

INTERVIEW OF VICENTE N. SANTOS

by Howard P. Willens

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- Willens: Vicente N. Santos, known as Ben, is one of the great political leaders in the Northern Marianas and was Vice-chairman of the Marianas Political Status Commission. I worked with him closely for several years in the 1970s. Ben, thank you very much for making yourself available for this interview. I'd like to begin by asking you to provide me some background information. Where were you born?
- Santos: I was born here on Saipan, December 2, 1933, in the old Garapan city.
- Willens: Were your parents both local people?
- Santos: Yes, both of them local.
- Willens: Had they been here for many years?
- Santos: Yes, and they have died. My dad died about seven years ago, and my mom died about five years ago.
- Willens: You were a teenager during the war?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: What do you recall about your education under the Japanese Administration?
- Santos: I attended one solid year during the Japanese Administration. I learned how to write and read very simple Japanese. The Japanese school concentrated mainly on agriculture, reading, writing, arithmetic.
- Willens: I understand that they had a five-year program?
- Santos: Yes, they had a five-year program for the girls and a six-year program for the boys, and that's about it.
- Willens: You just completed one year before the . . .
- Santos: Before the war.
- Willens: Before the war. Did the educational system just stop as soon as the war began?
- Santos: Well, they moved all the Chamorros and the Carolinians out from Garapan City. Practically every family, both Chamorro and Carolinian, owned farmland on the island. So we all moved to our farm. In my case, we maintained a nice comfortable farm in Aslito. So we moved to Aslito after we were evacuated by the Japanese, because the Japanese soldiers came back to Saipan to start preparation for the war. So we were ready. We had that small farmhouse in As Lito.
- Willens: How do you spell As Lito?
- Santos: A-s-l-i-t-o. As Lito.
- Willens: And where is that located on the island?
- Santos: It's located about a mile and a half from San Vicente and to the south.
- Willens: And so as the war began, the local people left the villages and went to their farms or other locations. Were they free to move without any interference by the Japanese?

- Santos: Yes, we were free to move without any interference. I guess the Carolinians and the Chamorros here were very lucky because we had that close contact with the Japanese government.
- Willens: What was your feeling then about the Japanese? I've heard many people say that they have, for the most part, respect for the Japanese and some affection for them. What is your recollection now of how the local people interacted with the Japanese?
- Santos: I was only ten years old in 1944, so I had good feelings about the Japanese. We lived among the Japanese. When I was staying in Garapan, next door were Japanese families and they're very nice people. No crimes, so peaceful. Much more peaceful than today. Even when we moved to the farm areas, we didn't have to lock our doors. The doors were open, and around our area in As Lito there were about 1,000 Japanese troops. They never bothered us. Whenever they would come to the farm, we would barter. They gave us rice, crackers, sugar, taro yam and papaya, bananas. So there was this very courteous way of appreciation from them.
- Willens: Did the Japanese provide job opportunities for the local people?
- Santos: There were jobs, yes. Like the sugar plantation, for example. My dad worked for one of the sugar plantation companies. Jobs were available for the local people. Everything you produced at your farm was saleable. Everything. If you had one pound papaya, everything is sold. There was a market for whatever we produced.
- Willens: What is your recollection now of the invasion of Saipan in 1944?
- Santos: Well, in 1944 my family was staying in As Lito. I guess, in particular, As Lito was very lucky, because one of the Tenorio sons was found in some area in Indonesia. So he got on to one of the battleships. He told this particular battleship captain that his family was staying in As Lito. So the closest bomb that hit the As Lito area was about a half mile away.
- Willens: Let me see if I understand that. You mean a young local person of the Tenorio family was in Indonesia and found his way onto a U.S. battleship?
- Santos: Yes, he was taken as an interpreter.
- Willens: Who was the Tenorio?
- Santos: His name is Miguel Tenorio.
- Willens: Is he still alive?
- Santos: He died already. And so we were lucky. That's the closest bomb that really hit As Lito, about a half a mile away.
- Willens: When the Americans came on shore though, there were months of very intensive fighting?
- Santos: Yes, that's when I saw many casualties. Some areas in Finasusu, for example, were already fortified, so there was this intense battle on the ground.
- Willens: What did you and your family do?
- Santos: I lost my grandmother and my grandfather from my father's side.
- Willens: They were casualties?
- Santos: Casualties, and two of my uncles were wounded in these battles as the marines came on to the island.

