

INTERVIEW OF GEORGE R. MILNER

by Howard P. Willens

July 19, 1994, July 20, 1994

- Willens: George R. Milner has served for many years at the Department of the Interior. Thank you, George, for taking the time to meet with me to discuss this project and the documents I sent you. I would appreciate it if you would give me some brief biographical information with respect to your education and the circumstances under which you first became employed by the Interior Department.
- Milner: All right. I have an undergraduate or Bachelors Degree from the University of Oklahoma in Political Science and a Masters Degree in International Relations from Columbia University. The circumstances of my employment at Interior were virtually an accident. I was making the rounds of federal agencies just after getting the Masters, trying to line up a job somewhere in Washington. I was staying at the Y which used to be on G Street and 18th and was on my way to the Department of State when it suddenly started to rain, and I went to the nearest building, which was the Interior Department and decided that while I was there I might as well fill out one of the federal employment forms, stopped into the Department's Personnel Officer, filled out a form. After a few more days of making the rounds, I went home to Oklahoma, sort of hoping I would hear something from somebody. Ultimately, I got a letter from the Interior Department offering me a position in the Department as a part of their then-new Management Training Program, which they were just instituting. One other fellow and I were the two non-Bureau people employed generally. A year was spent rotating in various jobs in the Department, at the end of which the intern was supposed to return to his own Bureau, so since I had no bureau to return to, I had to look around. In the meantime, as part of the training, I had gotten an assignment with the Division of Territories which was preparing to take over administration of the Trust Territory and was a part of the transportation survey which had been made prior to the transfer.
- Willens: What year was that, George?
- Milner: This would be about 1950.
- Willens: And what year did you get your Masters Degree?
- Milner: 1949.
- Willens: And so you began looking then for employment with the federal government shortly thereafter.
- Milner: Right.
- Willens: And when did you then become assigned to the Division of Territories or whatever it was then called?
- Milner: Well, by this time the training program had come to the end of the year, and I was offered a job with the Alaska Division of the Office. They had a Caribbean Division, a Pacific Division, and an Alaska Division, responsible for several operating activities at that time. I did take the job with the Alaska Division and remained with that Division until after Alaska became a state. With statehood, in a few months we had terminated that Division.

I became involved in sort of general Pacific/Caribbean activities briefly and moved into the Trust Territory/American Samoa area primarily.

Willens: When did that transfer into the Pacific area take place?

Milner: When did Alaska become a state?

Willens: I would have guessed 1950, but it obviously was later.

Milner: Much later than that. It was the late 1950s. I want to say 1956. I think one of us better look that up. [Addition: Alaska became a state in 1959.]

Willens: Exactly right. What is your first recollection of becoming acquainted with the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands?

Milner: Well, the first was of course the transportation survey, when I first got involved with those Territories. In 1961, following the 1960 elections, I was sent out to join Senators Long of Hawaii and Gruening of Alaska who were then making a tour of American territories—the Trust Territory, Guam, American Samoa. They went a somewhat longer way around by way of Tokyo and Hong Kong. I joined them on Guam and traveled with them to the Trust Territory and down to American Samoa. Then after they returned, a few days later because of business I had in Samoa, I returned to Washington from Samoa.

Willens: Just to get an overview of your career at Interior, George, did you remain employed by Interior until your retirement in the 1980s?

Milner: No. There was a hiatus. With the Nixon Administration, a fellow that I had gotten to know during my Alaska days was offered a job at the Commerce Department. I think he wanted a familiar voice on the other end of the intercom, and he offered me a position with him. I felt I really needed to get out of the rut that I thought I was sort of getting into and decided to make the switch. So I spent essentially the Nixon and Ford years in the Commerce Department and then returned to Interior in the Office of Territories after Carter was elected and Ruth Van Cleve came back as the Director of the Office of Territories.

Willens: And how long did you remain in the Office beginning in 1977?

Milner: I retired the day before President Reagan was inaugurated. I had earlier retired, a year earlier, and went back to work as a reemployed annuitant. The only break was a weekend and one day without pay, and there had to be the three-day lapse between full pay and going back as a rehired annuitant. I decided to retire because I decided I'd gone through enough transitions and I didn't really want to go through another one.

Willens: Let me direct your attention then to 1961 and the beginning of the Kennedy Administration. Before the Kennedy Administration came into office, did you have any personal experience with the administration of the TTPI?

Milner: Only from the Washington end. I had not been back to the Trust Territory since the earlier transportation survey. But I was involved in Trust Territory matters that were coming into Washington for consideration and decision by the Department and Congress.

Willens: Can you help me understand what factors led to the reevaluation of U.S. policy toward the Trust Territory at the outset of the Kennedy Administration?

Milner: I think there were probably several things that were operating. One was a general attitude towards the role of government in terms of doing things and spending money. The appropriation level of the Trust Territory had been raised from the original \$3 million authorization to \$7.5 million authorization, and by the end of the 1950s, appropriations

were moving up to that level. One minor story. The Governor of Samoa had proposed to host the South Pacific Conference. This was a group of delegates from all the Pacific territories. The Conference was formed by the Administering Authorities. But this would be a rather large group of people, and the Governor had to have some additional appropriations. We went to the Bureau of the Budget and got absolutely nowhere in terms of getting the authorization to go to the Congress for funds for this purpose. After Kennedy was inaugurated, there was a general review of financial programs—what do you really need, what can you do without—the sort of thing that a new Administration would come up with. And we went back to the Bureau of the Budget, the same Governor, same people from the Office of Territories, and we sat before the same budget examiners and we went through the same spiel that we'd gone through two months before. When the hearing was over, the examiners said, we're sorry you didn't tell us about this earlier. There was no difference really, but we did get the money.

Willens: Is it your recollection then that there was a White House directive to the Bureau of the Budget?

Milner: Well, I have no idea. It was just a general, as far as I knew, more relaxed attitude as to the effect that government spending might have, a greater willingness to put the money in. And this applied also to the Trust Territory. The new High Commissioner, as soon as he visited the place, came back and said, we can't do it with this amount of money. We need more funds. And the Interior people agreed that we really needed more money. The former High Commissioner was temporarily assigned to the Office, and he agreed, and we helped put together a budget request asking for more money.

Willens: Was that former High Commissioner . . .

Milner: Del Nucker.

Willens: But Mr. Nucker for several years during his tenure for High Commissioner had defended the level of funding against criticism within the U.S. Trusteeship Council, for example.

Milner: Criticism within the Trusteeship Council had not been very great. It was pretty much "you're doing great" sort of thing. There was very little real criticism of the administration as such. The first real criticism came with the 1960, 1961 whichever year it was visiting mission.

Willens: Yes, the 1961 visiting mission was generally viewed as being more critical than its predecessors, and some at the State Department and elsewhere have suggested that that was one of the contributing factors that prompted reevaluation of policy by the Kennedy Administration.

Milner: The reevaluation as far as I'm aware of came about before that time. There had been problems of settling war damage claims. The U.S. took the position basically that the Japanese had caused the war that caused the damage and the Japanese should pay for damage. After the change of Administration, it was decided well, we really ought to take a look at it. So another fellow from the Department and I were sent out and spent several months in the Trust Territory making a survey, an assessment of the extent of war damage claims, what might really be required. How can we go about pursuing this.

Willens: Did that take place then as early as 1961?

Milner: Yes, it did. At the same time, the new High Commissioner—well, let me go back to the transportation situation at the moment. Air transportation was basically provided by three amphibious aircraft that Interior had inherited from the Navy. They were the Grumman Albatross, and the only three that were ever certificated for civilian operation. They could

carry a passenger load of about 13 people. It's a fairly slow amphibious plane carrying a few number of people covering an area of roughly the size of the continental United States. This was air transportation. The aircraft had to be rehabilitated just before the Kennedy Administration. One of them crashed so we were down to two amphibious aircraft in—well, by October 1961. Two of them were operating. The High Commissioner asked a friend of his, Bob Ellis, who owned and operated Ellis Airlines in Southeastern Alaska, to come out and make a survey of the place, what can we do to improve transportation? And Ellis recommended converting almost immediately to a land-based operation wherever we could.

Willens: What does that mean—land-based operation?

Milner: I'm sorry. Land aircraft. Not amphibious. Not seaplanes. And to begin a program immediately of either improving the existing airstrips (one existed on Truk) and building them where they didn't exist. This was a program which the High Commissioner got under way. But again, the previous Administration had continued with the three amphibious aircraft which Interior had inherited from the Navy.

Willens: Were you aware in 1961 of the training facility on the island of Saipan?

Milner: Well, I was aware of rumors of it. The Navy of course administered the area. When we visited Saipan with Senators Long and Gruening, we drove by a group of buildings behind a high chain-link fence, and it was identified as the Navy Technical Training Unit. Nothing more was said about it. I do not know to what extent the Senators were aware of what it was. I'm not sure that I was really aware fully of what it was.

Willens: Until some later year?

Milner: Until either later in the year or a later year. The cover was blown I think later in 1961 or early 1962, sometime very early on.

Willens: Ruth [Van Cleve] remembers that there were some articles about the facility in some magazines. Do you recall anything of that kind?

Milner: She's undoubtedly right. The information I got came not through official government sources but from outside sources and magazines, newspaper articles.

Willens: What prompted the visit of the two Senators to the Trust Territory and other Pacific territories?

Milner: Well, both had been governors of territories, both were in the Senate and on the Senator Interior Committee. They were both interested in territories. I think they just wanted a first-hand look at what was going on, what might have to be done, if anything.

Willens: Do you know whether they made any recommendations to the Administration as to what steps ought to be taken in the area?

Milner: I simply don't recall any specific thing.

Willens: One of the first documents that I shared with you was a February 26, 1962 letter from Secretary Udall to Assistant Secretary Cleveland setting forth certain assumptions and a proposed program to be discussed at a meeting on March 1, 1962. This letter suggests to me that it followed a series of inter-agency discussions, but my efforts to obtain documents with respect to any such discussions were unsuccessful. Do you have any recollection of discussions among Defense, State and Interior that took place in 1961 and early 1962 that might have led to this kind of senior level meeting and definition of a new policy?

- Milner: I don't have any specific recollection, although it certainly flows from what was generally going on at the time, the desire to do more about the situation in the Trust Territory in terms of economic, political, development, education. The High Commissioner had asked the Peace Corps to send teachers out shortly after he took office. As I recall it, the Peace Corps response was that this is an American flag area, we are supposed to be in foreign areas, therefore we cannot help. The new budget request went forward in excess of the then-authorized amount. A proposal was put together to increase or to remove, I'm not sure which, in any event to raise the authorization level. The Bureau of the Budget said your authorization is \$7.5 million; that's it. The next day we turned around and got our legislation over to the Bureau of the Budget. The Committees of Congress were also very concerned about this level of funding. They had been aware that we were reaching the authorization level. The High Commissioner was also on very good terms with the Alaska Senators, Gruening, and Bartlett.
- Willens: Ruth recalls that Congress was willing during the Eisenhower years to fund the Trust Territory up to the level of the authorization but that in fact the Executive Branch never requested funds up to the \$7 or \$7.5 million ceiling. Is that your recollection?
- Milner: That is my recollection.
- Willens: George, I see from the February 26, 1962 letter that the agencies were all accepting the conclusion of the Defense Department that the national security and defense interests still argued for a policy in the Trust Territory that would ultimately protect those interests. Do you recall any initiative from the Defense Department in the early months of the Kennedy Administration that might have contributed to this reexamination of policy?
- Milner: As far as I'm aware, this has consistently been or had consistently been the policy going back as far as the Interior transfer in 1951. The Navy had always provided security clearances for people entering the place. I'm not aware of anybody ever seriously questioning this judgment. Certainly it was one of the things Interior followed and continued to follow in the 1960s.
- Willens: Do you have any recollection of Mr. Taitano, the Director of the Office who came in the early Kennedy years?
- Milner: Yes.
- Willens: Did he play any role in this reexamination of policy by the Administration?
- Milner: He undoubtedly did. In fact, I'm sure that he did. What his position was in terms of security, I really don't recall. I do know that the immediate decision to terminate the security review for U.S. people going to both Guam and the Trust Territory was initiated by the then-new Governor, Bill Daniel. Can we go off the record?
- Willens: Of course.
- Milner: He also mentions Tony Won Pat. Tony is a thoroughly decent person.
- Willens: No, I heard a good deal about the circumstances under which Daniel got appointed, and Mr. Taitano is very candid in suggesting that he was placed in the position as Director as sort of a quid pro quo for Mr. Daniel becoming Governor of Guam. There is some suggestion in the documents, George, that inter-agency efforts at the staff level that took place through the year 1961 were unsuccessful in reaching agreement among the agencies as to what ought to be done in the Trust Territory and that the lack of agreement at the staff level precipitated the kind of meetings at higher levels that are reflected in these documents. I don't have any additional information than that. Do you have any

recollection of differences between State, Interior and Defense in the very early months of the Kennedy Administration that might have required that this be escalated to the Secretarial level?

Milner: No, none that I'm aware of. As a matter of fact, I was under the impression at that time that the relationships—well, let me put it another way, not the relationships, the level of agreement was pretty high.

Willens: Well, it certainly was high after the meeting and led toward the issuance of National Security Action Memorandum 145. One of the other documents that I gave you—I'm referring to the letter from John Carver to Harlan Cleveland dated April 10, 1962 in which Carver basically makes some comments with respect to a draft declaration and memorandum that presumably were going to be submitted to the President. I don't have any of the documents or drafts of the memorandum and declaration themselves. Does this refresh your recollection as to the kind of staff work that was done before National Security Action Memorandum 145 was actually issued?

Milner: I reread this letter almost wholly in terms of getting agency support for the increased budget requests that Interior was making at that time. You had earlier asked about the dates when things were approved. The March 20, 1962 letter to Congress refers to—it's equally clear that the present limitations on annual appropriation of \$7.5 million contained in the Enabling Act does not even permit adequate funds for programs submitted by the Interior Department for fiscal 1963. So this was a late 1961 or early 1962 development of budget figures.

Willens: Yes. The letter from Assistant Secretary Carver to Cleveland does suggest a revision to reflect Interior's recommendations about the level of funding and the amount that should be requested for the proposed educational program. It refers also to a letter from the High Commissioner that Carver thought should be included along with the submission to the President. I don't have the letter from the High Commissioner. Is it your recollection that the High Commissioner and his staff in the Trust Territory played an active role in putting together an assessment of the needs and funding requirements that were adopted by Interior and submitted ultimately to the President?

Milner: Yes. The High Commissioner was concerned with the level of funding and the ability to get done that which he felt needed to be done. Del Nucker I had mentioned earlier had been reassigned to the Department. He went back to the Trust Territory to assist in the preparation of this budget review, and this kind of refinement I think was carried forward and reflected in this letter of Carver to Harlan Cleveland.

Willens: Would it have been Interior's general practice to defer to the recommendations that came in from the High Commissioner, or would Interior from time to time review those and make changes in the recommendation?

Milner: Well, I'm sure you're familiar with the budget process. The Department gets a figure which may or may not be broken down into sublevels for various activities. This gets passed on let's say to the High Commissioner. If you are seeking X amount, you should come in to justify what X might be. Interior would always reserve the right to argue with various points of the High Commissioner's submission and may or may not prevail. We would all march over to OMB, Bureau of the Budget, whatever incarnation it was in, and ultimately into the Congress with whatever was allowed. Basically, great or very substantial deference at any rate was always paid to what was recommended from the Trust Territory and American Samoa. These are the two areas where this kind of budget process was taking place.

- Willens: Is it your recollection that Mr. Nucker and his successor, Mr. Goding, generally agreed as to the increases in funding that were appropriate?
- Milner: Yes, I think so.
- Willens: :I find that interesting and somewhat surprising because of the assessment in the literature and from other interviewees that Nucker was a strong advocate of the prior Administration's policies which were radically different it seems to me from those that were adopted by the Kennedy Administration.
- Milner: Nucker was kind of a thoroughly professional bureaucrat, and I don't mean that in an invidious sense. But he knew what he would be allowed to ask for or was told what he could ask for, and he kept his requests within that level. And given what he had to work with, I think on the whole he did a very good job. But whatever his personal feelings might have been, he was not—either willing or allowed, I'm not sure which—to breach the ceiling which he was allowed or the authorization ceiling. Goding was somewhat bolder and, in terms of the Interior Congressional relationships, I think was more willing, and he was also the new man. He didn't have any baggage to take with him in terms of past policies. I really think when you come right down to it, had the previous Administration said you can ask for \$10 million, Nucker would have come in with a \$10 million budget.
- Willens: Were you aware of the issuance of National Security Action Memorandum 145 when it was issued?
- Milner: I really couldn't tell you at what point I did become aware of it. Probably soon or immediately after, despite the classification.
- Willens: The materials I've seen and the interviews have identified a few other factors that might have contributed to this reevaluation of policy. Let me just test them against your own recollection and judgment. There is some reference, for example, to President Kennedy's speech on colonialism in 1962 and a concern that the Kennedy Administration should not find itself embarrassed by being perhaps the last so-called colonial power. Do you have any recollection that this sensitivity to the anti-colonialist movement was a motivating factor?
- Milner: Frankly, no, although I think the documents may not adequately reflect the thinking of those within the Interior Department. I can speak only for the Interior Department. We were very concerned with the progress of political development. A couple of us, Ruth and I in particular, were veterans of the old Alaska/Hawaii statehood efforts, efforts to get that achieved—the various marches up the Hill—and we didn't quite make it this time but we'll come back again later on. Samoa had moved to the local Samoan governor, Pete Coleman. Samoa had just drafted a constitution. So we were aware of this and were looking forward to greater participation, self-government in the area. One of the problems I think was at what point do you pass from form to substance. In the Trust Territory there had been a chartering effort going on through primarily initially the districts and extending downward to the local level. I'm not sure it was as successful there as it was at the district level. I think you tended to elect the hereditary people rather than people who might fully function in a democratically elected body. And there had been some moves (but very tentative up to that point) at the Headquarters level, the Trust Territory level. Nucker had created the High Commissioner's Advisory Commission which initially he appointed. Goding moved very quickly to have that group elected—well then, he also ceased to serve as Chairman. He had them choose their own Chairman. In fact at the 1961 Trusteeship Council meeting, a rather interesting phenomenon as I recall it, Goding

tended to defend the previous Administration and Nucker tended to tell what the new Administration is going to do. It was almost a complete reversal of roles.

