

INTERVIEW OF MANUEL A. SABLAN

by Howard P. Willens and Deanne C. Siemer

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Willens: Manuel A. Sablan is a colleague and friend who served on the Marianas Political Status Commission and otherwise has stayed out of politics, although most of his family seems to have done otherwise. He has agreed to assist us in this historical project. Manny, thank you very much for being available on this Saturday afternoon. Could we begin by you telling us when and where you were born.

Sablan: I was born in Rota right during the war in the cave.

Willens: What was the date?

Sablan: December 27, 1944.

Willens: Well, that requires some additional explanation. How did that all happen?

Sablan: My father was from Saipan. He relocated to Rota before the war and became a teacher in the Japanese time.

Willens: What was his name?

Sablan: Benigno O. Sablan.

Willens: So he went over to Rota to teach during the Japanese time.

Sablan: Yes. And while he was there he found my mom, and they got married.

Willens: And what was her name?

Sablan: Consolacion Hocog Sablan.

Willens: She's a Hocog.

Sablan: Hocog Atalig.

Willens: She's both a Hocog and an Atalig?

Sablan: Yes. Her maiden name is Hocog Atalig, so her father's name is Atalig and her mom's name is Hocog.

Willens: I see. And did you have brothers and sisters?

Sablan: Yes.

Willens: How many?

Sablan: Seven. Let me see, four brothers and three sisters.

Willens: Well, we're going to ask you to name them.

Sablan: Ben, Herman, John, Ysidro . . .

Willens: How many sisters?

Sablan: Three.

Willens: And their names?

Sablan: I take that back. Two sisters. Michaela and Honora. All are deceased except Honora, myself and Ysidro.

- Siemer: What does Ysidro do?
- Sablan: He's retired. He's the former Director of Finance.
- Willens: When was he Director of Finance?
- Sablan: During the Marianas District Administration.
- Willens: During the TT days?
- Sablan: TT days, yes.
- Willens: Were you in a cave at the time you were born, from what your parents tell you, because there was a struggle or invasion of some kind going on at the time?
- Sablan: That's right. And coincidentally, what happened later is that I applied for a U.S. passport right after we were able to get a U.S. passport. But I couldn't get one, because they couldn't locate any birth records. So I had to go to court to establish my identity.
- Willens: Is that right?
- Sablan: Really. It's very ironical.
- Willens: That was about ten years after the Covenant was approved, when the Trusteeship was terminated and people were eligible for U.S. citizenship?
- Sablan: Yes. People who were born during the war, during that 1944 period, really had no record of their birth, because we were born in a cave.
- Willens: Have you ever gone back to visit the cave?
- Sablan: Yes.
- Willens: Did your family move back to Saipan then at some point when you were growing up?
- Sablan: My father was relocated from Rota to Saipan to serve as interpreter and translator of Japanese land records. So we were all brought back to Saipan in 1947.
- Siemer: Where had your father been educated?
- Sablan: Saipan during the Japanese Administration.
- Siemer: How far did he go in school?
- Sablan: I think fifth grade; he went to the highest level. He speaks Japanese fluently.
- Willens: He must have learned it in the course of his work.
- Sablan: Well, what happened is that when he went down to Rota, he was a teacher, and then he eventually became the General Manager for the sugar plantation factory in Rota. That's how we owned land in Rota.
- Siemer: How long was the family in Rota?
- Sablan: My father was born in 1908, and he told me that at the age of 18 he went to Rota.
- Siemer: He was a teacher?
- Sablan: Yes. He then stayed there until after the war. He believed very much in education, that's really why he relocated to Saipan, because he wanted us to have a good education.
- Siemer: How about your father's family? Did he have brothers and sisters?
- Sablan: Yes. Two of them.
- Siemer: Who are they?

- Sablan: Dolores Babauta and Jose Sablan. Deceased. You know Congressman Babauta?
- Willens: Yes indeed.
- Sablan: His mom is my sister. Babauta's mother is my auntie.
- Willens: That's Congressman Oscar.
- Sablan: Oscar Babauta. He's my nephew.
- Willens: Was your father teaching local people, or was he also teaching Japanese students?
- Sablan: He was a full-fledged teacher.
- Willens: But he was teaching the Rotanese population?
- Sablan: Rotanese population, including the Japanese.
- Willens: Including the Japanese?
- Sablan: Yes.
- Willens: That's why I asked, because we've heard that some local people were used as teachers only for local people. But if he spoke Japanese as well as you say, he . . .
- Sablan: Oh, he was moved specifically from Rota to Saipan because of the land records there. He was the official Japanese translator for all the land documents.
- Willens: And the land documents in Saipan covered also the transactions in Rota?
- Sablan: Oh, yes. Everything. When you go to the Asian mapping documentation, you'll see a lot of my father's writings there.
- Willens: And he stayed in that capacity until he retired?
- Sablan: No. He resigned and got into other things.
- Willens: Tell us about your education on the island of Saipan.
- Sablan: I was educated here in public school, Chalan Kanoa Elementary School, up to the sixth grade. Then I went up the so-called Navy Intermediate School from seventh through ninth.
- Willens: What years were those, do you remember approximately?
- Sablan: My God, I can't recall. But I graduated from high school in 1962.
- Willens: So you went where?
- Sablan: First to Chalan Kanoa Public Elementary School, then intermediate school, which is junior high really. Went to Hopwood High School. They used to call that intermediate school rather than Hopwood High School.
- Willens: Yes. I may have gotten confused about the various schools.
- Sablan: So it's now the Hopwood Junior High School. Then after that, then I got a Navy scholarship to attend Mt. Carmel School. It's a private school.
- Willens: How many grades did you actually do at the Hopwood High School then?
- Sablan: Seventh to nine. It's three years.
- Willens: Oh, that's just seven to nine. I see. And then Mt. Carmel for how many years?
- Sablan: Ten, 11, 12.

- Willens: So you graduated from Mt. Carmel in 1962?
- Sablan: Right.
- Willens: I see. Then what happened?
- Sablan: Then I got a TT scholarship to go to Manila. But rather than go there, I went to Guam for the summer, to the University of Guam. While I was there I got another scholarship to go to Rockhurst College in Missouri. So I finally ended up in Rockhurst.
- Siemer: That's where Jesse Borja went?
- Sablan: Jesse Borja, yes.
- Willens: And several other people from the Marianas.
- Sablan: There were two of us originally, myself and Steve Pangelinan. He died recently. Then following us Jesse came. But there were also people from other districts. There was a lawyer from Palau, Mariano Carlos, one of my classmates. And a guy who may be the next Governor of Truk, Casio Midar. There were four of us that were selected by the college from students who were attending a Catholic school.
- Willens: You were selected when you
- Sablan: I was selected back in 1962.
- Willens: When you were a senior at Mt. Carmel, you were one of the students selected?
- Sablan: Right. I was selected as a senior. Steve already had one year in college in Guam. So he was also selected. Both of us were on full Trust Territory scholarships. What happened there is that during those days there were only two scholarships a year.
- Willens: For the Marianas people?
- Sablan: For the Marianas. So I took the examinations here and got the Trust Territory scholarship.
- Willens: Who actually decided which students would get the scholarship?
- Sablan: No, you compete by taking an examination.
- Willens: It was based on examination?
- Sablan: Yes. Forty-seven of us took the exam.
- Willens: And how many got the scholarship?
- Sablan: Only two were available during the Trust Territory times.
- Willens: We've heard from some people that they felt that more scholarships had been allocated to the other districts. Do you have any recollection of that?
- Sablan: No, that's not true. During the Navy time, for example, Frank Ada had a Navy scholarship. During those days anybody that got accepted by a university would get a scholarship. But with the TT government, you see, they had no money. So I got the first Trust Territory scholarship in 1962. In fact, the people were not very happy with the Trust Territory when they first got in because of the scholarship program. The military were so relaxed and promoted a lot of people, Frank Ada, Dela Cruz, Luis Limes.
- Siemer: So if you got accepted, you'd get a scholarship?
- Sablan: Oh, yes, during the Navy time. But during the Trust Territory time, no. Only two per district.

- Willens: Did that change in the 1960s as more federal funds became available?
- Sablan: Yes. In fact, I think what happened, Howard, is that before the Kennedy Administration, it was basically like a zoo situation here in the TT. It was basically a limited, caretaking arrangement. The Marianas, for example, weren't affected by the TT Administration because we were basically under the military.
- Willens: Right.
- Sablan: So most of us really did not have that much contact with the TTPI.
- Willens: Well, how did you feel when the Navy Administration moved out?
- Sablan: When the Navy moved out, we were of course concerned money-wise, budget-wise, particularly in the area of education. The opportunity was a little more strained, more limited.
- Willens: In the middle 1960s, the United States government did put a lot of money into a crash program here to build elementary schools and so forth.
- Sablan: Right.
- Willens: Did they also make money available for scholarships?
- Sablan: Yes, but they said it's very, very competitive. There's no student loan program, for example. It's either a scholarship, or you don't go to college. That's what it was. So those that went to college without a scholarship went to Guam. Like Carlos Shoda. You know Carlos Shoda?
- Willens: Right.
- Sablan: Carlos Shoda went to Guam and was sponsored by a family there. But he never was on scholarship.
- Willens: A lot of the people we've talked to went to Guam for high school or for college and lived with a family.
- Sablan: Yes. I was the first really from here that went to the States on a full scholarship during those days.
- Willens: You mentioned the so-called "zoo theory", and you and I have read a lot about that over the years. As you were growing up and went off to college, did you really sense that there had been just a caretaker operation here?
- Sablan: I sensed it when I was in high school.
- Willens: How did it become apparent to you?
- Sablan: It became apparent to me because of a number of things. Number one is that during the Naval Administration the area was very restricted here. It was a military strategic area. So the Navy maintained good relations with us—the hospital arrangement, the school. They had good instructors, teachers and so forth. You could see that they had more money. So when the Trust Territory came in, you could see that the school system budgets were diminished. Then we picked up Rota as part of the picture. During the Navy time, Saipan, Tinian and the Northern Islands didn't have contact with Rota. But what happened in 1962-63 when the Trust Territory got in, they immediately started trying to get the Micronesians into major jobs. That's how Frank Ada got there—Frank Ada, Dela Cruz and several others such as David Maratita. And also in every district you saw this. But still, from the standpoint of sending kids to go beyond high school, the opportunities were very limited. Two per year. So what the TT did is, rather than concentrating on

sending kids to school, maybe because of lack of money, put them into some kind of a management training program, a college intern program.