- Willens: Did the Japanese change their attitude toward the local people after the invasion?
- Santos: No, in fact one of the officers informed us that the Americans battleships were already seen on the horizon and that we must be prepared. We had that notification from one of the Japanese officers.
- Willens: Were you told by the Japanese that the Americans would kill you or brutalize the local people?
- Santos: Nothing like that, not in our particular case.
- Willens: After the war concluded, it's my understanding that most of the local people for their safety were put into what were called internment camps. Did that happen to you?
- Santos: Yes, we were taken the same day they invaded Saipan. They found us about four in the afternoon.
- Willens: The Americans did?
- Santos: Yes, four in the afternoon. Then they took us down to one of the beaches, the Salimpio Beach. So we stayed there for a while, and then we were relocated to Camp Susupe. That's the big camp where I guess everyone was altogether.
- Willens: Did you think that was necessary?
- Santos: I guess so, because what they were trying to do is to get a head count of how many Japanese, how many Chamorros, how many Carolinians, and what have you.
- Willens: Did the Americans then go out to the local communities and tell the people to come into the camp, or how did you get the word that you and others were to go to a particular location?
- Santos: Okay. Shall we stop for a while?
- Willens: Ben, I was asking how the local people learned that they were to report to one or more camps?
- Santos: Alright. When we were discovered in As Lito, they took us down to Salimpio, where we were sorted out. You know, Okinawa, Japanese, Chamorro, Carolinian. So we were put with all the Chamorros and the Carolinians in one particular area. For about one week for registration and other matters. Then after about a week, they gave us new clothing and medical check-ups. Then after that was done, we were transferred to Camp Susupe. When we got to Camp Susupe, that's where a lot of problems started.
- Willens: What kind of problems?
- Santos: Sanitation problem. The people who were in charge at Camp Susupe were not ready to take care of all these people. So we got a lot of diarrhea, diseases and other things. One of my brothers died at Camp Susupe.
- Willens: Were the camps being run by the U.S. military?
- Santos: Yes, it was run by the U.S. military. But it was filthy, dirty and many people died as a result of that. Maybe they were not prepared.
- Willens: Were the Japanese and the Okinawans treated as prisoners of war and differently from the way in which you were treated?
- Santos: I don't know about that.
- Willens: How long were you and your family in the camp?

- Santos: I have no recollection how many months we were at Camp Susupe. I remember that when Chalan Kanoa was ready, then people started moving to Chalan Kanoa.
- Willens: Were ready in what respect?
- Santos: For residency. I guess the military prepared the houses for occupancy. So that's the time when people started moving to Chalan Kanoa. All of us.
- Willens: I understand there was a liberation day on July 4, 1946?
- Santos: Yes, that's the first time when we can say that we were liberated. The gate was opened so we could move around freely. Not extensive yet.
- Willens: Do you remember that as a significant occasion?
- Santos: It's significant, because we were able to go back to our farms and try to locate our deceased family. Like in our case, we went back to our farm in As Lito to look at what remained of my grandmother and my grandfather. Nothing remained, because they burned the farmhouse, because I saw them under a basement. So apparently they had to burn the whole house.
- Willens: Who burned the house?
- Santos: Maybe the U.S. soldiers.
- Willens: After the local people were liberated from the camps, were you able to resume your education?
- Santos: Yes. Right there at Camp Susupe, Mr. William Reyes started a small school.
- Willens: Mr. Reyes. R-E-Y-E-S.
- Santos: Yes, R-E-Y-E-S. And I was very surprised because I started learning Chamorro when I was four years old. I write and read Chamorro when I was four years old, so when I got into the first class, it's just the same letter. The only thing is that I didn't speak and write in English, and even if I pronounced the word I didn't know a thing.
- Willens: Were you being taught English in the camp?
- Santos: Yes, right there. Just the first day I started reading in English because I had that Chamorro training when I was four years old.
- Willens: Were you able to continue your education in later years in Guam or on Saipan?
- Santos: Yes, I finished ninth grade here on Saipan, which was the highest grade. Then I went to Truk for teachers training, that was a high school.
- Willens: Was that a high school for young people from all over Micronesia?
- Santos: All over Micronesia. So actually I finished my high school studies in only two years.
- Willens: In Truk?
- Santos: In Truk.
- Willens: Were there some of your colleagues from Saipan who also went to school at Truk with you at the same time?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: Who were they?
- Santos: Joe Cabrera, San Francisco Davis died already, Lisama, Joaquin Rabauliman, Cecil

- Nyland. Then the group that took the training on communication, including Vic Borja who works now for MTC . . .
- Willens: Victor Borja?
- Santos: Victorino Borja. And Usavio Chagula and Vicente Seman. These three took communications.
- Willens: Did you then come back to Saipan after your education in Truk?
- Santos: Yes and taught school right away at Chalan Kanoa Elementary School.
- Willens: When did you come back?
- Santos: 1951.
- Willens: So you began teaching in 1951?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: When did you first become interested in politics?
- Santos: Well, I was involved very early in politics—since I came back from school in Truk. I was involved from the beginning. I'm an artist, so I drew a lot of propaganda and campaign posters and all of that. That was my job.
- Willens: Were there political parties of any kind in Saipan where you returned here in 1951?
- Santos: None. I came back in 1951. There was no real identification until the Popular Party and the Progressive Party were organized. The Progressive Party being the business community, the business group. The Popular Party represented the grassroots people.
- Willens: What caused the two parties to develop?
- Santos: I guess we wanted more recognition of the grassroots people. Having the opportunity to go to school and learn about American democracy, at that time I saw the opportunity of a real democratic form of government. And not fearing to get up and talk about an issue. So our platform was opportunity for employment, opportunity to go to school, opportunity for homestead land. Because at that time I saw that only a few families were sending their kids to school for scholarship and job opportunity. So I saw this discrimination at that time.
- Willens: Discrimination of whom?
- Santos: Among the local people. In those days only a few families were in government, so they were able to select their own children to go to school on scholarship, have job opportunities, and what have you.
- Willens: These were the years of the Naval Administration of Saipan and Tinian?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: What was your general impression of the Naval Administration in terms of the services they provided to the people?
- Santos: It was very limited. So limited. The only thing, of course, that was good is that I never heard the words "budget" and "deficit."
- Willens: I've heard stories that when there was a need on the island, the Naval command structure would offer . . .
- Santos: Would provide it.

