

INTERVIEW OF DONALD F. McHENRY

by Howard P. Willens

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- Willens: Professor Donald McHenry who teaches at Georgetown University, has agreed to be interviewed based on his service in the Department of State during the 1960s and early 1970s and his subsequent service as Ambassador to the United Nations in the late 1970s. Don, thank you very much for taking the time. You and I met years ago in the course of you and your colleagues at Carnegie writing the book entitled *Micronesia: Trust Betrayed*, which I have reread recently and find to be a very interesting and instructive portrayal of some of the events I am trying to cover. I mentioned to you off the record some of the people I've interviewed, and I have your biographical information. Could you tell me how it came to be that you went to the State Department in 1963?
- McHenry: Well, I went in 1963 as a junior officer. I had just arrived at the State Department, I think in November 1963, which was right after the Solomon survey mission report. So my arrival really almost coincided with the initial policy exploration on the future of the Trust Territory.
- Willens: How did it come to be that you were assigned to the U.N. office?
- McHenry: I have no idea. It's a battle between Harlan Cleveland and about five or six others, who now all claim that they were responsible for putting me where I was.
- Willens: It was your first assignment, though, as a Foreign Service Officer.
- McHenry: It was my first assignment. I was the junior member of the Office of Dependent Area Affairs.
- Willens: What was the hierarchy in the office at the time?
- McHenry: There was an Office of Dependent Area Affairs, which handled all colonialism or colonialism-type questions. That included the Trust Territory, the non-self-governing territories of the Trust Territory, as well as oversight of colonies, anything that had to report to the U.N. under the non-self-governing territory section of the Charter. Those who were in that office had been there from the start of the U.N., and as territories, colonies became independent, the responsibility in the State Department was switched to the geographic bureaus. Not that there wasn't some geographic responsibility all along, but the action responsibility was in the Office of Dependent Area Affairs until they became independent.
- Willens: To whom did you report within that office?
- McHenry: I reported to an officer in charge first Richard Paness who was a Foreign Service Officer with some expertise on Germany, of all places. And then he was succeeded by Pat Burn, who actually at the time was an Asian specialist.
- Willens: Were Mr. Gleysteen and Elizabeth Brown assigned to the office at the time?
- McHenry: They were in the office. The section of Dependent Area Affairs reported to the Office of United Nations Political Area. So Gleysteen was the Deputy there, and Elizabeth Brown was the Director. They had world-wide responsibilities in terms of anything which was political that involved the U.N. Dependent Areas was on the down-side. Most of the areas had become independent, though the ones that we continued to handle were really

difficult ones, South Africa, Angola, Mozambique, for examples. But conflicts in the Middle East, these were all part of the larger responsibilities of the office.

Willens: Do you remember the completion of the Solomon Report as being one of the first events that you encountered in the course of becoming familiar with the Trust Territory and its problems?

McHenry: It had been completed when I arrived, and actually I think when I arrived they were still having meetings on it to get reactions on the Solomon Report and its recommendations.

Willens: Did you form any impression at the time as to the utility of that particular Report?

McHenry: I looked upon the Report at the time as sort of a catalyst for getting the government to take stronger, more concerted, more thoughtful actions with regard to the development aspects of the TTPI.

Willens: One of your former colleagues recalls it as being a preemptive strike in the sense that it was an effort by the Executive Branch to formulate and implement policy toward the Trust Territory in anticipation of another U.N. visiting mission in 1964.

McHenry: Well, I wasn't there, so I don't know to what extent they had the 1964 visiting mission in mind. It is clear that once the territory was moved from the control of the Navy to Interior, there was greater access to the territory. And so that you not only had visiting missions going out there, but you had the public at large. And I remember one of the things at the time, the *New York Times* magazine, I think, carried a story that one of the Trust Territory officials was seen kicking over a wall, a metal wall which was a school or something of that nature, I can't remember exactly. But there was clearly more attention being paid to it. And of course the United States was seeing this very rapid change in the colonial status of many of the territories, and it was sort of inevitable that this area was going to be the focus of attention.

Willens: Did you and your colleagues at the Department of State anticipate growing criticism within the United Nations with respect to the Trust Territory?

McHenry: We anticipated growing criticism if we didn't do anything. We felt it was something that we could control if we took the steps ourselves to improve things. But yes, we anticipated growing criticism. And more than that, we also anticipated that the criticism was also going to come from the Micronesians. Once you started an education program and they started sending the students off to Hawaii and so forth, it was inevitable that they, too, would become part of the critics.

Willens: Did you ever get out to the Trust Territory in your years at the State Department?

McHenry: In my years at the State Department, I never got there. I went there later on when I was out of the State Department.

Willens: The Solomon Commission Report recommended steps toward economic development and focused in particular on the political status issue. It recommended a measure of self-government for the Trust Territory that fell somewhat short of what the State Department at the time felt was desirable in light of the applicable U.N. criteria. Do you have any recollection of reacting to that particular aspect of the Solomon Commission Report?

McHenry: I don't, and in fact to be candid with you, I don't remember that aspect of the Solomon Commission Report. The exact wording of the Solomon Commission Report on that question, and the wording becomes very important. I do know that State felt that we were controlled by the Charter of the U.N. and by the Trusteeship Agreement in terms of what political status had to be offered in order to turn out as an exercise of self-determination.

And our reading of that was that you had to offer a full range of choices. And that only having offered a full range of choices could you have some reasonable confidence that it wouldn't come back to haunt you.