Willens: Was that generally well regarded?

Sablan: Oh, yes. That's really how the Micronesians got out into the jobs. I feel very strongly about that program.

Willens: And you think beginning sometime in the 1960s that the TTPI really did make an effort to bring Micronesians into the government?

Sablan: In my opinion, yes.

Willens: From time to time you heard complaints about the different salary levels.

Sablan: Oh, yes.

Willens: Was that an obstacle?

Sablan: It was not too much of an obstacle, because the salary was never high, even during the Navy time. So you didn't see the dichotomy there. There was never a shift or reduction in wages. The wages were very low and gradually increasing. So the incentive at that time for you to go to college was that when you get out of college you get into a high pay level.

Willens: Automatically by virtue of

Sablan: Oh, yes.

Siemer: Because of the government classification?

Sablan: Because of the government classification. Not only that, but the government was articulating a policy during that time that if you go to college and you come back from college, or if you are in a mid-management position and you work hard and so forth, they will put you into a training mode. The University of Nebraska extension program and a military camp program came into the picture. So there were some people taking correspondence courses, and professors came over here. And they did this so-called on-the-job training. And some of the Micronesians who eventually got into these programs, like my brother for example who never went to college, went all the way up to the top. Now for us who were young, when we graduated from high school, everybody wanted to go to college. Whereas in the old days, they see that's the only opportunity for you to move real quick. Eddie Pangelinan is a good example. Eddie was on scholarship—I think a seven-year scholarship.

Willens: For undergraduate school and graduate school?

Sablan: I met him on Guam back in 1962. Then he was the first so-called law school scholarship. But as I said, you can count on your fingers, it was very limited numbers.

Willens: Did you meet people from the other districts during the 1960s?

Sablan: No, not before I went to college. After I got back from college, yes, because I was stationed up here at the Trust Territory headquarters. I worked at the TT headquarters.

Willens: That's when you came back from Rockhurst?

Sablan: Yes. I got back in 1967.

Willens: What job did you take then?

Sablan: My major was Economics, so I was classified as an economist trainee when I first got here. But of course it was a three-person department, you know. There were only three of us.

- Siemer: Were you in the Finance Department?
- Sablan: I was in the Economic Development Division, they called it. Natural Resources Division.
- Willens: What did they do?
- Sablan: Basically credit union, cooperative and credit union. Business advisory things, setting up businesses.
- Willens: Were they managing the Economic Development Fund?
- Sablan: Right. The Economic Development Fund. That was under our shop.
- Willens: So you had about three people in the office?
- Sablan: When I got back in 1967, there were only three people in my office.
- Siemer: Who else was there?
- Sablan: A secretary, a guy by the name of Mitchell and myself.
- Willens: And you were the trainee?
- Sablan: I was the trainee, yes.
- Willens: Do you remember what kind of assignments you worked on in the first couple of years?
- Sablan: They put me on a management training program. This is what I was telling you. Everybody Micronesian that graduated from college during those days doesn't go to work for the districts. They sent you over here to the headquarters. So all of us Micronesians who were college graduates were being brought to the headquarters in Saipan. Then our job was to go out to the districts and train the districts. During those days we were fortunate because David Maratita was already here. He had graduated from the University of the Philippines. He was the economist for the Economic Development Fund for the Marianas at that time. He came in the year before us.
- Willens: So would he be working down in Frank Ada's shop?
- Sablan: Right.
- Willens: But your initial job was to go around and do some training in the districts?
- Sablan: That's correct. When I got back from college, they put me into this management training program for several months. Then there was a scholarship offered by the South Pacific Commission to be trained on cooperative credit unions. There were a lot of cooperatives during those days. It was initiated by the Trust Territory in Micronesia. So they sent me over for one year to Fiji.
- Willens: You went to Fiji for a year. That was 1968?
- Sablan: Yes. I got a certification from there. So I became certified.
- Willens: Then what did you do?
- Sablan: I came back here and I took over this guy's job—Mitchell.
- Siemer: What was the state of economic development on Rota in those days when you came back and took over?
- Sablan: Oh, my God, it was nothing.
- Siemer: What was there at the time?

- Sablan: Basically agrarian farming. They lived on farm products. The military from Guam flew in their planes and picked up the products. It was basically agrarian.
- Siemer: So it was agrarian and they were selling in the Guam market?
- Sablan: Yes.
- Siemer: Were there any businesses over there of any size at the time?
- Sablan: No, no. It was more like Joeten before. Mom and pop stores. Mayor Manglona's was the biggest.
- Willens: At that time?
- Sablan: Yes. Manglona goes all the way back to the 1960s. When I first got back and made my first trip to Rota, he was the only guy that had a small motel-like place there, and he had the biggest store there. But it was basically a convenience store. Their trading was basically with Guam, because during the Navy time, you see, they had no contact with us.
- Willens: What was the political situation in Rota at the time?
- Sablan: Well, in hindsight Rota's mentality is shaped by its history. Rota really is like a stepchild of the Marianas. They never had really been brought into the mainstream during the military time. Saipan had the best doctors, military, a lot of soldiers, a lot of activity going on. But Rota never had anything, because it was part of the Trust Territory. So the only associations they had were with Guam. Their economy was basically hinged to Guam. The people there are very homey people.
- Willens: What kind of people?
- Sablan: Very culture-oriented. The Rotanese are not like Saipanese. Family values are very strong. And they live on the farm. Very independent. And very education-oriented people; there are more college graduates from Rota than from Saipan.
- Siemer: Were the college graduates going back to Rota?
- Sablan: No, they came over here. For example, David Maratita, the economist from the University of the Philippines. He went in on his own. His family had to sell a lot of cucumbers to finance his education in the Philippines. Judge Atalig is another example. He was never on an scholarships.
- Siemer: And Pete Dela Cruz?
- Sablan: Dela Cruz is the same.
- Siemer: So even though their kids were going out and not coming back to Rota, the Rotanese were still investing in education?
- Sablan: Oh, yes. If there's any reason why we went to school it was because of my mother. My mother was very, very strong on education.
- Siemer: Your mom is from a Chamorro family?.
- Sablan: From Rota, yes.
- Siemer: Did your dad have some Carolinian heritage and some Chamorro?
- Sablan: That's correct. But my father's family was not really into the education thing, but my mom was very strong in education. In terms of trust, I mean they tell us that don't be number two. Always number one. So you can see that in my family even today. You just have to find ways to be at the top, to be up there. And you can see that thing in Rota families.

There's more college graduates from Rota. There's more lawyers from Rota. There's more CPAs in Rota. There's a lot of people there, and very smart guys. It's not because they're smart, it's because from the time they're very young, the family and mother are very close to the Church. That's why a casino has no chance at all in Rota.

Willens: Why do you think the economic development there has been so slow?

Sablan: The reason why is because, as I said, those that are educated never go back to Rota. They come over here.

Siemer: Do they also wind up in the States?

Sablan: Oh, yes. There are a lot of them in the States. But looking from the historical point of view, the political and the economic development in Rota has been slow. Rota has always been treated as though it's out somewhere, away from the mainstream of things here in Saipan. That's why they're very suspicious. They want concrete evidence that, "Hey, you're going to give me money here. Don't give me this thing because you're always treating me this way." No, we never treated Rota this way. It was because of the way it was handled in the past that they felt this way. During the Navy time from 1944 to 1962 they were in the Trust Territory, and the TT had no budget. Their kids from Rota never got a military scholarship to go to the University of Hawaii. They go to Guam, they see people from Saipan eating at the barracks with the military in Andersen Air Force Base. But Rota students were out there somewhere in the jungle. So they have this feeling. So when their people and their kids started growing up and became graduates, like Lt. Governor Manglona, I can appreciate where it's coming from. So I was telling some of the guys here that you know you have to look at this thing in terms of perspective at the time. They know me more in Micronesia than in Rota, for example.

Willens: They know you?

Sablan: Me. If I go to Palau, everybody knows me there. But if I go to Rota, they don't know me.

Siemer: Your family still has land in Rota?

Sablan: Oh, yes, plenty of land. But we never had an opportunity to go back there, you see. Go down there for a couple of days. But I never had any direct contact with Rota even during the Trust Territory time. But when I go down to the Marianas here, I don't go to Rota.

Siemer: You go to see David Maratita.