- Willens: Make the funds available.
- Santos: Yes, the only time I heard about budgeting and all of that thing was when the Trust Territory came to Saipan.
- Willens: Is it fair to characterize Saipan in the 1950s as being still essentially a subsistence economy? Were there any business enterprises on Saipan that you can remember?
- Santos: Yes. In 1950 there was small businesses—the Cruz's, Joeten, Villagomez .
- Willens: They were in business as early as the 1950s?
- Santos: They were already in business, and Matsamoto, you know, the movie theater, Guerrero with the bakery. And a few other smaller retail stores that serviced the people.
- Willens: But for the most part the people were engaged in small agricultural locations?
- Santos: Small agriculture and very good Naval systems.
- Willens: Naval systems?
- Santos: This was the Navy system on agriculture. With all the technology we have today, those systems yesterday were better than today.
- Willens: What do you mean by a Naval system?
- Santos: For example, my dad ran a one-half hectare farm. And there were extension agents sent by the Naval government. They came to your farm to assist you. And whatever you produce, everything was bought and sold here and in Guam to the military. That has dwindled so greatly.
- Willens: When did you first become aware of the facility at the north end of the island that was kept under security?
- Santos: I guess I forgot the year, but I had the opportunity to work with one or two ladies whose husbands worked for the Naval training unit. We were able to talk about the area, and I had the opportunity to go into the area with them. We've heard so many rumors about what's going on in there.
- Willens: What was your feeling in the 1950s about the island being maintained as a secure military base? Did you feel that was good for the people or not good for the people?
- Santos: It's very dangerous. I thought it was very dangerous, because this is a small island that the military was concentrating on with that type of training. So I felt very insecure about it.
- Willens: During the 1950s apparently, the Naval Administration permitted the development of municipal councils. Is that correct?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: Was that the first mechanism for local self-government?
- Santos: Yes, that's the beginning. You know, we had a bicameral legislature at that time.
- Willens: On Saipan?
- Santos: Yes. The house of the commissioners and the house of the council.
- Willens: Yes, I saw that. In fact, wasn't the council called the congress?
- Santos: Congress, yes. And the commissioners represented the different villages.
- Willens: Who created that early system?

- Santos: It's the Naval Administration.
- Willens: I see.
- Santos: I had the opportunity to work for the house of the council, as a recording secretary.
- Willens: That was a part-time job, because you were still teaching full time?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: How many years did you continue teaching?
- Santos: I taught 15 years, from 1951 to 1966. I went to Guam in 1954 and attended the two-year college program there—the so-called Territory College of Guam. That college was established in 1950 so I went in 1954. I finished a two-year program.
- Willens: Was that a two-year program directed toward giving you more credentials to teach?
- Santos: Yes, to teach.
- Willens: It was the equivalent of a teacher education program?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: What grade level did you teach?
- Santos: I taught from sixth grade up to high school.
- Willens: Was there a high school beyond the ninth grade in the 1950s?
- Santos: Yes, Hopwood was a stepping point for a higher education. When you graduated at the sixth grade level, you would move to Hopwood for 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, so I had the opportunity to be involved in the transition of all these grades up through the 12th grade. I remember my first 12th grade class had only nine students.
- Willens: They got a lot of personal attention then?
- Santos: Oh, plenty. So I taught social studies, civics, government.
- Willens: Under the system then in effect, could every student who graduated from high school get a government scholarship to continue to go college?
- Santos: It's selective.
- Willens: That's what you talked about earlier.
- Santos: That's right.
- Willens: You felt that the Naval Administration provided some opportunity, but there still wasn't enough opportunity for all of the students?
- Santos: Yes, because they selected a handful of Chamorros to be members of the scholarship board. And they selected their sons, their nieces, nephews, just their family group.
- Willens: Of the expatriates?
- Santos: No, no, just the Chamorros.
- Willens: So that the Chamorros who were on the appointing body favored their own relatives?
- Santos: That's precisely it.
- Willens: I guess it should have been expected. And it's not unusual. When in the 1950s did you become aware of the need to think about some future political status for the Marianas?
- Santos: Well, I had been hearing, you know, like Rota wanted to change its status in 1951.