Willens: And certainly the range of choices in State's view included the option of independence.

McHenry: It included the option of independence.

Willens: Do you have any sense now looking back as to the extent to which the Solomon Commission Report was or was not implemented?

McHenry: Well, Solomon clearly wanted, as I remember, to have the islands a permanent part of the United States. There was no question that that was his objective. The question was how do you go about making it a permanent part of the United States?

Willens: Were you aware at the time that there had been the National Security Action Memorandum 145 back in 1962?

McHenry: I was aware of 145, but 145 was written sort of in the where to go rather than the how to get there manner. The concern of State was not with the policy objective of 145. The concern was that you had to carry that out in such a way that it would seem to be an informed choice on the part of the Micronesians. I think there was confidence in the State Department that, given the attractiveness of the United States and given the history of this association, that if you carried on a development program the islanders were likely to select some kind of permanent association with the United States.

Willens: The documents generated during that period speak of a plebiscite in the Trust Territory as early as 1967 or 1968. Do you think that was a feasible objective?

McHenry: Well, I think that was written with the idea of five years. No, I don't think it was. It doesn't seem to me that we could put in place the kinds of programs, experience with self-government, educational programs in that time frame. My guess is that even those who advocated five years probably recognized that.

Willens: When I spoke with former Assistant Secretary Cleveland, he tried to explain why it was that the concerns with respect to the United Nations loomed large in the formation of policy in the early 1960s and suggested that it might be difficult for an observer today in the 1990s to understand the extent to which U.N. prompted concerns were an important contributor to U.S. policy, at least at the State Department. Do you have any general assessment throughout your career as to how the role of the U.N. in stimulating U.S. policy changed over time?

McHenry: I think on this point that you have to look at the times, the then-view of the United States towards the U.N. We still viewed ourselves, accurately or inaccurately, as the good guys, the people out to develop an international organization based on the ability of various nations to come together and make a better world. We were playing a leadership role in that organization. The Soviets were the ones who were the negatives. They were the ones who were vetoing in the Security Council and not paying their dues. You can contrast that to the later period, when the United States took on the characteristics frankly of the Soviet Union. We started not paying our dues and casting lots of vetoes. Part of that was because the United States didn't have the numerical control that it had had in the earlier stage, and we had to then resort to some of the same devices that the Soviets had been resorting to. Part of it is that the issues of the times changed, and the issues in some instances involved more domestic politics. Much of the change was in attitudes towards the U.N. For example, the United States found itself a defender of a beleaguered Israel, and many in the United States who had been some of the strongest supporters of the U.N.

started getting turned off. Turned off in some instances because of the “zionism as racism” resolution, for example. I think you also have to contrast what was going on in the world politically. Countries were becoming independent. The United States wanted to promote that independence and democratic government. In sharp contrast to the empire which the Soviet Union not only had built up, but which they forced upon Czechoslovakia and Poland. So it was important to the United States not only because of our ideas but also because of the political context.

Willens: The what?

McHenry: The political context with which we were working that we do things which were consistent with our obligations under the U.N. Charter and our obligations under the Trusteeship Agreement. I wouldn't say that we changed those so much as we started being more sleight of hand. Maybe in the 1980s we changed. But we started being more sleight of hand.

Willens: You referred to the need for the Micronesians to develop some further experience with self-government. It is generally recognized that the U.S. administrators of the Trust Territory did help the development of municipal councils and district legislatures during the 1950s and the early 1960s. There then came a time when the Congress of Micronesia was created via Secretarial Order, and there is some indication in the documents that the State Department commented on the draft Secretarial Order and contributed their views toward that end objective. Do you recall participating in any of the discussions with respect to the Congress of Micronesia?

McHenry: I remember the documents and the time, but I'm not sure I recall any specific discussions.

Willens: Did you regard it as sort of a necessary step to be taken to foster Micronesian unity?

McHenry: I remember we didn't think that they were moving fast enough, that the powers assigned to the Congress of Micronesia were not large enough. We wanted to eliminate the duplication between the Administration and the Congress of Micronesia. Many of the members of the Congress of Micronesia were in the employ of the Trust Territory government, raising some concern.

Willens: That was sort of, as I understand it, a practical accommodation of the fact that there was a shortage of trained people out there.

McHenry: It was. It's the kind of problem you run into over and over again. But it meant all the more that you had to try and ensure that the Congress of Micronesia was able to act on its own. And it's a difficult thing.

Willens: Do you think that the Congress of Micronesia to the extent that you followed its growth and performance did contribute toward some sense of Micronesian unity?

McHenry: I thought it and several other institutions there were very useful in terms of contributing to unity. The old high school which was there, the existence of an airline, to the extent that you had anything which brought people from a group of islands together, I thought was quite useful in terms of contributing to unity. I frankly thought that that was the only hope in developing the territories as an entity. I also thought it was the most efficient way of delivering goods and services to them. I was concerned all along that those kinds of territory-wide programs should not be deleted, both because of the efficiency and because I thought they contributed to building some sense of nationhood.

Willens: In your 1975 book, you suggest that there were certain policies adopted by the United States that contributed to fragmentation in contrast with the goal of Micronesian

unity. You identified such steps as locating the capital in Saipan, the tendency to place Micronesian political administrators in their home districts rather than elsewhere. And yet at the same time, the documents I've seen indicate that the Department of State and all the other U.S. agencies throughout the 1960s were firmly behind the concept of a single Micronesia and opposed to the frequently-expressed desire by the Marianas, for example, for separate status. Is it your impression in recollection that the Department of State at least was firmly opposed to separatism and fragmentation until the early 1970s?