Sablan: I go see Maratita, and Maratita goes to Rota. Sometimes I take a trip to Rota, but not in an official capacity, something like just to take a look at what happened in the cooperative over there. But I have no contact. My brother Caesar is a good example. He was a District Administrator here. They know him more than me in Rota. But can you imagine other people in the Trust Territory Headquarters who are supposed to be directing policies and so forth who go to Rota. They will never trust him there, because Saipan is the Marianas district and along with the other five districts of Micronesia everybody's competing for funding. From the standpoint of people in the Congress of Micronesia, the Marianas people are a minority. Not only that, but all the [Marianas] delegates are not college graduates, and everybody from Micronesia are college graduates. They're the cream of the crop. So even in committee assignments and things like this, you don't see the Marianas people. But the Rotanese are very aggressive. Benjamin was there from 1960 on. So when I got into these status negotiations, I could feel that Benjamin is a very smart guy, very aggressive. He had a good track record; he's a parliamentarian; he's everything. Then you

have Joe Cruz coming in from Tinian, and then you have Dr. Palacios. Now these are equivalent caliber kind of person.

Willens: They're very different people.

Sablan: They're very different people. But similar in terms of tenacity, background, and very adept in handling political matters. It's very interesting.

Willens: Well, you've named three people who were all in the Congress of Micronesia during the 1960s, and we happen to have read a lot of their speeches in the journals. Do you think that they were able to deal effectively with their counterparts from the other districts?

Sablan: I think that they have done quite well. But my opinion is that they were not as well-prepared as the other districts.

Willens: Who are you thinking of with respect to the other districts?

Sablan: I'm talking about Amata Kabua, Lazarus Salii, Bethwel Henry, and Andon Amaraich. My God, those guys are full graduates, the cream of the crop. And they've been with Micronesia since 1944 and were dealing with the Trust Territory government. We never had Trust Territory government experience here. We had military experience.

Siemer: So they knew the ins and outs of the Trust Territory Administration.

Sablan: Oh, no question about it. They knew the Interior hierarchy. They knew how Interior thought. That's why, in my opinion, there were very few people here in the Marianas even up to the time of the Covenant who really could say that much about the Trust Territory, because they never really had that much experience with the Trust Territory. Their experience had been with the military. But Rota had the TT experience, you see. You can see Rota in the same light as say, Yap, because they were together. So consequently when they put Benjamin Manglona into the picture here, he was very successful in Micronesia. So what I'm saying is that when people try to go back and look at history here, there are a number of things here that I think should be seen as a backdrop. One is that let's be very conscious that from 1944 to 1962, the Marianas (except Rota) was military oriented. And that those people that were born or raised during that period became leaders after the military regime and their perceptions really are somewhat different than those who were not part of the military regime. That's number one. Number two, with respect to education, there was really more preparation during the Navy time for people in the Marianas because of more money, more opportunity really, and consequently you see that the Marianas people are very happy with the military. You never hear anybody complaining about the military being bad here. I never heard of anybody saying I don't like the military. But I tell you there's a lot of people who said, "I don't like the Trust Territory." Some of the older Chamorro people here really wanted their kids to have the best education, and the Trust Territory in my opinion had not done initially quite well in that area. Eventually, when they started pumping in a lot of money into the schools.

Siemer: Do you think it's fair to say that the Chamorros in Saipan and Tinian, when the Trust Territory Administration came in, had the focus to get out from under the Trust Territory and that's the reason that they had a different attitude perhaps than the people in the rest of Micronesia?

Sablan: I would say so. Not only that, but that may have triggered why the Marianas wanted to hook up with Guam, to get unification with Guam. Because Guam was heavily military, so . . .

Siemer: And was out from under the Trust Territory?

- Sablan: And they were not part of the TTPI. And while there's restricted travel, we see a lot of Guamanians coming over here, and we go down to Guam for sponsorship, so everybody wants to be like the Guamanians, but nobody wants to be like the Trust Territory citizens.
- Willens: A lot of the people we've talked to did go to Guam for a high school education at considerable sacrifice to their families. We've been wondering whether you could say that education through high school and into college for even a year or two was more prevalent here in Saipan than it was in some of the other districts.
- Sablan: Oh, yes.
- Willens: You think so?
- Sablan: Oh, yes.
- Willens: I mean the leaders that you've named went on to college, but did the people in their districts do likewise?
- Sablan: I agree with you that there was more opportunity here even during the initial years of the Trust Territory.
- Siemer: Down into the villages.
- Sablan: More into the villages than say in Yap, Palau, Ponape and so forth. The population was bigger in Micronesia, but I'll tell you what. Those people who were brought into the Congress became leaders in Micronesian governments. There's only a selected number of them. But they are really good. They went through the process. But in our situation here, we are in a better position than any other district despite that we've been changed from military to Trust Territory. Why? Because we're closer to Guam. Like you said, there's a lot of teachers that went to Guam on a sponsorship. They'd go down there, be sponsored by a military family there, and they take care of their food and so forth, plus a servant, and then go to school. There's a lot of them from Saipan.
- Willens: Even apart from education, would you say that a lot of the Chamorros here had relatives in Guam and would go over to shop or the movies or whatever?
- Sablan: Yes, precisely. A common language there. Relatives are there. There are some constraints in terms of immigration and so forth, but that's understandable. But there's a lot of intermingling going on—wedding ceremonies, picking up a boat and going down to Guam.
- Willens: In the late 1960s then, when you were at the Trust Territory headquarters, did you become affiliated with one of the political parties?
- Sablan: No, not really. My family has always been involved in politics.
- Willens: Have they always been Popular Party?
- Sablan: Yes. My father was Popular Party. But my brother John is Progressive Party. So my family was divided.
- Willens: So the Progressive became the Territorial.
- Sablan: Right. And I became a Territorial.
- Willens: Who did?
- Sablan: Me.
- Willens: You became a Territorial?

- Sablan: Yes. As I say, I was never involved in politics. My father was Popular. When I got back from college, I never got into politics. To be very honest with you, I was appointed to the Political Status Commission because of the instructions of the Territorial Party. I don't know whether you have heard about this thing, but
- Willens: No. Go ahead, tell us.
- Sablan: Let me tell you what happened. During those days there's two of us in Saipan in the Democratic Party, and also Pete Agulto Tenorio. I was known more in those days as the economist, the guy who was up at the Trust Territory, and I was well traveled, with United Nations experience. I really had the best of training and exposure. So the party was looking for somebody who knows something about the economic side of the negotiations. So there was a party meeting here at the Hyatt, which used to be the Continental Hotel. Dr. Palacios was there and some of the party leaders. And they wanted me and Oscar Rasa to come in.
- Willens: Into the Commission?
- Sablan: Into the Commission. And our job was to distract the Commission and move toward free association. Because the Territorial Party did not feel that the Commonwealth should be the option. The Popular Party's position was either reunification with Guam or Commonwealth. The Progressive (or Territorial) Party was for free association or independence or statehood, but they wanted free association most. And Dr. Palacios was moving—this is really what he wanted. And Oscar Rasa at that time was very active.
- Willens: Was this after the November 1974 election when Oscar and Pete A. beat Eddie Pangelinan and Herman Q. Guerrero?
- Sablan: Precisely. Remember I came in with Oscar for the last round.
- Willens: Right.
- Sablan: I was not even following the negotiations. I was so busy with my work. I was on the Economic Commission for the United Nations. As I said, I had no idea of what was happening here. Really I never had the time to do this. So Joeten decided to step down so I could get in to take his slot. So that was the decision made at the Continental Hotel. For Joeten to step down and for me to come in. This was Olympio Borja or somebody. But anyway, there were two slots there that were being controlled by the Territorial Party. I was dumbfounded when I attended this meeting and said you know, "Joe, I would love to come in. But I never really had any idea, I was never interested. I was interested, but I do not have the time."
- Siemer: How did slots come to be identified with a particular party?
- Sablan: I think there was an appointment based on the private business sector, and I was appointed to take over for . . .
- Siemer: The private sector?
- Sablan: Joeten's position.
- Willens: Let me just clarify this a little bit. Well, go ahead.
- Sablan: That's how that meeting turned out.
- Siemer: Who else was at the meeting?
- Sablan: Dr. Palacios, Jess Mafnas, Oscar Rasa, Rabauliman. It was an executive political committee pre-meeting.

- Siemer: They were concerned because the Commission up to that date had been pushing toward pure commonwealth?
- Sablan: There were a number of concerns that they were having. Number one, they were concerned about the minimum wage, that we shouldn't be locked into the so-called federal minimum but we should control our minimum wage. That was number one. Number two, Oscar's concern was that he just didn't want a permanent union. He wanted some kind of a free association with certain options for permanency. Those were the immediate concerns that we had.
- Siemer: Were they worried about immigration at that point?
- Sablan: No.
- Siemer: Were they worried about how much money the U.S. government was going to provide?
- Sablan: Yes, there was some concern about that. In fact, some of them were kind of questioning Pete Aguto regarding the compensation for the Tinian land.
- Siemer: Was there discussion about the negotiations moving too fast?
- Sablan: When I walked into this thing, I had no background, I had no idea what had transpired. I always felt that everything was going okay. My personal concern really (I had my own personal agenda) had been that I wanted to go to school and get the best education and then, regardless of whether we become U.S. citizens or not, I will survive. So I really was not too concerned personally about what was going to happen to the Marianas. I was more concerned with preparing myself to meet the challenge of whatever happened. It's not because I was not interested. The other thing also is that these people were more politically oriented than I was.
- Siemer: They were very politically oriented.
- Sablan: Yes. But they wanted me and Oscar. They wanted Oscar because of his political education background and his very aggressive personality. He was a former Congress of Micronesia member and very articulate. And also Oscar and I were on very, very good terms. He respected me and so forth and I respected him. But I was known during those days really as an economist, and I didn't really have too much involvement in the Marianas. I was more at the Trust Territory headquarters level. So they needed somebody that could come in and be able to talk to [MPSC economist] Jim Leonard. They felt that there was nobody on the Commission with the educational background to be able to do this. This is the kind of discussion we had in that meeting. I said, "Well, I'll be happy to come in. But to detrack this thing from commonwealth to free association, what the hell do I know about free association? But I'll be happy to come in and talk about it." As you recall, during my involvement I was more interested in the minimum wage situation, the Headnote 3-A, the Jones Act application—that's what I was interested in.
- Siemer: What was your reaction when they talked about the minimum wage? What was your view about that?
- Sablan: My reaction was that it should not be.
- Siemer: There should not be a minimum wage here?
- Sablan: There should not be a federal minimum wage. I talked to Ambassador Williams in one of our discussions after we all agreed. Had a very interesting meeting with him and his assistant . . .
- Willens: Jim Wilson?

