

INTERVIEW OF NICHOLAS deB. KATZENBACH

by Howard P. Willens

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- Willens: I am at the home of Nicholas Katzenbach in Princeton, New Jersey. Mr. Katzenbach has graciously agreed to be interviewed with respect to his service as Under Secretary of State in the latter years of the Johnson Administration and his involvement in that capacity with some of the issues facing the government with respect to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. I knew Mr. Katzenbach when we both served in the Department of Justice in the early 1960s, and so I will take the liberty of calling him Nick during the course of this interview. Nick, thank you very much for being available on this occasion. I do have biographical information from *Who's Who*, but it might be helpful for the record if you could sort of explain how it was that you came to the Yale Law School as an assistant professor in the 1950s and then subsequently found your way into the Kennedy Administration.
- Katzenbach: I came to the Yale Law School primarily because I didn't want to return to private practice in New Jersey, and Yale had been trying to recruit me for some time. I was in the Department of the Air Force at the time, and with the election and Eisenhower being elected, I decided it was time to leave. Therefore, I was recruited mainly by Myers McDougall to go back to Yale and teach at the Yale Law School.
- Willens: That was in about 1952 or thereabouts?
- Katzenbach: 1952, yes.
- Willens: And you had graduated from Yale in what year?
- Katzenbach: I graduated from Yale in 1947. Then I went over to Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar for two years. Then I went back to New Jersey and served a nine-month clerkship that was required before you could take the bar. Then I took the bar in 1950 and was admitted to the bar in 1950. I really didn't like the private practice that much—not private practice generally but private practice at my father's old firm in Trenton, New Jersey. And my whole background and education at Yale, and work on the Yale Law Journal and so forth, would have made me suitable for a New York firm or a Philadelphia firm or a Washington firm, but really not for a Trenton, New Jersey firm. So I was anxious really to get out of it. I used the Yale Law School as an excuse to do it, which didn't hurt anybody's feelings.
- Willens: How did you come to be recruited to be an assistant attorney general at the beginning of the Kennedy Administration?
- Katzenbach: Well, I had been in Geneva on a Ford Foundation fellowship. I was doing no work in the campaign, but I got taken with the activities of the Kennedys, and I thought, "My God, it would be wonderful to be back there and do this." I called Byron White, whom I'd known quite well at law school, and asked him if there were any possibilities. I also knew that Adam Yarmolinsky was helping Sarge Shriver. Adam had been behind me a year at Yale. Byron said, "Well, if you want a job, you'd better get back here."
- Willens: Had he been designated to be Deputy Attorney General?
- Katzenbach: He'd been designated as Deputy Attorney General. In fact that was done almost immediately. I think he was designated as Deputy Attorney General almost as soon as Bobby was designated Attorney General. And it fitted with what Bobby wanted. Bobby

was very much concerned that he would be regarded as politicizing the department. Therefore, he wanted to get young people of impeccable intellectual qualifications, educational qualifications, experience, but who hadn't been active politically. And that's basically what he got.

Willens: I was sort of the view at the time that he had asked his Deputy Attorney General to take over the principal responsibility of finding people of quality to fill the assistant attorney general slots.

Katzenbach: Fundamentally I think that has to be true, because I don't think Bobby would have been capable of doing it otherwise.

Willens: No. The predominance of Yale Law School people . . .

Katzenbach: Suggests that.

Willens: . . . suggests that indeed.

Katzenbach: Classmates. . . .

Willens: Yes. After your service there as Assistant Attorney General, then Deputy Attorney General, then Acting Attorney General and finally Attorney General, how did it come to be that you moved from the Department of Justice over to the Department of State?

Katzenbach: Well, when I first came back, I had really wanted to be in the Department of State, not in the Department of Justice. I'd been teaching international law. That was what interested me. Therefore I was interested in the Department of State. And also the other thing in this matter was I thought that my welcome with the Federal Bureau of Investigation was pretty much worn out. With the requirements on bugging and wiretapping I put on them, although Hoover accepted them all graciously, I knew in fact he must be angry as all get out. And I felt that perhaps my usefulness there in the department was waning. The President called me up and asked me whom I would recommend to be Under Secretary of State. He gave two or three names to me, some of whom I was quite opposed to. And I said, "Well, why don't you put me over there?" And he said, "No, no, he didn't want to do that, he couldn't do that." He wanted me where I was because of civil rights. They had great confidence in me and so forth. I thought that was the end of it. And indeed it was for maybe three months. I never heard from him again about it. And then suddenly he called me up about three months later and said, "Are you still serious about that?" I said, "Yes." He said, "All right. I'm going to name you."

Willens: When was that approximately?

Katzenbach: It was right just about the time I went over there; would have been late 1966.

Willens: Sometime in late 1966?

Katzenbach: October 1966.

Willens: I see.

Katzenbach: I was at a meeting of the Crime Commission. He called me there.

Willens: That's right. The Crime Commission reports were completed in late 1966, were they not?

Katzenbach: Yes. But I continued to serve as chairman, although they were just about over. They were just about at the last meeting.

Willens: Yes. I remember we had just finished our D.C. Crime Commission Report, now that I remember, just before Christmas in 1966. I think yours was either coming out in

piecemeal fashion or was due shortly. When you reached the Department of State as Under Secretary, do you recall receiving any briefing from Mr. Sisco or others with respect to the issues relating to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands?

Katzenbach: I don't really. I don't think I did when I first went over there. Mainly, Joe Sisco was heavily involved in Israeli matters, Middle East matters, and I don't really remember his bringing up any of the Marianas stuff at all. I remember later reading some of the documents that you've provided me. I can remember some of those circumstances, but I don't think I got any briefing initially.

Willens: The earliest document I have that suggests that you were being introduced to the problem is the document dated January 20, 1967 from Mr. Sisco to you that purports to be an information memorandum. Stepping back from the Trust Territory issues for the moment, you were in the State Department until the conclusion of the Johnson Administration, is that right?

Katzenbach: Yes.

Willens: As you look back on your State Department period lasting somewhat more than two years, can you give me a range of the kind of problems that you were dealing with in terms of the Vietnam War, the Middle East, or whatever?

Katzenbach: Yes. The biggest problems that we dealt with—obviously the Vietnam thing was always on the front burner there. There was a good deal of the Middle East and the Six Day War. Then there was just the usual bunch of problems, but I would think that those were the two on which most of the time was spent. I spent a fair amount of time testifying, because I'd had a lot of experience dealing with the Congress. I was recruited all the time, and Rusk hated it, so I was recruited all the time to do that. And actually, it's kind of funny. One of the things that never occurred to me in going to State—I never bothered to look at the composition of the House and Senate committees. And if you look at them and think of the fact that I had worked so hard on all the civil rights legislation, and here I was right in the middle of all the people opposed to it. Because there was heavy southern domination in the Foreign Affairs committees in the House and Senate.