McHenry: State was. I'm not sure that others were. In fact, I'm very positive that the Navy either went out of its way to promote some sort of separate identity in the Marianas or it consciously didn't do those things which would have promoted unity that I think was needed. I don't want to suggest that Interior, for example, would deliberately take steps to promote separatism, though I think later on they may have, but I do think that they passed up many opportunities in terms of unity.

Willens: One of the thorniest problems is to try to assess in retrospect the forces tending toward unity and the forces operating against unity.

McHenry: Well, one of the forces operating against unity was the fact that, coming from the war, no one was thinking about an independent Micronesia. The fact that so much in the way of physical structure was in the Mariana Islands there was a tremendous investment. And to talk about a capital elsewhere at a time when money was short could easily be knocked down by those who were saying "Hey, we've got it already here." The proximity of Guam was another factor which argued very strongly towards keeping things right where they were. I don't think people were making an error, I simply believe that they had an opportunity, and it was brought to their attention, an opportunity to go in another direction, and they refused to do so.

Willens: Who refused to do so?

McHenry: Oh, I think Interior did. Interior probably more for economic reasons. Interior probably because why change the status quo? I wouldn't say that with the Navy. I think the Navy used the economic reasons and the status quo because they felt that that was also going to in the long term protect their association with the Marianas, potential association with the U.S.

Willens: As you know, what used to be the Trust Territory is now four separate political entities, with the Republic of Palau, if that's the proper name, being the most recent to have finally worked through these entangled status and related issues. Do you have any sense today that a different U.S. policy in the 1960s might have been able to override or influence the separatist tendencies so as to yield a united Micronesia?

McHenry: I don't know. Experience would argue that building a nation, particularly out of islands, is a very difficult thing. If you look at the West Indies, when the British left, people did not stay together very long. The various federations that were formed in Africa for the most part didn't last. If you look at the breakup of the Soviet Union, or the pressures to break up Russia or the Ukraine, or what's going on in Yugoslavia, we know that there are tremendous pressures in terms of ethnicity and tribe, race and religion, which are always operative there. On the other hand, if you look at Europe today, we know that eventually there is a tendency, not just in Europe but also in Africa, there is a tendency to say "Hey, wait a minute, we've got some things in common. And maybe we don't want to work together politically, but let's build on the things that we have in common, so we can have an economic union," and slowly but surely there's a recognition that there's a tremendous range of factors to work towards some kind of entity. Now that process is not one which

goes at a steady pace. It goes forward, it stops, maybe even takes a step backwards, forward, stops, and so forth. But it is occurring. It's occurring in the Caribbean. The East African Federation, which broke up at the end of the 1960s, is coming back together for a strong economic ground. And I suspect that we're going to see more of that as regions and peoples mature. I'm not as familiar with Micronesia today as I was, but there may be some of that going on now, in transportation, for example.

Willens: Going back to the 1960s and the differences between the State Department and Interior, did you personally participate in the preparation of some of the studies that were generated by the State Department trying to bring about some Executive Branch policy that would permit the United States to move toward implementation of National Security Action Memorandum 145?

McHenry: I was in most of those from about late 1963 until about 1967. I was intimately involved with them. In 1967 and 1968, I was still there; in fact, I had a larger responsibility in that period. But I no longer had the detailed knowledge that I had in earlier periods. We were trying (a) to get faster movement on economic and political development; and (b) to get agreement that we would offer the full range of options to the Micronesians. We assumed that if you did (a), then (b) was going to come out where we wanted it. To the extent that there were those who believed we couldn't give the Micronesians more advantageous status than the U.S. territories, we believed we had to move on those territories as well.

Willens: That was an interesting issue, sometimes called the leap-frogging issue. It was State's view that all of the territories including the Trust Territory should be treated together, although I think the Department of State seemed to have withdrawn from that position later in the 1960s when it seemed to acquiesce in the view that the Trust Territory had special factors applicable to it and justified its separate treatment.

McHenry: Well, we always wanted to make sure that it had special factors. After all, when the Charter speaks of the Trust Territories, it speaks of self-government or independence. For other territories, it simply says self-government. We didn't want to get those confused. But there were those in Interior and in the Congress who said, we can't offer the Micronesians more than we offer the others, and in essence their next statement, which they never uttered was, and we're not going to offer them any advanced status. We believed then that there was (again, in the context of the times) the possibility that we were going to have problems with those other territories as well, that they too were going to start to look around the world and start questioning their status. And in fact, Puerto Rico was. So we didn't want the others used as a reason for holding back on our obligations with regard to Micronesia. We felt our obligations with regard to Micronesia were greater than our obligations with regard to the other territories.

Willens: One of the issues that one sees in the exchanges between Interior and State was the different assessment of the capability and readiness of the Micronesians for self-government. One of your former colleagues said, I think perceptively, that Interior and State would assess the level of sophistication out there that would best support the positions that the agencies were taking for other reasons. Did you have any sense as to whether State's views were pressing more self-government on the Micronesians than they were ready to accept?