- Sablan: Jim Wilson. He said, "Manny, what do you think? Do you think the Marianas can survive without alien workers?" I said, "Malarkey, man, we cannot. We have to have alien workers here. Three percent natural growth rate, 12,000 population, you're going to move a hotel? I mean, no."
- Willens: This is after the Covenant was signed?
- Sablan: After the Covenant. And I told him, I said, "Listen, the other thing also, let's stop this nonsense, this thing about a unicameral legislature, that we have to have unicameral legislature if we're interested in political unity."
- Willens: Who said that?
- Sablan: I said that. It's impossible to have a unicameral legislature here if you want to bring in Rota and Tinian. Impossible. So you have to agree, I was very conscious that when I signed on this Covenant, I knew one thing very much in the back of my mind, that I know it's forever, it will never change. And it's a dilemma, okay? You have to make sure that this Legislature is politically inefficient. Before I signed this Covenant, that evening I went into my room and I lit a candle. And I asked the question in my mind, is this the best or is it something that is workable?
- Willens: And what was the answer?
- Sablan: I said it's workable. But don't ever believe that this is the best document. Because as far as I'm concerned, there's no way for the majority on Saipan to be controlled by a minority group in a political sense. And everything is political. And when you talk about money, you talk about political power. And if you don't have the votes, you have no money. But we have to agree on this thing, because there is no way for us to segregate. So I told him that we have to make the system inefficient in the interest of political unity. It's more costly to have two houses, but you cannot have a workable system, unless you have two houses.
- Siemer: So when Benjamin Manglona came with the Rota resolution asking for a bicameral legislature as a condition
- Sablan: Ultimatum. And if I were Benjamin, there's no other option.
- Siemer: But you thought at the time, as I understand you, that it was necessary to do.
- Sablan: Oh, yes. You would be wasting your time discussing otherwise.
- Siemer: Actually, there's a very (I'm also an economist) sophisticated economic theory that says it's better if politics is inefficient because if politics is very efficient they will spend the money very fast.
- Sablan: Precisely. There's a lot of things here that I feel very comfortable about. My thinking is that for as long as Rota and Tinian are economically dependent, there is always going to be this political issue of a bicameral legislature being more expensive. So my thinking is that we should make Rota and Tinian economically efficient because then we have no political problem. But now it's very evident that they can use this political power because they are not economically self-sufficient over there.
- Willens: But isn't it true that they will have the political power even if they were economically developed and self-sufficient?
- Sablan: Yes. But the need for them to use us as a lever will be less. But that's the kind of thing that when I got into this thing I was thinking about. You know, there are a number of things that are bothering me. I feel that there are a number of things here that would be begging

the question if you continue to ask. Number one is that there are still people here who feel that we should move toward a unicameral legislature. No damn way. Yes, you can have a unicameral legislature if Rota and Tinian want to sit on their own legislature.

Willens: Right.

Sablan: I think what we should be saying is that it's a good system that we have put together because this system prevents Rota and Tinian from being abused. They've been abused. At least Rota was abused, as far as I'm concerned, from 1944 to 1962.

Willens: Do you remember anyone on the Commission taking a different view when Benjamin came in with the request for a bicameral legislature?

Sablan: I think everybody from Saipan had some concerns. You see my frustration with the Commission is that I really did not have that much personal association with these people on an intellectual situation. We never sat down and discussed things. My discussion was always with Pete Tenorio, Oscar Rasa and Dr. Palacios. We were very close and exchanging views on some of the issues. I saw a number of things coming. From my perspective, [that is how] it was happening.

Willens: What are you thinking of?

Sablan: One is this thing about the Rota and Tinian situation. In fact, because of this thing, I spent a lot of time reading, because it was the same thing that the U.S. faced when they were setting up their Constitution. So that's why I was arguing with these people saying the one way to do this is the reason why we're having problems today, the U.S. has already solved these problems when they were setting up the 13 states and eventually brought others into the Union and they go first by authorization and then by appropriation. The problem we have here, the reason we're fighting here, is because everything you want money for is by appropriation. But the U.S. system, you just come in and authorize, you have an authorization of two years before it happens, and unless it's an emergency, a national defense matter, then you come in and get an appropriation directly. The U.S. Congress cannot come in and appropriate immediately. You have to authorize this thing first. So they give you two years to think. You see, in our situation, any time they say I want appropriation for Rota, I'll do it tomorrow. You see? So my thinking is that we go back and pick up those practices, because what we have done is set up a system that is patterned after the U.S. Now the U.S. had the same problems when they were beginning with Rhode Island and several others, New York. So my thinking is the same scenario here. If I'm a Congressman, why should I give \$100 per capita in Rota and give \$10 per capita in Saipan. There's no damned way you're going to justify this thing politically. But my thinking is that we have to tell these people that yes, where it's a 10 to 90 here, but always remember you cannot get a 10 unless you get this support from Rota, and that's the bottom line, that's the fundamental thing. That's what holds this whole entire system together.

Siemer: Why do you think Benjamin waited until the last minute in the last round to make that demand?

Sablan: Benjamin is a very smooth, very slick politician. I can read Benjamin. Benjamin is 200 miles ahead of you, he is always thinking. It was Benjamin that first encouraged me to run for office. It was the first time Benjamin came to me and said, "Manny, I want you to run." So I ran and I lost, because I never campaigned. He and I can see this thing. You know, I was very mad one time, there were a number of things that bothered me. But we did a good job. In my opinion, the Covenant was the best document ever put together given

the constraints, given the fact that we had no precedent to look at. But what makes the Covenant now kind of shaky is because some of these things were never followed through in terms of the mechanics. Number one, I told Benjamin that, regardless of whether we need the CHC hospital, we should not agree to eliminate the inflation adjustment. That's in the Covenant negotiations. I never agreed to receive a half a dollar's worth of currency. We settled those things during the negotiations. You remember they tried to change the fiscal year, and we were going to lose \$2.3 million?

Siemer: Yes.

Sablan: But some of these guys did not have the training, they did not have the technical knowledge. So I asked Ben, "Why did you agree to these things?" He said, "Manny, we need the money for the hospital." I said, "Money for the hospital is money, but I'm talking about fundamentals here. This is sacrosanct. You changed that thing, you changed the calculations here. So you lose." I asked him why he agreed that the Executive Impoundment Act should apply on the Covenant money.

Willens: Which Act?

Sablan: Impoundment Act of 1986. And they signed this damned agreement. I said, "Did you contact Howard?" No. You know, Howard, to be very honest with you, during the Guerrero Administration, Eric Smith came over to me. He was the guy who was supposed to be the person negotiating on the [Section] 902 negotiations. He came to me and of course he's going to be working with the Justice Department. I said, "I want you to have the Governor declare your office a national disaster and pump money into this thing. Believe me, man. I mean go out and hire Howard Willens and hey, we spent a million dollars to get the Covenant, and it's going to cost us a little more than maybe several million dollars to get it implemented." And my concern is that you need money to get the best of minds, because when you get into these issues, that's what I'm worrying about. You get into the idea of the Impoundment Act of 1986, the Presidential proclamations on how to use the money. Can you tell me after the negotiations that we're going to have a Presidential proclamation to draw the damned money?

Willens: Those things you're referring to came up at the time of (as I understand it) renegotiating the second seven-year commitment, and I remember Jim Leonard telling me at one point the Marianas representatives had given up some of their self-government authority in order to get the funding.

Sablan: Precisely. This is the thing.

Willens: Were you involved in those?

Sablan: No. In fact, they wanted me to be involved. I told these guys, I said, "Listen, we have to have money for this." In fact, I recommended that they should get you and Leonard back. They have these court cases here. None of us has ever been brought in to testify. Who would believe this guy? And I told Pete Agulto, I said, "Pete, this is a very sensitive thing. This is a fundamental thing. This is a foundational thing. This is Covenant stuff, Constitution stuff. Now when you start chipping away at these things, then what do you have?" Now during my time, I remember, when we first got in with Governor Camacho, we got in five pages of acceptance on the [Section] 702 grant for the first time. We sent it over to you. You simply said that we say accept this pursuant to Article something. What did they [the U.S.] want us to do? Quarterly reports and all kinds of things. Send it back. We got the grant. We control our money. And we should control our money, because this was all negotiated. There's something I gave up and something you give up; this was

not a one-way situation and this is not an organic act here. This is an exercise of self-determination that meets the test of everybody, including the United Nations, the whole shebang. And we had a plebiscite here. That is my understanding. That is where I was coming from. That's what moved me to sign this document. And that's what I did in the First Administration. Nobody gave us any problem during the four years of the Camacho Administration.

Willens: Did the people in the federal government understand . . .