Willens: That is interesting. Is it your recollection that the initiative for upgrading the Council of Micronesia, as I think it was termed in the early 1960s, came from Goding himself, or was it stimulated from Interior?

Milner: No. I was rather surprised that he was aware of it. As I recall the thing, and this goes way back, at the 1961 Trusteeship Council meeting, questions were asked about converting it into more than an appointed body, and he said we can do it very soon. I don't recall the exact timing he said, but do it within a year or so.

Willens: Where, just to go ahead for a moment, where did the idea for the Congress of Micronesia emanate?

Milner: In two areas. One was the desire to convert the Council into something more than just something that sat around once a year to advise the Commissioner, make it more of a legislative body. There was interest within Interior for creating a legislative body, and a commitment had been made at the 1961 Trusteeship Council meeting. There was great difficulty in resolving the bicameral versus unicameral question. There were also problems with respect to who should be eligible and not eligible and what the levels of compensation might be. But sometime in 1962, I believe, a unicameral draft was sent to the Trust Territory and the Council to review.

Willens: Would that had been prepared by Ruth or people working with her?

Milner: I'm not sure who prepared it. Ruth undoubtedly as the responsible lawyer played a major role in preparing it. And it was a unicameral proposal, which in many respects makes sense for that size body. On the other hand, the district organization has both geographic and cultural bases, and as Carver said in one of these speeches to the Council before the legislative document was drafted, something had to be done to resolve the interests of the merchants of Boston and the planters of South Carolina in terms of our own system. We want your recommendations as to what would happen. The Council had looked at both the unicameral and the bicameral version and when Carver and I were out there for this meeting, and this jumps ahead to 1963, there was a kind of a combination upping the membership of the unicameral system. The Council came back with a recommendation that we want a bicameral system. And if it was going to be a unicameral system, we want equal membership from each one. And I think simply Yap was concerned that Truk would overwhelm them. And Truk was concerned that something else might happen. And I think the Marianas ultimately said, we don't want any part of it.

Willens: This is the familiar problem. We went through it with respect to the Northern Marianas where obviously a unicameral legislature would have made much more sense for the same set of reasons.

Milner: Well, other than the fact that you can get a balance of culture and geography in an upper house and an equal representation in the population in the other house, I think historically the American administration tends to pattern itself on the U.S. experience. We only have one unicameral state legislature. It was also partly because I think we tended for a variety of reasons to look on the Trust Territory as a whole, and it really wasn't until the 1960s when someone said look, it really isn't a whole. That's a figment of our imagination. It's a figment of U.N. imagination. It's a figment of Japanese/German history. We really need somehow to see to it that these people can represent themselves and work together. That's a purpose of your story.

- Willens: It is, but it's a useful and unique perspective. Ruth remembers that she and her Department colleagues also were motivated by what she characterizes as humanitarian concerns in the sense that a liberal and activist Administration might feel more impelled to address educational and medical needs in the Trust Territory. And she did not say this to be self-serving in any sense but in trying to help me understand what motivated this reexamination other than national security defense objectives, U.N. criticism and sensitivity to the anti-colonial movement. She suggested that there were some humanitarian concerns that may indeed have resulted from the kind of reports coming back to Interior and Congress from these visits.
- Milner: I think that's absolutely true.
- Willens: There's some reference to President Kennedy personally being offended by a polio epidemic that took place in the Marshalls, I believe, and I think it was 1962 but I'm not certain of that.
- Milner: I don't recall the exact dates, and it was followed by a measles epidemic. Generally speaking, and again in part because of the closed system and nobody could get in very well, it was generally regarded as an area that was immune to polio and this kind of thing. They had the local indigenous diseases, not the exotic ones brought in from the outside. The polio epidemic could be traced to one of the field trip vessels that called at Kwajelein where one of the—I think it's the daughter of one of the officials or employees on Kwajelein—came down with polio and someone traced the outbreak of polio in the Marshalls to the trek of the field trip vessel. Everybody had said you won't have polio out here. There's nobody to give you polio. Well, we had a polio epidemic and moved as quickly as possible to deal with it. Sometime in the same general period a measles vaccine was developed, and we got a letter in from the Trust Territory saying, what about this? We thought it was a good idea to give everybody measles vaccine so, among others, I trotted over to the Public Health Service and said look, we've got these 100,000 people or less, and you have the measles vaccine, how about giving everybody a shot? They said: "Oh, no, no, no, this is an unexposed population. So far as we know, they don't have measles out there. We don't know what would happen if we give these people measles vaccine. There's no immunity. It would not be a very good idea at this stage of the game." Shortly thereafter, measles broke out and it just sloshed from one side of the Territory back again, and you know who got the blame for it—the High Commissioner and the Department of the Interior.
- Willens: And did one or both of these epidemics come to the attention of the White House?
- Milner: Yes and we got the blame for it. I don't think our proposal to immunize against measles ever got to the White House. The epidemic got to the White House.
- Willens: I understand. The bad news always travels more rapidly.
- Milner: Yes.
- Willens: Could you just address briefly the role that Assistant Secretary Carver played in the formation and implementation of Trust Territory policy during his tenure at Interior.
- Milner: He was a highly interested, highly energetic person. He liked to get things done. He was very active in dealing with the Office. I had no difficulty whatsoever, although I was by no means the head of the Office, picking up the phone and talking to him. I should tell you, too, that I do have a hiatus here from the fall of 1962 until approximately June of 1963. Carver had nominated me to a mid-career fellowship at Princeton, and I was at Princeton during that period. So some of the things that happened in late 1962 and in early 1963—I just don't have first-hand information. But Carver did play a very active role at all times.

He was always accessible to us. He was always willing to listen to what we had to say and even when he disagreed with us you felt that you had been heard.

Willens: What is your assessment of the role played by Robert Mangan?

Milner: Very much the same kind of a role. He's a totally different personality.

Willens: Did he come in with Carver?

Milner: He came in with Carver, yes.

Willens: And did he leave with Carver?

Milner: No. Carver moved up to be Under Secretary, and Mangan moved up with him as Under Secretary. When Carver left and Luce came in, I really don't recall at this point what Bob did.

Willens: What was your assessment then of Taitano? He was the Director to whom you reported, but I gather he didn't stand between you and Messrs. Carver or Mangan with respect to recommendations that you wanted to have heard.

Milner: No, that's right. Except I do not want to imply in any way that Taitano was just off in the corner and ignored. He did perform as Director.

Willens: Was it not unusual to have a Guamanian in the office? He was the first local person from one of the Territories who had been given that position. Was he accepted as such in the Department?

Milner: Oh, I think so, at least as far as our Office was concerned. I can't tell you about the Department as a whole.

Willens: After the National Security Action Memorandum was issued, there was a Task Force that was created to implement the direction provided by the President in that National Security Action Memorandum. I have very limited documents with respect to the work of the Task Force. It appeared to have met for approximately half a dozen times. You can see that there's a reference to the first meeting of the Task Force which was chaired by Assistant Secretary Carver. It outlines generally what the Task Force intended to do. Do you have any recollection of participating in the work of the Task Force during the remainder of 1962 and into early 1963?

Milner: No. That was during my sabbatical at Princeton.

Willens: Did your sabbatical begin at the beginning of the academic year in September?

Milner: Yes. So I left sometime toward the end of August or early September. I don't recall the exact dates.

Willens: Do you remember attending any meeting?

Milner: I attended several of the meetings up to that time. Various assignments had been farmed out to the various participating agencies. Defense was to do some reviews of the whole security question.

Willens: I don't understand what the Task Force was really set up to do. Was it designed as a mechanism to make further recommendations for program changes or funding increases?

Milner: Yes. That's my understanding of it. Bolstered in part by one of my last assignments before departing for academe, which was to draft a report of the Task Force—draft the report before the Task Force had finished its work, which I did. In several places at the end

of the discussion, I ended up with, for example, the Defense Department believes the security situation should be maintained, question, question, question. I assumed that was what was going to happen. The Task Force agrees question, question, disagrees question, question. Somebody else had to fill in the blanks, because the work was still ongoing at that time.

Willens: Do you remember any differences among the key agencies that developed in the early months of the Task Force work that you were familiar with?

Milner: Not really. The differences I would say would be essentially more degree or timing than basic disagreements.

Willens: At this time, there was as a working premise the desire for an early plebiscite in the Trust Territory that would bring about the expression of desire by the Micronesians to have some permanent affiliation with the United States. National Security Action Memorandum 145, as I recall, did not fix any precise date for that plebiscite, but there were documents being generated at about that time or shortly thereafter by the State Department suggesting a date as early as 1967 or 1968. Do you have any recollection that the Interior Department agreed or disagreed with the idea that there could be a plebiscite as early as 1967 or 1968?

Milner: I couldn't tell you what Carver felt. Certainly my own view was the earlier such a vote could take place, the better, provided (and this goes back to my own Alaska experience) we were fairly certain that whatever was decided upon or what the Micronesians thought they were voting for was in fact achievable. And this meant we had somehow to get the Congress to agree to what would take place. The history of both Alaska and Hawaii statehood goes back to the beginning of the current century. There were repeated efforts to march up to the Hill with a statehood proposal, and we got rebuffed. Next year, they marched up again with increasing regularity as time went on until statehood was finally to take place. I had great doubts that Micronesians would understand this process, that if they said "Okay, we want to join the United States," as whatever the status might be, and everybody goes up to the Hill, and Committees vote against it or simply took no action, the level of disillusionment would be pretty high. They wouldn't understand this is an ongoing process of going back and forth. The other problem was the attitude that we felt the key Congressional Committees would have—both the Senate and House—with respect to what we usually referred to as leap-frogging the Trust Territory above that of the Virgin Islands and Guam. In both of those cases, we fairly early on (I can't place the precise date) started moving towards an elected governor and a delegate to the Congress for those two areas. We were very confident that the Committees would not go along with doing better than that or as well as that immediately for the Trust Territory.

Willens: Those are some of the issues that the documents reveal were very much debated between Interior and State beginning in 1963 and for several years.

Milner: Right.

Willens: I think I may have given you a copy of National Security Action Memorandum No. 229, dated March 21, 1963, in which the President essentially asks for a progress report with respect to the implementation of National Security Action Memorandum No. 145. He asks for a report that covers seven different points that are set forth in that document. This was issued at a time when you clearly were away on academic leave. Do you have any recollection of understanding why it was that the Task Force was being asked to produce a report in early 1963?

- Milner: I'd always wondered what had happened to my draft. And I never saw anything that indicated such a report.
- Willens: Did you ever see a report issued by the Task Force after you returned to the Department?
- Milner: If I did, I certainly don't recall it. I would think I would.
- Willens: The only document I have that's suggestive of what the report might have been is the letter dated March 27, 1963 from Harlan Cleveland to John Carver. It is described as the State's Department's initial contribution to the status report called for by the President. It's a substantial letter that discusses the international pressures and makes some specific recommendations as to how best to implement National Security Action Memorandum No. 145. Had you ever seen this letter before?
- Milner: I don't recall it until I saw it here.
- Willens: Is there anything in that document that came as a surprise to you or refreshes your recollection as to any different position that Interior was taking at or about this time?
- Milner: No. I think not.
- Willens: One emphasis that comes through in this document and some of the earlier ones is that the Kennedy Administration clearly identified as the first priority the area of educational facilities and additional teachers.
- Milner: Which Interior had already to some extent identified.
- Willens: One of the interesting criticism in the literature is that the U.S. policy in the 1960s with respect to the education of the Micronesians was wholly misguided and ineffective. The argument runs that it was misguided in the sense that Micronesians were taught English rather than their vernacular and that American teachers rather than Micronesian teachers were being called upon to do the teaching. There's some suggestion that under Mr. Nucker's administration there had been an education director named Dr. Gibson who was so offended by this radical change in policy that he ultimately resigned. Do you have any recollection of a contemporaneous dispute as to the wisdom of changing the educational program in those important respects?
- Milner: From time to time somebody would raise the question of why do you teach them English, and my response was always, the Japanese taught them Japanese. They don't speak the same language. They've got to learn some language, and as long as the U.S. is there it might as well be English.
- Willens: That seems basically irrefutable, but there are those who say you would train them in English and educate them on an American model, and there were no jobs available for them once they graduated from high school.
- Milner: That's true, but in the 1961 visit to the Trusteeship Council, the High Commissioner brought a Micronesian along with him. The Micronesian had to function in Washington. We went up to New York, and he functioned in New York. We went to a couple of fairly formal sort of lunches and what not that one delegation or another had put on. He very quickly knew which fork to use and committed no social gaffs. And as more Micronesians began to deal with the outside world, they had to know more about the outside world. This was one of the dilemmas we had. If you taught them to deal with the outside world, you were accused of shirking your duty to teach them how to deal with their own local world. If you concentrate on the local world, how do you expect them to survive in the world at large? It was a classic case of being damned if you do and damned if you don't. There's much to be said on each side. This relates to a basic problem of implementation

of policy in the United States going back even to NSAM 145. Things were classified. How do you get Joe Blow, who is serving as a district administrator out there and who may or may not have a security clearance other than just the lowest level (not a Commie), to know that the policy is to make the Trust Territory a part of the United States? How do you get this across to the Micronesians without in effect saying something like that? One thing that we tried to do, a number of us, was to look good by being good, not by pulling the wool over somebody's eyes. But if we put in a good education system, then they would be more kindly disposed toward us, we thought, hoped, than if we continued the education system that was not very good. The other problem was where do you put the schools, how do you staff them, where do you get the people to teach them. And one way was to try to teach Micronesians to teach in English. And this is a slow process. The other is to import somebody from the elementary school down here who for some reason wants to get a job elsewhere and you pay him what he earns here; otherwise, he doesn't go. I realize that the Peace Corps had a different philosophy, but that's another story in itself. Basically, the policy that evolved was to provide education services, health services, comparable to a United States standard. And of course, you have a wide range of 50 states and what not. The other question was academic training vs. industrial education. What's the proper balance there? Unfortunately, industrial education had a sort of bad odor in the United States during the 1960s. Vocational training and those who went to vocational schools were those who were too dumb to do anything else and got short shrift.

Willens: There was at least one vocational education institution in the Trust Territory that got generally good reviews by outside commentators at the time.

Milner: Yes, this was the Catholic School on Ponape.

Willens: On Ponape. Did you personally have the opportunity to sort of test the views of Micronesians in the early 1960s as to their desire to learn English rather than the vernacular or Japanese?

Milner: Yes. I think the younger people on the whole saw their future as identified with the United States and were interested in being able to communicate with the Americans who were there—like it or not. I think, on the whole, most of them came to like it. Certainly those that I came in contact with to any great degree voiced no objection to me as to either learning English or what was generally being taught. I think they felt that what they needed in terms of their local indigenous group they would get at home or in local institutions. But they really needed to have the tools to cope with the outside world. I suspect that you experienced in your work with the Marianas people that, once they got the tools, they were pretty handy at using them.

Willens: Yes. During 1962, there were a series of executive steps taken with respect to the organization and accessibility of the Trust Territory. One was the transfer of authority back to Interior from Navy with respect to Saipan and Tinian. Do you recall that being an important issue in the early years?

Milner: No. The total Trust Territory was originally transferred to Interior. The Admiral involved at the time in the Pacific did not like Interior and did not want Interior to take it over and managed to get the Marianas returned to Navy jurisdiction.

Willens: Is it your recollection that that might have had something to do with the desire to create the training facility on Saipan?

Milner: I have no idea what motivated it. My impression at the time was that he disliked several of the people involved in Interior. The then head of the so-called Pacific Division could

be a very abrasive character. He did not like the Navy Administration. The Navy regarded itself as being defeated in losing the Trust Territory and at the same time losing American Samoa. They were not happy about losing jurisdiction of Guam as well.

Willens: So how did you feel at Interior when the Marianas came back under Interior's jurisdiction?

Milner: Along with it, Interior inherited the Navy Technical Training Facility. The facilities on Guam were a collection of temporary quonsets at the end of the runway. Meetings at the High Commissioner's office had to come to a halt when one of the jets took off, because it was right overhead. There was nothing to do but to move to Saipan to take advantage of these facilities.

Willens: That was one of the steps, relocation of the capital, recommended by the U.N. visiting mission in 1961.

Milner: Actually, President Truman had designated Truk as a future capital, and the visiting mission in 1961 recommended moving it to the Territory. I think the previous one had probably done the same thing, although that was back in my Alaska days. Guam made sense in terms of being the transportation hub. You could get to the rest of the place from Guam. You couldn't from some of the other places. My own personal view was that sure, we've got to take advantage of Saipan, but it's a move in the wrong direction and we're going to be criticized. And sure enough the next Trusteeship Council characterized it as a move in the wrong direction.

Willens: The other step that was taken was to remove some of the security restraints that you recalled early with respect to Governor Daniel. Was there any Department of Defense opposition to that step that you can recall?

Milner: I don't really recall. I think at that point it was regarded as being something that was fairly inevitable. The lifting was not complete in terms of the foreign investment but solely in terms of American entry.

Willens: And it did not pertain to American investment either, as I recall.

Milner: No, no, it's just American entry. Right.

Willens: You referred earlier to one of the documents that I provided you which was a letter to Representative Aspinall on the subject of funding. During the early years of the Administration, was Congressman Aspinall, so far as you know, fully apprised of the new Administration policy with respect to the Trust Territory?