Willens: In part because of the operation of seniority...

Katzenbach: Yes.

Willens: ... and the attractiveness of the Foreign Relations committees.

Katzenbach: I suppose it was attractive, although God knows why it was.

Willens: Secretary Rusk had previously served in the 1950s, as I understand it, in the International Organization Bureau at State.

Katzenbach: That's right.

Willens: And people at State felt that they had an audience in the Secretary who would be quite receptive to the United Nations aspects of this issue. Yet I see very little documentary evidence of his being involved.

Katzenbach: I don't think he really was very receptive, despite his prior experience. He was far more interested in Vietnam. He was far more interested in his own Far East experience, which he also had. Remember he was a Colonel over in that theater during World War II.

Willens: I see. Did there come a time when you and he might discuss the Trust Territory and he more or less asked you to handle this?

- Katzenbach: I don't think so. I think probably I just handled it. I might have raised it with him. We used to often have a drink in the evening before we both went home, and I might have raised it then. But it's not something that sticks in my mind or something that I think he had any great interest in. I think probably Joe Sisco, who was a very savvy person and very good on political-type issues, [might have had something to do with my involvement]. Joe was a Foreign Service officer, although I don't think he'd ever been abroad. Joe was a very able fellow, and I think would have been aware of my closeness with Kennedy, Stuart Udall and Bob MacNamara. He might have thought, therefore, that I was far more suited to deal with a dispute that involved Udall and MacNamara with the Department of State than Rusk.
- Willens: I see. Well certainly the....
- Katzenbach: I used to be quite close to Udall, mainly because he had seats to the Redskins game and I could get invited if I was very nice to him.
- Willens: But you would never compromise your position on an issue.
- Katzenbach: You didn't have to. Earl Warren was one of the other people who went all the time, and Potter Stewart and Byron White.
- Willens: I see. So a lot of federal government work was done at the Redskins game?
- Katzenbach: He used to have three Supreme Court Justices there most of the time.
- Willens: It is interesting to see how an issue like the Trust Territory would come to your desk, as it appeared to do with some regularity, given the major and more sensitive foreign policy issues that were on your desk.
- Katzenbach: It may have very well have come to my desk simply because Rusk said why don't you take it to Nick or Sisco. That would make sense. Also they had a system there in the Department of State with a common Secretariat for the Secretary and the Under Secretary. Ben Reid, who held that job, was very scrupulous about informing each of us as to what the other person was doing. So Rusk certainly would have known I was doing it.
- Willens: That's interesting. Looking at some of the early memoranda that I've made available to you, it appears as though Mr. Sisco is making an effort to acquaint you with the problem, the need to reach some speedy resolution of the matter, and the differences that had developed over time between State and Interior. Were you aware as you got into this that the agencies, particularly State and Interior, had been massaging this problem and trying to reach some agreement over the last five or so years?
- Katzenbach: Yes, I think I was. There was no question about the fact that Defense had their interests and that everybody else was prepared to find a way of satisfying Defense interests.
- Willens: Defense interests in the view of some of the military people at Defense were perfectly well suited by continuing the Trusteeship in status quo. Did you ever find yourself in discussions with either the civilian or military leadership at the Defense Department where preserving the status quo was presented to you as an option that they might find attractive?
- Katzenbach: I don't recall that. I'm not sure we could have preserved the status quo for that long. I think you have to take other things into consideration here, and I think the U.N. was at that time becoming, as it had been for some time, less and less of an errand boy for the U.S. We had less and less control, and Vietnam had hurt on this, and the Middle East had also hurt on this.

- Willens: Because the U.S. position there . . .
- Katzenbach: Because of the U.S. position there.
- Willens: . . . was alienating some of the new members of the U.N., especially the former colonies?
- Katzenbach: Yes.
- Willens: There also was the sense. . . .
- Katzenbach: And I think, as I said, Joe Sisco is a very able person who had a good political sense. I think when he said, "Look, let's try to get a vote on this now," I think what he was saying was that if we don't do that, we're going to have trouble with the U.N. in the future.
- Willens: There were plans in the early Kennedy Administration to have a plebiscite in the Trust Territory as early as 1968, and the effort in the early 1960s had been to reach agreement within the Executive Branch as to a program of economic and social development that would permit a favorable outcome at that time. But by the time you got involved, a longer time frame seems to have been thought feasible. Do you have any recollection of such discussions?
- Katzenbach: I think the real problem was that that lady in Interior just wanted to keep right on doing what she was doing.
- Willens: You're speaking of Ruth Van Cleve.
- Katzenbach: Ruth Van Cleve, yes. I think she just enjoyed doing what she was doing and wanted to continue to do it.
- Willens: Well, there is in the materials some support for the proposition that the Interior Department's views were based in part on what they thought was acceptable to Congress and were also mingled with the issue of how to deal with the other insular areas such as Guam, the Virgin Islands and so forth.
- Katzenbach: That's right. But I don't think they gave a damn about the U.N.
- Willens: You're speaking about Interior Department personnel.
- Katzenbach: Yes. All they would say was, "Well, of course you're the U.N., we'll leave the U.N. up to you," meaning (I think), "You get the U.N. to do what it is we want to do, not that we'll pay any attention to what the U.N. wants to do."
- Willens: You mentioned Secretary Udall earlier, and some of the materials indicate that on more than one occasion you discussed this issue with him. Do you think that he had independent views with respect to a resolution to this problem, or was he influenced to a very substantial extent by his staff?
- Katzenbach: I think Luce was influenced almost entirely by the staff.
- Willens: Under Secretary Luce.
- Katzenbach: Yes.
- Willens: With whom you dealt for a brief time.
- Katzenbach: Yes. I don't think Udall was. I think Udall thought he had a problem with Ruth Van Cleve. And he had a problem with the staff, and he had to find a way to deal with that problem, because he didn't want to overrule them, but it didn't mean he agreed with them. He wanted to find a way to deal with them. And with the Congress he had the same problem, because I think Interior were the people who were feeding the Congress on this. Said, "Let's just take it over."