Sablan: Naturally, because we had our position. This guy came to my office and they gave me a document to sign. I said, "Wait, what is this?" They said, "Manny, you have to do this." I said, "This is not the Trust Territory any more. There's nothing in the Covenant or in the negotiating history that says I have to sign a 905 cash disbursement report on Covenant money." I remember the discussion we had during the hearings before Senator Stevens about appropriations. I said, yes sir, we're the only ones that have a supplemental appropriation up front on the tail end. Nobody has that. Nobody. We're the only ones here that have a food stamp that has a local stamp. Nobody has that. Now we did all of these things, and we did these things using the Covenant as the foundation. What I see now is that it's not a U.S. problem. I don't think this was a U.S. problem. I think these were local problems here. We did not spend the money to get the people that should know all these things, like you, and fight to protect what we have agreed to.

Siemer: What were you doing during the Camacho Administration?

Sablan: I was the number one person there. I was the Budget and Planning Officer.

Siemer: For the four years?

Sablan: Yes. Maybe the reason why I was very successful was because I was in the Covenant negotiations, served in the Trust Territory, and then was appointed Executive Officer for the transition. So I was not only on the negotiations, but I was also on the planning and implementation side. So when I got together with these people from Washington, there was some basic understanding that we can talk about or relate to. But when I moved out and Benjamin got involved, he called me up regarding this thing. I couldn't believe what I heard—that they're going to renegotiate the [Section] 902 agreement and so forth. When I heard about this Presidential proclamation thing and conditioning funding on Interior Department controls, I said, "This is something wrong." I mean I can understand this thing. And Benjamin said, "Manny, right at the very bottom there was a sentence there that the Impoundment Act of 1986 applies."

Willens: Why was that agreed to?

Sablan: That's what I asked Ben. Why did they agree to this thing? Why did you agree to it? It would have never happened if they had brought you and Leonard into the picture. But I know it's happened because these people really don't have the background. They don't want to spend the money.

Willens: One reason why I wanted to talk to you about this was because of the transitional planning effort in which you were involved as well as the implementation. Putting aside the Constitutional Convention and the legal stuff, you did have some economic and social planning documents prepared. Was the work good?

Sablan: Oh, not only was it good work, but we over projected.

Willens: What do you mean?

Sablan: In other words, the OTSP projections were really very conservative. There's a number of things that are happening today that were never really anticipated. Had the plan been institutionalized, so to speak, and applied to the budget and the appropriation process and so forth, maybe it would have been a different situation. There's two things that happened that were not anticipated in the plan. The growth of the alien population is number one. Number two is the so-called impact of the fact that we're controlling immigration. During the Camacho Administration, eight companies came in. Headnote 3A, the minimum wage and control over immigration are the three components that really triggered the so-called economic explosion here.

Willens: But you had some people come in during your Administration?

Sablan: During the Camacho Administration, the first batch of people that were interested in Headnote 3A were the garment factories. I was completely against it. During that time I took a trip to Asia—to Taiwan, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Bangkok. I wanted to see what is this garment thing. In all the garment factories I visited, I saw that they were semi-mechanized. So I told Camacho that we should go ahead and accept the garment factories provided that they are a little heavier on mechanization, so that we could reduce the need for importation of labor.

Siemer: And have more skills here?

Sablan: Yes. And also move to improve the telecommunication system, because in those days we still did not have a telephone system. We had a telephone system, but it was just beginning. So nobody got in. We prevented the garment industry from coming in. Then we went out and started trying to promote Apple, computer chips and other such business. Nobody was interested because of the deficiencies in the communication infrastructure and the flight or shipping schedules. When Camacho lost the election in 1981, it changed to an open door policy. They did away with this thing. So the first garment factory got in. There was an onslaught of garment licenses—20 licenses were released—and that was the beginning. So when this thing happened, I knew right then that we had problems. The garment factories that I've seen in Asia and Hong Kong and so forth are not the same kind of garment factory as we have here. They are more mechanized over there than here. It should be the reverse, because they have more population there than here. But you cannot blame these people. That's profit, man.

Willens: Governor Pete Tenorio also changed the Foreign Investment Act.

Sablan: Yes. Everything became open door.

Willens: Did you consider changes in that Foreign Investment Act during Governor Camacho's Administration?

Sablan: No. In fact, as I said, I was very influential in Camacho's Administration. My position at that time with respect to economics was that it should be regulated economic growth, but we have to be mindful of two things. One is the mass, the number of workers; in other words, we should not get into an industry that would demand manual labor, but we should try to import skilled people that have supervisory skills or higher. Then zero in on the infrastructure. Get in immediately on the telecommunications. The transportation was moving okay, Continental was doing well, and also the hotels, so tourism.

Willens: Was that beginning during your time?

Sablan: Oh, yes. Definitely.

- Willens: How about the requirement that the foreign investors could only have 49 percent, or was it 51 percent, I forget?
- Sablan: Oh, that's on the Article 12, the land situation.
- Willens: How about just an ordinary hotel or other foreign business? I thought there was some requirement that it be a joint venture.
- Sablan: During the Camacho Administration, foreign investors could still come in, but they had to go through some kind of a process to determine how much they had. I think \$250,000 was the bottom line there and with so much participation. But there was no requirement there like the Trust Territory. The Trust Territory was more stringent.
- Willens: I see.
- Sablan: During the Camacho Administration. That's how we got in David Cahn. We hired David Cahn for that. Then Camacho fired him. But his job really was to put together something like this. But that's that.
- Willens: You mentioned that in 1978 there were some plans that you said were conservatively prepared, but you suggested that they were not implemented by being tied into the budgetary process or anything of that kind.
- Sablan: That's right, that's right.
- Willens: Was an effort made to do that?
- Sablan: We tried, but during our Administration there was a lot of fighting between the Administration and the Legislature. In addition to this, we also had the casino scandal. During the first two years of our Administration, it was basically political, as you know. There were some big fights with Oscar, also issues involving Camacho, executive authority, and all kinds of unified budget concepts kind of thing. So we spent a lot of time fighting. And then we also had the controversy with Rota—Camacho fighting against Rota. So there were a lot of things that could have been done by implementing these statutes, but it was not possible because of political fighting.
- Siemer: Let us go back to when you came on to the Commission, because I wanted to ask you one thing about Oscar Rasa's position. You said that Oscar was not opposed to commonwealth, but he wanted not a permanent deal but something that he could change his mind later on if it didn't work out. Was that what he was talking about?
- Sablan: No. In any discussion that I had, the impression I got from Oscar is that he wanted some kind of a political status that the Marianas can go through without committing to a permanent deal. Size the situation up and then at some point down the road decide whether to hook up, to go independent or seek another status. I got the impression that what he really wanted was something like free association, because as I said during those days, I was the least knowledgeable of any of these people. Because I never read up on it, nor got into it. But the impression I got is that the Progressive [Territorial] Party leadership—because of Oscar's stature as a politician, as an educated individual in this field and that he seemed to be very articulate when he talked about political arrangements—wanted him to be the lead spokesman in this field. In the area of economics, they wanted me to do the speaking for the party.
- Siemer: Did they expect that you would support Oscar's position with respect to free association?
- Sablan: Oh, yes. They expected me to support the party position. The party position at that time was to go against the Covenant, to go against the Commonwealth that was negotiated.

- Siemer: Dr. Palacios changed his mind.
- Sablan: In many respects, Dr. Palacios changed my mind. Dr. Palacios at the final round of talks was fully committed to the Covenant.
- Willens: What do you think brought about that change in his view?
- Sablan: Dr. Palacios not only was a very close friend, he was also a very close relative to my wife. I knew him for many, many years. When he came back from college, I became very close to him. He's very educated, too. So we spent a lot of time talking about economics and statistics and so forth. He's a very academic kind of a man. There's one comment he mentioned to me. He said, "Manny, we have to go out and pray before we sign the Covenant." He always suggested to me that I should spend my time on my own, sit down and think this thing through from the inner out. See whether my conscience and my heart and so forth—this was the kind of thing he was telling me. He seemed to feel that what had been done up to that point really was the best that we could possibly come up with given the U.S. position as well as the Rota position. All of us knew that Benjamin would walk out anytime that you raise anything like this, and that Benjamin also had another strong card, and that's Joe Cruz.
- Willens: Joe Cruz would have gone with Benjamin?
- Sablan: Oh, yes. Benjamin and Joe Cruz were seeing eye to eye. They knew exactly what they wanted. In addition to that, Joe Cruz had more to lose really because he was giving up two-thirds of his island. And everybody also knew that Joe Cruz was very close to the military. He was very close to Admiral Crowe. So we saw this. But as for Dr. Palacios, I didn't think Oscar could influence Dr. Palacios. I felt that Oscar and Dr. Palacios were about the same in terms of acumen, political savvy, and that both of them can read where they're coming from. They were more experienced than I was. I was getting more direction from Dr. Palacios because I trusted him more than Oscar. That's what my insides were telling me. But I also did a lot of reading. But I just didn't have that grasp on the political aspects of the Covenant. I never spent that much time on it. I came in very late in the negotiations. I didn't have the background, and there's a lot of information you guys had developed from day 1, and it's physically impossible for anybody to catch up.
- Siemer: What about on the economic side, though? Were you satisfied once you looked into the economic deal?
- Sablan: Oh, yes. I was very satisfied. There were a number of things that I felt were critical with respect to the bottom line. Number one, I felt that if the Commission were to move to get the federal minimum wage applied I would have stepped out. With respect to the Jones Act, I felt that was a no-no situation because of our economic posture here vis a vis the United States. Our market is different, the entire thing was different. In the same manner as Puerto Rico. They have to rely on the Bahamas. We have to rely on the Asian market. If we had a longshoreman's strike in San Francisco, we couldn't get our rice over here. So far as I'm concerned, the Jones Act issue really was very critical here. The Jones Act involved foreign shipping prohibitions. And we're dealing with the foreigners on these things. So that one was bottom line for me. The other provision I wanted was Headnote 3A. I wanted Headnote 3A really not for labor intensive industries, I wanted it for capital intensive operations. That's why I wanted it. During those days I was with the United Nations I traveled. I was very well traveled. So I saw those things. And I always got into the economics. The other one was immigration. On the immigration issue, there were two things that I was somewhat concerned about, but I was not really that concerned from the economic side. But I anticipated some concern. I was more concerned about the