McHenry: I don't know what people thought, what others thought, but I will never forget that the 1960 visiting mission said that Tanganyika might be ready for independence 20 years hence. It was independent in 1963. And I remember the Portuguese foreign minister who told George Ball in 1963 or 1964 (I can't remember which one it was, 1963 I think) we're not going to start this self-government stuff in Angola and Mozambique, because I

know there's a slippery slope out there, and once we start down that slope, we can't stop. And I felt very strongly that the same thing was true with regard to Micronesia. We can't stop. So whatever people said in terms of judgment about their readiness, and I think people are always more ready than we give them credit for, you couldn't go ahead with the educational portion, you couldn't go ahead with the political factors without anticipating that the pressures were going to build on you. And I think that's the point which we simply were never able to get across.

Willens: One of the letters from John Carver to the State Department expressed his concern that premature granting of self-government to the Micronesians would amount to a walking away from one's colonial responsibilities and might expose the United States to some of the consequences that happened in Africa and elsewhere. When I spoke with him recently, I asked him about that letter, which his subordinates said had been largely written by him. He acknowledged that and said that he did feel that there had to be an ordered, gradual progression. He seemed reluctant in this day and age to accept that something more rapid might have been required. Do you think there was a risk of that kind that one had to worry about?

McHenry: I think there's always a risk of that kind. I think the danger is greater in my view of moving too slowly than moving too fast. If you don't move fast enough and the pressure and the demonstrations build up, it's hard then to get control of the situation and have it come out the way you want it. Don't forget, we were trying to get a decision to come out in a particular way. And why run the risk of waiting until the pressure in the valve built up until the valve is exploding?

Willens: Was it your sense at the time that the Micronesian leaders were seeking an expedited change in their status towards something different than the Trusteeship status? It's another issue on which the two departments divided from time to time the extent to which there was a sense in Micronesia that a change was required.

McHenry: Carver would say this in some of his letters which he wrote. I saw the Micronesians mostly in a context which was different from what Interior saw. They saw them out there. They saw them when they came into Washington. I saw them at the U.N. I saw them informally. I saw them in the sessions. I heard what they were listening to. And I saw several sets of Micronesians. That is, they were at several stages. Some of whom were sophisticated enough that they would play one department off against the other. That was clearly going on in the Marshalls and the Marianas. Some were not anywhere near that sophistication. That was clear with Yap and Truk. Some were in between that, and I would put Ponape there. And some were like . . .

Willens: Palau?

McHenry: Palau ended up being sort of the conciliators, the statesmen. But I could see that Interior saw them in one setting, and I saw them in the other.

Willens: Was it your sense that there were a number of leaders from the various districts who were ready for change and able to deal with it?

McHenry: I thought there were. But again, you have to also understand that we and State saw Micronesia as one of 50 places we were looking at. We had heard the same arguments, seen the same developments, in any number of countries. We were not just looking at Micronesia. We were bringing our experience from other places and looking at those developments and potential developments, knowing what we'd seen elsewhere.

- Willens: One of the recommendations that appears in the State-generated documents was that the White House designate a special assistant to coordinate Executive Branch policy with respect to Micronesia. Did that ever get anywhere?
- McHenry: It was a bureaucratic ploy to get around the Interior.
- Willens: It clearly was seen as such by Interior, and what's unclear to me is whether in fact after Mr. Sisco went over to discuss it with McGeorge Bundy, whether anything in fact was done.
- McHenry: I don't think anything was done. I think he and Rusk informally agreed on Maxwell Taylor. And nothing was done until later on in the last portions of the Johnson Administration.
- Willens: You're not speaking about Haydn Williams, are you? Because he was appointed in 1971.
- McHenry: No, before that. Was he the first one appointed?
- Willens: I think so. There's no indication of any other White House involvement.
- McHenry: As I say, I get fuzzy after 1968.
- Willens: Sure. Generally with respect to White House involvement, did you get any sense in the 1960s, that White House personnel, particularly on the National Security Council staff, were actively involved with Micronesian problems, or did it begin to fade from whatever position it had on the agenda?
- McHenry: I think it began to fade. I don't think it was the priority. I don't know what the genesis of the Solomon Mission was who came up with the idea or whether it generated from the White House.
- Willens: There has been a conflict in recollection on that. Michael Forrestal is said to have contributed to the idea, and Harlan Cleveland thinks that he was one who suggested it.
- McHenry: Well, they were both there, and if you look back, you'll see Cleveland's speeches on the Pacific Basin at that time. But I wasn't there, so I really don't know.
- Willens: Did you participate in any of the meetings State officials had with Interior?
- McHenry: I was not present for most of them. I was in some meetings with Carver.
- Willens: Can you help me sort of evaluate and describe those individuals from State and Interior who played a role in this debate? What was your overall assessment of Harlan Cleveland, for example?
- McHenry: He was an intellectual visionary. Not so much concerned about the details of policy, development of details. He left that to Sisco and to Elizabeth Brown.
- Willens: What was your characterization of Mr. Sisco?
- McHenry: Great bureaucratic talent. He was a very determined person. He was, however, pulled away from this question constantly. I never felt that he gave it the kind of detailed attention that he would give to the Middle East.
- Willens: Did Mr. Gleysteen play an active role?
- McHenry: Gleysteen was very active, very knowledgeable. Gleysteen was something like Cleveland, a very thoughtful, contemplative person, not one to get into any bureaucratic fighting but could if he thought it was necessary.
- Willens: I see from the documents that in the later years of the Johnson Administration, efforts

were made to engage Under Secretary Katzenbach in this particular policy matter. Did you have any experience with Mr. Katzenbach?