Milner: Yes. He I think was fairly aware of what was going on. In fact, I'm very sure he was. Mr. Goding knew personally a number of members of the Committee. At one point I think he had had a staff position with the Senate Committee. He had known them for years. No, I think he was very much aware of the changes in policy, and I think he had a rather conservative outlook in terms of what is required and what really should be done, but I don't think he really opposed the changes that took place, particularly in terms of the legislative authority. The Committees did increase the funding authorization. In fact, I think the House Committee was somewhat more liberal than the Senate Committee in upping the initial authorization.

Willens: Well, Congressman Aspinall's name comes up in the documents on frequent occasions, and there are obviously conflicting views as to the role that he played during the 1960s with respect to the Trust Territory. What is your overall assessment?

- Milner: Aspinall was a very hard-working, very sincere and basically fairly conservative Chairman. I'm told that whenever a newly elected member of the House applied to become a member of the Committee, he asked them to write a little dissertation as to why they wanted to be on that Committee. It may not be true, but that's what I'd always understood, and it fits his character. He had a very strong view of what was right and what was wrong. He was consistently one of the better friends of the Territories. If you could make your case to Aspinall, you had the House, but you had to make your case. And I'm not sure that during the 1950s, for example, he was convinced that more really needed to be done until you get to the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s. And I think this is generally true of the senior members in the Committee—Larry O'Brien, for example, John Saylor. The Senate Committee, particularly Scoop Jackson, I think was also much the same kind of stripe. I give Aspinall very high marks. Aspinall was willing to do some things that I think he wasn't given credit for being willing to do. I know the State Department regarded Interior as being the wrong Committee to deal with. What they needed to do was to deal with the Foreign Affairs Committee. They may or may not have been right.
- Willens: We'll come to that. No one from State that I've talked to thought they could evade involvement by the Interior Committees. They were hopeful that if other Committees were involved and the Executive Branch were united, perhaps there might be an outcome that would meet their criteria.
- Milner: They could outnumber them.
- Willens: Now, that may have been also an optimistic assessment.
- Milner: But when you get to the end of the tape here I need to tell you a little story that is unprovable, undocumentable and happened to three people. Two of them are now dead.
- Willens: One suggestion that's sort of tucked into the Cleveland letter of March 27, 1963 to John Carver is on page 6. It suggests that the State Department believed that the Executive Branch ought to fix responsibility and authority for dealing with this problem in a single individual. Subsequently, as you saw from the documents, the State Department recommended repeatedly that there be a White House Assistant designated to help coordinate the Executive Branch agencies with respect to the Trust Territory. Do you recall any discussion early on with respect to this State Department recommendation?
- Milner: Only sort of incidentally from time to time. It's a proposition that frequently came up in terms of where's the proper location for an Office of Territories. Should it be in a department such as Interior? Should it be in the Office of Management and Budget? Should it be sort of an independent agency a la Appalachian Regional Commission? Should it be sitting at the right hand of the President in the Oval Office, which would probably last five minutes. The general experience that I think a number of us had with this kind of high-level presidential bit is something of a flash in the pan. Mr. Bennett's drug program is perhaps a more recent case of the czar who's going to do great things and six months later, where is he and what is he and did anything really happen? I think most of us really discounted it as being an effective way of getting the job done.
- Willens: Was it viewed by you as a way supported by State in order to reduce Interior's influence and jurisdiction over the matter?
- Milner: Not until later. There is of course the conspiracy theory, which you've probably heard about. My history with the State Department up to about 1964, 1965, somewhere in there, was that we get along very well.
- Willens: Who were you working with primarily?

- Milner: Frances McReynolds for one, Professor Robert Robbins for another. These people tended to disappear.
- Willens: How about the career people like Elizabeth Brown and Gleysteen?
- Milner: They tended to be the people who would come in for a one or two-year assignment and wanted to do great things on their watch, and then move on.
- Willens: Did you have any personal experience with Harlan Cleveland?
- Milner: Only very fleeting. I found him a very first-class sort of person.
- Willens: But so far as you recall, up to 1964 or thereabouts, you recall these discussions for the most part being all very professional and uncontroversial.
- Milner: Yes. There were some very legitimate differences of approach. Interior felt that the Interior Committees could go so far but no further. We also felt that people in the Trust Territory needed more experience in political development before you would fasten on them the trappings of a democratic government and at the same time recognized the increasing U.N. type criticism. I think the State Department was paying more attention to international criticism than the substantive developments and concern with the Congressional Committees.
- Willens: One of the next events of significance was the appointment of the Solomon Commission. There is a National Security Action Memorandum No. 243 dated May 9, 1963 that designated Mr. Solomon as a consultant and charged him with this Mission. Do you have any recollection where the idea for such a Mission came from?
- Milner: No. Again, I was at Princeton during this period. I really have no idea where it came from.
- Willens: I believe you were back on duty by the time they had the Report, and I think I have provided you with some notes of a briefing session that took place on October 22, 1963.
- Milner: Yes.
- Willens: And it indicates that you, among others from Interior, were present at the meeting. What was your personal reaction to the Solomon Commission's Report and its recommendations?
- Milner: I think on the whole it was a very well done kind of report. There were some things I thought would be better left undone. The appointment of political officers who would sit parallel to the District Administrator, who rightly or wrongly corresponded to the Governor of a state in this federal system that was being erected, and would be able to second guess the Governor and the like, it seemed to be something that was going to cause all kinds of real problems, particularly if we moved towards naming Micronesians as District Administrators. This was something that was bound to happen. I'm not quite sure when Dwight Heine was first appointed as District Administrator, but it was sometime close at hand. That's what I thought was sure madness.
- Willens: What did you think about the recommendation of a plebiscite by 1967 or 1968 that would offer the measure of self-government that Solomon suggested would be acceptable to the Micronesians? Did you think that was a feasible objective?
- Milner: I'd kind of like to look at the details of what they recommended on the plebiscite.
- Willens: The summary of course is all I have with respect to the political recommendations, and on page 18 of the summary Solomon acknowledges that the Micronesians before voting in

a plebiscite would want to know what the organization of the Territorial government was going to be, and he suggests at the bottom of page 18 that there be an elected Micronesian legislature and a Micronesian chief executive nominated by and having the confidence of the legislature. But he proposed that there be an appointed High Commissioner who would retain substantial review authority over the work of the Micronesian legislature and the chief executive. I asked Tony Solomon last week whether he thought that this measure of self-government would have been embraced by the Micronesians, and he was very affirmative and confident that they would have accepted this measure of self-government. On the other hand, it seems to fall far short of what the State Department was urging at the time in the sense that there was very substantial control by a U.S. official, there was no grant of U.S. citizenship or nationality, and there was not even an organic act contemplated until some years after the plebiscite. But the State Department officials, with the benefit of hindsight, think this version might have been acceptable.

Milner: I don't know. I have difficulty, and had at the time difficulty, understanding how it would work on a practical day-to-day basis. To leap-frog very far, when I returned to Interior from my tour of duty in the Commerce Department, the negotiating people (and I can't identify which ones were involved—you may have been involved) had put together a piece of paper that had somehow mixed the constitutionally organized Marshalls, Federated States, Palau, in with the High Commissioner and it seemed to me in retrospect that that proposal matched fairly close to this one.

Willens: Let me hasten to assure you, by 1977 I was not involved any more except in peripheral measure with respect to implementing the Covenant and getting the first constitutional election.

Milner: This seemed to me to be an incredibly complex kind of thing with the High Commissioner's hands in various other peoples pockets. How would this thing really function? We ended up ultimately with a Secretarial Order that simply provided these constitutional governments would come into being. They would function between themselves. The High Commissioner's authority was very narrowly defined. He would have certain review of laws. He could suspend or declare null and void an act of the Marshalls, for example, if it contradicts certain things, laws of the United States applicable to the Trust Territory, the Trusteeship Agreement, this kind of thing. This provision was regarded by some people in State as being excessively narrow. Shouldn't even have that kind of authority.

Willens: That was in 1977 or later.

Milner: Yes. This was a later bit. But what I was trying to do was carve out which was a legitimate U.S. role at this point and leave the Micronesians as free as possible. It seems to me that this would have been the kind of intermixing thing—here on the next page—the High Commissioner could withhold all or any part of funds going to the government. He could exercise all legislative and executive powers when the security of the U.S. was involved. He could veto all laws and confirm the chief executives, you know the Micronesians, appointments of key department directors. He could dismiss the chief executives off the legislature. This is not really self-government. Not exactly the democratic sort of thing we thought we were looking towards at that time.

Willens: Do you have any recollection of the briefing session you attended where Solomon and some members of his Mission may have summarized their report and responded to questions?

- Milner: Only as outlined here in the report.
- Willens: Well, preceding that meeting there must have been some internal discussions with—the Director of the Office was still Taitano I guess at the time?
- Milner: Yes.
- Willens: And Carver and Mangan were still there. Was there any Interior Department position that was supportive of the Report and was going to recommend its implementation to the President?
- Milner: I think basically we in Interior would support portions of it. Portions of it not. There may have been differences between the High Commissioner on the one hand and the Department on the other as to which should not be or which should be. But I recall them as being fairly minor. In any event, shortly thereafter, Carver and I and ultimately Marty Mangan, who had joined at that point the Office of Territories, went out to Saipan to work on at least some of the political administrative recommendations, a number of which we approved.
- Willens: Was that trip truncated because of the assassination of President Kennedy which required your return?
- Milner: No. My trip was truncated because my mother died. Carver went out first, and I joined him out there about a week or so later, I don't recall the exact dates. He and I attended the opening of the Council of Micronesia session, and the main topic of business there was what do you want in the way of a legislative body? What are your recommendations?
- Willens: Is it your recollection that Interior with some caveats was inclined to support the political recommendations of the Solomon Commission?
- Milner: Yes.
- Willens: And was Interior generally prepared to work toward an early plebiscite if that could be accomplished?
- Milner: Yes.
- Willens: And was one of the immediate focal points of your work to begin and move toward a Congress of Micronesia as soon as possible?
- Milner: Yes.
- Willens: But you did have some reservations that you've referred to as to whether this was really a level of self-government that the Micronesians might find satisfactory.
- Milner: Right.
- Willens: Do you recall any discussion on that precise point with Solomon or anyone else from the Mission?
- Milner: No.
- Willens: The Solomon Report was fairly critical of the Trust Territory Administration and High Commissioner Goding was, as you can see from the documents, understandably somewhat defensive and thought it was perhaps more critical than it needed to be. Solomon thinks that his recommendations to contract out a whole series of responsibilities including education was one of the more creative and innovative aspects of the Report. Did you and others at Interior think that the use of private contractors was a viable mechanism for addressing some of these needs?

- Milner: In some cases, yes. In other cases, no. I don't recall specifically a contracting out of education except in certain areas. We were very interested in working with Hawaii in developing the higher education facilities. We ended up with a contract with Robert R. Nathan Associates to work on economic planning. After it was all said and done, I'm not sure we got as far down the road as we had expected when we entered into the contract, but that's one of the problems in dealing with outside contractors in any area like this. One of the problems with contracting education is if you are interested in getting local control and local interest in the school system, then you have to deal with the locals and you have to deal with people the locals can react with, and if you hire the XYZ Corporation to come in and run your nice school, do you really achieve what you're after?
- Willens: Did you view the Solomon Commission Report as a program that would permit Interior to obtain increased funding and increased staff to perform some of the tasks that were set forth in the Report?
- Milner: I would say on the whole, yes.
- Willens: One of the more controversial views of Mr. Solomon, of course, was that it was better to use outside contractors than it was to support a substantial enlargement of either the Trust Territory staff or Interior's own payroll. That may have been his view as an outsider, and it may not be one that you necessarily share.
- Milner: Well, you do have a dilemma, and one of the other recommendations is a rotation of people who have been out there for too long. I was fully convinced that a number of people had been out there too long, and we did try very hard to get people reassigned from there back to Washington and what have you. We had some successes. On the other hand, if you are one of the hiring partners at your law firm here and you have some guy who spent the last 15 years in Timbuktu somewhere, perhaps being a Minister or Deputy Minister of Justice, are you sure you really want to hire him back in here to do the kind of work that you're doing? And this was one of the problems we had—getting other agencies, even in Interior, to take people from the Trust Territory. They also had a number of people in the Trust Territory who simply didn't want to come back for this kind of appointment. It's a nice, pleasant life.
- Willens: Well, there also seems to have been at that point a number of people in the Trust Territory who had served at Interior with respect to other Territories for a period of ten, 20 or more years, and they were reaching the point at which I suppose retirement might have been attractive.
- Milner: True.
- Willens: Do you recall any differences among the agencies—State, Interior and Defense—regarding the Solomon Commission Report?
- Milner: No, not really. Our problems mainly were concerned with releasing the second or third volumes and how you should really cope with the classified first one.
- Willens: Was it only the first volume that was classified?
- Milner: Ultimately it was only the first one, and think initially it was only the first one that was classified. I really can't recall.
- Willens: Do you understand why it was classified and by whom?
- Milner: I presume it was classified by State, the White House. It was part of the dilemma of [NSAM]145. How do you get out to the public that yes, we're going to glom onto this

area and we're going to do everything we can to glom onto it, and everything we're doing is designed to achieve this result, at the same time telling the U.N. and the public and the Micronesians that no, we're not doing this at all. It's difficult to cope with on a day-to-day administrative governing sort of a situation.

Willens: And there were briefing sessions held with the 1964 visiting mission when the topic was raised as to what U.S. policy was with respect to the Trust Territory, and it had been agreed in advance that the visiting mission could not be told exactly what U.S. policy was because of the classification.

Milner: Yes. Exactly.

Willens: Can you give me your judgment as to what impact, if any, the Solomon Report had on Trust Territory policy.

Milner: In terms of the economic development, education, so on and so forth, I think due respect was given to its recommendations. The problems of the political volume—I think we've sort of been discussing—there's a real problem as to what to do. I think Interior basically continued its course of adding more Micronesians to the payroll in terms of promotions, not in terms of economic development. We moved ahead as rapidly as we could with respect to the legislative authority. And we continued to worry about how do you transform it into something that would get us out from under the Trusteeship Agreement.

Willens: One of the authors who has written on this subject cited John Carver as saying that really the Solomon Commission Report added nothing to what they had been advised before they took off for their Mission but that it was valuable because it was an independent, non-governmental entity speaking to these issues. Does that strike you as something as consistent with your own view, or would you give the Report somewhat more credit than that suggests?

Milner: No, it did tend to pull things together. I might give it a little bit more credit than John did. But one of the chief virtues I discovered in my 30+ years with bureaucratic life is that it sometimes helps to have an outsider put what you have told him inside a nice cover and hand it to you. It becomes more saleable in that form.

Willens: There's some suggestion in the documents that the State Department at least thought that the assassination of President Kennedy had an impact on policy with respect to the Trust Territory at Interior. The suggestion is that the sense of urgency no longer existed once President Kennedy was assassinated and Interior was free to ignore recommendations that had been previously made.

Milner: I think that's State Department's view. It's certainly not my experience at Interior. No. We kept, at least in my experience, being more and more concerned about somehow terminating this thing, somehow achieving the union with the United States and doing it as early as possible but consistent with having political institutions that were in truth functional. At the same time, we could look across the Atlantic to Africa where the Belgian Congo and what not were all coming into existence. I know Carver in one of his memos referred to the Belgians being able to walk away from the Belgian Congo. We didn't want to walk away from the Trust Territory. At the same time, we didn't want to see develop the kind of autocratic ruler who would last for four, five, six, maybe ten years at the maximum and then be overthrown by another dictator—the sort of pattern that had been developing in other areas.

Willens: With the change in administrations came certain personnel changes at Interior. Do

you recall the circumstances under which Mr. Taitano left to become Deputy High Commissioner of the Trust Territory?

Milner: No, not specifically. I heard various versions, but I don't know that any of them are particularly true.

Willens: Were you aware that Ruth Van Cleve was being considered as his successor? She is the first to admit that her appointment may have been attributable in part to the fact that there was a Presidential desire to have more women in positions of responsibilities. Do you have any recollection of discussion at the time as to who should succeed Taitano?

Milner: No.

Willens: After the 1964 visiting mission from the U.N. did its fact-finding, it submitted the customary report. There were some issues in that report that I would just like to put before you and ask for your reaction. The visiting mission commented about the separatist movement in the Marianas, and they strongly urged the United States as Administering Authority to squelch that impulse through any means feasible. The United States policy seemed to be (as you suggested earlier) to try to defuse those separatist impulses and to continue to think of the Trust Territory as an entity. Did there come a time when you began to question the U.S. commitment to this single entity concept?

Milner: Yes, and I couldn't time the reaction specifically to the Marianas effort. I'd always thought it was a very difficult job in creating a unity out of this, partly because of the differing languages and differing cultures and partly because of the animosities that had existed historically. I guess if you look at the Balkans today, they do have some validity.

Willens: That's true.

Milner: Frankly, I really felt that the frequently proposed union of the Marianas and Guam would be a very good idea and the sooner the better. I think the Guamanians at that time felt that they didn't want to take on the burden of the poor neighbors to the north. Now it may be that the neighbors to the north don't want to take on the poor ones to the south.

Willens: Well, their views on that matter did change over time, to be sure. One of the other issues discussed in the visiting mission's report of 1964 was addressed to the increased level of funding, which on the whole the mission found commendable. But they raised this interesting issue as to whether the United States was embarked on a policy that was making Micronesia economically dependent on the United States and to that extent prejudging the outcome of any ultimate plebiscite. Do you recall that kind of a policy question being raised by the U.N. mission?

Milner: Well, yes. There was that kind of a question. But as far as I was concerned, if we wanted it to become American, that's the thing to do, and we had it within our control to (we the U.S. government, not we Interior) to change the tariff regulations so as to permit the goods to come in. We had it within our legal authority to permit American investment if we could find any. We could come in without contravening the Trusteeship Agreement. The more the U.S. association would seem to us, the more likely they would be to identify with the U.S.