so-called aliens becoming U.S. citizens. In fact, when I was appointed Executive Officer during the transition government, I called the Attorney General (Jack Layne) into my office and I really got after him. We signed the Covenant, we're supposed to get all the immunities and privileges of a U.S. citizen, but I don't yet have a U.S. passport. But I could not understand how an alien person from a non-U.S. area can just simply denounce allegiance to any country and become a U.S. citizen in Saipan. That one caught me by surprise, and when I got out from the negotiations, I thought that it's only 24 or 26 people that would qualify under this provision. But when these people were lining up there, I got worried, because I knew that it will not hurt us for the next ten years, 20 years maybe, but I'll tell you what. But again, in retrospect, I think it's okay. My feeling now is that, just like the alienation of land, I feel really in my heart now that just like the argument on the affirmative action that as long as we continue to differentiate us from other races, then we will continue to have problems. So my thinking now really has shifted dramatically over the years. I felt during those days when I was Executive Officer very bad about it. In fact, Dr. Palacios was very concerned about this.

Siemer: On the land.

Sablan: No, on the aliens becoming U.S. citizens. Very, very concerned. He was so concerned that one night he came to my house with a gun. Honest to God, this is a true story. Dr. Palacios came to my house with a shotgun and said, "Manny, I want you to follow me." We went up to Governor Camacho. Because there was this certificate of identity thing that was supposed to be released to a Filipino here, and as far as he was concerned and also as far as I was concerned, nobody should get this thing except these 26 people that we discovered in the negotiations. Dr. Palacios' concern was that if Camacho were to agree to this thing, then it would open up a Pandora's Box and we would have over 200 or 300 people here becoming just like us here. And he was concerned about those people getting into this. That was the thought then, but now my thinking is different.

Siemer: What happened when you went to Camacho's house?

Sablan: Oh, we went up there with a gun, and the Governor walked out. It was about 2:00 o'clock in the morning, 1:00 o'clock in the morning. Dr. Palacios doesn't double talk, this guy. You know him, right? We went in there and said, "Governor, I want to know, are you going to sign this certificate of identity? If you do, this is it."

Willens: What did he say?

Sablan: He said, "No." So he filed actions against the federal government. Remember the lawyer here [Raynaldo] Yana?

Willens: Yana?

Sablan: Yana. Yes. That was his case. Yana was asking for a certificate of identity.

Willens: I did get hired to represent the Commonwealth and try to get those certificates set aside. The problem had been that the Resident Commissioner . . .

Sablan: Precisely.

Willens: Canham had issued it. I tried to argue that his decision should not be binding on the Commonwealth, but Judge Laureta was hearing the case then.

Sablan: Precisely. Well, at any rate, that was not our job. It was the Resident Commissioner and the Attorney General. Then when Frank Ada decided to run for Governor, they appointed me as Executive Officer, so that when I got into the job, it was the first thing that confronted me.

- Willens: The Executive Officer of the interim government under the Resident Commissioner?
- Sablan: I was the Deputy of the Resident Commissioner, Mr. Canham. But it was too late. They already got the Legislature to provide permanent residence. There was a lot of political stuff.
- Willens: But on the land alienation point, did you support that at the time or did you oppose it?
- Sablan: Oh, very much so. I supported it. My concern really was more preparation, more time for people to get more sophisticated and so forth. But my position has always been that people should make decisions with respect to their own land, but for those people that do not have the training or sophistication, that they should be protected.
- Siemer: Do you think they became sophisticated during the boom time?
- Sablan: Well, Deanne, you know the saving aspects of Article 12 is that despite that they leased their land, they're still going to get the land back in 55 years. So believe me, that's a major protection. And secondly, if another Chamorro or Carolinian brought that property from you, it still stays with a Chamorro. So the problem you see in Hawaii and Alaska will not happen here. The concern that I have now is whether 25 years is enough for us to be sophisticated. My thinking, yes. There's more college graduates now, there's more kids now that have been exposed. We have more deals being looked at now. So in what, another five years, there's a referendum. Maybe they might pass this thing.
- Siemer: What do you think was the situation back when you were in the first Camacho Administration with respect to Chamorro patterns of saving and investing in business here? What was it like back then?
- Sablan: Back then there was no money, because the wages were very low and the prices were very high. So really during those days you didn't have any money.
- Willens: No savings?
- Sablan: No savings.
- Siemer: What has happened over the years with respect to patterns of saving and investment in the Chamorro community?
- Sablan: The Chamorro community over the years has become more wealthy. They may not have savings in the bank, but they have more land. And they have more income-producing property. And they're spending their money on their kids' education. So from the standpoint of wealth, Chamorros today are wealthier.
- Siemer: But it doesn't seem to be directed into investment in business, which will produce more income.
- Sablan: No, no, no. The Chamorros here on Saipan, for example, are in a better position economically than any other U.S. citizens—in Hawaii, California, or anywhere, particularly in respect to U.S. territories. Why? Because we're the only territory here where the citizens own property, and if they sell this property, it will be bought by another CNMI citizens. So that is internal circulation. Now if he were to go out and lease this property, he will get this property back and still make money during the term of the lease. So from this perspective, that is a major economic benefit for our people here.
- Siemer: That's right. Investment in land has been almost mandated because of that, so your people have been required to invest in land because they can't divest it to someone else.
- Sablan: Precisely the point.

- Siemer: But in terms of business activity, has it turned out the way you expected with respect to Chamorro and Carolinian ownership of businesses and control of business activity here?
- Sablan: In terms of like, for example, supermarkets or other ventures?
- Willens: Yes.
- Sablan: No, I don't. My speculation from the very beginning is that you need to look at the sheer numbers.
- Siemer: Because the numbers are so small.
- Sablan: 47 percent of the population is below the age of 18. These people do not have any money up front. If they want to get into business, they have to go out and borrow. So most of the Chamorro businesses here go bankrupt because there was no capital to start off. So they pay the CDA or economic development loan to get money. So they get into trouble. But they always have been able to get out of this trouble because of the fact that they have land. So they close up their business. They lease out the property. They get more money. The other interesting aspect is the homestead program. The homestead program here is very interesting, because these are the vehicles to transform land into economic value, and the government is playing in this direction. And again, they lease their land, homestead or land exchange, and they lease it to a Korean. So the land owner is divested of the opportunity of occupying that house, but he's getting money now every month.
- Siemer: And where's the cash that he gets off the lease? Where's that cash go? It doesn't go into investment in another business.
- Sablan: No. Right now a good portion of it is going to consumer goods.
- Siemer: So it goes back into the economy, which benefits basically foreign owners—either U.S. concerns like Budweiser or Jeep or GM or Japanese concerns who have other consumer durables.
- Sablan: Yes.
- Siemer: That was my question. Why is it that over this period of time, and maybe it's simply been too short a time, that cash doesn't get invested in business here?
- Sablan: Well, as I said, from the standpoint of the Chamorro, if you look at the number of Chamorros here, there is what, 60,000 population we have here, okay? In terms of indigenous Chamorro-Carolinian here, maybe about give or take 16,000. Of the 16,000, 47percent are under the age of 18. So 8,000 Chamorro. Now of the 8,000 Chamorros, do we have 10 percent or 800 of these people in business today? In terms of buying and selling goods and services. Yes, there's people that are doing this. But for the 90 percent, yes, they have money, they're spending it on consumer goods. The other thing also is that while this thing is going on, the government is generating other income.
- Siemer: That's right.
- Sablan: Okay? They're generating other income. So really these people have no incentive. Why should they work? Like my father was telling me, during the Japanese time nobody worked. Because everybody had land, you see. Now my concern is what happens after 25 years of Article 12. For as long as there is Article 12, people can continue to lease their property and not sell it, and hopefully have an annual income as opposed to advance payment income. You see, in my opinion we would still be very strong economically from the standpoint of the local people. But when you divest that land, two or three generations down the road, you're going to be up the mountain. And I see that everywhere. The

moment you lose your property, the next thing you know you're going to be a tenant. And then you lose everything. I see it in Hawaii. I see it everywhere. I don't see it here, and it will never happen as long as you don't divest that land. The other thing also is if you look at the record, in terms of land ownership by Chamorros, there's a lot of land. Like in my family, we have 180 hectares of property. A village lot, agricultural land, five hectares. That's 50 house lots of five hectares. Unthinkable. You cannot find this anywhere under the U.S. flag. Now my thinking is that because we have the time, we already are approaching 25 years of the Covenant—20 years, another five years—there's a lot of kids now that were not even born when we signed the Covenant. Like my child, he's graduating from college. Now he's in a better position in terms of knowledge, experience and exposure than I was when I signed this Covenant. So I have more confidence that he will protect what I left for them and what I left for them is very beautiful because it's protected by a very nice political instrument here—the Covenant, the Constitution, Article 12 and the whole shebang here. The other thing also is that if really this is a bad deal, then how is it that Guam is still fighting for what we have?

Siemer: It's true.