- Willens: The issues that were presented to you in early 1967 centered about a proposal from the Interior Department to request Congress to create a presidential commission comprised of representatives of Congress, representatives from the Executive Branch and representatives from Micronesia to discuss the future political status situation. As reflected in the documents, Mr. Sisco and his staff urged you to reject that proposal and settle upon a course of action that would attempt to resolve this matter within the Executive Branch with only occasional consultations with Congress. There came a time when a meeting was held on this subject, and you did not buy into the staff recommendation.
- Katzenbach: That's right.
- Willens: Why was that?
- Katzenbach: Well, I think the State Department by and large regarded Congress as a nuisance and that therefore you shouldn't have to deal with the Congress and you ought to just take it over yourself, deal with it as an Executive matter, and that was the easy way to deal with it. They didn't like to deal with the Congress. My guess is, and it's not really a firm recollection, but I'm sure that was true on everything I ever had with the Congress and the State Department. The Congress was just a pain in the neck. But the problem is you just couldn't deal with this as just a pain in the neck. And the Congressmen, if I recollect correctly, didn't care about the U.N. They did care about what the Defense Department wanted. And they just thought well, let's just deal with it. So I think what Interior and Udall were suggesting was an effort, the study commission was an effort to try to deal with the Congressional problem and try to deal with Ruth Van Cleve at the same time.
- Willens: Did you share the State Department's view that there was a sense of urgency attached to this matter and that there ought to be steps taken to bring about some early act of self-determination by the Micronesians?
- Katzenbach: Yes, I think so, in part because the question of when our administration of it was going to become such an embarrassment that the U.N. might do something about it. They wouldn't probably take it away from us, but they could have made life more difficult for us on any solution. And the second part was simply an Administration coming to an end.
- Willens: How did that affect your thinking?
- Katzenbach: Well, I think a desire to get the problem resolved before an election with at least the potential of a change in Administration.
- Willens: In the early 1960s, U.N. concerns seemed to loom very large, and that seemed to have lessened in force over the next decade into the Nixon Administration. When you were at State, did these U.N. concerns really impress you as important factors that ought to weigh in your judgment?
- Katzenbach: Yes, I think they did. They probably impressed me more than they should have, but they did.
- Willens: Some of the people I've interviewed have suggested that the people who were debating these issues might have become overly ideological, both with respect to the importance of the U.N. on the one side, and on the Interior side perhaps overly rigorous with respect to the need to defer to Congressional preferences.
- Katzenbach: That probably was true. I mean it's a question of degree and how important it was. Obviously Joe Sisco, having that job, is going to be influenced by his relationships with the people he has to deal with all the time.

- Willens: At one of these meetings that's reflected in the documents, Ambassador Eugenie Anderson participated. As I recall, she came from Minnesota, and I think she had some Humphrey support that may have brought her into the government.
- Katzenbach: That's right. She was number two in the U.N., wasn't she, I mean in our delegation to the U.N.?
- Willens: Yes, I think that's correct. Did you have any impression of what she brought to bear on this issue?
- Katzenbach: I don't really honestly recall now. I liked her, so she must have been pleasant.
- Willens: One of the people who worked for Mr. Sisco and authored several of these memoranda is William Gleysteen, who recently, and may still be, the president of the Japan Society in New York. He's a historian by training and was very thoughtful in my interview of him. What was your reaction to his participation in these matters?
- Katzenbach: I don't remember him very well, frankly, at that time. I remember Popper.
- Willens: Mr. Popper?
- Katzenbach: Yes. And I remember Sisco. And I don't remember....
- Willens: The other names that I've seen are Don McHenry ...
- Katzenbach: Yes.
- Willens: ... and Elizabeth Brown.
- Katzenbach: He was at the U.N., wasn't he? Don I think was at the U.N.
- Willens: Well, I don't know if he there then. He subsequently went there.
- Katzenbach: I think he was there then.
- Willens: He may have been there then. With respect to the Defense interest, did you get the impression that the developments in the Far East and specifically the deepening Vietnam conflict was bringing about any change in the Defense Department's attitude toward resolution of the Trust Territory problem?
- Katzenbach: Not really. I don't think I could get any interest in anybody in the Defense Department, except for the military. I don't recall ever talking to MacNamara or to Nitze. I guess maybe I talked to Nitze about it, but I don't remember. Or Paul Warnke.
- Willens: So far as you can recall, the Defense interests were fixed and deemed important and generally deferred to by the other agencies?
- Katzenbach: They were deferred to by the other agencies, and the other agencies thought they could be accommodating.
- Willens: When it came to the meeting at which you considered Sisco's recommendations as to how to deal with the Interior Department's commission proposal, there's a memo here about that meeting which suggests and states: "Mr. Katzenbach quietly emphasized that we were not discussing objectives on which the Executive could agree. We were considering tactics to reach these objectives." The memo written by Mr. Behrens suggests that you more or less instructed staff to find some way to embrace the Interior Department's recommendation and work with it.
- Katzenbach: That's right.

- Willens: Was that because of your sense that Congress had to be dealt with and the Interior suggestion was a way at least of moving this along?
- Katzenbach: Yes. My sense was that if Interior was really willing to play fair and square on this, this was a way of dealing with it. If we didn't want a commission, we were just going to have Interior, I think, fueling up the fight in Congress. We weren't going to get anywhere.
- Willens: Well, it looks as though what Sisco was recommending wasn't very much different from what had been going on for the previous several years.
- Katzenbach: That had been unsuccessful.
- Willens: Was it your sense that something new perhaps had to be tried?
- Katzenbach: Yes, I think so. The composition of it—you could argue about and debate and so forth and so on.
- Willens: I've seen some reference to a position attributed to you that there should not be Micronesian participation on this commission. Do you recall taking any position on that issue?
- Katzenbach: I don't. It seems to me you either had to have their participation as members of the commission or you could alternatively set up a commission which would inquire of the Micronesians as to what it was they wanted, interacted with them, which I think would make just as much sense as having them on the Commission. I guess I could argue that it would make more sense since the decision was ours as the Trustee, not theirs.
- Willens: That's certainly right. You could argue both ways. There's some suggestion that there was a legal barrier to having aliens serve on such a presidential commission. Does that trigger any recollection?
- Katzenbach: No. They come from outer space, of course.
- Willens: They might be particularly valuable members of a presidential commission based on those we have known. With respect to the instructions that Mr. Behrens took away from the meeting in your office, there is an interesting ambiguity as things unfolded as to whether your judgment was that the Interior Department's views for a commission might be adequately met if the President formed the commission including Congressional members, as opposed to the Interior Department view of going to Congress and asking it to act on this proposal. Do you have any recollection as to which you really thought was more feasible?
- Katzenbach: I don't know whether any one was feasible, but I did think that there was a point to be made about Executive leadership in that context. I certainly wouldn't have had any problem with Congress appointing the members they wanted to appoint. I thought it was pretty clear who they were going to appoint I guess. But the idea of Congress creating the commission was somewhat bothersome. And I also thought it probably was influenced by the Kennedy Assassination Commission and the fact that it had members of the Congress on it as members. And it may well have been that that was the pattern. But I certainly was sympathetic to the notion that the President ought to be chiefly involved, not exclusively involved, but chiefly involved.
- Willens: Well there certainly was a major point made in Mr. Sisco's memoranda to you, namely that the Executive just should not dump this into the hands of Congress and therefore lose control.
- Katzenbach: Because he really wanted to have Congress not have anything to do with it.