Willens: Why was it that the tariff restrictions were not removed with respect to the Trust Territory during this period of time? It was proposed in one of the legislative proposals that is referred to in one of the documents. Ruth recalls an anecdote about certain Soviet Union watches finding their way to the Virgin Islands (I think) and then coming into the United States under what was then Headnote 3A. This inflamed Congressional sentiment and

they therefore didn't want to see the Trust Territory provided with that opportunity. Do you have any recollection along these lines?

Milner: Yes. Why it failed in the Congress, I don't know, but I've heard stories like that. The Congress is currently concerned I think about the Chinese manufacturers of clothing made in the Marianas and coming in as product of the Marianas.

Willens: Exactly. The U.N. visiting mission also addressed the proposed Executive Order with respect to the Congress of Micronesia that by this time I guess had gone a substantial way toward completion. It was promulgated sometime as I recall in late 1964. I have provided you with a letter written to Assistant Secretary Carver from Harlan Cleveland dated September 1964 where the State Department makes certain recommendations. Do you recall participating in the discussions within Interior and with State as to the substance of this Executive Order?

Milner: Yes. I returned from the Trust Territory in November of 1963 with a draft legislative order.

Willens: Just to put it in time, was that when it still reflected a unicameral house or by this time had it been altered to reflect the bicameral preference?

Milner: What I drafted up was a bicameral draft, which was the recommendation of the Council of Micronesia. It was their first choice. Their second choice was that, if it had to be unicameral, there would be an equal number from each of the six districts.

Willens: And what happened to that draft over the next ten or 12 months?

Milner: It was bounced back and forth within Interior. Bicameral vs. unicameral was one of the issues. The question of should the legislators be full-time with an annual salary? Should they be paid a per diem for days in session with travel time and what not added to it for a special session? Should employees of the Trust Territory government willy nilly be eligible or should it be limited to certain levels of employees? I tried to find a copy of the actual order as it finally came out and couldn't find it amongst my memoirs. I'd tossed my memoirs. I decided that I'm not going to do what you're doing.

Willens: Did you toss them or did you put them in some convenient law library?

Milner: I do have two pieces of paper, memos going back and forth. I don't recall the details of the outcome. It became a bicameral legislature. As I recall, the senior Micronesians, department heads and the like, if not initially ineligible to serve within the Congress, by the second or third election would be ineligible to serve. And as I recall it, we ended up paying them a per diem payment, so much per day. I don't recall what figure—it was \$16 or something like that.

Willens: What do you remember being the principal issues of difference with the State Department?

Milner: The principal issues with the State Department were the role of the High Commissioner in proposing and vetoing legislation and the proposal to declare urgent legislation or emergency legislation.

Willens: They wanted to . . .

Milner: They wanted to eliminate those provisions.

Willens: And Interior wanted to preserve to the High Commissioner those powers?

Milner: Yes. Simply on the grounds that these people have never had at that level experience of

working together in a legislative body. They had not had experience in legislating on a territorial basis. And that there were some things that perhaps really had to go into effect that would be the urgent provisions. The emergency might exist simply because it was sometimes difficult to get people together from wherever they lived in the Trust Territory. Conceivably something might develop that would require the issuance of legislation. The original proposal, as I remember it, and I may be hallucinating now, provided that the next Congress either had to confirm or repeal or modify the emergency legislation. I'm a little vague on that point.

- Willens: One of the other issues that I think is addressed in the State Department letter and in the U.N. visiting mission report is the budget and the extent to which the Micronesians would have any say whatsoever in the disposition of funds made available by the U.S. Congress. What is your recollection of that particular debate?
- Milner: This was more of the debate with the other departments, particularly State, than it was within Interior. That provision was very similar to what they had in the Samoa Constitution.
- Willens: The one proposed in the Secretarial Order?
- Milner: Yes. The Samoa Constitution had worked fairly well, and what I anticipated (and as a matter of fact it didn't quite work out this way), would be the High Commissioner would lay before the legislature at least the guidelines that he'd gotten from Interior. For example, he would lay before them his recommendation we're going to put X amount in education, Y amount in health, and we're going to do something else in terms of communication or what have you up and down the line. Then the Congress would carefully make their recommendations. I would have expected the High Commissioner and his staff to adopt those recommendations that they felt were sound and not those that they felt were not sound. And this had to go back to the Interior Department, which had to go through its own machinations in getting the thing consolidated into whatever it was that the Secretary sent over to OMB. State felt that this was insufficient. There was one provision in there that the Congress could not appropriate unless it had the revenues to finance that which is directly appropriated. In other words, they were limited to Trust Territory money. They felt that they should go further than that. They should be able to appropriate the money that the Congress provided, the federal grant. Part of the trouble was that the federal grant was justified almost down to how many pencils do we have in the school on a particular island. It was an incredibly detailed budget justification to the U.S. Congress. We couldn't see a practical way of having the Congress say we want six pencils, the feds saying you're only going to get three pencils, and how do you resolve that?
- Willens: Were you aware of any informal consultations with Congressman Aspinall as to what measure of authority he thought was appropriate for the newly created Congress of Micronesia?
- Milner: Yes. Discussions took place. I can't recall the details of any of them. But it didn't come as an absolute surprise to him.
- Willens: One thing Ruth recalls with some vividness is the sense that Congressman Aspinall never liked to be surprised and that it was always well advised for Interior and presumably other agencies to let him know what was coming down the line.
- Milner: That's right. And he was apprised of what happened, and I wouldn't be surprised if he saw a copy of the draft before the Secretary finally signed it.

- Willens: Certainly it seems to me that he would have found most objectionable any suggestion that the Micronesians rather than his Committee would determine how the funds were to be spent.
- Milner: Right. Well, his Committee didn't go in the details. You know, there's another story to some extent on that one. No, I'm sure that, although I didn't do it, Aspinall had a copy of that draft before the Secretary signed it. The Secretary may have said yes, I will sign it. But he was not surprised by it. As I say, it was very similar in many respects to the provisions of the Samoa Constitution.
- Willens: Were you generally pleased with the provisions of the Secretarial Order as it emerged from what seemed to be year-long deliberations?
- Milner: Yes. I didn't win everything I proposed, but yes, sure, it was a very workable sort of thing. And despite Mr. Cleveland's comment that they didn't have a chance to get their hands into the something—honeypot was the term that we frequently used.
- Willens: Were any concessions made to the State Department with respect to its concerns as summarized by Cleveland?
- Milner: No, not that I remember.
- Willens: It's been suggested to me that this letter was really probably a letter drafted by McHenry for the record just to summarize all the battles that he had waged unsuccessfully with Interior, among other reasons because the letter is dated just a few weeks before the Secretarial Order was in fact issued and it suggests to me that there really wasn't time for Interior at this late point to accept some of the more substantial modifications that are contained in this letter.
- Milner: Well, a year or so after the Order went into effect and the Congress had had at least one if not two sessions, one of the members said to me (on a visit to Washington), "You know, we haven't begun to exercise the authorities that you gave us."
- Willens: In what respect was he right?
- Milner: That they hadn't.
- Willens: Is there an example that comes to mind?
- Milner: No, not a specific example. But it was a very tentative approach. Part of the budgetary problem came up because of a change in personnel. The Trust Territory acquired as a budget officer, finance officer, I can't recall the exact title, a fellow named Joe Screen, who had been with Rex Lee in American Samoa. Screen was a very strong personality, and he liked to throw his weight around. Very competent kind of a guy, but he wanted to do things his way. Rex Lee kept him under his thumb. Whenever Joe arrived at Interior to prepare for hearings, usually several days before Rex arrived, my office was down at the end of one of those corridors, and you could hear Joe as soon as the elevator opened. My usual term for him was Joe Scream. But at an appropriation hearing, a budget hearing, when Rex Lee was there, Joe didn't say anything until Rex specifically referred a question to him. When he got to the Trust Territory, Bill Norwood was a much quieter, much easier going, I guess mellow would be the term to use, sort of individual, and Joe really tended to take over. Norwood did not keep him under his thumb the way Rex Lee did. And Joe regarded the entire budget process as exclusively his. He tended to try to freeze out the Micronesians. The interplay that I had hoped to see simply did not really take place, which actually represented a certain step backward. I was flabbergasted on this war damage survey of 1961 to go to the various districts and have the District Administrator

tell them well, now that we have an appropriation, we have to figure out where the money is going to go. What had been going on in the year or year and a half leading up to that appropriation? They had apparently not been part of it. It was almost exclusively a headquarters operation and, with Del Nucker's administrative budgetary accounting skills (he could glance at a piece of paper like that and tell you what the sum total was, absolutely uncanny) he could manage it. But with the vastly increased appropriations and Will Goding's own background in Interior and the whole budget process, he shifted back toward more of a local participation in putting the budget together. But Joe then tried to pull the Micronesians somewhat out of the picture, which brings on a couple of stories. OMB sessions were of course all classified. By much pulling of teeth we managed to get them to agree to allow a delegation from the Congress of Micronesia to come in and talk to OMB. So they did sit in on part of it and we made a little spiel to the Office of Management Budget. The appropriations hearings in the House were always closed sessions. They were not open to the public. We were very nervous as to what was going to happen, and we again had told the staff that this Congress of Micronesia people were here, and they had a statement that they wanted to make to the Committee, would this be possible. The Subcommittee Chairman was a wonderful lady, so we all sat down in the meeting room, and she heard from the Micronesians. One of them started to get up to go, and she motioned, sit down, and we had an open hearing. The House Appropriations Committee had the High Commissioner, Department of the Interior and the Congress of Micronesia sitting side by side discussing various points, need for this, priority for that. It was a rather interesting session.

Willens: Was that the only one of its kind?

Milner: No. From then on, it became a regular feature of the appropriations hearings. This was unprecedented, in our experience at any rate. And it shows a certain adaptability of the U.S. Congress to what they regarded as a reasonable approach and they regarded the participation of the Micronesians at this level and at this time as entirely appropriate.

Willens: Were there occasions that you can recall where the Micronesian representatives in fact expressed disagreement with the High Commissioner's recommendations?

Milner: Yes, particularly by the time you got into the 1970s. By that time . . .

Willens: You mean when you came back to the Department?

Milner: When I came back.

Willens: Wasn't there a natural disinclination in the 1960s?

Milner: In the 1960s, I don't recall a real difference of opinion, certainly not of the nature that tended to develop in the 1970s.

Willens: Your comment about the Micronesian member of the Congress of Micronesia conceding that they had not yet exercised all the powers granted them under the Secretarial Order is an interesting insight. There have been, as you know, many articles and a few books written about the Congress of Micronesia. What is your assessment today of the contributions that the Congress of Micronesia made in its first several years toward self-government?

Milner: Well, I think even though they may have approached the task gingerly, they began to sense and began to exercise their ability to enact laws and have them approved. The High Commissioner did not veto things willy nilly and he did not promulgate things willy nilly. I think their major contribution was in devising their own council to begin to go around to check out what it is that they would like to see in the proposal that came up

in 1966, 1967 to have a study commission, to ask the President for a study commission, to look into the future. I think it proved to be a fairly significant grant of self-governing authority for them, at least for the time, a very significant move, one on the whole that they respected and I think intended to use and did ultimately looked at carefully and then moved into this recommendation and began to sort out for themselves where they would like to go.

Willens: The concept of a Territory-wide legislature had been proposed over the years as an important first step toward self-government among other reasons because it would provide a training group for politically interested leaders, and to a considerable extent the Congress of Micronesia did serve that function. It also was recommended over the years as an important step toward creating some sense of Micronesian unity. What I find interesting from the materials is that the contribution toward Micronesian unity attributable to the Congress may be more of a mixed bag, so to speak, in that it provided a forum to expose the disagreements among the districts and the need to make substantial compromises in order to formulate Territory-wide policy. Do you have any recollection or judgment as to how the Congress began to operate as a vehicle for Micronesian unity or as a vehicle for expressing Micronesian disunity?

Milner: Not really. I left Interior in 1969 or early 1970, I can't recall which. I think it was November 1969. It was still something that was early stages. But I think your assessment that it proved to be a mixed bag is sort of borne out by events, because it did ultimately disintegrate, and it wasn't the glue that some people had hoped it would be.

Willens: No, I think that's right. Let's turn then to the inter-agency discussions that took place beginning in late 1964 and continuing through the next few years. I've provided you with some documents suggesting that the State Department in early 1965 developed a planning paper and shared it with Interior and the Defense Department. It generally was designed to try to reach agreement among the three agencies as to what to put before the President as a basis for achieving the objectives of NSAM 145. We have a letter from then-Under Secretary Carver dated October 8, 1965 addressed to Mr. Sisco, and this is one of several letters over Carver's signature that takes issue with the State Department on several key points. Did Mr. Carver generally draft these letters himself, or were they more often than not prepared by Ruth and her colleagues?

Milner: Some of this material I can recognize things that I have written, some of them very clearly were Ruth's style, some of them are pure Carver.

Willens: He did from time to time take drafts prepared by staff and substantially edit them?

Milner: Yes.

Willens: Some of the differences were reflected in this letter and subsequent Carver letters focus on very precise issues. First, there seemed to be a difference between Interior and State as to whether there was a need to change the status of the Trust Territory. State took the view that there was an urgent need for change, for international and other reasons, and Interior seems to have taken a somewhat different position. But you've stated here today that so far as Interior was concerned in your opinion Interior recognized the change had to be accomplished.

Milner: Yes, but I think the problem is two-fold. One is in terms of timing and substance. In one sense, the earlier a plebiscite, the better. On the other hand, in terms of timing, we wanted the thing substantively to work. We wanted the Congress of Micronesia to be functional, for example, not something that all of a sudden was handed down on high

from the Secretary of Interior or the President. The second of the two-fold problem we had was what would the future status be, and we had to sell the U.S. Congress on a status, and Scoop Jackson, Wayne Aspinall, what have you, had very definite ideas as to what the various status alternatives were and what they should be and what they might be within the American constitutional system. We did not want to appear to promise the Micronesians a particular status without some satisfaction that in turn this is something that would be achievable and achievable fairly promptly within the American context.

Willens: I understand that point. The Carver letter of October 8, 1965 takes issue with the third and fourth premises set forth in page 1, namely, Carver takes issue with the proposition that the people of the Territories now yearn for a greater measure of self-government.

Milner: I think he was right at that time.

Willens: Is it your recollection that at the time of this letter in 1965, there really was no articulated desire for more self-government within the Trust Territory?

Milner: Yes, I think that's right.

Willens: But at the same time, you had been out there and worked with the Council of Micronesia looking toward a Congress of Micronesia.

Milner: That's right.

Willens: Are those consistent recollections?

Milner: Well, I guess it depends in part on what is meant in Carver's context. I read the things in terms of the whole shmeer of self-government. The interest in the Congress I think would be development of institutions which fall short of what the ultimate Interior goal and the ultimate State Department goal might be. But I think in part the Micronesians would not have been unhappy if the Council of Micronesia had continued for another several years. I didn't sense a real overweening sort of desire that they should be converted into a real legislative body, and I think it's borne out in part by their tentative approach to the legislative authority they were granted.

Willens: And certainly it's borne out as well by the sense as the years progressed that many more of the political leaders in Micronesia, especially from those districts other than the Northern Marianas, felt that preserving the status quo had some advantages to them with respect to negotiations with the United States.

Milner: Sure. I was not party to the negotiations, as you well know.

Willens: No, you were spared that experience.

Milner: I did have the feeling, though, that they sort of looked on negotiations as a way of life.

Willens: Well, I think that on both sides to some extent, but certainly on the Micronesian side one could get that impression. Indeed, the Marianas leadership, not to mention their consultants, were often criticized for rushing into a negotiated deal where it took two and a half years, which was viewed as unreasonably short in the Micronesian tradition.

Milner: Right.

Willens: The fourth of the premises that Carver took issue with was that there were pressures within the American territories for a new status, and this was a reaction to the State Department view that not only the Trust Territory but the territories of Guam and American Samoa and the Virgin Islands ought to be treated together with a view toward an improved status. This is to some extent a response to the leap-frogging issue that figures in these

documents, and it always was a little unclear to me why the State Department felt they had to package it all together, although there is some explanation in the documents, and I learned more obviously from people with whom I've spoken. What is your recollection as to this leap-frogging issue, and granted that one couldn't persuade Aspinall presumably to give the Trust Territory more attributes of self-government than the other three territories, why was it not possible to move all four toward some greater level of self-government?

Milner: That's a good question. To some extent, I don't know. We had proposed or did propose at some point in here elected governors for Guam and the Virgin Islands. These people clearly were in a position to elect their governors if they were so permitted under the Organic legislation. The Samoans I think were very similar to the Trust Territory people. They were fairly well satisfied with what they had. I think they were sort of terrified of the thought that the U.S. might leave and they would be united with Western Samoa, which in the traditional hierarchy was much higher ranked than the American Samoan social structure. So as Americans they were up here, united they would be down here. They had right of free entry into the United States. There were probably more Samoans at that time and certainly now in Hawaii and California than in American Samoa. The nationality meant that they could get off the plane in the U.S., declare their five years residence in Samoa, and walk out a citizen. Citizenship was easily available. At the same time, they were very frightened of U.S. citizenship in American Samoa for fear that it would mean that you could no longer discriminate against the non-Samoans. They wanted to be sure to protect their culture, their land. They were not pushing then anyway for a really different status. The Virgin Islanders and Guamanians wanted to elect a governor but it wasn't all that urgent. They wanted to have Congressional representation. Again, there was interest, but it was not a marching, carrying the torch, flag-waving, operation.

Willens: Over the next several years, the State Department seemed to retreat from its initial position that all four territories be treated on a par with respect to enhanced self-government. Documents from 1967 and 1968, when the concept of a presidential commission became foremost as an approach, reveal a State Department willingness to sort of accept the fact that the Trust Territory could be treated separately and perhaps needed to be treated separately because of the Trusteeship Agreement. But you basically agree with Carver's assessment as of late 1965 that there really was no perceived or articulated demand for more self-government in Guam, the Virgin Islands and American Samoa than was sort of preliminarily being discussed with respect to an elected Governor and representation in Congress.