Sablan: Every night I listen to the Chamorro Hour. Howard, if you can understand Chamorro, I cannot believe what I've been hearing from these people. I mean, these guys were under the U.S. flag from 1898 and they're still fighting to get their land back from the military. Now in our situation, that's why I told the Governor, Governor Tenorio, and even Governor Guerrero, I said our program here is that when we approach the U.S. Congress or we approach people in Washington on the political side, that we should be painting a picture of where have we been both heading over the last 20 years. What I am saying is that, you know, I'm already 52 years old now.

Willens: No.

Sablan: Yes. 52. Okay? Now when I was 31, 52 minus 31 is what? About 20-some.

Willens: Twenty-one years ago.

Sablan: Twenty-one years ago. That's the time when we got into the political status negotiations, 20 years ago. Twenty-five years ago. Guam has been a U.S. territory for some 100 years already by next year, and they have not even reached first base. We are now going back to investigate what we have done over the last 20 years. We've achieved something here in a very short period of time that has given us, in my opinion, an unprecedented economic boom. During my time the budget was 97 percent federal grant, 3 percent local money. Now we are matching federal grants with a budget of \$237 million. Tell me what U.S. territory in the history of the United States, particularly the history of a U.S. insular jurisdiction, where you see something like this. Tell me or show me a territory that was not part of the so-called Interior Department. Thirty years of the last 50 years we were under the Trust Territory. In only twenty years of time we have accomplished this economic boom. Yes, we have problems, but I'll tell you what. When you look at your checking account and your financial statement and then look at also the situation out there in terms of the people. Look at our college graduates, people who are holding lands, who actually have land, houses, income-producing property. In terms of poverty (I'm talking about real poverty—people that go out on the street with their hands out trying to beg for food), we have none here.

Willens: But the critics are going to raise the issues of drugs and crime.

Sablan: Well, tell me a country that doesn't have a drug problem. Drug problems are not limited to the Marianas. It's a global problem. My concern here really is that some of these problems are not really because of the Chamorro or the Carolinian indigenous population. The problem is that we are part of the so-called global community—it's an international thing. An international airport here. So the moment you do this thing, there's no turning back, there's no trade-off here. You either flow and prepare to protect yourself as you flow on this thing, or you shut it off. We cannot shut this thing off, because of international and other obligations—U.S. Constitution, Covenant, U.S. statutes. If somebody were to judge the Northern Marianas, they should look at the people in the Marianas—indigenous as well as the U.S. citizens from the States—and look at their status in life, and say where were you 20 years ago? Where are you today? Twenty years ago, how many people were in Saipan and what was the occupancy rate in the hotels? Six percent, 28 percent the highest in 1978. Today, 3,000 rooms to choose from and more still coming. Now on the tourism side, these are people paying money, so really we have only two problems here economically. One is the alien workers. Second is anything that relates to drugs. The fact that the immigration authority and so forth causes the flow of immigrants, some of whom go into illicit business activity. There's a lot of that here that is happening, such as prostitution. But these are controllable. This is not really a federal job. This is our job. This is the Marianas leadership's job. So there's nobody to blame here other than our own people. But our people should go out and spend money to bring in the experts, bring in the specialists, the expertise. Like I was telling you before, for the CNMI government to be able to go and fight the Justice Department on Covenant issues, when you're only paying them \$60,000, what kind of a lawyer is required to do this thing? You need a lawyer that is qualified. If you want a good lawyer, you have to pay the price. There's no two ways about it. That's why in my opinion the Covenant was very well put together, because we have the best people—you and Leonard and the other people. But the moment you get away from this professional expertise, you get into trouble. Because this is not a Marianas issue, this is a national-level issue here that requires the best of minds. And these best of minds cost money. So that's why I felt that Froilan Tenorio—there's a lot of people complaining about him, but in my opinion, I like the guy. I really like his attitude. Because his feeling is this: if you cannot do it, if you have to go to Gates, the public relations guy of Microsoft, go to him if that's what it takes. Don't go to this regular moron there in the jungle and so forth, go to the best. Because if Microsoft talks to you, a billion-dollar guy, he will listen to you first before he will listen to a guy who's only \$10,000. If you go to CNN and put a taxman there, you get 200 million people exposed to it every night, okay, 10 million, but how much will be the return out of this thing? This is the kind of mentality that we need in the Marianas. But no, we want to go out and negotiate. And I know two things. We're going to do this thing on our own, okay? I'm not belittling anybody here. They may have gone to law school and passed the bar, and for what I know they may be grandfathered into the bar. We don't need this kind of thing. This is a very serious matter, it's a fundamental matter, so you have to get the best. And you have to spend money. The other thing that's bothering me about the Marianas here—everybody likes to be grandfathered here. They don't want to take examinations. Scholarships without exams? And you fail that commencement ceremony. 70 percent did. Can you imagine this thing? During my time, 47 of us competed by taking the exam and you cannot get one of the two scholarships unless you pass the examination. Believe me, the other 45 are going to study much harder next year. Because there are reasons for them to do so, because once you get the scholarship, it's 100 percent fully paid and you get the best of education. But here, no. You want to grandfather this thing. They're trying to find ways so that you can work for the government as a lawyer and then just join the bar

automatically. My God, if you cannot pass the bar exam, then what school did you attend? And for me to pay you something when you can't even pass the bar and then tell me that you are a licensed attorney, simply because somebody passed the legislation up there, this is the kind of thing that bothers me. But don't blame America.

Willens: How about those leaders in the other districts that you met and came to know over the years? They made different decisions for their people. They wanted to have their own country and their own laws and protect their local customs. What did you think of those judgments that they made? Do you think they regret them now?

Sablan: I don't know, Howard. As I said, it depends on their perspective. I think that if you put yourself in the perspective of say the Palauans—from their perspective, they wanted to control their destiny, and they're happy with what they have and they're happy with respect to what they foresee. They're not complaining. They wanted that. In other words, if you talk to a friend in Palau, let's say President Nakamura—Nakamura was my assistant during the Trust Territory Administration, he was one of the economists.

Siemer: Nakamura was?

Sablan: Nakamura. President Nakamura was working for me during the Trust Territory time as an economist. You talk to him, he's very happy. And the people voted, the majority voted, they're very happy. Are they unhappy that it took so long? I don't think so. Now the other thing also is that whoever is unhappy can move out. They migrate. They're here, or in Guam. They have mobility.

Willens: Why did the people here have a different perspective?

Sablan: Why? As I said, because the Marianas people back in the 1960s, all they knew was the military and Guam. So the majority, the Popular Party, the people that had the vote during those days, they wanted the United States because they saw the United States every day in the eyes of the military and the eyes of people in Guam. Okay? Then the relationship [with Guam], the Chamorro blood line, the whole works.

Willens: When you and Oscar came on to the Commission, did Oscar make any efforts in the last round to try to slow things down or change the position that the Commission members had taken.

Sablan: Yes. I think that Oscar was somewhat relying on that myself, Palacios and the others would follow his lead in this thing. I think what happened was that Oscar found out eventually that he was alone and that Palacios, myself, Pete Tenorio and the others were quite happy with what had transpired. We did some changes on the minimum wage law and so forth. And then in my opinion, Palacios was very pivotal—Palacios and Pete Tenorio—very influential at the very last turning point there.

Siemer: Was Dr. Palacios close to Felix Rebauliman?

Sablan: His brother was, but not him. And Felix as you know was against it.

Siemer: Was Oscar close to Felix?

Sablan: Oh, yes. Very close.

Siemer: After the Covenant was signed, Oscar started a considerable public education campaign against the Covenant.

Sablan: Right.

- Siemer: Oscar was quite an astute politician, as you've described him. Why did he campaign against something that seemed so likely to pass?
- Sablan: Oscar in my opinion was a very independent thinker. He didn't follow anybody's lead; he followed his own lead. He had always been a leader. The youngest Congressman in the Congress of Micronesia, the most educated person in his field, very articulate, a very forceful personality. He was also a good fighter. He had everything. If he wanted to become the first Governor, he could have become the first Governor. Really. Oscar was so popular, young, and he had everything. He was a very astute and a very shrewd politician.
- Siemer: But as a shrewd politician, why did he want to be on the losing side of that issue?
- Sablan: Oscar's feeling was that time would tell, that some of the things he was talking about would bear out, and it's bearing out now. Some of what he said then is bearing out now. My thinking is that it's bearing out now not because of the Covenant; it's because of the way the Covenant was followed through.
- Siemer: The implementation.
- Sablan: Implementation, yes. I agree with Oscar in some of the things that he said with respect to what's happening today. But don't blame the United States. Blame the people that implemented this thing.
- Siemer: How did you as a Territorial Party person get appointed to the Camacho Administration?
- Sablan: As I said, I've never been a politician, Deanne. As Howard knows, I left my Trust Territory job to join Pete Tenorio as the Associate Director for Economic Planning here, and then from there I was detailed to Canham to handle the administrative separation [of the Northern Marianas].
- Siemer: How long did you work for Canham?
- Sablan: I worked all the way up to the inauguration, and then I was prevented from campaigning for the first Governor because I worked with Canham. So I was in my office when Camacho walked in there at 9:00 o'clock in the morning to take over the job as the new Governor. He found me there and said, "Manny, stick around."
- Siemer: How was Canham to work for?
- Sablan: Oh, fantastic. I loved the guy. The only thing about him, like I said, was that there's so many Filipinos. The problem that we had during those days is, as I said, you cannot compare Howard's caliber to Jack Layne, the Marianas government lawyer who never got involved in the negotiations. These guys have no idea. You know what I told Jack Layne during that incident? I said Jack, I remember during the negotiations that there was a legal memorandum that was countersigned by both Howard and the Justice Department. Because I raised some of these questions. Eddie told me about it, and I saw the document. And I said everything is in there, and if it's not, then contact Howard Willens. But what happened is, as I said, it was during Canham's time, when Frank Ada was still the Executive Officer. These people went to the Legislature, which conducted an overnight emergency session, and passed the permanent residency law. Mike White was behind it. So it was a done deal really, it was finished. When I got down there, everybody had signed off, and renounced their previous citizenship. But at any rate, I got appointed really because I was on the job. And in addition to that, my family had shifted their vote and gave it to Camacho. Particularly my nephew, Joe Sablan. See, Camacho won by 125 votes—a very

close call. So it was a last-ditch effort. Camacho was supposed to run with Pete Tenorio. I don't know whether you still recall that, Howard.