- Willens: Now Rota at the time was being administered by the Interior Department.
- Santos: Yes. Rota suggested some kind of a status. Rota started in 1950. And during the subsequent elections, I was involved in all of the elections at that time already.
- Willens: During the 1950s?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: Even before the Popular Party was formed.
- Santos: Even before that. So when I reached age 25, that's the qualification to become a member of the Municipal Council.
- Willens: Is that when you ran?
- Santos: Then I ran.
- Willens: You ran and you were elected in 1960.
- Santos: 1960, yes.
- Willens: That was the first time you ran?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: Did you run then as a member of the Popular Party?
- Santos: Yes, under that banner.
- Willens: Now I understand that the Territorial Party, or its predecessor, the Progressive Party, did establish itself in part because of its desire to be annexed to the United States or to have some direct status relationship with the United States. Is that true? Was political status one of the key elements that prompted the development of the Party?
- Santos: Yes. At that time the Popular Party opted for reunification with Guam. You have heard about that, and we followed that trend all the way. Even though Guam denied this approach—remember they had a plebiscite? Lost out on that plebiscite. We never gave up.
- Willens: Why did you think that reunification with Guam was the most attractive way for the Marianas to achieve its objectives?
- Santos: At that time we saw that Guam was already in the American political family, and we saw the opportunity for self-government under the Organic Act. Remember the Organic Act of 1950? We saw that opportunity. Personally I thought that was a good basis to follow, and when Guam rejected it, then I had in mind that we had that history of wanting to become a part of the United States, wanting to become U.S. citizens.
- Willens: I've heard it said that both parties, the Territorial or Progressive Party and the Popular Party, shared the goal of wanting to become U.S. citizens. They differed on the means of achieving that program.
- Santos: Yes, that is right. It's only the means of reaching that goal.
- Willens: You speak of Guam in those days as evidencing some self-government which you found attractive. Did you think it was more economically developed and that that was something you also thought was important to the Marianas?
- Santos: Yes, that's one consideration.
- Willens: What were some of the others?

- Santos: The other one is self-government. One thing we differed with the Progressive Party is that the Progressive Party wanted to unite all of Micronesia. We didn't want that to happen because we were never at one point united, you know. We were united by a stroke of the pen, not from the wishes of the people.
- Willens: I know that was an issue that was worked with over many years, but as I hear you, you're recalling that even when you were a young politician at the age of 25, you were of the view that the Marianas did not have any common links with the other districts?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: And you had been educated in Truk, however, and so you had met many Micronesians from other districts.
- Santos: Many, many, yes.
- Willens: Did you not feel that there was some community of interest that you shared?
- Santos: Even at that early stage, I felt that politically it was impossible to get together. Maybe economic, yes. In economic terms maybe it was feasible.
- Willens: Well, why not politically? Did they not want to be U. S. citizens? Did they want to do something else?
- Santos: That's right. They wanted to run their own government like an independent country, and we thought that that was impossible. In my view, at that time, before the creation of the Congress of Micronesia in 1965, four years before that, I was elected to represent the Marianas at the Council of Micronesia. This is the first legislative body (without legislative power) that was created and elected by the people. So I represented the Marianas for four years before the establishment of the Congress of Micronesia in 1965. And even at that stage, we never mentioned political unity. All the six districts shunned away from the fact that this was not possible.
- Willens: The purpose of the Council, if I recall, was to advise the High Commissioner?
- Santos: The High Commissioner, yes.
- Willens: It was created after Interior replaced the Navy, is that correct?
- Santos: Yes, to advise the High Commissioner and in preparation for the establishment of the Congress of Micronesia.
- Willens: Yes, I'll come back to that. That is exactly right. When you were elected to the Municipal Council in 1960, what were the responsibilities of the Municipal Council at that time?
- Santos: So limited. But at least it was a good beginning, because we passed resolutions, we passed ordinances . . .
- Willens: Did you have any funds to administer?
- Santos: Yes, we got our funds from beverage taxes.
- Willens: Beverage taxes?
- Santos: Liquor tax, that's about it. And because the municipal government ran those businesses actually, at that time beer was not sold, was not franchised by any entrepreneurs. It was franchised by the government.
- Willens: I don't understand that.
- Santos: In other words, the municipal government sold to the retailers.

- Willens: The beer. So they could make some money.
- Santos: That's right. So we make some money.
- Willens: Beer's a very popular commodity.
- Santos: And you know we were paying the salary of the elementary teachers? We were paying the salaries.
- Willens: Out of that?
- Santos: Out of those funds, yes. So, in a way, we had that good start-up on our government.
- Willens: What changes, if any, did you see when the Interior Department took over for the Navy in administering the island?
- Santos: Well, then we started having problem on funds.
- Willens: How did that develop?
- Santos: I was teaching at that time, and we had difficulty finding money for certain supplies. So it was a new experience. We had to budget ourselves, unlike under the Navy.
- Willens: Were you aware of the level of funding that the United States government provided to the Trust Territory?
- Santos: I don't have any figure. I don't remember. But it was a tough time because the Interior Department was running six districts. Under the Naval Administration, just Saipan.
- Willens: Did you feel that when the Interior came in, therefore, Saipan was going to get less attention and less funds than it had enjoyed in the past?
- Santos: Yes, exactly. I remember we had so many second-hand telephone poles. They had uprooted many of those telephone poles on Saipan and sent them to the other districts. There is a 10-million gallon underground reservoir built by the Japanese. The Interior Department took all the steel beams and sent them to Truk to construct the harbor there. That's a big destruction to Saipan.
- Willens: So the reservoir could not be used.
- Santos: That's right, precisely.
- Willens: Did the local people have anything to say about that?
- Santos: We contested that. We went up to the High Commissioner and told him that that's not fair and that the reservoir should stay on Saipan because we have the need for it. But they didn't listen.
- Willens: When the Interior took over, did they have the system, then, of district administrators?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: So there was a district administrator . . .
- Santos: And the High Commissioner.
- Willens: He was not a local person, until Mr. Ada.
- Santos: Until Mr. Ada.
- Willens: In 1961 there was consideration being given in the United States government under President Kennedy to reevaluate United States policy toward the Trust Territory. Did you have any indication in the early 1960s that there was some change being talked about with respect to the TTPI?