McHenry: I did. He came over to State in only the last two years or so of the Johnson Administration and was not as active in this as was Rusk himself. Rusk was extraordinarily knowledgeable on this subject, going back to his own participation in the drafting of the Charter in his own early period as Assistant Secretary of State. But he was also extraordinarily busy. And I think that Cleveland particularly counted on Rusk's support because he felt he knew what the Secretary's views were. The Secretary was particularly strong on the question of getting ahead of the curve in terms of political development, for example.

Willens: What was your evaluation of the Interior people who were focused on this issue?

McHenry: Oh, informed, provincial in outlook, great bureaucratic in-fighters. They really knew how to stop things they wanted to. I didn't think that Udall was ever very involved. I felt very strongly that he was not involved, and that the question never achieved the level of attention at Interior that it should have had.

Willens: There were efforts to bring Udall together with Katzenbach or the Secretary of State, and he did get involved on a few occasions, as I can see from the documents.

McHenry: He wasn't very much involved. And I don't know why. He may have had other fish to fry with the Congress, for example.

Willens: Let's turn to that. The Interior view basically is today, as it was then, that ultimately you had to get Congressional approval to whatever future status one sought for the Trust Territory. Did you personally have any experience with Congressman Aspinall or other members of the Subcommittee in connection with this subject?

McHenry: Aspinall, Carey . . .

Willens: There's a Republican named Saylor.

McHenry: Saylor, from Pennsylvania?

Willens: I think so. And then a staff man named John Taylor, who was very knowledgeable I gather.

McHenry: Yes.

Willens: Did you personally appear to testify?

McHenry: I never testified. I was there when the State Department people were there.

Willens: It's very difficult to get any accurate picture what happened at those hearings because, as you point out in the book, most of those hearings were in executive session, and if there ever was a transcript, it's not available today.

McHenry: Yes. The picture is of a group of Congressmen who are several stripes. There is the group which says, "My, we really screwed this place up. And anything that they want today to straighten it out, give it to them."

Willens: Who fell into that group, as examples?

McHenry: Carey. There was a group which said, "These are ours. We took them. And nobody is going to take them away from us, and I don't care what the U.N. or anybody else has to say." Aspinall. There was a group which sort of fell between that, which was sort of embarrassed about what we'd done, "We need to do more, we have to somehow handle this U.N. problem." I think all of them leaned toward Aspinall on the U.N. thing. There was very little support [for State's views]. There was some.

- Willens: Congressman Bingham, for example?
- McHenry: Bingham. Yates. There was some. Those people who were also on the Foreign Affairs Committee or familiar with the U.N. were supportive of trying to figure out some kind of way of handling it. But the hearings were not particularly constructive. They were domestic hearings. They were concerned about giving more to Micronesia than we do for Guam. And everybody knows we're not going to let Guam have a choice.
- Willens: Putting the political status issue aside for the moment, did you feel that the Congressional committees were responding affirmatively to the requests for increased funding?
- McHenry: Oh, yes.
- Willens: It seems from the record that the Executive Branch more or less got the increases in appropriations that it sought.
- McHenry: Oh, they got the increased funding, and towards the end, they were getting more than they wanted. I mean as I say, towards the end, I'm talking about the late 1960s and even into the early 1970s.
- Willens: Did you think Aspinall basically took his positions convinced that he could prevent any change in the status from occurring other than what he would support, namely some territorial status similar to American Samoa or possibly over time similar to Guam and the Virgin Islands?
- McHenry: That's what he had in mind. It was sort of like American Samoa. Not nearly like Guam and the Virgin Islands. Talking about something which leap-frogged all of them was totally unacceptable to him.
- Willens: How did you and your colleagues at State think you could deal with this kind of powerful committee chairman in the 1960s and persuade him or others that there was an alternative future for the Trust Territory that had to be addressed at an earlier date?
- McHenry: As long as it was simply an Interior committee question, we had a real problem. If you could get it out into Foreign Affairs and the Armed Services Committees you had a chance.
- Willens: Many of the State Department memos suggest the need for White House involvement and coordination of a lobbying effort. It's unclear to me whether that ever materialized. It looks as though it did not.
- McHenry: There was never the concerted effort. I think, particularly in the Goldberg years, it got off into any economic, social and into political development. And things could sometimes move with amazing speed.
- Willens: What kinds of things are you thinking of?
- McHenry: Oh, when they decided to send a few Peace Corps people there. They sent them an army. I can't remember how many it was, but I remember at the time it was amazing. I think we had more Peace Corps in Micronesia than anyplace else in the world. I can't remember what the numbers were.
- Willens: It was somewhere up around 900, I believe.
- McHenry: Yes. It was an enormous number of Peace Corps volunteers there.
- Willens: Did you participate in any of the discussions with respect to the Peace Corps?
- McHenry: I participated in the discussions of the idea, and then Goldberg and Udall had a lunch one day, and the next thing I knew, there were all these Peace Corps volunteers going to