Willens: Yes, right.

Sablan: So there were a lot of things happening. So while I was not physically campaigning, my family was behind Camacho. So that's really what happened.

Willens: Just a few more questions about the Commission. Do you remember the series of meetings near the end, before the Commission actually voted on the Covenant? What's your recollection of the way that Ed Pangelinan handled those discussions leading up to a vote?

Sablan: Well, before the vote, we all knew (at least I knew) that Oscar would not be there, and what's his name . . .

Willens: Felix?

Sablan: Felix would not be there. We knew that.

Willens: Well they were there, weren't they, during the discussions?

Sablan: Oh, yes, but they're not going to be signing.

Willens: Oh.

Sablan: We knew that already. Because at that point, to the signing, I think the signing was on a Saturday—to the end through that period, we already knew.

Willens: Did you personally talk to either Felix or Oscar about whether they would sign?

Sablan: No, because they never showed up. They decided not to show up.

Willens: Did you know they weren't going to show up?

Sablan: Dr. Palacios and I were, you know, very close. He'd been mentioning to me that Oscar and Felix might not be signing. And they were against it. They're not going to be signing. But we had enough numbers to pass it.

Willens: Did you think it was important for the Commission to try to get as many votes as possible?

Sablan: Yes, but politically, Howard, the Commission was basically very political during those days. You had the Territorial and the Popular Parties. So you have Pete Tenorio and Eddie on good terms. I was on good terms with Eddie. Palacios was on good terms with Eddie and also with Joe Cruz. Joe Cruz was really no problem because he was always supporting this thing. But the other members were basically followers. So when you saw Palacios and Eddie and Agulto were together, then we knew already how many votes we had. But no one could control Oscar Rasa. And we always felt that Felix would be more inclined to follow Oscar, because Oscar and Felix were very close, [from the] Congress of Micronesia and also his precinct, San Jose. Felix came from San Jose precinct. So politically Felix was always a supporter of Oscar.

Willens: Some of the people in the Carolinian community still thought that it would have been better for the Marianas to stay with the other districts.

Sablan: Oh, naturally.

Willens: Was that a point of view that the Trust Territory had when you became involved?

- Sablan: Right. Not only when I became involved, but it was the position that had been taken in the community for many years by the late Elias Sablan. You know Elias Sablan's father, former Chief Sablan, his position was the Popular Party position of reintegration with Guam. There was nobody talking at the time about free association, because free association came into the picture later on, through the Congress of Micronesia. So our only option was reunification or statehood. Now statehood was the Progressive Party position.
- Willens: Statehood involving the entire Trust Territory?
- Sablan: Yes. Unified, the entire Trust Territory would become part of a state. That was the initial position.
- Willens: Did the Chamorro leaders in the Territorial Party think that it was in their interest to affiliate with the other districts?
- Sablan: Yes, because you have to remember that the Progressive Party people were basically like myself. We were Trust Territory headquarters people. Palacios, the Director of Public Health for the Trust Territory. Everybody. Oscar was in the Congress of Micronesia. And during those days, they looked at the District government as a subservient government. You didn't see the big boys over there. You saw the big boys on the Capitol Hill. Now the big boys on the Capitol Hill were basically of Micronesian orientation. As I said, Palacios was known more in the Marshalls, Ponape and Palau than in Rota. He spent more time there. Even myself, I spent more time traveling to all these districts than to Tinian. I never went to Tinian for many years. So it wasn't because of the affinity to the Micronesian people, it's that we saw the Micronesian government as a system.
- Willens: That's an interesting point. Did the High Commissioner Johnston at that time take any position with respect to these political status issues?
- Sablan: No, but I'll tell you what. There were a number of incidents here in Saipan that in my opinion should have given the High Commissioner and the Capitol Hill people indications that there was a serious move to separate here. When some of the Congressmen from the Legislature here went up and burned the Trust Territory Code, you know? Somebody with a gun went out, took out an exterminator license to kill, went up the Trust Territory headquarters and parked his car there, with this gun. So this got some attention.
- Willens: I should think so.
- Sablan: Then they burned down the Congress of Micronesia building. I think that brought them back to their senses. I think we have to do something about this.
- Willens: Do you think the local community identified who actually burned the building?
- Sablan: I don't think so. But my feeling is that it was because of the tension there. My thinking when I first walked into the negotiations, Howard, if you had asked me my feeling, what did I feel, what was my first impression when I walked into the negotiations, you know what my impression was? It was military-oriented. The question I was asking myself when I first walked into these political negotiations was why should the U.S. be interested in the Marianas. Because unless you were interested, you will not be prepared to negotiate. If you're not interested, then no negotiation. So the first question I was asking myself was, what am I negotiating, and why should they be interested to negotiate with me. The bottom line was there was military. So my thinking was okay, if military rights is what you want, you know, a Communist deterrent, okay, then what is the other side of thought here? Do we have any other options? To be very honest with you, from my perspective, I was simply looking at it from an economic point, it really makes no sense to me really to hook up with the United States or to hook up with anybody unless that relationship made

the best economic potential. Because I always felt that if the entity is politically stable, and you have the best of economic opportunity with that stability, then why wouldn't you go? Why should I complain? But there are still people even today who feel very strongly about the war. There are some people here who were killed in the Japanese time, so some of them really, like Dr. Palacios, have some real sense of what it meant to be a community. There were people here during the Japanese time who were beheaded, were harassed, you know. I talked to my father. My father told me that in the latter part of the war he was one of those people supposed to be executed. So he also changed some of his feeling about the Japanese after the war. There's a lot of it in Guam—a lot of Chamorros went to Guam as military aides and beat up the people in Guam—Chamorro against Chamorro. So there's also that feeling there. But my thinking when I walked into the negotiations was that I was more interested in economics than anything else. That was my interest. But also I felt that there were people in the Commission more politically attuned than myself. They knew more about political status because they were involved in the Congress of Micronesia—Oscar, Rabauliman, Palacios. So they had gone through all of these things and were in a better position. Oscar was not privy to a lot of the information that transpired in the Marianas negotiations because he was not there. But he had a lot of background with the Congress of Micronesia position as a Congressman. But when we got in there, for the latter part of the negotiations, about ready for signing, then we spent a lot of time every evening, got together with Dr. Palacios, discussing these things.

Willens: Do you remember Ambassador Williams telling the Commission that the United States had decided not to build a base on Tinian in the near future?

Sablan: During the negotiations?

Willens: When you came on in December of 1974.

Sablan: No.

Willens: Do you think from an economic standpoint it would have been advantageous if the United States had constructed a base on Tinian as they had originally planned?

Sablan: Most definitely, because of the infrastructure. In fact, my discussion with Pete Agulto and the others was that it was a staged phasing, like a storage facility, a backup facility, but it wasn't going to be a major installation. My thinking was always that if we were to move economically in the Marianas—Saipan, Rota, and Tinian—you have to do something about the infrastructure. And the infrastructure was not there, even under the Covenant funding, to handle those things that should have been handled by the Trust Territory. In fact, that was one of the concerns Oscar Rasa was raising. It was Oscar's position that the United States should not be left free on this obligation under the Trusteeship Agreement to make the area economically ready to move ahead. So he was talking about infrastructure. So anyway, that was my thinking on the Tinian side. But I never thought for a moment that Tinian was going to be a major facility like the Andersen Air Force Base. I mean it just didn't make sense to me. The other thing also is that the lease term, the 100-year thing, as opposed to an ownership interest. That's another discussion we had. Because we never hired appraisers, you see. I asked Pete Agulto, I said do you have an appraiser for the Marianas side, because we had an appraiser hired by the U.S. side. I was interested in an independent appraisal on the Marianas side. I did ask that question during our own internal meeting. And Pete was handling that. So I was very happy when I found out that it was a lease rather than a sale, because of the Guam problems. That's it.

- Willens: All right. We've pretty much covered the ground, and you've been terrific. I think you've already given a closing statement. Is there anything else that you'd like to add to the record, looking back over the last 20, 25 years?
- Sablan: As I said, there's no regrets. I felt that there's a lot that we have gained, and we should be thankful for it, be grateful for it. Realize that the Covenant was never, at least I never felt that it was, the utopian kind of situation. But I tell you, it's workable. I felt really that we should try to do everything possible to get publications out that address some of these things, so the people here will know exactly where we were coming from. And that if there's problems as a result of the Covenant, identify those problems and see whether we could correct them. I feel that correcting those problems is not necessarily a U.S. issue, that it should be a mutual issue. I'm very concerned about the Section 902 consultation provision.
- Willens: [Section] 902, yes.
- Sablan: I mean, it's a joke. It was never intended. Our intention in [Section] 902 was to deal with serious situations, that this was supposed to be fully funded, should be operational, and that the U.S. Congress and the Marianas should try to resolve any issues that arise with respect to the Covenant.
- Willens: Thank you very much.