Milner: That's right.

Willens: I guess another issue that seems to have separated State and Interior during these years related to the options that would be put before the people of the Trust Territory when it came to be time for a plebiscite. And the question was certainly whether independence should be or needed to be on the ballot, should retention of the status quo be on the ballot, and what other option in terms of affiliation with the United States should be on the ballot. Did Interior have any views as to whether independence should be one of the options offered the Micronesians?

Milner: Our view was ideally that the plebiscite should say do you want to join the United States—yes, no. That would be the end of it. We recognized that under the Agreement and U.N. scrutiny and the like, we had to put independence on it. We didn't think many people would opt for independence. We really felt that the status quo question (and I don't recall whether it's in one of my remaining pieces of paper or one of these) would

- defuse whatever vote there was for independence or joining the U.S., partly because they really wouldn't understand the other two.
- Willens: You were commenting on what Interior's views were with the alternative of preserving the status quo and suggesting some of the disadvantages to that alternative.
- Milner: Yes. We felt that it would make less convincing whatever the vote might be, for either independence or for going with the United States.
- Willens: But with respect to the option of joining the United States, did you think that you had to spell out some of the specific attributes of self-government either along the lines that Solomon Commission reported or some other version that you thought would be more acceptable to Congress?
- Milner: Well, this was part of our dilemma. We felt that if you're going to get an affirmative vote on joining, as time went on there had to be some concept of what's going to be entailed in making this decision. The Micronesians would want to know am I going to be a citizen, am I going to have this, am I going to have something else. What was the status going to be. We also felt that before you could put that question to Micronesians, we had to have some confidence that whatever was the decision by the Micronesians in terms of status would also be acceptable to the U.S. Congress. I think we recognized that, at least I felt, anything short of independence was going to be vetoed in the Security Council. Therefore, the United States was going to have to put the best possible face upon the decision by the Micronesians to join the U.S., and that was going to be it. As far as we were concerned, that's the end of the Trusteeship Agreement. I guess a little bit like the post-Vietnam, declare a victory and leave.
- Willens: You mean take victory in the sense of change the status of the Trust Territory in accordance with the wishes of the Micronesians even if it was not acceptable to the United Nations?
- Milner: To the United Nations. In other words, all that was achievable in terms of getting agreement with Congress with American Samoa as a prototype, as a model. Then that was it. We would do that. The choice was the Micronesians, and if the vote was well above 50% and approaching 100% (of course it wouldn't be, but getting up in that range), then we could say to the U.N., look, this is their choice, the Trusteeship Agreement is to move them toward self-government, this is what they want, we have given it to them, end of Trusteeship. And we recognized this would not satisfy the Committee of 24 and it would not get us out of that kind of review, particularly since we were still reporting on Guam, the Virgin Islands, and they were still making noises about Puerto Rico.
- Willens: During 1966 and into 1967, there were several meetings between State and Interior, many of which involved Under Secretary Carver until he left and then involved his successor. The goal seems to have been to reach agreement among the three agencies, but primarily between Interior and State, on a proposal to the President that would, among other things, clarify policy and presumably chart the course more specifically toward a plebiscite. Did you participate in any of these meetings?
- Milner: Some of them, yes. Not in all of them, but yes, in some of them.
- Willens: There was a meeting I know in January 1966 involving Sisco and Carver and there was a subsequent meeting in June of 1966. Did you have any recollection of these discussions with respect to the ability of Sisco and Carver for example to communicate their differing positions to each other?
- Milner: Each was pretty eloquent with respect to his own point of view, and I'm not sure that there was any reception on the other side.

- Willens: Was there any movement toward compromise that you can remember during this period of time?
- Milner: I don't recall any real movement toward compromise. In fact, when the Micronesians came up with their request for a presidential commission, I recall walking into Ruth's office and said look, this is what we've been looking for. We've got to involve the Micronesians. We've got to involve the Congress. We've got to involve the Executive Branch. Let's recommend a commission appointed by the President composed of Micronesians, members of Congress and the Executive Branch, that can sit down in a room like this around a table, somebody can say let's do such and such. Somebody else can say you're an idiot and it's not going to work, somebody else can say how about trying something else? And you're not out on the record, you're not out in public, you can come to a workable meeting of minds of the three major players, the Micronesians, the Congress, the Executive Branch, to something which then could be presented to the Congress.
- Willens: What was Ruth's reaction to that suggestion?
- Milner: She seemed, as I remember, to think it was very good. As a matter of fact, we put together some such proposal, and I can recall a meeting in Ruth's office in which some State Department staffers, Defense staffers, she and I were there, and we discussed what we were proposing to do. The Defense Department had been pounding the table about our need to make sure it's secure, we have to move fast, we can't drag our feet.
- Willens: There is some suggestion in the documents that the Defense Department became somewhat impatient with the inability of State and Interior to reach an agreement on a recommendation to the President.
- Milner: Yes, I think they did. They were urging, we've got to move on this.
- Willens: Why do you think that was? Was this because of Vietnam?
- Milner: I really don't know. I'm not quite sure what their motivation was. In any event, somebody said (I think somebody from State) to Ruth how soon can you get this draft to the Bureau of the Budget? Ruth's reply was, we expect to have it over there in two days or something like that. The Defense Department said, we can't clear it that soon.
- Willens: But the initial reaction at staff level was favorable.
- Milner: It was favorable, except the State Department was very concerned about the Micronesians being privy to classified information as to what do we want to do. Well, Interior's approach was, it's not classified. We've got the Trusteeship Agreement that says that at some point this thing comes to an end. How can we sort out how it might come to an end that would please all of us.
- Willens: To some extent, the idea of a presidential commission flowed first from the suggestion that came in from the Congress of Micronesia, but secondly because of the inability to sort of reach agreement in 1966 as to how else to deal with the situation. There came a time at when at the Secretarial level where it looked as though there was an agreement (well, at the staff level) as to how to proceed, but there was a meeting between Sisco and Secretary Udall on June 1, 1966 where apparently Secretary Udall proposed that the Trust Territory be absorbed within the state of Hawaii, and subsequently Ruth wrote a letter over to the State Department saying you remember this idea was expressed and here is a list of 25 issues that had to be explored in connection with this. Do you recall whether Secretary Udall initiated that proposal on his own at the meeting, or was that something that had been recommended by you or by Ruth?

Milner: I think he probably initiated it on his own, although I'm not positive of that. Senator Long had introduced this kind of proposal, and people had been kicking around the idea. This would solve all kinds of problems, make Samoa a part of Hawaii. But Samoans didn't like that either.

Willens: It looks with the benefit of hindsight like a diversionary effort and clearly one that was rife with legal, procedural and political problems, as I think was reflected in Ruth's letter.

Milner: Right.

Willens: Did you personally ever think it was a serious alternative that could be pursued?

Milner: No. It's an attractive one, but one that had no possibility of coming about.

Willens: What do you think prompted Secretary Udall to make the proposal?

Milner: I don't know, really, unless he was sort of bemused about it, and said, I'll try this. I think he may have been fed up, too, with the bickering. I mentioned that there was another story to tell with respect to funding. One of our problems was that the more we built, the more the operational costs went up. If you have schools, you have to have teachers; therefore, you have less money to build more schools or to build more hospitals or whatever it is. The construction had been squeezed by the operation. No other territory of the United States to our knowledge has ever had that sort of authorization limit as had the Trust Territory. It could ask for whatever you wanted. The Congress would appropriate whatever it wanted, for example, in American Samoa. In the Trust Territory, you had this authorization limit. And Ruth and I came up with the idea of trying to come with a five-year construction program, and there are references in here to leaving completely open the authorization for operations. We had projected at \$100 million that would be required for operations. But the level authorized would be limited only to capital improvements, and that was the sum total of five year capital improvements. Ruth and I went up to talk to Wayne Aspinall in a rather long and very cordial and interesting conversation with him. And he didn't say yes. He didn't say no. He said it's an interesting idea. Send it up and I'll take a look at it. About the same time that Secretary Udall sent this legislation to the Hill (I don't recall exactly now but the timing was very close), Secretary Udall went over to the Department of State where the Peace Corps program was announced, which surprised Aspinall. He rejected our authorization proposal as the Peace Corps proposal.

Willens: Ruth's recollection is that she attended the announcement of the Peace Corps program, but that she may have been the only person from Interior who did.

Milner: There was an announcement by Secretary Udall. Udall was somehow involved in it, and I think it was announced over at the State Department. This is something that you could check in the records. [Addition: I was referring to a proposal that became a five-year authorization request projected at some \$172 million for a five-year construction program and \$152 million for operations. The original proposal discussed with Aspinall covered only construction and left operational funding free. The five-year proposal and its three-year successor proposal are briefly discussed at the top of page 5 of the January 30-31, 1967 report on the meetings with the U.N. visiting mission.]

Willens: And that offended Congressman Aspinall.

Milner: It outraged Congressman Aspinall.

Willens: To put it bluntly.

- Milner: You've got to remember too, at this point Aspinall's son was either Lt. Governor of American Samoa or the Governor.
- Willens: I did not know that. Do you have any judgment now as to the strengths and weaknesses of the Peace Corps program that was conducted in the Trust Territory?
- Milner: I have very mixed feelings with respect to the Peace Corps program. In one sense, I think it was one of the major disasters ever to befall the Micronesians. Simply in terms of entirely too many too soon. The High Commissioner had earlier asked for Peace Corps volunteers and had been turned down and so he sort of turned to alternatives. This is sort of where the conspiracy theory tends to hold. I think the relationships basically between State and Interior were fairly open and above board. Ross Pritchard I think really wanted to be the High Commissioner. I think the State Department really wanted to wrest administrative jurisdiction from Interior and place it in State. And I think the three, Sisco, Eugenie Anderson and Pritchard, were working hand in glove. I'm probably overstating what actually happened, conspiracy theories abound, but there's an awful lot to this that certainly lends a certain credence to it.
- Willens: Did you think the Peace Corps program there then was, if not initiated by the State Department, strongly supported by the State Department because it helped take authority away from Interior?
- Milner: Yes. A very good friend of mine, now deceased, was the staff man for the House Interior Committee—Jack Taylor. Jack Taylor had been with the Navy Civil Administration and, as long as I knew him, had been with the Interior Committee. He was invited down to Florida to one of the early training sessions and came back. (Unfortunately I looked for and didn't find a piece of paper.) He was absolutely appalled at the orientation the trainees were getting. It was almost entirely anti-Trust Territory Administration. Shortly after the first trainees arrived in the Trust Territory, Jack Hood Vaughan met with a group of them in Palau and made a statement saying in six months the Peace Corps will achieve what the Department of the Interior has failed to achieve in the last 16 years. This was openly stated in front of the Micronesians. There is a reference in here to the visiting mission raising some questions as to how divisive these people are. I paid a visit to the Trust Territory, was stuck on Yap for some reason and couldn't get on down to Palau, so I stayed on Yap longer than I was supposed to. The District Administrator turned me over to a couple Peace Corps volunteers to show me around because I was very interested in the then controversy as to where to build a new Yap airfield. This existing one was pretty minimal and really needed to be replaced by a larger, more adequate airfield. These two volunteers looked on me as the skunk in the fashion show. They were highly negative. You could sense it in everything they said. But anyway, they dutifully did as they were instructed and showed me around the place, and minimally answered my questions. At about lunchtime, we stopped by the hotel. The Yap Hotel at that point was run by the Trust Territory government, a very modest, small operation. And I said, let's have some lunch. So they agreed, and we walked into the hotel and said we'd like lunch. The person in charge said, well, you're staying at the hotel, you can have lunch, but these two can't eat lunch. At this point, I turned around and said, the three of us can't eat lunch here, and walked out. Got outside and said, do you have any place where I can buy you lunch? And you could just see their attitude melting. You know, here was this devil from Interior, and he walked out with them. He really wants to have lunch with us. And he'll go to a Micronesian place to have lunch. So things improved. A little bit later in the trip, I was on Truk, talking to the District Administrator, and looked out his window at the hospital. And at about 11 o'clock or something like that, a whole gaggle of American nurses came

up and went in the hospital. He said, "They're the Peace Corps nurses." I said, "What are they doing this time of day?" "Well, they're going to work." "In the middle of the day?" He said, "Yes." He said, "They live on the outer islands. They commute into the hospital every day." "Well, when do they go home?" "Well, they go home about 2 or 3 o'clock in the afternoon." Well, we have these half a dozen nurses or whatever they were, spending a couple of hours a day in the hospital, the rest of the time commuting. There were a couple of other problems. The inter-island and intra-district shipping was in very poor shape. In any event, it was sort of minimal at best. And the High Commissioner complained to me at one point about the emergency calls from the volunteer out in such and such a place. Turned out he was out of cigarettes. He wanted another carton of cigarettes. They all didn't behave like this, by any means. A number of them did very good service, played a very positive role. But throughout, there was sort of the attitude that the American administration was very poor, very bad, and they were really the ones who were working. We were also in the process of getting a regular commercial airline with jets coming into the place. The Peace Corps came up with its proposal to set up its own airline. There were a lot of pilots in the United States that the commercial airlines had let go because of poor eyesight and other physical disabilities, and they could run this airline for us. At Interior we called it Air Myopia. In any event, though, I think it was too much.

Willens: I know. I'm not going to be able to get into it. The Peace Corps program there, much has been written about it, and I don't have many documents, and it's a whole diversion, and I'm already too tempted by other diversions.

Milner: Within your own status bit, there were these pressures going on that didn't make it any easier for the people who were involved and people who wanted to have an easy solution. There is a memo here, Sisco to the Under Secretary, it's a memo of January 20, 1967, and it relates to the commission proposal. It starts on page 5 and discusses what the options should be. We're examining this proposal carefully to see whether it conforms to our legal obligations. Apart from these considerations, however, we believe it is essential that we not pass on to the commission tasks which should be properly performed by the Executive Branch. At this point, for seven years the Executive Branch had not been able to decide how much self-government and what would get us out from under the U.N.

Willens: Well, that's exactly right. And the next sentence, he goes on to say in particular the Department of the Interior does not want to decide in advance which political status the Micronesians wish to obtain for the Trust Territory and so forth, and that was one of the issues as you say would have been debated and not resolved. Eventually, there was a Presidential proposal sent up to Congress in August of 1967 for a commission. Several months earlier, however, Congressman Bingham had introduced a commission proposal. There is some suggestion that it might have been drafted within the Interior Department. Do you have any recollection of whether that was the case?

Milner: I don't know.

Willens: Do you have any recollection as to whether the Bingham resolution was consistent with the views of you and Ruth Van Cleve?

Milner: It was getting close to it.

Willens: But you don't personally recall helping in the drafting of that resolution?

Milner: No. Our original proposal called for Micronesian participation. That one never really saw the light of day. It was vetoed on security grounds.

- Willens: Yes. Did your own proposal address with any specificity what kind of alternatives the commission should be examining, or were you deliberately seeking to avoid that?
- Milner: We were looking toward an essentially double education process, one to educate the Micronesians and the second to educate the Congress. And the Executive Branch members would be the third leg of the tripod. The Micronesians needed to know what it was that they could expect from a union with the U.S. The Congress really needed to know what the Micronesians really wanted, what they really expected. And they needed to know from the Executive Branch what was regarded as feasible in terms of the U.N. and what other Executive Branch considerations would be involved. We felt if we could get the three parties together, they could come up, or we would hope they could come up with, if not the alternative, at least the range of two or three alternatives that would pretty well satisfy what we were after.
- Willens: The State Department seemed to take the view strongly that this should be a Presidentially-shaped commission, whereas the Congressional proposals obviously elevated the role of Congress. What was your view with respect to that issue?
- Milner: Our view was that it was essential to have the Congress participate in this, and that the usual Congressional hearing was not the way to do it. The witness from the State Department, for example, sits there and the chairman asks him questions, the ranking minority asks him questions. Questions 1 and 2 don't necessarily follow. Certainly 3 and 4 don't necessarily follow. And by the time you get around to the other members, you're all over the place, and questions are posed, they're partially answered, never completely resolved, and you never manage to get agreement. So you have to go back in the process and you have to do it over again. And you run into the rebuffing kind of situation. This is why we really wanted to involve the Micronesians, the Executive wants a task force of some sort, and the Congress has to be involved. Let's try to put one together, the President naming the Executive Branch members, the Micronesians putting up their people, the Congress selecting theirs. And Bingham's proposal, although it didn't include the Micronesians, was close to what we were ultimately coming up with. State just did not want to discuss classified things with Micronesians.
- Willens: George, you made a few documents available to me, and I appreciate that. Let me just make certain for the record that I understand what you have provided. I see here a document that includes the opening remarks of High Commissioner Goding to the Fourth Session of the Council of Micronesia on November 12, 1963. Were you present on this occasion?
- Milner: Yes, I was present on that occasion.
- Willens: What was the purpose of this particular visit that you and Assistant Secretary Carver made to the Trust Territory?
- Milner: The major purpose was to discuss with the High Commissioner and people on his staff the major recommendations of the Solomon Report and to begin implementing those recommendations that were mutually agreed to. One of the more important aspects of it, though, was to follow through on the commitment to convert the Council of Micronesia into an elective legislative body. And the burden of both the opening statement and Mr. Carver's opening statement which followed Mr. Goding's was to lay before the Council the alternative proposal that had been developed by both the Council in previous sessions and the Department of the Interior. The package also includes Mr. Goding's closing comments at the end of that Council session.