- Micronesia. They agreed to it, and Johnson signed off on it, and it was done. It was done literally at lunch one day.
- Willens: Did you come to have an opinion as to the efficacy of the Peace Corps program in Micronesia over the next several years?
- McHenry: Oh, not really. Again, you have to remember this is a time when I was moving out of this watching of day-to-day developments. I've talked with a number of Peace Corps volunteers. Well, it's the same as you find everywhere, Peace Corps volunteers who think they had a great experience, but with some reservations about their effectiveness, as in "My, we could have done more if it hadn't been for [the bureaucracy]."
- Willens: No, that's certainly true. And the Interior Department, of course, responded quite negatively over time. Near the end of the Johnson Administration, the idea of a status commission emerged and a legislative proposal to create such a commission was sent up to Congress in August of 1967. To what extent did that proposal represent a reaction to the Micronesian formation of a status commission?
- McHenry: Oh, there was some of that. And I need to have my memory refreshed on this, but I think the major thing that I remember about that was battling with Interior on the terms of reference for the commission. With their wanting it wide open and our saying that you can't have it wide open, we have legal obligations and really they cannot tell us how to carry out these legal obligations. We again are starting with a full range of self-determination options and we have to operate within these parameters.
- Willens: Was it your view that unless the commission was given in its terms of reference very specific guidance with respect to the Trusteeship Agreement, that it might recommend a status acceptable to Congress but not sufficient to meet U.N. criteria?
- McHenry: Again, I'd have to look, but I'm sure that was a concern, especially a commission which would be so heavily influenced by Interior and by the Defense Department and would reflect the dominant view in the Interior.
- Willens: As it happened, the Senate did enact the proposal, but the House never held hearings on it in 1968 or subsequently, as I recall. Do you have any judgment as to why Aspinall was unwilling to even provide a Congressional hearing on this proposal?
- McHenry: Aspinall felt that this was the responsibility of his committee. Period.
- Willens: And so any representations he made about a hearing are in your view not likely to represent his true feelings at the time.
- McHenry: No.
- Willens: I mean he said on many occasions that the Executive Branch should get its act together, then we in Congress would then have something to react to.
- McHenry: But in the private meetings, he would tell us what the "act" was supposed to be.
- Willens: He would tell you what?
- McHenry: What the act was supposed to be. You can get your act together, but make sure that your act doesn't have these people any higher than American Samoa. We aren't going to have independence on any ballot. We can ask these people a very narrow question in terms of their future at some point.

- Willens: Where did you go in 1969 with the Nixon Administration? The biographical information suggests that you became a Special Assistant to the Secretary for a while and then Assistant to the Counselor. Could you describe what those responsibilities were?
- McHenry: Actually, in 1968, I got pulled away for a special assignment for Rusk, so I was just bouncing around from one place around the world to another for short periods of time. I don't think I spent a quarter of my time in the office. So really somebody else was running that show. When the election took place, I was assigned to the Transition Team for the Nixon transition detailed there to work with Rogers. From November, whenever Nixon announced his Cabinet, until maybe two or three months into the Nixon Administration. And then I was moved from there to the Counselor's office. I never even moved my office. The way Rogers had it, the Counselor's office was a part of his office.
- Willens: Who was the Counselor then?
- McHenry: Dick Petterson. And I was there handling NSC affairs.
- Willens: Did it have anything to do with the Trust Territory?
- McHenry: We had Trust Territories in there.
- Willens: So that's where you stayed until 1971?
- McHenry: I stayed until 1971.
- Willens: And then that's when you left the Department?
- McHenry: Yes. I went on leave in 1971.
- Willens: Well, then you are one of the first people I've had a chance to talk to about what seemed to be a rather substantial change in procedure and substance once the Nixon Administration came into office. As you indicated in the book and have just intimated, there was now the development of position papers under the aegis of the Under Secretaries Committee, and out of that process emerged an Executive Branch policy in the spring of 1969 that Secretary Hickel went out with great fanfare to announce. Do you have any recollection as to what precipitated the change toward the use of the Under Secretaries Committee?
- McHenry: It was the change in the whole of the National Security Council structure.
- Willens: This was all Kissinger-originated?
- McHenry: Yes. The whole structure changed. Kissinger came in and created this structure. Of course, there was the NSC Review Committee, and then there was an Under Secretaries Committee. Some things were important enough to get from the Under Secretaries Committee to the NSC Review Committee. Other things were too important to go through the Under Secretaries Committee. They went directly to Henry. Henry ran the NSC Review Committee.
- Willens: Were other Cabinet officers on that Committee?
- McHenry: No. Every agency designated their person for that committee.
- Willens: But it had a higher status in the process than the Under Secretaries Committee?
- McHenry: It was Henry. Henry technically was a member of the Under Secretaries Committee. It met in the State Department under Elliot Richardson. I sat in that Committee, and Kissinger came once. Never came again. Maybe came twice. That's it. The NSC Review Committee, as I said, handled the important issues. And the State Department representative Petterson was my boss. And what we would do in that Committee would be to review the policy paper and get them ready for the NSC to see, which really meant get them ready for

Kissinger and/or Nixon. Because after a while even the NSC didn't meet. It was just Kissinger who would decide when he would send a review paper to the President or he'd do it himself. The Under Secretaries Committee handled the Micronesian question. I don't think it ever got to the NSC. I don't think it did.

Willens: To the NSC as a Committee.

McHenry: Yes.

Willens: The memoranda generated under the Under Secretaries Committee in 1969 include many from Gleysteen and Mr. DePalma and then comparable papers being generated by Interior leading to policy studies and ultimately a memorandum that went to the President for a decision. Then the papers show approval of the policy and direction to the Departments to implement it. The policy seems to reflect (as your 1975 study suggests) adoption essentially of the Interior position supported by Defense and to some extent subordinates the concerns that the State Department had urged so vigorously for many years. If that's an accurate shorthand summary, to what do you attribute the change in policy that we saw in early 1969?