- Willens: Do you recall ever having any discussion with the President on this subject?
- Katzenbach: No, I don't.
- Willens: Do you recall any discussion with Walter Rostow or White House advisors on the matter?
- Katzenbach: Probably. But I know Walt was interested in nothing but Vietnam that I can recall. That's a little unfair.
- Willens: The joint resolution that was being generated within State did reflect the point of view you just recalled, namely that there should be a lot of internal Executive Branch consultation but that the President ought to create a commission, the Congressional resolution ought to recognize that step and endorse it, and then have Congress appoint the members on the commission that were allocated to it. That is not the way it came out, however. Ultimately the President did send up to the Hill a piece of legislation that left in the hands of Congress the creation of a commission. Do you recall any discussion as to whether that was the proper way to go?
- Katzenbach: No, I don't really recall. But it seems to me that probably resulted from Interior wanting it, Udall wanting it, and Rusk being unwilling to oppose it.
- Willens: There's some involvement of the Bureau of the Budget in these deliberations.
- Katzenbach: With legislation involved, there always was.
- Willens: Right. Do you recall any discussions with Bureau of the Budget personnel as to the differences between State and Interior on this issue?
- Katzenbach: No, I don't. I don't even recall who the Bureau of the Budget representative was.
- Willens: The names here are Hughes
- Katzenbach: Well, Hughes was good.
- Willens: Hughes is a long-time Bureau of the Budget person. And Charles Shultz was the head of the Bureau of the Budget at the time I think.
- Katzenbach: Yes.
- Willens: One of the other issues that is reflected in these papers relates to the sequence at which choices would be presented to the Micronesians. It's unclear to me based on these documents whether Sisco and his staff thought that you could have a plebiscite without any indication of what self-government was going to be provided or whether you would reserve the plebiscite until you had an opportunity to develop self-government at which point the Micronesians would be asked either to go independent or associate with the United States. Do you have any recollection of that issue?
- Katzenbach: My recollection was that they wanted to paint it with a very broad brush and then negotiate the self-government afterwards. What they really wanted was a sort of popularity contest—which way do you want to go?
- Willens: So you think the tenor was to have an early plebiscite with very broad alternatives?
- Katzenbach: An early plebiscite that said we want self-government in association with the United States.
- Willens: And the alternative might be independence.
- Katzenbach: And the alternative might be independence, yes.

- Willens: And was it the sense that ...
- Katzenbach: And then you negotiated what that was going to be.
- Willens: And that the presidential commission that the State Department wanted to have would be the vehicle for fleshing out what self-government was going to be?
- Katzenbach: Well, to some extent, yes. Maybe even not there....
- Willens: Maybe not what?
- Katzenbach: Maybe not even then in every aspect, but that would have been the notion, because the self-government would in essence have been a piece of legislation, wouldn't it?
- Willens: It could have been done by executive order, I suppose. But the question that comes to mind is whether there was a belief in the State Department that such a generalized presentation of choices to Micronesia would be acceptable to the United Nations?
- Katzenbach: I think that they thought that it would be.
- Willens: Even though the self-government alternative was not spelled out in a way that might meet the U.N. criteria for self-government?
- Katzenbach: Yes. Because I think then the U.N. would have tentatively approved it subject to seeing that it worked out consistently with their concept of self-government, which it would have. I mean all the steam goes out of those issues after a while unless you're outrageous and not giving them any self-government.
- Willens: As this debate continued, though, over the next year and a half, it looks as though the strategy changed in the sense that the goal was not to have a plebiscite within the next year or so but rather to have steps taken toward self-government over the next four or five years looking toward a plebiscite in 1972, which is what the proposed legislation contemplated. Was that just a change around the edges in terms of this proposal, or was that a matter of substance?
- Katzenbach: Oh, I think that was a matter of substance.
- Willens: How so?
- Katzenbach: Because I think that Interior was insistent that we take time in that. Actually, it made perfectly good sense to take time.
- Willens: The sense was that....
- Katzenbach: It would have been awfully phony, I think. I don't think the Micronesians were prepared to know what it was they really wanted by way of self-government.
- Willens: Well, that's a whole set of separate questions, as to whether the Micronesians if faced with this generalized plebiscite would in fact have regarded it favorably or rather as some not very helpful means of confusing the situation. You never went to Micronesia, did you?
- Katzenbach: No.
- Willens: Did you have any sense of what was being done in Micronesia with respect to economic and social development during the years you were at State?
- Katzenbach: Only when I learned from talking to the people there and I guess it wasn't nearly as much as we wanted it to be or at least some people wanted it to be.
- Willens: Did there come a time when you became aware that sentiments within Micronesia differed

from district to district and that in particular the Marianas had a fairly firmly held view to become U.S. citizens and part of the United States?

Katzenbach: I don't really remember, Howard. It sounds as though I ought to remember.

Willens: Well, it truly isn't really reflected very much in the materials that I've shared with you, among other reasons because State had taken the position vigorously and consistently that the Trust Territory had to be dealt with as a single entity. Do you recall any discussions of that particular legal issue with the Legal Advisors Office or anyone else?

Katzenbach: I'm sorry, I don't.

Willens: But you have some recollection that the sense was

Katzenbach: I have some recollection that there were differences in that regard, but I don't remember it as a legal issue, although I suppose it might have been. I don't know. Might have depended on how the Trusteeship was set up, the language and so forth, none of which I think I was ever aware of. I have a vague recollection of some young man from the Legal Advisors Office being present at these things.

Willens: Who was legal advisor? Steve Boyd's name appears. I think Abe Chayes was Legal Advisor earlier in the Kennedy Administration. Was it Leonard Meeker at the time you were there?

Katzenbach: It was Leonard Meeker. He may have been there at the time. Leonard was a good lawyer, but he had a kind of attitude in regard to Legal Advisor Office, of being very independent of everybody, I think. Which is the way it ought to be run.

Willens: Some of the other State Department people I've talked to do suggest that they brought a religious fervor to this issue and perhaps others as well.

Katzenbach: Leonard would have been much more sympathetic with the U.N. than many other people, I think.