- Willens: As I understand the situation, the work in the Interior Department and in the Trust Territory to create a Territory-wide legislative body was well underway before the Solomon Commission submitted its report.
- Milner: That's correct. At least by 1962 a draft proposal had been developed and circulated within Council levels and hit those levels of the Trust Territory. This had a large input from the Department of the Interior.
- Willens: Did the Solomon Commission's recommendations with respect to political status provide further impetus to complete the work toward a legislative body in the Trust Territory?
- Milner: The Department and the High Commissioner were very committed to a time schedule, and we hoped to have it actually in effect and under way in 1964. It turned out to be somewhat delayed. I would say that the Solomon Report simply reinforced something that was already well underway and may have very well taken place had the Solomon Commission Report never existed.
- Willens: Do you have any recollection of individual members of the Council of Micronesia in the early 1960s? Let me specifically mention the name of Ben Santos from the Northern Marianas, who I believe was a member of the Council.
- Milner: I remember him, not in any particular context. The members of the Council on the whole I thought were rather bright and energetic people, and I was generally impressed by just about all of them.
- Willens: Was it your sense that the members of the Council in the early 1960s for the most part represented the younger generation, many of whom had been trained at PICS in Truk and then Ponape or at U.S. educational institutions?
- Milner: Yes, I think that's a fair statement. Just about all of them were of this category. There may very well have been some exceptions. Dwight Heine, for example, from the Marshalls, was a very major player in some of the Council deliberations. Heine was very fluent in English. He was a very active sort of individual. In fact, he became one of the first, in fact I think the first, District Administrator to be appointed from the Micronesian population.
- Willens: Were he and Carl Heine brothers or otherwise related?
- Milner: They are related, and I'm not quite sure what the relationship is. I'm not sure that they were brothers; they may well have been cousins.
- Willens: One of them, and I forget which, turned into a substantial critic of the United States administration of the Trust Territory. I think it may have been Carl.
- Milner: I think you're right.
- Willens: I've seen some reference to it in other critical books of this period, where Heine is identified as one of the more articulate Micronesians who believed that United States Administration had stifled a Micronesian spirit and inappropriately repressed local aspirations. I don't intend to overstate it, but there certainly was criticism along that line. Did you have dealings with Carl Heine at any point?
- Milner: Not specifically that I can recall. I may very well have met him, but no, I have no particular recollection.
- Willens: Another document that you were kind enough to provide includes a proposed order to create the new legislative body in the Trust Territory. Could you explain what this package of documents represents?

- Milner: Yes. The earliest set of documents is a letter of December 18, 1963, I can't quite read the date, 1963 from the High Commissioner to Mr. Taitano, the Director of the Office. It discusses a proposed Executive Order that would have created a Congress of Micronesia, an elective legislature with legislative powers. The covering letter analyzes the pros and cons of several of the provisions in this order. The High Commissioner had proposed doing this as an amendment to the Code. It was subsequently decided that it should be an order of the Secretary of the Interior creating this legislature.
- Willens: Why was that particular vehicle chosen to create the legislature? Was it because of ease of subsequent amendment?
- Milner: Frankly, I'm not quite sure why it was chosen. Could of been just pulling rank, who knows. I think it was probably chosen because the Secretarial Order would presumably provide greater stature to the Order and to the Congress of Micronesia and something that the High Commissioner would not still have authority to eliminate it. In fact, the Secretary would have authority to amend or to revoke it at the stroke of a pen, but that would be considerably less likely.
- Willens: Now do those papers that you just described reflect the input from the Council of Micronesia during the session in November of 1963?
- Milner: Yes, very much so.
- Willens: Was it at that meeting of the Council that you and others at Interior heard strongly expressed views in favor of a bicameral legislature?
- Milner: That's right. Yes.
- Willens: And so Mr. Taitano's memorandum and analysis assesses the alternative approaches that might be pursued?
- Milner: Mr. Taitano submitted a memorandum to the Secretary laying before the—I didn't give you that, I don't have the final version of it here—but it in effect asked Secretary Carver to decide unicameral vs. bicameral, make a decision with respect to the alternative financial provisions. The piece of paper that I gave you, the memorandum, is one that was drafted for Mr. Carver to send to Secretary Udall giving in fact Carver's final recommendations with respect to the Order.
- Willens: It's interesting that Interior was so far along in preparing this Secretarial Order in December of 1963, but the order did not in fact issue until September of 1964. Do you recall why this amount of time was spent in refining the Secretarial Order?
- Milner: Most of the delay, as best I can recall, occurred because of efforts to get concurrence, not only within the Department and with other Departments as well. Again, the State Department was quite interested in making progress in the political development area and had an interest in the draft Order. As you will recall, one of the letters that you gave me is a letter from I think Harlan Cleveland to Secretary Carver. Yes, September 16, 1964 . . .
- Willens: That's right.
- Milner: . . . giving State's comments with respect to the Draft Order.
- Willens: A copy of the draft Order must have been made available to the U.N. visiting mission in 1964, because its report reflects its suggestions with respect to the draft Order. Do you have any recollection of discussions with members of the U.N. visiting mission as to this particular topic?
- Milner: Other than the general fact that it was discussed, the mission urged us to move ahead, and

- we assured them we were moving ahead, and here's what we're doing, and we'd like to get your comments.
- Willens: So it may well have been that Interior wanted to defer completion of the document and final action until it received comments from the U.N. visiting mission and comments from State Department and other Departments.
- Milner: Certainly from the other Departments, and it's certainly plausible.
- Willens: Ruth remembers that the discussion with the State Department on this subject descended into what we might call the details.
- Milner: Yes.
- Willens: Well, the nitty gritty or the nits, and she thought that State descended to a level of detail with respect to the proposed Order that was probably not necessary. Do you have any recollection of that?
- Milner: I would agree. I think they had a legitimate interest in the timing of the thing, they had a legitimate interest in possibly the amount of compensation, this sort of thing. But in the last analysis, most of those issues were really between the Micronesians on the one hand and the Administering Authority in the person of the Department of the Interior, the High Commissioner, on the other. We had enough of our internal different views. The note that I gave you along with Mr. Goding's letter on the draft memorandum from Carver to Udall also includes a note on which I made comments on more than the draft itself. Referring to how do you win votes in Micronesia, do you give them what they are interested in, or do you give them that which you believe is good government, I think is the term that was used.
- Willens: And your conclusion on that dilemma was what?
- Milner: The conclusion was that a bicameral legislature was not going to be a disaster. It's what the Micronesians wanted. They would be willing to make it work. They might not be willing to make a unicameral system that they didn't like work. And if we wanted to win votes, then we should keep that in mind.
- Willens: I think it would have been extremely difficult for the embryonic Congress of Micronesia to try to function within a unicameral legislature that was composed as you indicated yesterday was likely to be the case.
- Milner: Right.
- Willens: In any event, the last document you provided me was a draft memorandum dated January 27, 1964 that you prepared. It apparently is a draft letter to President Johnson setting forth some of Interior's views with respect to the Solomon Commission Report. What do you recall about the preparation of this draft letter and its ultimate disposition?
- Milner: I recall absolutely nothing with respect to the ultimate disposition other than I do not have and do not recall seeing a final version. This was an early version which attempted to outline a number of things that were currently under way or about to be put under way. It also outlined some of the inconsistencies in the report. This was a section that was obviously subject to further discussion and fleshing out. There is in addition to contracting for program planning, we concluded that really the High Commissioner and his staff are accountable to the Department and to the U.S. Congress and we can't divide responsibility there. We had much the same kind of a conclusion with respect to the district political officers paralleling the District Administrator. In terms of some of the economic development proposals, for example, the mission calls for maximum

Micronesian operation of commerce, yet calls for direct ventures by Trust Territory without Micronesian involvement in order to expedite advances in living standards. That's somewhat inconsistent. They encourage development of outside capital investment yet propose infant industry protectionism for Micronesians. This isn't very conducive for attracting capital. In effect it is saying that a number of things were being undertaken and several things we had reservations about. We outlined proposals for the legislative body, a reorganization of the headquarters, which was one of the things that Secretary Carver discussed during his visit in October/November 1963, an order that was being prepared to more precisely define the authority of the High Commissioner with respect to the Interior Department, a Code Revision Committee was started, an accelerated health program started, and so on and so forth.

Willens: George, I was asking whether you attended some of the meetings with Assistant Secretary Carver in the Trust Territory in early November 1963 with respect to the Solomon Commission Report?

Milner: Yes. I attended some of them. Actually, there were three of us involved—Secretary Carver, Marty Mangan and myself. Secretary Carver arrived in Saipan first, and a week or so later, I arrived. And he and I overlapped in various meetings, discussions, up to the opening of the Council of Micronesia, at which point Secretary Carver had to leave. I stayed on through the legislative meeting and for some days thereafter, and Marty Mangan arrived at about the time that I left.

Willens: You will recall that I showed you, and we discussed yesterday, some memoranda with respect to a briefing session on October 22, 1963 at which you and others from Interior were present to discuss the report with representatives of other agencies and Mr. Solomon and members of his mission.

Milner: Yes.

Willens: It seems to me from a quick reading of this draft report that really the Interior Department and the Trust Territory had not truly formulated their views with respect to the Solomon Report as of October 22, 1963. Is that correct?

Milner: There were some things that I think we further wanted to consider.

Willens: I'm not suggesting that it would be difficult to take a report and formulate considered agency views within the limited time available. The reason I asked the question is that it looks to me as though the meetings in November of 1963 in the Trust Territory were designed to elicit more specific information from the Trust Territory personnel as to what they thought about the Report.

Milner: Yes. One of the things that Carver did was to distribute appropriate parts of the Report to the various Departmental people who were directly concerned and asked for their response. There were discussions with these people to get the pros and cons from their point of view and ultimately put together a proposal to reorganize the headquarters operation and define a little bit better the lines of responsibility.

Willens: Do you recall whether the submissions that the Trust Territory personnel made commented on the Solomon Commission Report recommendation of substantial use of outside contractors?

Milner: No, I don't recall specifically.

Willens: There also was in the Solomon Mission Report a recommendation that some form of master plan be developed with respect to implementing the program and that the task

force composed of representatives of the various agencies remain in place to provide counsel to the Secretary of the Interior. Some of the documents suggest that latter recommendation at least was viewed by Interior as possibly a challenge to (or reflection of) Interior's management of the Trust Territory. Do you have any reaction to those particular recommendations?

Milner: Well, I supposed there was some feeling at Interior that it constituted a reflection on the quality and quantity of management. The other prevailing sort of thing is that it became government by committee. One could discuss things ad infinitum and never quite come to a resolution, and either something would be done simply by default or it was just a delaying tactic. I mention, for example, our reliance on the Public Health Service with respect to measles immunization. If we'd relied on the advice of our own doctor on hand, we would have immunized these people. We may have created other problems, but at least we would have immunized them, and as it was, the committee recommendation was no, no, don't do anything.

Willens: I remember from the written statement of Assistant Carver at the briefing session that he delicately suggested that authority had to remain with the Secretary of the Interior. Was he in essence sort of making the point that you just made?

Milner: I think so and probably much more eloquently than I did.

Willens: Well, it had to be delicate and diplomatic because he was facing up to several other agencies and Chairman Solomon and members of his Mission on the occasion.

Milner: Yes.

Willens: With respect to the task force that was in place during this period in time, that is to say 1963 and 1964, it was terminated by President Johnson in February of 1965. State personnel subsequently complained that it had been terminated without any consultation with them and at the instance of Interior. Do you recall any discussion or recommendations with respect to termination of the task force?

Milner: No, I don't recall any.

Willens: We have a memorandum that you apparently prepared on January 24, 1966.

Milner: Oh, the territorial development memorandum?

Willens: Yes. This memorandum appears to have been drafted at about the time where there had just been, actually on January 19, a meeting involving Under Secretary Carver and State Department personnel. I think it's fair to say this was a time at which there was a rather clear division of views between State and Interior with respect to a proposed memorandum to the President on this subject. Did you recall the circumstances under which you prepared this memorandum on January 24, 1966?

Milner: Not what specifically had told me to sit at the typewriter and pound it out, other than a general feeling we needed to get something down on paper as to what we were talking about—what are the disabilities that territorial residents had, what are not disabilities, and what we might do that might somehow help resolve the impasse that was developing.

Willens: It looks to be a thoughtful examination by you as to the complications involved in the situation and trying to articulate an Interior position that could be advanced to the State Department and other agencies. Do you know what use, if any, was made of the document?

Milner: No, frankly I don't. It was circulated to various people, but whether it went into the round

file or into the mind, who knows?

Willens: It was about this time, actually, that Ambassador Anderson and Ruth Van Cleve appeared to testify before the House Interior Committee. I think I have provided you with some documents with respect to the testimony that Ambassador Anderson gave with respect to her recent visit to the Trust Territory and her reactions to the situation that she saw there. What did you understand was her function in going to visit the Trust Territory?

Milner: Well, she had been named the representative to, among other things, the Trusteeship Council, and as such was the State Department/U.N. type that we would have to deal with. Interior felt that it would be very useful for her to know what she was talking about. We actually proposed that she visit the place and made the initial arrangements for her trip.

Willens: Did you regard her as a perceptive and thoughtful observer?

Milner: Well, yes and no, although I think she begins to sort of enter into the so-called conspiracy group. Yes, I think she perhaps overreacted to a number of things which she saw and underestimated some of the problems that existed in the area. But on the whole, I think she picked up things that were actual problems and needed to be addressed.

Willens: There is a suggestion in one of the State Department documents dated January 25, 1966, which is a memorandum from Miss Brown to Mr. Sisco regarding the House Subcommittee hearings. And you see there that Congressman Aspinall made an opening statement that refers to "a movement within the U.S. administration which was thinking about taking the territories away from us." Do you know what Congressman Aspinall was referring to by that statement?

Milner: No, although I suspect he too was beginning to come into a conspiracy point of view.

Willens: A conspiracy in particular being an effort to take responsibility for the Trust Territory away from Interior and locating it elsewhere?

Milner: Yes, that or else diminishing in a major way the role of Interior. Interior was the agency that he could reach out and grab, and State was not an agency that he could control. They reported to other Committees, and he regarded, I think it's fair to say, the Trust Territory as one of his responsibilities and felt that up to that point at any rate, his Committee had been exercising their responsibility in proper fashion.

Willens: Do you know whether there were subsequent conversations with Congressman Aspinall that satisfied him that the rumor or report that he heard was not accurate?

Milner: I'm not sure what he heard, and I don't think he ever fully was satisfied on the point. I mentioned yesterday the proposal to authorize a five-year capital investment program with an open-ended operating bit. And on second thought, you'd better rely on Ruth's recollection rather than mine that Udall was not present at the meeting. But that would even outrage Mr. Aspinall more that State and Peace Corps would announce a major proposal like this, and I think that would only add fuel to the fire that somebody else is moving in on his turf.

Willens: The report that the State Department prepared internally with respect to Ambassador Anderson's testimony is set forth in a document dated January 27, 1966. Were you present at this particular hearing?

Milner: I may have been. I don't recall it, though.

Willens: Do you have any recollection of Ambassador Anderson's testimony with respect to the

- pluses and minuses of the current administration of the Trust Territory?
- Milner: Not in terms of the hearing before the Health Subcommittee.
- Willens: Was Congressman O'Brien essentially of the same mind as Congressman Aspinall with respect to the Trust Territory?
- Milner: I think so, yes.
- Willens: And would the same be true with respect to the ranking Republican, Congressman Saylor?
- Milner: I think basically yes.
- Willens: Was there anyone on the Committee that you felt had a somewhat more sympathetic ear for the complexities of the situation and the need to make some judgment as to future political status in a timely fashion?
- Milner: There were a few congressmen who were sort of new to the Committee and had not had the background and history that those three had. They were all veterans of the statehood bit. They had also participated in the legislative maneuvering that led ultimately to the transfer of Samoa, Guam and the Trust Territory from Navy to Interior jurisdiction. I couldn't say that the Aspinall/Saylor/O'Brien view was unsympathetic. I think they felt that the time was just not right, that things had not moved quite as rapidly as some of the rest of us were increasingly beginning to think should be the case.
- Willens: Well, that's really sort of the core of the issue, whether you and others at Interior essentially thought that things should be moving somewhat more expeditiously but thought that your views would not in essence carry the day with the Interior Committee. Or the converse of that is that the views of the Interior Committee became your views in light of the relationship that you necessarily had to maintain with the Committee.
- Milner: Well, I think Interior had no compunction about going to the Committees and proposing more and faster. We'd asked that the authorization be increased, for example, rather than just settle along and continue with the \$7.5 million. We were in the process of proposing with respect to other territories the elected governor legislation. The Interior Department generally regarded the question of a delegate to the Congress as something peculiarly the responsibility of Congress, not the Executive Branch. So we tended not to push it, but we always said yes, we would be in favor of it. We had no objection to it.
- Willens: Take the case of the elected governor for Guam and the Virgin Islands. That in retrospect was a significant step toward self-government in those territories. Was that a proposal that had to be repeatedly advanced to Congressman Aspinall before he would agree to it?
- Milner: It was proposed several times before it was finally enacted. I really couldn't say at what point he became convinced. He did like to be the devil's advocate from time to time, so it was sometimes difficult to tell what position he really took. But at any event, the Committee did not always act favorably on it. I really don't recall whether we had the situation where the House said yes, the Senate said no or vice versa, which is frequently what happened in some of these legislative proposals.
- Willens: Was the difference between Interior and the Committee with respect to the Trust Territory essentially one of whether the Micronesians themselves were ready for enhanced self-government in the middle 1960s?
- Milner: I would say that Interior probably was more confident in favor of increased self-government than the members of the Committee, although they too changed fairly

quickly in that attitude in the latter half of the 1960s. The Committee made a visit to the Trust Territory sometime about this period.

Willens: There was one visit in early 1968. There may have been one earlier.

Milner: I think there was one earlier than that, while Goding was still High Commissioner.

Willens: I see.

Milner: And the members of the Committee came back convinced that more needed to be done than was being accomplished at that point.

Willens: Is it your recollection that the visit to which you are referring took place after the Congress of Micronesia had been created?

Milner: Oh, I'm sure it was, yes.

Willens: So it might have been in 1966 or 1967?