- Santos: Yes, I guess you remember the Solomon Report?
- Willens: The Solomon group visited Saipan sometime in 1963. Did you happen to meet any of the people who visited?
- Santos: None, none whatsoever.
- Willens: Do you know whether they met any local people?
- Santos: I don't know, that's a mystery. They talked about it. What I heard was that beside the Peace Corps, there will be a change in the Trust Territory for more economic development, but nothing at all. I've never met any one of them, and at that time I was already a member of the Municipal Council. In fact, when I ran for the Municipal Council just the year before I transferred to the Marianas Island District Legislature, I was a Vice-speaker already . . .
- Willens: Of the Municipal Council?
- Santos: Of the Municipal Council. So we should have been advised of what's going on.
- Willens: Did you have any impression in the early 1960s as to what the Trust Territory Administration had in mind with respect to a future political status for the Marianas or the rest of Micronesia? Did the subject come up, for example, in the meetings of the Council with the High Commissioner? Did you or the other Micronesian representatives ever raise the issue of future status?
- Santos: It was a very touchy issue.
- Willens: Why was that?
- Santos: The only thing we talked about was the creation of the Congress of Micronesia. But none of us ever talk about separate status, like U.S. citizenship or free association or whatever, none of us. I guess, you know, the Micronesian mentality, we didn't want to offend the other guy. So we kept it to ourselves.
- Willens: Would you talk among yourselves about these possibilities?
- Santos: We didn't.
- Willens: Well, did you have the sense that the political leaders in the other districts were thinking about future status to the same extent that you and some of your other political colleagues were?
- Santos: We didn't discuss that freely. When I was a member of the Council of Micronesia, we never talked about any political status.
- Willens: Let's go back to the creation of the Marianas District Legislature and the first election in January 1963. How did the District Legislature come to be created, if you know?
- Santos: Other districts had already created district legislatures.
- Willens: Because they had been part of the Interior Department administration?
- Santos: Yes, so we were the last one to be created. Remember, we had this Municipal Council before. I forget the name of the political scientist who drafted our charter.
- Willens: Was he from Hawaii?
- Santos: He's from the U.S. mainland. I forgot his name.
- Willens: Did most of you who were on the Municipal Council then run for the Marianas District Legislature?

- Santos: Let me see, yes. Mr. Reyes was a member of the Municipal Council. I was a member of the Municipal Council.
- Willens: Let me hand you a list of the members of the 1963 Marianas District Legislature. Although I don't know many of those people, if you could describe them sort of briefly and, or as a group, how would you characterize them?
- Santos: The people who ran for the Mariana District Legislature—myself, Olympio Borja, Juan Reyes, let me see . . .
- Willens: Were most of these members the Popular Party?
- Santos: Yes, most of them. Let me count. Myself, Juan Reyes, Felipe Salas, Leon T. Camacho, Santiago Magofna, and Francisco Diaz. These are all the members of the Party.
- Willens: Was that a majority?
- Santos: Then we got members from Tinian, so we were a majority.
- Willens: What were the responsibilities of the District Legislature as compared with the responsibilities of the Municipal Council?
- Santos: I guess it's one step upward in political status. The District Administrator being that close to the High Commissioner gave us more autonomy because our laws were signed by the District Administrator.
- Willens: Your laws were signed by the District Administrator?
- Santos: By the District Administrator, so there is that one step higher than the Municipal Council.
- Willens: Did you have the same access to funds?
- Santos: We had very limited access to funds. Whatever funds we could get, we had to initiate it.
- Willens: Were there taxes that had to . . .
- Santos: Yes, we had taxes.
- Willens: What were some of the responsibilities of the District Legislature.
- Santos: Yes, it's one step upward in our political status. The District Administrator was appointed by the High Commissioner. The District Administrator signs our laws, so there is this good relationship between the District Legislature, the District Administrator, and the High Commissioner. We were able to talk more about development in the area. Even our resolutions were, in most cases, responded to positively because of that relationship.
- Willens: The District Administrator was appointed by the High Commissioner and the members of the District Legislature were elected by the people. Did you feel that the District Administrator's loyalties were primarily to the High Commissioner rather than to the community?
- Santos: Yes, we knew about that. We knew that.
- Willens: Did that not generate some tension between the District Legislature on the one hand and the District Administrator on the other?
- Santos: Yes, that's why when we had our own District Legislature we were always thinking of getting much more self-government. We had that in mind all the time.
- Willens: Did the District Administrator support your desire for more self-government, or did he try to discourage you?

- Santos: The District Administrator is on the safe side. He didn't make a comment one way or the other because of his relationship with the High Commissioner.
- Willens: Was the future political status and more self-government something that you raised with the High Commissioner from time to time?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: But within the Marianas context, not within the Council?
- Santos: Not within the Council.
- Willens: In 1961 there was a United Nations visiting mission that issued a report that some describe as being critical of United States administration of the Trust Territory. Did you and other political leaders meet with members of the visiting mission when it came to Saipan?
- Santos: Yes, always. When they came out here there was always a scheduled meeting with the Municipal Council, the District Legislature, and the public.
- Willens: Did you view the United Nations as a source of support for your economic development and your future political development?
- Santos: Yes, it was. I viewed it as a buffer, a shoulder that we can lean to in times of misunderstanding by, say, the District Administrator and the High Commissioner. We can inform the United Nations of what's going on.
- Willens: Do you think they had the authority and the influence to bring about change in U.S. policy?
- Santos: I knew from the beginning that perhaps they had very little leverage because of the nature of the Trusteeship. It's a different trusteeship agreement. It's a strategic trust and I knew a long time ago that it was a different trust arrangement and that the United States still maintained a strong hold within the Micronesia area.
- Willens: But did you feel it was to your advantage to criticize the Trust Territory Administration by the U.S. to the United Nations, or were you concerned that, if you criticized too much, you would incur some displeasure of the TTPI officials?
- Santos: We thought about that many times. But our responsibility, being elected by the people, we put all our thoughts in representing the people, not the High Commissioner, not the District Administrator. We had a good feeling every time the United Nations came out here, we had a good feeling to tell the United Nations some of the mistreatment on land problems and economic problems and all of that. So we had the feeling, once they came out here, that we could release all our frustration to the members of the United Nations team.
- Willens: One of the issues that was being debated in Washington at this time was whether to change the longstanding policy of the Interior Department here in Micronesia, which was characterized as letting the people develop at their own pace, not encouraging them to go beyond a subsistence economy, and the people in the Marianas seemed to want more than that. The United Nations criticized the United States for having the TTPI capital in Guam, for example, and for keeping this as a closed community. Did you complain about issues like that?
- Santos: Yes, we complained about issues like that—the slow pace of the Interior Department, not meeting the expectations of the people.
- Willens: Were education and health services major concerns?

- Santos: Yes, we complained. We even complained when the District Administrator was a Naval officer, we complained to the United Nations visiting mission.
- Willens: Now in 1962, President Kennedy did issue an order that opened up the Northern Marianas. More accurately, he transferred administration from the Navy to the Interior and then also, in August of 1962, he issued a directive enabling free entry of U.S. citizens, investments and vessels into the TTPI. Was that an important development for you?
- Santos: Yes, it was a welcome development. In fact, we went further than that. I remember meeting with Mr. Richard Taitano. He was at that time the director of Office of Territories.
- Willens: What was your impression of him?
- Santos: My meeting with him was specifically to discuss the most favored nation clause.
- Willens: This was in the early 1960s?
- Santos: Early 1960s. We wanted more development here in Saipan, especially, and we wanted to move on to our tourist industry.
- Willens: Even as early as the early 1960s?
- Santos: Yes, that very early.
- Willens: What had led you to believe that tourism was a promising area for economic development?
- Santos: Well, it's a very clean enterprise. In 1963 I was very fortunate to be granted the so-called State Department Leadership Grant. And I was asked which part of the United States I would like to visit. This is a 30-day tour within the United States. So I asked whether they could include Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands in my schedule because I read that Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands at that time were doing a good business in tourism. I also studied the location of those two islands, the tourism industry, and other businesses associated with it. And so I spent a few days. I even bought my own ticket from Puerto Rico to Virgin Islands, and back again, just to feel how this experience could be repeated from Japan to Saipan.
- Willens: Were you the first one from the area to do that?
- Santos: Yes, I felt from that moment that tourism is possible with that kind of trend. That's why I was after the relaxation of the most favored nation clause at that time. And maybe you remember Mr. Hickel, the Interior Secretary from Alaska?
- Willens: That was a long time later.
- Santos: Finally he relaxed that provision, so the Japanese tourists can start coming to the area.
- Willens: You were pursuing that with Mr. Taitano when he was head of the Office of Territorial Affairs in the early 1960s?
- Santos: Yes, I met with him to get some consultation, and he advised me, he gave me a lot of advice. After I got a lot of good information from him, I started going to the United Nations to ask for relaxation of that most favored nation clause.
- Willens: Was it your view that U.S. corporations and business interests would not provide development here? As I understand it, in 1962 when the area was opened up, U.S. businesses were free to come and develop here. But you thought it was necessary to permit Japanese and other interests to come as well?
- Santos: Others, yes. In fact, we pampered Town House to come out here and start this business.

- We wanted competitive prices, not monopolistic, and when Town House came and established business on Saipan, the prices went down in most cases 50 percent, 40 percent.
- Willens: Who was behind the Town House?
- Santos: The Popular Party.
- Willens: Was that Senator Borja?
- Santos: No, the Chamber of Commerce in those days just didn't like any of this competition, business competition on the island.
- Willens: I have heard that the Chamber of Commerce never really met for several years and was not receptive to new business.
- Santos: Yes, they were never receptive to anything at all.
- Willens: Now, how did the Popular Party encourage entrepreneurs to establish the Town House store?
- Santos: Well, we supported them.
- Willens: Were they outside interests, or were they local people?
- Santos: Just outside interests. They were just outside interests. We were looking for lower prices, competition, and employment.
- Willens: Was that being resisted by the Territorial Party because it represented the business interests?
- Santos: It was resisted, yes. It was resisted strongly and especially by the Chamber of Commerce.
- Willens: Did your efforts to increase the number of enterprises and improve competition get the support of the District Administrator?
- Santos: The District Administrator was very silent on those particular areas.
- Willens: It is your recollection that in the early and middle 1960s there were new businesses that came in that had a very beneficial impact on the community in terms of lower prices and more services?
- Santos: Yes, more services and employment.
- Willens: Now I understand there really was no hotel here of any size until the Royal Taga was created. What were the circumstances under which the Royal Taga was created?
- Santos: The Popular Party assisted.
- Willens: How did you accomplish that?
- Santos: We favored the Royal Taga to be established on government land, and our planning had been coming together nicely with the hotel. Then we got tourism coming in slowly. So all of this was coming together—slowly.
- Willens: Did you have any economic plan that you were developing? In that connection let me refer you to the Nathan Report which was the product of a study in 1965 and 1966. Were you aware of that study, and did it have any impact?
- Santos: I was aware, but we had our own planning.
- Willens: Did you?

- Santos: We had our own planning. In 1960 and after that the Credit Union was established for the benefit of the employees. That was established after my trip in 1963. I went to a small community, Waukegan, Illinois, to look into its credit union. When I came back, that's how our credit union started. So we had our own planning, our own developmental planning on our island. In fact I had an idea that maybe the same employees at that time would band together and, with payroll deduction, build our own hotel and get management from outside.
- Willens: Did you pursue that possibility?
- Santos: We started talking about it. In fact we had everything lined up, up to getting some loan from the so-called Economic Development Fund at three percent and we had a good reception from different people. But it didn't go very far.
- Willens: I have heard that the Economic Development Fund was available for enterprising local people who wanted to establish a business. Do you know any businesses that took advantage of that?
- Santos: Yes, in fact my group took advantage of it. We had a small poultry farm, and I'm a good poultry man. I grew up on the farm and I studied poultry.
- Willens: It's about this time that you stopped teaching, about 1966?
- Santos: I stopped teaching in 1966 to take up a full-time position as President of the Marianas Island District Legislature.
- Willens: You mentioned earlier that the Council of Advisors, or whatever it was called, led to the Congress of Micronesia. Did the idea of a Congress of Micronesia come from the Council or from the Interior Department?
- Santos: From the Council of Micronesia. But, you know, the Interior Department is always playing a role.
- Willens: What did you hope would be accomplished by that?
- Santos: The Council of Micronesia had no real legislative authority. Mostly resolutions. So we selected a district every year where we met. During our term in the Council of Micronesia, we were already studying how to create a bona fide legislative body with all the authorities that attach to it.
- Willens: Did you have any role in drafting or reviewing the draft of the Secretarial Order that created the Congress of Micronesia?
- Santos: Yes, we had the opportunity. The Council of Micronesia was given the opportunity to review the draft.
- Willens: Did you know that the draft Secretarial Order was the subject of considerable differences in Washington as between the State Department on the one hand and the Interior Department on the other?
- Santos: I don't remember that.
- Willens: Did you have any dealings with State Department officials in the early and middle 1960s?
- Santos: No, none at all.
- Willens: Do you remember any visits from members of the United States Congress in that time period in which the subject of self-government or political status might have come up?

- Santos: Well, during the 1960s, I don't remember that early.
- Willens: The Congress of Micronesia was created in 1965. Did you consider running for the Congress?
- Santos: I ran for the Congress of Micronesia, yes, and I lost out.
- Willens: You lost.
- Santos: Yes. I lost out. I guess I was not that enthusiastic to get into that body yet, because I was more interested in my position in the District Legislature. I was already in the midst of charting our political status, so I didn't work that hard. So I lost out for all from Rota. I won all from Saipan.
- Willens: Who won your seat?
- Santos: I don't know. Because it's the first Congress of Micronesia.
- Willens: First Congress of Micronesia. I forget who were the initial members.
- Santos: When Rota was counted, I guess I lost out by 20 votes.
- Willens: I see.
- Santos: But I was not that interested in running for the Congress of Micronesia, because I knew at that time that my basic interest is at the District Legislative level, because there I can exert all my effort in the preparation for our political status.
- Willens: Who were the most active political leaders within the Popular Party at the time? You mentioned Mr. Salas.
- Santos: Yes, Salas, and Dr. Palacios.
- Willens: Dr. Palacios. Was he in your party at the time?
- Santos: Yes, then he switched to the Territorial Party.
- Willens: Did a young man named Mitch Pangelinan become active?
- Santos: Mitch was active. Frank Diaz was active, too.
- Willens: One of the questions that was debated in Washington during this period of time was the extent to which the people in Micronesia in general and in the Northern Marianas were ready for self-government. Some federal officials took the view that the people out here were not ready for self-government, that they could not handle those responsibilities. Others took a contrary view. Did you have a sense in the 1960s that you and your colleagues were ready to assume the responsibilities of self-government?
- Santos: Well, in 1960, knowing that this is not an overnight issue, it takes years and years. Had we not started early, perhaps today we don't have commonwealth. So we had to start someplace and to get a head start, and in the process learn more about it. It's good timing. We had close to about 20 years of political aspirations, and when it came the right time in January 1978, we had our Constitution, our Covenant. Maybe some people might say we were not ready yet. But we had all this experience already. The same thing that we've seen every day. The District Administrator, the High Commissioner responsibility, and so when finally we were given the opportunity for self-government, I guess that we were ready. We were ready.
- Willens: If someone had met you in 1965 and said that he didn't think you and the Northern Marianas were ready for self-government, would you have argued with him?

- Santos: Well, I would say to him that at that particular time we were not ready. But if we don't start early, we'll never be ready. We have to start someplace. Some point in time where we can educate ourselves. Such education has to be more open, create more debate, create problems within the community, and present questions that can be answered by some people. Otherwise, if the United States would say at one time: AMarianas, here you are, like it or not, become a U.S. citizen tomorrow. Then maybe we were not ready for that. But we were getting ready all the time. We were educating ourselves in the process.
- Willens: During this entire period of time up until 1969, when the Guamanian voters rejected reintegration, you and the Popular Party were still sponsoring reintegration with Guam.
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: And the Territorial Party was sticking to its somewhat different view.
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: What is your assessment now about the Congress of Micronesia? Specifically, did you think it played a constructive role in trying to develop some sense of unity within Micronesia?
- Santos: In a way, the creation of the Congress of Micronesia was a blessing in disguise for us. When that body was created in 1965, I saw the opportunity of a more open political discussion that would give the Northern Marianas a chance to air its feelings and aspirations about political status. It gave us that sense of respect. When the Congress of Micronesia's political status commission was created, that again gave us more leverage to come in and discuss with them that the Northern Marianas cannot be a part of what the Congress of Micronesia envisioned as a free associated state.
- Willens: You made the point earlier that within the Council of Micronesia there was some reluctance to talk about future status alternatives.
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: But it is your recollection that once the Congress of Micronesia was created, that provided a new forum in which discussions about political status could appropriately take place in an open manner?
- Santos: Exactly.
- Willens: And that then gave the Marianas representatives a new forum in which to state their specific aspirations.
- Santos: Exactly, because the Council of Micronesia was nothing more than a body that met from time to time with the High Commissioner with no authority to legislate. But when the Congress of Micronesia was created, I said to myself, now this is the ultimate avenue.
- Willens: You did mention the Future Status Commission that was created by the Congress of Micronesia in 1967; it issued an interim report in 1968 and a final report in 1969. The final report recommended a relationship called free association or, as an alternative, independence. Did you know that the Commission was tending in that direction?
- Santos: For free association?
- Willens: Yes. Dr. Palacios was a member of the Commission, as I recall. Were you kept informed by him or anyone else what the Commission was doing and thinking?
- Santos: Yes. Eddie Pangelinan and Herman Guerrero informed us of what was going on, especially

- at the District level. We knew what's going on. We followed the sessions of the Congress of Micronesia.
- Willens: At one point, the Congress of Micronesia passed a resolution asking President Johnson to create a commission to study status alternatives for Micronesia and make recommendations. The United States government never reacted to that resolution, and so the Congress of Micronesia created its own Commission. What was your reaction when the Commission came out with its recommendation that Micronesia pursue a free association relationship?
- Santos: Well, to me it was not a big surprise, because all along we do not opt for that type of relationship. We wanted closer ties with the United States, and we rejected that recommendation.
- Willens: Shortly thereafter, the United States presented what was called the so-called Commonwealth Proposal to the Micronesian Delegation on Future Status and they rejected it. What is your recollection of that event and its significance?
- Santos: Well, we supported that avenue, that status. Having had the opportunity to know a little about Puerto Rico's status, that gave us more leverage to come to it. And we told Eddie Pangelinan and Herman Guerrero that that's contrary to what the group wants for the future political status, because it's not closer to the United States.
- Willens: During the 1960s, the United States did increase the level of funding for the Trust Territory. Do you believe that the funds that were spent in the Northern Marianas were well spent for schools or infrastructure?
- Santos: I don't remember that particular year, you know.
- Willens: During the whole decade, the funding increased from about \$7 million per year to \$15 million to \$35 million a year. I'd just like to get your judgment about how well, during the ten years from 1960 to 1970, do you think the United States performed its responsibilities here in the Marianas?
- Santos: We were getting some funding, as I mentioned earlier. Under the Interior Department we have six districts and the Northern Marianas had already shown some improvement. Funding to this area was very minimal. Most of the funding had to be concentrated on the other districts. That is one of the reasons why we were so negative about the continuance of that type of arrangement. Remember the time when Congress of Micronesia was trying to increase the tax on fuel . . .
- Willens: And tourism.
- Santos: And tourism. I mean reduce the tax of fuel. They used a lot of fuel on the islands because they used a lot of outboard motors. In those days, very, very few cars on Saipan.
- Willens: Very few what?
- Santos: Very few cars on Saipan. So they reduce the copra tax. Copra is so important in the other five districts. So there is this kind of feeling that the Congress of Micronesia was not meant for the Marianas District.
- Willens: What would you say were the principal differences between the Marianas on the one hand and the other five districts? You mentioned a few—the desire for U.S. citizenship, for example, the differing level of economic development. What were the other factors?
- Santos: Basically it's customs. You know culture has to play an important role in economic developments, political developments. In Saipan, at that period of time, we were more

free than the other five districts. We had our own customs. We had our own culture, but that will not deter our movement to self-government.

Willens: There was some concern within the Carolinian community, wasn't there, about a separate status for the Northern Marianas?

Santos: Yes, especially the Carolinian community here. