: Well, I guess opinions differ on that. I was going to ask you what your overall assessment is of this Trust Territory being broken up into four separate entities.
- Hickel: Well, I was hoping it would stay unified. That's what I was hoping. I haven't been focused on it in the last 15 years or more, 20.
- Willens: Was it your sense that the Defense Department's attitude toward Micronesia became more specific and intense as the Vietnam War sort of began to unfold?
- Hickel: Well, I would say that if we learned a lesson, and I think we did in that whole Southeast Asia, Micronesia was just a small part of that misunderstanding in that part of the world. That's all Vietnam was about. Vietnam was just a lack of really understanding. Micronesia would have been easier to put together than Southeast Asia, with the different civilizations. More money, more everything. I always thought that whole Micronesia area should have been sort of collectively as one, but someone has to bring it together. In fact, if I'd have been there for six or eight years, there'd been a lot of difference, you know.

Willens: All right. That concludes our interview. Thank you very much, Governor.

Hickel: I don't know how much it helped.

Siemer: That was very useful. Thank you.