Milner: I would guess 1966, 1967, something like that. Do you recall when Norwood was named ?

Willens: I have some note that I think it was in the summer or fall of 1966. He certainly was there by early 1967.

Milner: That's the best of my recollection.

Willens: I may have reference to that somewhere in my materials, although the Congressional visits and the reports with respect to them are few and far between in terms of documentation. It's very difficult to pin them down and then see what they did and what their reactions were.

Milner: Very seldom did a formal report come from one of these visits.

Willens: That's right. The State Department memorandum that evaluates the hearings before the Subcommittee describes Ruth Van Cleve of Interior as providing "a brief but rapid fire statement in the remaining ten minutes of the session." And Ruth recalls with some satisfaction that it was indeed rapid fire and it seems to have been successful. You did comment favorably about Ruth yesterday, and I know you two have worked together over several decades. Can you for the record sort of just describe her strengths as a public servant/lawyer/bureaucrat over the decades in which you worked with her?

Milner: Yes. I hope so. She was to say the least very hard working. She was very thorough. She was very willing to consider both sides of the question. She had an ability to come to a fairly quick decision on the basis of the analysis. There was no undue protracted dillydallying back and forth. She was very articulate. She was always very well prepared. She had a very high sense of public duty and public responsibilities. I doubt that she ever took home a government-issued pencil, for example. She was the sort of a person you would love to have working for you or to be working for in my estimation.

Willens: Did her training as a lawyer prove to be an advantage or an obstacle?

Milner: I think it was probably an advantage. She always accused me of practicing law without a license. I am not a lawyer. But I had to plow through enough territorial law in Title 48 of the U.S. Code that I could spiel it back to people. But she never resented the fact that occasionally I would draft a piece of legislation and of course it went to the Department Solicitor before anything happened to it. But it was never a case of well, you're not a lawyer. You don't know what you're talking about.

Willens: What were her relations within the Department with Assistant Secretary Carver, Robert Mangan and Secretary Udall?

- Milner: I would say very good. I had less opportunity to judge her relations between Udall and herself, but I just have no reason to think that they were anything but extremely cordial.
- Willens: Both Ambassador Anderson and the Nathan Associates Report at various times in 1966 emphasized the need to resolve the status issue. Did that emphasis on the need for prompt resolution of status come as a surprise to you and your colleagues at Interior?
- Milner: No. We felt ourselves that it was an overriding problem. We had to go back to the economic development thing. Until the political status was resolved, how could you get a consistent policy in terms of tariffs, for example, U.S. investment, the application of various territorial U.S. laws with respect to the territory in a way that would sort of accomplish whatever your ultimate policy would be.
- Willens: Well, to some extent, the formal expressions of Interior's position seemed to be at odds with that general proposition. Let me direct your attention to the Carver letter of April 13, 1966, which is a short letter addressed to Mr. Sisco at the State Department and reacts to some of the staff papers that had been prepared at State with respect to this subject. Do you recall whether you had any role in drafting this letter?
- Milner: I don't recall participating in its drafting.
- Willens: It seems to reflect a strongly held personal view by Assistant Secretary Carver with respect to this issue. You made reference yesterday to colonial Africa and Asia and the ill-advised abandonment by the colonial powers of their territories and the strong commitment as reflected in the letter not to do likewise with respect to the Trust Territory. Ruth remembers that this may have been a highly personal letter written by Assistant Secretary Carver, and he makes reference in the very last paragraph on the last page of the letter that if the staffs of the two agencies reach a more optimistic conclusion than he has reached in this letter, "I will be highly suspicious of their methodology." What is your reaction to this letter in light of what was sort of a growing sense that there needed to be some prompt resolution of the political status issue?
- Milner: I agreed wholeheartedly. I was very pleased with the letter, although I hadn't really remembered it, and I may never have seen it before. It goes in part to the discussions that we had been having for some time within Interior that we needed to resolve the situation and resolve it as rapidly as possible. But we also had to resolve it in terms of the substance of what we were trying to accomplish. It would be very easy to create the trappings of democracy, various pro forma elections, various types of legislative bits, but if nobody really believed in and really knew how to make them function the way they were supposed to function, you didn't really have the substance of self-government. You were really sort of a hollow facade, more for show than anything else. And this is one of the things that seemed to come through to me when I read this memo the other day. We had discussed what had happened in Africa and Asia and how did these so-called democracies that were left behind all of a sudden become dictatorships. Not that we thought that a dictatorship in Micronesia was possible, given the language problems and the geography.
- Willens: There might have been six dictatorships.
- Milner: Yes. Well we may have that. But really we were not interested in just simply putting on a show. We felt an obligation to the Micronesians as well as to the United States government.
- Willens: Well, the central point of the letter seems to be set forth at the top of page 2, where Assistant Secretary Carver reflects his candidly held view that the people in the Trust

Territory are not ready to assume the responsibilities of local self-government to the same extent as Guam and the Virgin Islands were at the time.

Milner: Right.

Willens: This letter was written six or so months after the Congress of Micronesia had been created. So on the one hand you have Interior taking the lead in creating a territory-wide legislature, which reflected some measure of confidence in the ability of the Micronesians. At the same time, a high-level official is taking a very strong position with respect to State that the Micronesians were not ready for the measure of self-government that State seemed to be urging. Is there an inconsistency here?

Milner: I think it's fairly a matter of degree. One learns to walk by taking a step, and we were taking a step in terms of the creation of the Congress of Micronesia. We were fully prepared to make modifications as experience was developing, how the thing actually functioned. No, I don't really see an inconsistency, except again perhaps in terms of timing. There was a time in Guam and the Virgin Islands when the legislature was not as fully functioning as it was in 1966.

Willens: One might have concluded at Interior that you wanted to see a year or two of substantive experience with the Congress of Micronesia before you moved further. Is that fair?

Milner: Yes. I think that's fair. We were also in the process of increasing the number of high-ranking Micronesian executives in the administrative branch.

Willens: One of the recurrent issues that you made reference to yesterday was the extent to which Micronesians who were employed by the Trust Territory government could serve in the Congress of Micronesia. And as you recalled correctly yesterday, the order did provide that such Trust Territory employees could serve in the Congress of Micronesia but with some sort of sunset provision suggesting that they would not be able to at some point in the future. I forget whether that sunset provision was implemented or whether it was extended.

Milner: I don't recall either. It also shows up in the High Commissioner's draft that he sent in.

Willens: But the central point is that you were looking at a fairly small group of educated and otherwise equipped Micronesians to provide leadership in a legislature.

Milner: That's correct.

Willens: Sometime in 1966, I think in about the middle of the year, Under Secretary Carver was replaced by Mr. Luce. Were there any differences in policy or Department position that flowed from that change in personnel?

Milner: I think not. Mr. Luce came to the job from Bonneville Power Administration, which was a far cry from Carver's experience at that point of five or six years of dealing with territories. So we did have to begin at square one to a large extent.

Willens: Did he take an active role with respect to this topic?

Milner: Carver's role as Under Secretary, as I recall, was somewhat less than it had been as Assistant Secretary simply because as Under Secretary he had other things to cope with as well. I don't think he ever lost his interest in the territories, and we had no problem in getting to him.

Willens: Actually, I have not asked the question about Carver's replacement as Assistant Secretary, who was Mr. Anderson?

- Milner: Yes.
- Willens: Did Harry Anderson continue to take an active role as his predecessor had with respect to these problems?
- Milner: Yes, he did. Again, though, he was a newcomer to the field and in one sense I guess you might say the new recruit was thrown into the Super Bowl game in the last quarter.
- Willens: Well, to some extent you might say that, in the case of Messrs. Luce and Anderson, they would have the natural tendency to continue the policy in place and depend on Ruth Van Cleve and her staff to carry the lead. Is that a fair assessment?
- Milner: I think it's a very fair assessment. I would add the caveat, particularly with respect to Anderson, with whom I had more dealings than with Luce, that he was willing to say, "Exactly why are you doing this? Should we do something else?" He didn't accept the staff recommendations just willy nilly.
- Willens: I gather from the documents that Under Secretary Luce had a relatively short tenure.
- Milner: That's correct.
- Willens: I remember a letter that he wrote to Mr. Katzenbach at the State Department expressing regret that they had not been able to put this "chestnut" to rest before his departure. Where did he go?
- Milner: I really don't recall. I think he became the head of the Edison Company in New York, the power company. I can't recall the exact name—something Edison, New York Edison, something like that.
- Willens: As a result of the discussions between the agencies, it appears as though the State Department did compromise on two important issues. First, they seemed to have abandoned the idea of linking political status for the Trust Territory with status for the other three territories. They still had a leap-frogging problem, but they seemed to back off from the proposition that you had to deal with all four of the territories at the same time. Is that your recollection, that they did change their view over time on that?
- Milner: Yes.
- Willens: The other point is that the documents at least seem to suggest that the State Department, perhaps acknowledging the force of Interior's position, developed a view that you could put to the Micronesians a future status option in a plebiscite that would provide for permanent affiliation with the United States but leave for subsequent determination exactly what attributes of self-government would be available to them. The documents make reference to a five-year probationary period, and then some make reference to a ten-year probationary period. Do you have any recollection of discussions with the State Department in which they indicated their readiness to back off from the original position of providing the Micronesians on day 1 with all the attributes of self-government but rather leave for subsequent determination after a probationary period exactly what measure of self-government should be provided?
- Milner: I can recall all kinds of discussions along those lines. I don't recall at which point they really began to back down on it. I suspect it may have been the matter of further consultations with Mr. Aspinall and others. I don't mean to finger Mr. Aspinall as the sole opponent of that particular point of view. I think it's commonly held throughout the Congress, as a practical matter, you just couldn't do it. You had to deal with the territories individually.
- Willens: It seems to me that by the time State made what I'll term a compromise on these two

points, the positions between State and Interior were really not as far apart as the rhetoric and the documents seem to suggest. Do you have any sense of feeling that there was an opportunity to get the two agencies together in this timeframe?

Milner: My recollection a good number of years, 30 years after the event, is that it was sort of a matter of attrition. Everybody just sort of got worn down. But I think that you're right. When you come right down to it and with 30 years hindsight, the differences were not all that great.

Willens: But I may certainly be missing something, because the agencies and the very intelligent people at both agencies clearly felt that there was an impasse.

Milner: Yes.

Willens: And that's what led in part to the embracing of the presidential commission.

Milner: Yes.

Willens: With respect to the commission proposal, George, you told me yesterday that you recall that the State Department was initially favorably inclined. Is that correct?

Milner: Well, the initial proposal that Interior put together was that we have an Executive Branch, Congressional, Micronesian Commission. I think they were in agreement that this was an approach that could be followed. They objected to the Micronesian participation, and they tended to object to Congressional input, that it should really be wholly the Presidential type commission. As mentioned yesterday, Interior's view generally was we have to have the three elements to the discussion come up with a range at least of proposals that would be workable rather than to say you will do this or you will do that or you will do something else.

Willens: While the Commission proposal was being considered within and between State and Interior, your Department prepared an issue paper dated March 15, 1967 entitled "Political Future—Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands." I forget whether it identifies the author.

Milner: I think it doesn't.

Willens: I don't think it does. It includes a glossary.

Milner: That is pure Ruth Van Cleve. The glossary.

Willens: She recalls that the glossary (which defines the various terms) suggests that this paper was intended for broad circulation and would necessarily reach some people who were not as familiar with this arcane area of the law as you and she were at the time. Do you recall whether you assisted in the preparation of this document?

Milner: Probably so. I wouldn't be able to tell you what percentage was my contribution. It had elements that sounded like me; a lot of it sounds like Ruth. It was probably kind of a joint sort of operation.

Willens: In the summary of recommendations, it definitely reflects an Interior view that the status of the Trust Territory at the outset should be either as an unorganized, unincorporated territory similar to American Samoa or as an organized unincorporated territory similar to Guam. Do you have any recollection as to why this paper was prepared?

Milner: Not specifically, although it was again probably the general feeling that it was time they just set out what they were talking about.

Willens: But you really had done this on numerous prior occasions, although I don't remember

and I haven't seen a document quite like this from earlier years. This seems to want to provide a discussion of the full range of alternatives, and I don't know whether it has any relationship to the presidential commission proposals that were then being discussed.

Milner: It quite possibly does. I really don't know.

Willens: March 15, 1967 is a date in the upper right hand corner of the front page, but I frankly don't know who put that there.

Milner: There's one typed here.

Willens: Is it?

Milner: It is March 15, 1967.

Willens: That's right. So as an appendix, and I'm not too sure that the appendix is there, and actually the appendix is not included, but the appendix according to the table of contents was a Department of Interior legislative proposal which I assume at this point would have been its presidential commission proposal.

Milner: I would guess so. I was curious myself as to what exactly was attached when I got to the last page and it wasn't there.

Willens: In the conclusions, the recommendations are summarized, basically reflecting Interior's view that even if the United Nations does not view the recommended status favorably, it still is necessary to go forward with what best serves the interests of the United States and Micronesia and not "seek to win as many members of the United Nations as possible." That basically is consistent with the view that Interior has been expressing through these years.

Milner: Yes.

Willens: There apparently was a summit meeting on April 10, 1967 involving I think Secretary Udall or perhaps it was Under Secretary Luce and Under Secretary Katzenbach of the State Department. I've shared with you a memorandum dated April 10, 1967 from Mr. Sisco to Under Secretary Katzenbach reflecting the receipt by State of a new Interior paper recommending the establishment of a legislatively controlled status commission and an early plebiscite with the objective of making the Trust Territory a non-self-governing territory. Mr. Sisco's memo tries to highlight the principal positions of the State Department and identify some of the differences between State and Interior. In fact, the second memorandum dated April 10 provides a summary of the meeting prepared by State and indicates that Under Secretary Luce attended along with Assistant Secretary Anderson and Mrs. Van Cleve. It was attended also by Mr. Hoopes of the Defense Department. Do you recall hearing about this meeting and what its outcome was?

Milner: I don't recall specifically, but I undoubtedly learn what the outcome was. It would appear from this memorandum that the Interior issue paper was circulated (and I guess it's the previous one).

Willens: The thing that interests me about this meeting on April 10, 1967 is that the participants in the meeting seemed to have reached some tentative agreement that the ambiguously defined status of commonwealth might be sufficiently broad to meet the various needs of the two agencies. On page 2 of the memorandum of the meeting that the State Department prepared, there's a statement that "after considerable discussion it was agreed that the concept of commonwealth status was sufficiently broad to encompass a status for the TTPI which would allow us to terminate the Trusteeship Agreement and meet the requirements of Congress." Do you have any recollection as to whether you and others

at Interior felt that the apparent compromise based on the status of commonwealth was achievable?

Milner: I think it was felt it was potentially achievable. One of our problems was what is actually meant by commonwealth. There's the Commonwealth of Virginia, for example, the Commonwealth of some other states, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. At the time, the term was beginning to be used to apply potentially to the Trust Territory and I think nobody really fully understood exactly what it was and what they were talking about. It was kind of a label that could apply to all kinds of situations.

Willens: Was it your feeling that Congressman Aspinall would accept an ill-defined status alternative of commonwealth without truly knowing exactly what was contemplated? That seems unlikely in view of the record and what you've said.

Milner: No. At least at the staff level lower than the participants in this meeting one concern was that the Committee would be very reluctant to approach it. But the education had to take place and, regardless of how you labeled it, they had really to understand what the Micronesians wanted, the U.S. wanted, the U.N. wanted and work out something. Precisely why these people concluded that commonwealth status was something to be tried, I really couldn't say.

Willens: Do you recall being involved in any meetings with the Bureau of the Budget where the proposed presidential commission legislation was discussed?

Milner: Yes.

Willens: I forgot whether I gave you a copy of a draft memorandum of conversation dated May 19, 1967 reflecting a meeting at the Bureau of the Budget at which the budget personnel concluded that critical differences still remained between State and Interior, notwithstanding the apparent and preliminary compromise that had been reached at the meeting on April 10, 1967. Did that memorandum refresh your recollection as to the role of the Bureau of the Budget in this connection?

Milner: Well, one of the things we had to do of course was to get BOB concurrence before anything could go forward, certainly as a part of the program of the President.

Willens: Bureau of the Budget clearance was ultimately obtained. It's a little unclear whether it was obtained through direction from the White House or whether the Bureau of the Budget thought that ultimately the proposed legislation did reflect a sufficiently united Executive Branch position to go forward.

Milner: I think it was one of the few occasions which Interior won out over the Bureau of the Budget. I think there was a major impetus from the White House, let's get on with this.

Willens: Ruth thinks this is one of the few occasions where she may have personally asked Secretary Udall to get involved and that, as you just stated, there may have been some effort by the White House that subsequently released from the bureaucratic process a proposed bill. Do you have any further recollection of the Bureau of the Budget involvement in this matter?

Milner: No, except that they went along with the proposal to put a date in the legislation, which I argued at the time would be a red herring. We really wanted something without a date in it, because ideally if you're going to get the thing done, the sooner the better. If you put a date in it, you're not going to get it done before that date, and you're going to focus an awful lot of discussion on whether the date was too soon or too early, and that was going to be something that would sort of delay active consideration of the thing. I did

not attend all of the hearings. I may have mentioned that I was involved in the Bikini bit during the latter part of 1968 and did not attend some of the House hearings that were critical right at the end. But at the one or two that I did attend, much of the question and answer revolved around 1972. Was that a realistic date? And very little was devoted to the question of, is this the thing we need to do, and how soon need we do it in terms of creating the commission. The Bureau of the Budget, if I recall it, was very firm that we had to have a firm date in this legislation.

Willens: There appears to have been, at least at the State Department, support for a proposed joint resolution; it's reflected in some of the State Department documents that I gave to you. There also is a document dated June 30, 1967 from Acting Secretary of the Interior Luce to Mr. Katzenbach enclosing a proposed memorandum to the President and a proposed report on H.J. Resolution 594, which I think was the resolution introduced by Congressman Bingham. Luce's letter indicates that the Bureau of the Budget asked Interior to prepare these documents, and it then elicits from the State Department a letter dated July 5, 1967 from Katzenbach to Luce expressing State's decision that it cannot concur on either the proposed memorandum to the President or your proposed letter to Congressman Aspinall. The State Department position seems to be that the drafts imply a latitude of choice presumably to be made by the commission that does not in fact exist in the State Department's opinion on the matter of self-government. Was it basically the State Department view that the commission had to be given instructions that constrained it to consider only status alternatives that would in the State Department's view meet the United States obligations to the U.N.?

Milner: Yes. This is my recollection. This was one of the real stumbling blocks, as we discussed earlier. I think there was a certain moving together of position at the staff level. But the real stumbling block was getting out from under the U.N. and what in State's view had to be done and had to be done immediately.

Willens: It looks as though State at least was of the view that the commission to be created could not be relied upon to recommend a status alternative that would both accommodate the interests of the Micronesians, accommodate Congressional preferences and accommodate the United Nations. As I've summarized it, it sounds like sort of a hopeless task.

Milner: Yes.

Willens: It sounds as though after that disagreement developed, the staffs of the two agencies were instructed to try to work out some compromise, and there's a letter from Interior to Katzenbach dated July 13, 1967 that indicates these efforts were unsuccessful. Do you remember any discussions that followed this exchange of letters at the Under Secretarial level?

Milner: No, not as such. I'm afraid not. I see State corrected us with respect to Eritrea. [Addition: Luce said on page 2 of his July 13, 1967 letter that all U.N. precedents have resulted in sovereign independence for trust territories. Someone in State wrote across the bottom of the page "No—Eritrea, though not a trust territory, was permitted by U.N.G.A. to merge with Ethiopia. Also what about the Ryukyus." On rereading the Interior comment and State's note, I think Interior was right; all former trust territories at that time had become independence. Anyway, the "correction" only went into someone's file.]"

Willens: Right.

Milner: At this point that Ruth had a conversation with Secretary Udall in terms of moving ahead on this.

Willens: After President Johnson sent up the Administration's proposal on this subject, did you have any dealings with Congressional personnel, either members of Congress or staff, as to the proposal?

Milner: I don't recall any with my participation, no.

Willens: There was a considerable debate between the agencies apparently as to how to deal with the House Committee and in 1968, Secretary Udall was asked to appear before the House Committee, and it was planned that he would address this issue. He undertook after meetings with Katzenbach and a lot of staff work to defer to the State Department with respect to what U.S. obligations arose under the Trusteeship Agreement. The documents that I've shown you indicate that he stuck to his position. There were Senate hearings, and the Senate did adopt the proposal but changed the plebiscite date, and this was the point you made earlier, that you thought a specific date was a red flag. I believe the language was changed to "as soon as possible" or something to that effect.

Milner: Yes.

Willens: What do you think prompted the Senate's action in that regard?

Milner: Quite probably some conversations with appropriate staff members or members of the Committee. I don't recall that anybody specifically had that chore to do.

Willens: Was your view with respect to the date generally shared by Ruth and others at Interior?

Milner: I really don't know. I kept muttering around about how it was a mistake to do it.

Willens: Did you think it was too soon to bring about a plebiscite?

Milner: No. My view was if possible get them to do it sooner than that. This was 1968, and the 1972 date was a target sent up there. If you could do it in 1969, 1970, 1971, that's fine. If in their combined wisdom a later date, well, I guess we'll just have to live with that as well. My concern was that the date would become more significant than in fact it should have been. I think there was some change in wording with something becoming "no later than" or "by". There's a reference in here I think in—it's on page 3, Secretary Udall's statement. He says it should occur by 1972. Some said it's too soon, they think the time between this date and 1972 will not be ample to permit the commission to do its job.

Willens: Did you play any role in preparing Secretary Udall's statement?

Milner: I don't recall. I may have, but I don't know.

Willens: As the Johnson Administration came to the end of its life in 1968, Congressman Aspinall essentially concluded after hearings that there would be no action by his Committee on the presidential commission proposal. Do you remember attending the hearings on the presidential commission proposal before the Aspinall Committee?

Milner: I attended at least one, and at some point in July or August, I left for the Trust Territory and a fairly extensive visit including Bikini. I was not present at the Committee hearings when I guess the Committee in effect decided not to do anything about the legislation.

Willens: What is your judgment today as to why Congressman Aspinall declined to act on this proposal in 1968?

Milner: My conclusion as to why he declined is based on an informal conversation when he dropped in at the table where a staff member of the Committee and I were having lunch.

- Willens: When did this take place?
- Milner: This would be sometime in probably February 1969. The new Administration had taken office but not much before the conversation took place. A few weeks, a month or so at the most. He asked when the Administration was going to send up its study proposal he was now ready to take it up. He had not wanted to act on the proposal in the previous Congress because there was going to be a new President and he did not want to tie the hands of that new President. I don't think from his words that he was expecting precisely the same provision but he was expecting substantially the same kind of proposal.
- Willens: Did the staff person with whom you were having lunch provide any information one way or the other as to whether that in fact had been the motivation influencing Congressman Aspinall?
- Milner: No. I have no reason to doubt the Congressman.
- Willens: In late 1968 (and perhaps you were not back from Micronesia at the time) the documents include a draft organic act. Ruth recalls that she and others drafted an organic act and she sent it out to Marty Mangan, who I believe at that time was Deputy High Commissioner, for his comments. Do you recall any discussions in late 1968 regarding the drafting of an organic act that might at least provide a vehicle for addressing this problem, since other approaches seem to have been inconclusive?
- Milner: Not specifically, although I would not be surprised that we would try an alternative since the one proposal had gotten nowhere. It might be well worth trying something else. Oddly enough, an organic act had been sort of in the wings from the time Interior first took over administration, although after my initial visit to the Trust Territory, I was sitting across the hall in Alaska, I kept hearing words about we really need to have an organic act, and until we get an organic act, we have this rather unsatisfactory delegation from the Congress to the President to the Secretary of the Interior.
- Willens: Why was it that, after repeated representations that there would be an organic act, in fact there was no organic act drafted and presented to Congress?
- Milner: I'm not really sure. I think there was probably a feeling that it really was premature for that sort of thing and perhaps just not enough support for it.
- Willens: Did the concept of an organic act necessarily mean the creation of governmental institutions as was done in Guam and the Virgin Islands Organic Acts, or was it contemplated simply as a way of formalizing by legislation the authority that the Secretary of the Interior had with respect to the Trust Territory?
- Milner: No, I think it was more the creation of government institutions. Certainly that was the context that within Interior an organic act meant.
- Willens: As I recall, you told me yesterday that you remained with Interior until sometime near the end of 1969?
- Milner: Yes.
- Willens: With the change in Administration, do you have any recollection as to what the new Secretary of Interior and his political appointees thought should be done with respect to the Trust Territory?
- Milner: Initially territorial affairs were somewhat hampered by the fact that an Assistant Secretary had not been named to replace Mr. Anderson. Mr. Anderson left at about the time of the inauguration, the day before or day after. His successor, Harrison Loesch, did not take

office until June, July, something like that. It's a date that if it's important to you, you can probably check somehow. Territorial things just sort of disappeared basically in the upper levels of the Interior Department. It's not uncommon with the change of Administration, and who knows what happens and then people just don't know what to do with it. Secretary Hickel did have a couple of assistants who had been working with him on the campaign. One was Edgar Kaiser. Another (Ron Walker) later became director of the National Park Service. They became very active and very interested in what was going on in the Trust Territory and planned or were instrumental in planning Secretary Hickel's trip to the territory. They organized it very much the way they operated a campaign. They even proposed to have the Interior Department pay Micronesians to come out to the airport to cheer the Secretary when he arrived. It was at that point I began to think maybe I should get out of this business.

Willens: Before he visited, there had been an inter-agency effort under the auspices of the National Security Council and the Under Secretaries Committee to reexamine policy toward Micronesia. Do you know whether anyone from Interior was involved in this process?

Milner: I would presume so, but I really don't know. The major thing that I do recall from this period other than the Secretary's trip was the visit of a Micronesian delegation from the Council of Micronesia to begin the negotiations of a status proposal. Secretary Loesch at that point was fairly new on the job and he had some rather hectic meetings as to how do we cope with this, and they came into the Interior Department for the meetings.

Willens: My understanding was that Secretary Hickel in early May did visit Micronesia and announced publicly that it was U.S. policy to establish some form of permanent relationship with Micronesia. I may not have the words exactly right, but it was regarded as implementing the consultations among the agencies in the Under Secretaries Committee and was portrayed as being the first time that such a commitment had been made. Is it your recollection that he did in fact make such a statement and that it was regarded as a major step toward affiliation between the Trust Territory and the United States?

Milner: It probably was, if that's in fact what he said. It probably was about the first time this had been said out loud in Micronesia by a responsible official.

Willens: Shortly after, a draft organic act was prepared by the Interior Department and delivered to Congressman Aspinall. It was apparently done at his request and as I recall (and I don't have the documents in front of me) the Interior Department shared what they had done with State and said that we don't necessarily agree with this act, but we did it as a drafting service for Congressman Aspinall. Do you have any recollection of that step?

Milner: No.

Willens: Then the Micronesian Future Status Commission issued its second and final report in or about July of 1969, and for the first time spelled out as a preferred Micronesian position the status of free association as defined in that report. Do you recall any discussions within Interior as to that particular recommendation of the Status Commission?

Milner: One of the problems that Interior had was exactly what is meant by free association and is it something that would fit within the American constitutional framework.

Willens: And was it your preliminary judgment at the time that free association, which had no precedent in the American system, would probably not be acceptable?

Milner: I had severe doubts about it. It depended entirely on what it actually appeared to be once

it was developed. As a label I had rather severe doubts about the practicability.

- Willens: My chronology indicates that there was a first round of negotiations sometime in October of 1969. Could that be the occasion that you are recalling?
- Milner: Yes.
- Willens: And did you participate in the sessions that took place between the Micronesian representatives and the U.S. representatives?
- Milner: Yes, I did.
- Willens: What is your recollection of those meetings?
- Milner: My recollection is that—well, on the one hand, the Micronesians had gotten themselves pretty well organized. My feeling was that the Administration was not very well organized. I had hoped that the meetings would discuss major principles that had to go into the thing—what are the questions, the questions of citizenship, nationality, questions of eminent domain, which was a very hot item at the time, what could the U.S. military have and how could they go about getting it. Rather than to say well yes, we think we ought to become U.S. citizens, we think we should be U.S. nationals (and there is a difference), or we should be something else, or the military should have certain eminent domain rights or they should have something else. The meetings fairly quickly developed into somebody laying on the table a piece of paper with things spelled out in agonizing detail, and the other side responding, with the U.S. side laying it out, the Micronesians taking one look at it and saying we need to caucus to review this. Then they'd come back and either have it completely rewritten or completely rejected. My initial hopes were that we could get closer to a meeting of the minds and some of the Micronesians whom I'd known for some time confided to me before the meetings that this was entirely possible. By the end of the meetings, I had a feeling that we were perhaps further apart than we had ever been at any time in the past in terms of what kind of a status and relationship the Micronesians should have with the United States.
- Willens: Well, who were the Micronesians in that delegation that you recall having personal conversations with?
- Milner: The one I specifically recall was Kaleb Udui.
- Willens: Kaleb Udui, who was serving as counsel to them?
- Milner: I think he may have been serving as counsel; he may have been a member of the delegation. I think probably he was serving as counsel.
- Willens: Is it your recollection that the Micronesians who came to what I would call the first round of negotiations were determined to implement the free association alternative set forth in the report of the Status Commission?
- Milner: I'm not sure. They may very well have been. They may have been using it as the opening of a negotiating session.
- Willens: It was your sense that, if the conversation had been more at the level of principles in the important areas of land, citizenship, financial support and whatever, there might have been more readiness to reach at least preliminary agreements?
- Milner: Yes. This was my thinking at the time, and nothing since then has really shaken the view that if basically we could have agreed on those, then you'd fill in the details in between.
- Willens: Was Assistant Secretary Loesch more or less in charge of the U.S. delegation at that

time?

Milner: Yes, he was the Chair of the U.S. delegation. But he was very new on the job, and in all fairness to him . . .

Willens: He seemed subsequently to have taken a considerable interest in the problem.

Milner: I think he did. But I left I think about November 2, 1969, so I have no first-hand information. No, Loesch was very interested in the job that he had and I think was very sincere and wanted to do an outstanding job in it.

Willens: There's some indication in the documents, and I think they refer to this first session, where he was trying to reach some compromise with the Micronesians on an aspect of the land issue and was subsequently told by Defense or some other agency that they would be unwilling to go along with the kind of compromise that he was seeking to pursue. Was Defense playing an active role in the negotiations?

Milner: Yes.

Willens: And was it still the U.S. view at the time that an organic act providing for a status similar to Guam and the Virgin Islands was the outcome that the United States was seeking to accomplish? Was the essential position of the United States in late 1969 that the Micronesians should be persuaded to agree to some form of organic act and status comparable to Guam and the Virgin Islands?

Milner: I really couldn't say. I was also in the process of getting a new job.

Willens: Well, that's correct. Well, just jumping ahead to 1977 then. I gather from what you've told me that you returned to the Office of Territories under the Carter Administration?

Milner: That's correct.

Willens: And at that time, Ruth Van Cleve was asked to serve again as Director?

Milner: Yes.

Willens: And how long did you remain?

Milner: I remained until January 1981.

Willens: And you decided at that point that you'd been through a sufficient number of transitions?

Milner: Yes. I was a holdover Truman Democrat and all of the flip-flops in between, and I decided that I'd had enough.

Willens: During the four years, did you play any role in the Micronesian negotiations, because the Marianas negotiations were completed by that time?

Milner: They were completed. There was in place the embryonic Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas. They had the Resident Commissioner, Mr. Canham, there. My participation in negotiations was almost wholly with the Office of Micronesian Status Negotiations (OMSN). I did not really sit in on the negotiations with the Micronesians in any significant way.

Willens: Who were the special representatives then during the 1977-81 timeframe? Was Peter Rosenblatt one of them?

Milner: Peter Rosenblatt was named shortly after I arrived on the scene. There was a holdover whose name I can't now recall.

Willens: Fred Zeder?

Milner: No. Not Fred Zeder. Anyway, he was in effect replaced by Rosenblatt.

Willens: Based on your observation from the position that you held at Interior, did you form any judgments about how effectively the Office of Micronesian Status Negotiations performed in conducting these negotiations?

Milner: I think on the whole they did a pretty good job in conducting the negotiations. My problems were with respect to the High Commissioner's running of the Trust Territory and the organization of the Trust Territory while the negotiations were going on and making sure that whatever we did did not work at cross purposes with Mr. Rosenblatt. This was complicated somewhat by Mr. Burton, who took an early and acute dislike to Mr. Rosenblatt.

Willens: Had you dealt with Mr. Burton previously?

Milner: No. He had attended one of the Trusteeship Council sessions during the 1960s that I had also attended, but at that point he was a very junior member of the Committee and had really played no particular role with respect to territorial matters. By 1977, the situation had changed very completely, and he had the predominant congressional role, at least in the House, with respect to the TTPI.

Willens: In conclusion, let me ask you for your assessment of U.S. policy in the Trust Territory and the outcome that we see in Micronesia today? We see four separate entities, one of which is in a commonwealth relationship under the sovereignty of the United States, and the three others are in a uniquely defined free association relationship but with considerable economic dependency on the United States. What is your assessment of this outcome?

Milner: The splintering of the Trust Territory into the four entities I think was perhaps inevitable. I don't know that anything really could have held it together in the long run. I think even had it moved into the U.S. sovereignty area as a single entity, it may very well have ultimately split up, perhaps much the way it actually has. I think the commonwealth arrangement has been working on the whole fairly well, although there are some very obvious stress points. The level of federal financial assistance, the level of Marianas raising their own revenues, who is responsible for overseeing the expenditures for what. In the late 1970s, we had some real problems with respect to the extension of the three-mile limit, 200-mile limit and so on and so forth, the whole law of the sea issue. And there were several meetings among Interior, the Northern Marianas, NOAA with respect to how these laws should be applied, if they should be applied, went back and forth on that. I think basically the differences can probably be resolved. I'm not sure that the Guamanians want to join Marianas, although they do more than they did. The Marianas are probably much less happy about such a union. I really don't see it as a future. Regarding the free association, to some extent I still have the concern that—at one point I expressed during the early 1960s—can we settle for arrangement in which both parties wake up each morning saying, do we want to continue the relationship? That's oversimplifying the existing relationship, and I think it is a potential. On the other hand, world events have changed considerably, the loss of the Philippine bases, the military has not yet returned to Guam, has not yet returned to the Marianas. I'm not sure that the military concern with respect to Micronesia is by any means the same as it was during the 1960s. I guess I'm saying in a way, who cares if we decide to go someplace else in terms of defense security with the current situation.

- Willens: Well, there certainly is some commentary to the effect that our national security interests might have been just as effectively served with respect to the freely associated states by letting them adopt the course of independence and enter into binding treaty obligations with respect to our military requirements.
- Milner: Right. This is quite true. And it is I suppose a possibility in the future. It may have been at one point during the negotiations. By 1977, I think people were pretty well committed to that which was ultimately achieved.
- Willens: There was a very considerable internal debate within the Executive Branch as to whether and when to offer the independence option and whether it was ever sincerely offered or whether simply as an interim negotiating tactic is something that I and others will have to wrestle with. So, you left the area of Territories in 1981, and I assume you haven't been back to that part of the world since?
- Milner: No, I haven't. I did a very brief, three- or four-week consulting job with the Office of Territories a year later, and decided I wasn't going to face the highway anymore.
- Willens: All right. Well, next time we meet, maybe it will be on the beaches of Saipan.
- Milner: I would enjoy that.
- Willens: Thank you very much.