Willens: The Interior and State Departments continued to disagree as this issue went forward as to what kind of options would be presented to the people in any plebiscite. That's kind of reminiscent of some issues that have arisen very recently with respect to Puerto Rico—as to whether Congress would agree to the results of a plebiscite in advance.

Katzenbach: Oh, they'd agree, if it came out the way they wanted it.

Willens: Right. But they would want to have some input as to what options were presented and to make sure that, regardless of how the vote came out, it would be something that would be acceptable to Congress?

Katzenbach: No, I don't think regardless of how it came out it would be. You always had to guarantee them the vote was going to come out at least in a way that was (at this time that we're talking about at least) in a way that would have satisfied the Defense Department.

Willens: Did you think that preservation of the status quo would be one of the options that should be presented to the Micronesians?

Katzenbach: The status quo couldn't go on indefinitely. Status quo would be fine this year and the next year and the year after. But you eventually have to come to a plebiscite on it. And you would like to come to a plebiscite on it when the plebiscite was going to come out substantively the way you wanted it. And you had no idea if you just continued the Trusteeship, whether it would or not.

- Willens: It looks from the materials as though the Interior Department's proposal for a presidential commission was at least in part designed to be responsive to a resolution passed by the Congress of Micronesia asking for a presidential commission.
- Katzenbach: It may have been, I don't know. I don't ever recall anybody saying that. I had thought of it much more as an effort to sort of solve our own congressional problems.
- Willens: There was a Future Status Commission created by the Congress of Micronesia in 1967 that produced an interim report in 1968 and a final report in 1969 after you had left the State Department. Do you recall any discussion within State as to whether the sentiment in Micronesia was changing in a way that was going to complicate achievement of U.S. objectives with respect to the future of the Trust Territory?
- Katzenbach: I can recall that that was a concern, but whether it went as far as you indicate, I don't really recall.
- Willens: Did you personally ever meet any visiting Micronesians in your office?
- Katzenbach: I think so actually.
- Willens: Do you recall any names or locations?
- Katzenbach: I don't have any recollection of it. I mean so many people walked in and out of that office at one time or another. But I do have a vague recollection of that. I may be able to find out if I can look at some stuff.
- Willens: No, that's not critical. Shortly after you received some of these memos from Mr. Sisco in early 1967, the members of a U.N. visiting mission came to the State Department to be briefed in advance of their trip to Micronesia. These visiting missions occurred every three years, and 1967 was one of those years. Do you recall meeting the members of the U.N. visiting mission?
- Katzenbach: No, but maybe I'm confusing that with what I just talked about meeting Micronesians. Because I have a very vague recollection of meeting with some people who were not State Department people or Interior people about this problem.
- Willens: In 1967 (as had been done in 1964) the State Department deliberately chose to not respond fully to the visiting mission's inquiries as to what the objectives of the United States were in the Trust Territory. To put it more bluntly
- Katzenbach: They didn't want to reveal the Defense Department
- Willens: They didn't want to reveal that and they didn't want to reveal the fact that there'd been a National Security Action Memorandum No. 145 in 1962 that declared as a matter of national objective bringing the Trust Territory under U.S. sovereignty. Do you have any views as to whether that's the type of thing that ought to be disclosed or not be disclosed?
- Katzenbach: Not particularly. I don't think I would have disclosed it. You might disclose it in some vague way. Nor do I think I would have been permitted to disclose the National Security Memorandum. I think it was clear we had a defense interest. I doubt it was clear what that might encompass.
- Willens: Members of the visiting mission sometimes expressed this rather interesting point of view. They would complain on the one hand that there was inadequate U.S. funding for education, social and economic development in the Trust Territory, and yet on the other hand they would maintain that the spending of funds by the United States was amounting

to prejudging the outcome of the plebiscite because the Micronesians would become dependent on external support.

Katzenbach: Which certainly was our intent.

Willens: So that criticism doesn't strike you as having any particular validity?

Katzenbach: Not really. I mean, like campaign contributions, I guess.

Willens: Of which we've heard a good deal in recent months. You did take charge of the matter after Secretary Udall wrote a letter to Secretary Rusk, and that was proposing a meeting between you and Under Secretary Luce with staff. There subsequently is a "Dear Nick" letter dated July 13, 1967 from Under Secretary Luce to you in which he concludes: "I am sorry that we couldn't have buried this chestnut while I was in office." And that reflects an exchange of letters and meetings of staff to try to get agreement between Interior and State as to the substance of the memorandum to the President that would set forth a common Executive Branch position.

Katzenbach: That was mainly on the issue as to whether the President ought to take leadership of the commission or not.

Willens: It's in part that. It seems also to relate in part to whether the commission was going to have a full range of options available to be studied, including something falling short of self-government. Interior was taking the view that this commission should have the full range of political status alternatives on the table for discussion, and the State Department seems to have been taking the view that you could have issues before the commission only if, if adopted, they would comply with the Trusteeship Agreement. Do you recall any discussion on that particular issue?

Katzenbach: No, but that makes perfectly good sense if that's the view each would take.

Willens: Is it also evenly balanced in terms of the merits of both positions, or do you think that at the time one position was sounder than the other?

Katzenbach: Well, I mean it seems to me that anytime you cut down a range of alternatives it has less merit than where you give the full range. On the other hand, I think the State Department's point of view was that if you gave a full range which included the lesser, that that was going to mean they had to make a lot of explanations in the U.N. and it might not be very satisfactory.

Willens: That would only follow if the Commission recommended the alternative

Katzenbach: No, it would follow from the resolution itself. The U.N. people would say, "What on earth are you doing this for? Because we're not going to be satisfied with anything less than"

Willens: That kind of criticism could be anticipated from the U.N.?

Katzenbach: Yes. At that time.

Willens: At that time.

Katzenbach: That might effect even the view of the Micronesians, I suppose. I don't know.

Willens: Well, that is an interesting point of view as to whether the Micronesians would have ever participated in such a commission if they'd been invited to participate, and what would have been the outcome if their views were outvoted by the other members of the commission. I think it tends to support the point you were making earlier that it might be better to have a commission without Micronesian membership.

Katzenbach: It might be better from both sides actually, because the Micronesians could then denounce it if they wanted to.

Willens: Well the Micronesians did end up producing a very (in my view) well-reasoned and literate report in 1969 in which they espoused strongly a relationship of free association with the United States that provided all the indicia of self-government or, in the alternative, independence. As this unfolded in 1969 and 1970, the U.S. representatives first pretended they couldn't understand this, and two, they kept pressing for some form of status that would be more acceptable to Congressman Aspinall. What was your assessment of Under Secretary Luce, whose tenure at Interior I guess was fairly brief.