McHenry: In the first place, even less of a concern about the U.N. There is more of a concern about the strategic importance of the Marianas.

Willens: And is that related to the Vietnam conflict?

McHenry: Oh, somewhat related to Vietnam, but I think just a concern that you have to have a back-up place to go. I think it's more strategic than anything else. There's more money available for bases and the military had visions of bombs dancing. I would say we also had a very weak Secretary of State.

Willens: Who were the key players in your judgment who played a role in this reformulation of a Trust Territory policy in 1969?

McHenry: NSC people. Who were the NSC people?

Willens: Well, was there someone who went from State? Schneider? You mentioned him in the book.

McHenry: Schneider went. He wasn't the one.

Willens: No, you're speaking of the Executive Director or are you speaking of NSC staff people?

McHenry: NSC staff people. Schneider went to the NSC. He wasn't that much involved.

Willens: But you think much of the impetus for this came from the NSC staff?

McHenry: What happens at the end of an Administration is that everybody who has lost out in the last Administration or had a grievance uses this opportunity to reopen any policy question they can possibly get their hands on. And I've seen it over and over and over again. And people who have been in the bureaucracy and who you would have thought of as civil servants suddenly take on a political cast. And almost every issue gets reopened, especially if there's a change of party. It has happened over and over and over and over again. And if you don't resist it, it's very hard to have any continuity in government.

Willens: You point out in your 1975 book that Secretary Hickel in his volume shows grows great ignorance of what had taken place during the prior Administration with respect to the Trust Territory. I don't see in the documents that kind of view at either Defense or Interior, but it may well be that some of the changes you've just identified the changes of political party and the chance to revisit something with some fresh personnel may have provided

impetus to Defense to press this to a decision and to get Interior finally to press for a decision from the Executive Branch that they thought would be acceptable to Aspinall. That seems to have been what happened, but with some significant lack of success so far as the Micronesians were concerned.

McHenry: Yes. Again, it's a period of time when I wasn't as involved as I had been in the earlier stage. Since it went through the Under Secretaries Committee, I saw that material, but I was involved with the NSC Review Committee, and we had a whole lot more on our platter in terms of hotter subjects.

Willens: Did you have any subsequent involvement at or about the time that Haydn Williams was appointed, or had you left the Department by that time?

McHenry: I left the Department in 1971.

Willens: And he was appointed in about spring or early summer as I recall of 1971. Did you ever subsequently work with him in any connection?

McHenry: I met him when I was touring Micronesia, but I never worked with him.

Willens: You wrote the book at a time when the Marianas Covenant was pending before Congress. And you pointed out that it went through the House on a very expedited calendar, to say the least. You speak in the book about the way in which Congress was, or it maybe still is, ill-suited to deal with this kind of a policy problem.

McHenry: It still is.

Willens: What was your sense when the Covenant went before the Senate and opposition developed in the Foreign Relations and the Armed Services Committee? What do you think prompted that kind of criticism?

McHenry: Well, you have something like Micronesia, which clearly falls under four different committees; more than that, you can argue five.

Willens: Interior . . .

McHenry: Defense, Interior, Judiciary, Appropriations, Foreign Affairs. You could make an argument it's five.

Willens: Certainly.

McHenry: Five committees. And they have no way of coordinating. It's almost like the health bill right now. And it wasn't something which was a burning issue to many people. There was no widespread public interest in it and certainly no great knowledge of it. Secondly, we have no history, no experience in handling the territories. It's not like we're the British Commonwealth Office. We hadn't had that. Even Interior doesn't like to see itself labeled as the Colonial Office. So there was very little in the way of discussion. Third, I suspect most Americans would think, if they knew anything about it, we must be doing a great job. We wouldn't dare pull anything over on people. We're idealistic Americans up and above board, and so forth. To the extent that in those circumstances the system could debate this issue, it got a fair hearing. The question is, does this structure allow that? And in the long term, is it in our interest or is it in the Micronesians' interest? It may turn out fine.

Willens: There was opposition in the Senate Foreign Affairs or Foreign Relations Committee on the fragmentation issue and concern about that departure from prior U.S. positions and what was perceived as unanimous precedents with respect to the termination of previous trusteeships. In the Armed Services Committee, though, some of the opposition came

from those who questioned the need for a substantial military facility in Tinian, given other developments that were occurring, and to some extent there was an element of racism involved in questioning whether the United States should be taking into the family insular areas whose culture and language were so different from the majority.

- McHenry: But even on the Foreign Affairs Committee, Foreign Relations Committee, as is true in many instances, one of their staffers was primarily interested in this. I think there was a staffer who had a bee in his bonnet on it. I'm not sure who it was.
- Willens: But you think that unless Congress had departed from its normal structure and formed a special committee to deal with this issue at an earlier point, it simply wasn't equipped to evaluate the result of the negotiations taking into account all of the relevant considerations?
- McHenry: No, I don't think Congress is structured in that way.
- Willens: You also commented about the extent to which members of Congress had been briefed from time to time and the extent to which they really were being asked to accept the final product as negotiated or else reject it in total. Is it your sense today that that's an inappropriate way to deal with agreements of this kind?
- McHenry: Oh, no, I may be arguing against myself here. I think the Executive Branch ought to be able to negotiate agreements. It ought to consult with the Congress, and then negotiate said agreement with as much information as it possibly can get. I don't like the idea of Congress' trying to rewrite. They don't want to turn it down, and they may give their reasons for turning it down, and force the Executive Branch to return to the drawing boards. But this idea of rewriting, or providing exceptions, and so forth is not something I'm fond of. In fact, I like the fast track on trade.
- Willens: And that's based on independent judgment. It does seem to me, as someone who was involved, that it was difficult enough dealing with Congress during the course of the negotiations and, if they had been free to sort of rewrite it or qualify it, it wouldn't have served anyone's interest.
- McHenry: No.
- Willens: When you went to the United Nations in 1977, did the issue of the Trust Territory come before you in any capacity during the Carter Administration?
- McHenry: We had the Trust Territories there, obviously, the Trusteeship Council continued to meet.
- Willens: And in terms of the political status issues, do you recall any particular issues that engaged your concern at the time?
- McHenry: You would think that I would remember that.
- Willens: Well, I'm not so sure, actually. It was a fairly quiet time in terms of the Micronesian negotiations.
- McHenry: It was a quiet time.
- Willens: One thing that changed over time in the United Nations, at least with respect to U.S. policy, related to the U.S. ability to terminate the Trusteeship Agreement with respect to some of the Trust Territory, but not all. The United States had regularly taken the position during the 1960s and 1970s that the Trusteeship Agreement could be terminated only in whole and that any effort by the Marianas or the Marshalls to seek some other result was futile, if not ill-advised. In fact, what happened though in the middle 1980s was that the

United States did move to terminate the Trusteeship without the approval of the Security Council.

McHenry: Yes, but totally different circumstances, totally different political environments.

Willens: You're not suggesting that legal positions are influenced by political circumstances now, are you?

McHenry: That's exactly what I'm suggesting.

Willens: And I'm not going to disagree with you, either.

McHenry: It was a totally different environment. And in the 1980s, when that was done, among other things it was done in an Administration which didn't give a damn about the U.N. It was out to destroy it. So that was quite a contrast to the 1960s and the 1970s. Even in the Nixon Administration, they were not out for unilateral termination of the Trusteeship Agreement. They were still wrestling with that problem.

Willens: You suggest in your book that by the time the United States got its act together and presented a proposal to the Micronesians, the Micronesians had progressed to the point where they had a much different aspiration. I agree with that characterization. Do you recall any particular Micronesian leaders that you thought were particularly effective political leaders?

McHenry: Yes. Let me comment. At some point in the process, it becomes every man or every group for itself. And I think that's what happened in Micronesia. The Marianas were more sophisticated, had more contact with the United States and the outside, but they also had an economic commodity which was hot and which they could sell. The Marshalls developed the same thing with the space tracking station, testing station. And it therefore is not surprising that those two groups were the ones in the forefront in terms of fragmentation. It's somewhat surprising that Palau fell back because Palau had strong leadership in the negotiations, and I'm not sure to this day what was involved in their holding back. I thought some of the Micronesia leaders were quite bright and effective. I think the chap who was head of the negotiations from Palau . . .

Willens: Lazarus Salii?

McHenry: Salii, yes. Lazarus Salii.

Willens: That's right.

McHenry: I thought he was a very effective chap. There's a little-known story about him. He damned near died in New York from a reaction to something at the U.N. We had to rush him off to a hospital under really emergency circumstances one day. This was in the mid 1960s. The Marshalls had Chief . . .

Willens: Amata Kabua.

McHenry: . . . Amata Kabua, who was clearly accustomed to dealing with the Navy, had grown up with them and knew how to wheel and deal.

Willens: Well, the point I was making was that Secretary Hickel went out in 1969 to offer what was a territorial relationship, and it was subsequently misnamed a commonwealth proposal, and for two years the United States tried to urge this end result on the Micronesian representatives. Whereas the Micronesians had already issued a report and were beyond that in terms of goals of free association and/or independence. And there seems to be some disingenuousness, if that's the word, on the part of the U.S. negotiators in thinking they could just ignore those statements and continue to try to persuade the Micronesians that

a territorial relationship would meet their needs. I don't quite understand why it was that the U.S. adhered to that negotiating position for so long.

McHenry: I don't know why they adhered to it for so long. I'm not surprised that the Micronesians were beyond that point. If anything, I would be surprised that they weren't further along. I'm surprised that they weren't further along, that they wouldn't try and drive an even harder bargain with the United States for more autonomy and with a higher price tag attached to it, especially given the amount of money that was being thrown around in the Defense Department at that time.

Willens: Well, that about concludes my set of questions. Do you have any further reflections you'd like to add?

McHenry: Well, I sort of ran out of steam when I left there, and I don't know the period 1969-1973. You know, I've found this whole experience frustrating. At the same time I was dealing with this, I was handling the war claims negotiations, and the only way we got that resolved in the final analysis was to move it away from the bureaucracy. And I think we probably would have made greater progress on this if we'd gotten it out of the bureaucracy earlier.

Willens: Don't you think generally the use of a Presidential representative like Ambassador Williams and a separate staff were useful steps to take?

McHenry: Well, when you have complex issues with people who have dug into their positions on issues which don't get White House attention, those steps are useful.

Willens: Thank you for your time and willingness to share your recollections with us. It has been very valuable.