Katzenbach: I don't really know that I have a great deal of impression. I felt that he had no independent views from the staff. He was just an advocate for the staff views, is what I felt. Whereas I thought Udall had some independence.

Willens: The Defense Department seems to have weighed in about this point on the Interior side of the issue, although it seems that neither side gave any less credence to Defense objectives.

Katzenbach: Well, I would think they would, because that would get rid of the U.N. They didn't want the U.N. screwing around in their business.

Willens: Could you elaborate on that? You think the Interior view with respect to this commission was more supportive of Defense objectives?

Katzenbach: I think in the sense of not necessarily wanting them to go to full independence, full local sovereignty. I mean, if I were representing Defense I would prefer that they not have total sovereignty on local matters, because I would be very interested in their local matters, like where am I going to put this missile base.

Willens: After the Luce letter to you, there is a status report here that Elizabeth Brown wrote to Mr. Sisco who apparently had been absent for some period of time and it endeavored to bring him up to date with respect to the matter. The memorandum is dated July 25, 1967. In the course of that memorandum, she reports that you sent a letter to Under Secretary Luce declaring that State could not concur in the proposed memorandum to the President because Interior implied that there was latitude in the Trusteeship Agreement to offer Micronesians a non-self-governing U.S. territorial status. She reports that you made very clear our position that such an action would violate Article 6 of the Trusteeship Agreement. So there was some discussion then within the department as to whether or not Mr. Rostow ought to be involved to meet with Interior officials and you at a high level to work out these positions before the Interior Committee in the House held hearings later in July. Her memo says: "Mr. Katzenbach decided not to send the memorandum to the President but rather to put the issue into the SIG channel." Could you sort of explain what SIG is and what your role was in creating that mechanism?

Katzenbach: Well, they created it largely to concern itself with inter-departmental matters as a mechanism for trying to get agreement. Mainly it was concerned with foreign aid matters, amount of military and economic assistance to go to X, Y or Z—that kind of thing.

Willens: It was created during your tenure?

Katzenbach: Oh, yes. In fact, it was created during my tenure and it was one of the ways in which I was successful in recruiting Arthur Hartman to come work for me was to tell him he would in effect be my alter ego. I was chairman of the SIG and he was going to be the real chairman of SIG, since I wasn't going to go to that many meetings.

- Willens: And the initial staff
- Katzenbach: He is a very capable guy.
- Willens: Yes, I'm in touch with him. I'm trying to interview him because he figured largely during the last years of the Johnson Administration and also he served the same coordinating function under the new structure of the National Security Council that was put in place in 1969. SIG we've discussed refers to Senior
- Katzenbach: Senior Inter-Departmental Group.
- Willens: And as you organized it, the Under Secretary of State would serve as the presiding officer of the group?
- Katzenbach: As the presiding officer, yes.
- Willens: So your strategy, if accurately reported here, and is this an accurate report?
- Katzenbach: That's what I remember, I don't know.
- Willens: So the strategy seems to have been that
- Katzenbach: The issue would be put into a favorable forum.
- Willens: Put into a favorable forum and if SIG came out the way the Chairman, namely you, wanted it to come out, that it put Secretary Udall in the position where he might have to ask the President or Mr. Rostow to overrule the recommendation of SIG.
- Katzenbach: That's right.
- Willens: That's the way it would have worked out.
- Katzenbach: Yes, that's the way it would have worked out.
- Willens: That sounds very clever. Did it happen? Apparently not.
- Katzenbach: I don't know. I doubt it.
- Willens: Well, there's some suggestion in here that when you informed Secretary Udall of that procedure
- Katzenbach: He didn't like it?
- Willens: He requested that you meet instead to work out your differences.
- Katzenbach: Yes.
- Willens: And then there seems to have been a meeting with him and Mrs. Van Cleve to explain State's position. And Secretary Udall apparently did take the position, which he subsequently honored, of testifying before the Interior Committee in the House of Representatives only about issues that were pertinent to the Interior Department and to not intrude on State's views with respect to its obligations under the Trusteeship Agreement. Is that something that you recall discussing with Secretary Udall?
- Katzenbach: Yes, I think so. Yes.
- Willens: And as you've indicated earlier, he was someone that you felt had an independent view on the subject.
- Katzenbach: Yes. I felt very comfortable with Stu Udall. If he told you he would do something, he would do it.
- Willens: By this time, had you ever met with Congressman Aspinall?

- Katzenbach: Probably. I'd met with almost everybody in Congress. You mean on this issue?
- Willens: On this issue.
- Katzenbach: I don't remember ever meeting with him on this issue. I don't even remember the testimony, to be perfectly honest.
- Willens: Well, we'll come to that. We do have in the set of documents a memorandum that was prepared by Mr. Popper addressed to you dated July 28, 1967. It reports on the House Interior Committee hearing on the Trust Territory at which Secretary Udall testified. Did you ever hear directly from Secretary Udall what his views were of his appearance before the committee?
- Katzenbach: Not that I recall.
- Willens: One of the points made in the report to you is that Congressmen Aspinall and Saylor thought there was nothing that a commission could do that their committee couldn't do just fine by itself. Did you ever find yourself discussing with members of Congress the need for a commission?
- Katzenbach: I think Congress never wanted a commission. Not with anything really.
- Willens: Another point made in the memo was that the members of the committee expressed reservations about offering the TTPI a choice of independence with the expressed concern that they might select independence. It was State's view that under the Trusteeship Agreement one had to present that option to the Micronesians. Is that right?
- Katzenbach: Yes. I suppose you could have fudged it after they'd taken that as their position. You could have said, "Well, they're not ready for independence yet."
- Willens: After they voted on it?
- Katzenbach: Yes. You might even be able to get another vote down the road somewhere.
- Willens: One of the issues on which the departments debated for nearly a decade was whether the Micronesians were ready to vote . . .
- Katzenbach: For anything.
- Willens: . . . on anything with an informed sense of what the alternatives were. The State documents seem to reflect some sense that this is a manageable problem and that the situation in Micronesia isn't different than it was in many other parts of the world and that you have to give people this option at some point whether you think they're really ready or not. What was your sense of that issue?
- Katzenbach: Probably about as you state. I think they felt if you could get the vote and the vote was favorable, go ahead and get the vote, whether they're ready for it or not. You can always stall afterwards. You can work them into whatever, to the association, to the self-government, and it can be done in such a wide variety of ways that I think you could just work them into it. I don't know. Something like that.
- Willens: Once you got a report and some sense of what was going on before the committee, did that lead you to have any reservation about pursuing a strategy that depended on getting Congressional approval? It looks from the materials as though the reports back from the initial hearing were (not surprisingly) very negative to this proposal for a commission.
- Katzenbach: I would have thought they would have been.
- Willens: But if you thought they were going to be, and in fact it turned out that way, it looked as though the Executive Branch was in fact giving to Congress the leverage and ability

to reject the Executive Branch preferred approach, which meant that there would be no action that the Executive Branch could take that wouldn't fly in the face of this Congressional opposition.

Katzenbach: Well, I think the reason they went along with the commission, Howard, was the fact that Interior, whose personnel were more familiar with Aspinall than State's (ten times more familiar with his views than anybody in State), thought if they could get him to go along with the commission, that was worth doing. That was my view at least.

Willens: That seemed like a perfectly reasonable view, but now you've received intelligence back . . .

Katzenbach: So what do you do?

Willens: Right.

Katzenbach: I think you've already committed yourself to some extent. I think that one of the virtues of the State Department position—that the President ought to be taking the leadership throughout on this—was that even if they rejected the commission you could still have a commission.

Willens: That was the issue that I wanted to explore with you, because it comes up later in the papers. After another year of deliberation on this subject, there still was no Congressional action, and the question was raised in the very late stages of the Johnson Administration (in a memorandum between Califano and Barefoot Sanders) about well, should we do this by executive order—namely, appoint a commission.

Katzenbach: Califano was probably working for Larry O'Brien.

Willens: I see. But as we've discussed the issue of going to Congress with the proposal, it does look as though the Executive Branch adopted a strategy which proved not to be successful, and one of the consequences was that it sort of limited its own options.

Katzenbach: Well, that's right because they went down there [to Congress]. Instead of going down there—if they'd taken the State Department view on the commission, it would have been a commission appointed by the Executive, and they would have been consulting Congress as to who the President ought to be naming as members and so forth. They chose to go a legislative route. God knows why, but Lyndon Johnson undoubtedly had good reasons for it, because he certainly understood the Congress and so forth, and I have no idea. Maybe he owed Aspinall a favor, I don't know.

Willens: One of the memoranda that I've made available to you is dated August 29, 1967. It refers to a meeting that you had with Secretary Udall and Mrs. Van Cleve in advance of the July 26 hearing at which he testified. Let me quote from this memorandum: "At one point Mrs. Van Cleve asked Katzenbach whether he wished for Interior to lie about the present level of political sophistication in the Trust Territory. Katzenbach replied that the manner in which the facts were presented would have a great influence on the kind of reception which the Administration position will receive in the committee." Do you have any recollection of that exchange?

Katzenbach: It sounds like her. She's a tough cookie.

Willens: She's a product of Yale Law School.

Katzenbach: Is she?

Willens: And until very recently still working on insular area matters. She says she would never use this language in a meeting with you or anyone at your level and, well, I think generally.

But it does reflect the vigor with which different points of view were presented during this period of time.

Katzenbach: I remember her very well, but I had the impression she would certainly have used that language if that's the way she felt.

Willens: Well, there was (I guess it's something I've already referred to) this ongoing debate about the level of political awareness and sophistication. One of Luce's predecessors, a man named John Carver, whom you may have met during your Justice Department days . . .

Katzenbach: Yes.

Willens: . . .wrote a very articulate and eloquent letter at one point explaining that Interior's concern here was that a premature judgment to terminate the Trusteeship Agreement might contribute to circumstances in Micronesia rivaling those in Africa in terms of civil strife, violence, massive poverty, and so forth and so on. It seemed highly dramatic, at least it does decades later when you see that exchange, but there was that concern.

Katzenbach: I think people, you know, I'm not sure we're ready for democracy here either

Willens: Well, people tend to take these positions depending upon what ultimate outcome is desired, as we know.

Katzenbach: Yes. It seems to me—if Interior is running the country, they're going to think that people aren't prepared to run it nearly as well as they're running it.

Willens: Yes. A lot of the documents do reflect a consensus that the Interior Department was not doing a good job there. Did you have any basis for judging that one way or the other?

Katzenbach: No. Other than the fact that there was a lot of opinion to that effect which was certainly going to influence what was going to happen.

Willens: Did you ever come across any debate with respect to the role of the Peace Corps in Micronesia?

Katzenbach: No. I noticed it was mentioned in there, and I just don't remember anything about the Peace Corps being there even.

Willens: There were particular complaints about the Peace Corps lawyers who were quickly turned into advocates for the Micronesians . . .

Katzenbach: Of course. How could we expect anything else?

Willens: And the Trust Territory government was most unhappy with this. Did you ever meet one of the High Commissioners?

Katzenbach: They always are. I mean every governor is unhappy with legal services for exactly the same reason. I can remember Dick Thornburg coming in, saying, "They were questioning things that I was doing."

Willens: When was this?

Katzenbach: When he was Governor of Pennsylvania. Talking about legal services. "We can't allow them to have class actions." He said, "They were bringing class actions on things I was doing as Governor." I think it's the same reaction.

Willens: It is. There's one memorandum in 1969 or 1970 where President Nixon was so offended by the reports that he received that he instructed that it be pursued aggressively. But the Trust Territory Administration did get criticism from almost every possible source, from Congress to the Peace Corps to the other executive agencies. To some extent they probably

didn't deserve it all. I have given you a copy of a memorandum from Mr. Sisco to you dated March 21, 1968. He reports on his testimony before the House subcommittee dealing with this subject. This was the first occasion on which a State Department representative was permitted to appear to pursue the legislative proposal for a commission. He reports on the whole that it went favorably. Do you remember any oral report from him?

Katzenbach: No, I don't. He came in all the time. Joe used to often drop in at the office. He may very well have handed it to me and commented on it. From my experience, very few people will say that they didn't perform very well.

Willens: He reports that Congressman Aspinall was candid enough to comment that the status commission would be controlled by the Executive Branch and that Congressional members of the status commission would be drawn from committees other than his own, even though only his Committee had both the expertise and competence. That suggests that, although he was able to present the views of the State Department, he was unable to report that there was any real promise of success. Do you recall any discussions in which you were involved as to whether some alternative strategy ought to be adopted at this point?

Katzenbach: No, I don't.

Willens: He was most concerned about making sure that the committee understood the role of the State Department and that the State Department not be criticized as being too deferential to the United Nations. Was this a problem that you personally encountered from time to time in dealing with members of Congress?

Katzenbach: I think so. It's been a frequent problem, because they don't really like the U.N. except when it does them a favor. You know one of the interesting things about members of Congress is if you take members of Congress abroad with you and you put them into a discussion on which they have very strong views against the French or Germans or something and they're there, they immediately collapse on those views. They begin to see the other side of it much better when they're forced to deal with it. It always interested me. It's easier to negotiate something if you're not negotiating it but just criticizing the negotiators.

Willens: Actually, this hearing took place after some of the members of the committee had visited Micronesia. It included Congressman Foley, Lloyd Meeds, and a few others. I don't think Phil Burton was part of that group in early 1968. Only a few years later, the rules within the House changed radically as part of what was regarded as a revolution after the 1970 election in the U.S. And Phil Burton and others were very active in democratizing the House, reducing the authority of the Chairman. Did you have any exposure or familiarity with that change in the procedures in the House in whatever you might be doing at the time?

Katzenbach: Not really. No.

Willens: All right.

Katzenbach: In fact I always thought it was a mistake.

Willens: What? Sisco concludes his report to you by stating that, "Although the present mood of the Interior Subcommittee is unpromising, I still see no better way than the status commission to get at the intricate problem of developing and implementing a satisfactory political program which will enjoy Congressional support. We may of course have to forsake the commission idea in favor of something less satisfactory, but I think it is worth a substantial effort on our part to bring it about." Well, as part of that effort you subsequently testified before the Senate subcommittee on this subject, although I don't seem to have the full

testimony. Most of these hearings were in executive session and not published. The memo suggests only that you stressed that a plebiscite must be held, that 1972 was an ideal date, and that the status commission proposed by the Administration would promote the “smoothest possible cooperation between the President and Congress.” Do you have any recollection of your appearance on this subject before the Senate subcommittee?

Katzenbach: No. I'm surprised I knew enough about it to testify.

Willens: Well, this memorandum starts out I think by saying that you were well briefed.

Katzenbach: That's obviously staff taking credit for my testimony.

Willens: Written by the person who did the briefing. It suggests that the subcommittee heard Senator Mansfield, you, Secretary Udall and Rear Admiral Lemos.

Katzenbach: That's where the Admiral's testimony is quoted there.

Willens: Yes, that's correct. Now Senator Mansfield apparently was testifying because he had introduced a measure for a presidential commission in his own bill. Did you know of any dealings with either Congressman Bingham in the House or Senator Mansfield to have other legislative proposals introduced on this subject?

Katzenbach: No. I'm sorry to draw such a blank on it, but I do.

Willens: It then suggests after these hearings the Senate apparently passed a slightly modified version, so your testimony was successful to that extent. But the House, according to a Sisco memorandum dated June 17, 1968, would not act during that Congress unless State could persuade Congressman Aspinall to cooperate. Mr. Sisco says that Aspinall has stated with “crusty stubbornness” that he does not wish to take action this year. Sisco proposes yet another high-level effort to try to get Aspinall to go along with the Administration's approach and recommends that you, Secretary Udall and Deputy Secretary of Defense Nitze might jointly see Aspinall, and you have approved this memo with your initials suggesting that you are ready to call Secretary Udall and try to get some kind of a joint presentation. Did you call Udall and do you recall any meeting at all with Aspinall on this subject?

Katzenbach: I don't think we ever had a meeting, but I may be mistaken.

Willens: It's now pretty late in the year. Well it's the summer of 1968, which is an election year.

Katzenbach: Yes. That's useless really. You're not going to get anywhere.

Willens: At that point of a presidential term, particularly given what was going on at the time. I guess one of the last memoranda here actually suggests that you did have a meeting with Aspinall, and this report is a Popper memorandum dated July 9, 1968. This indicates that you reported back that Aspinall was thinking in terms of only two alternatives— independence and statehood. This is one of the first times that the statehood alternative comes to light in these memoranda. You apparently told him that wasn't correct; namely, wasn't correct in the sense that they were the only two alternatives. You went on to explain that there was a self-government alternative. Then Aspinall, in response to that, apparently said, well, there's a possibility of amalgamation with Guam or Hawaii. Does any of that refresh your recollection as to what might have come up?

Katzenbach: Not really. The amalgamation with Guam I can remember being discussed from time to time, and I guess nobody could work just how it was going to happen or whether it was a good idea. Amalgamation may have been a good idea. On a purely Defense point of

view it might have been a good idea, I'll put it that way. I can't think of any other reason it would have been a good idea.

Willens: It always seemed to me like it was a proposal that was made in general by people who didn't realize that the Trust Territory covered some thousands of miles of ocean. It also indicates that you saw Secretary Udall and you and he sort of reviewed the issues that were outstanding. But this memorandum seems to suggest that everyone had more or less played this issue to conclusion. That's confirmed in the last memorandum in the book written by Mr. McHenry to Mr. Gleysteen dated July 18, 1968 where there's a report of the hearings that were actually held by the House subcommittee on the presidential commission proposal. Mrs. Van Cleve said that although she was pleased that the committee had held hearings, she was not optimistic. She reports that Congressman Foley had told her that he had gone into the hearing prepared to support the status commission proposal although with misgivings, and he left strongly opposed because there were too many so-called loose ends that needed to be tied up. What was your sense either now in recalling this or hearing these memoranda as to where the issue was left as you completed your terms as Under Secretary of State?

Katzenbach: I don't have any recollection that it was not resolved.

Willens: If in retrospect you had the ability to rewrite history, what decisions do you think you might have made differently on this subject, if any?

Katzenbach: I don't know. Given Aspinall's position, I'm not sure there's much you could do. You have a powerful chairman of the committee who has a very strong view as to what's going to happen. And you're not going to get Interior to take any very strong action that Aspinall's opposed to.

Willens: And I suppose

Katzenbach: Understandably. I mean I'm not saying that critically. The chairman of the House committee had a very strong view.

Willens: It also suggested that a president who was as familiar with Congress as President Johnson was might have been reticent about taking strong Executive Branch action that was not favorably received by the chairman.

Katzenbach: Yes.

Willens: Do you have any knowledge as to how Micronesia's actually worked out over the last 20 years?

Katzenbach: I don't know apart from what you told me at lunch.

Willens: Anything more that you can state for the record about the issues, the personnel or the problems that you confronted on this subject?

Katzenbach: No. I think if you look back on it, Defense had just one interest in it and everybody was prepared to accommodate that because nobody would be prepared to oppose it. There was no constituency that would be interested in opposing it, at least at that time. There might be today I suppose, but there wasn't at that time. I think the State Department was kind of anxious to get the issue resolved so they could get it off their back. And I think Interior rather enjoyed it the way it was.

Willens: On that note we will conclude. Thank you very much.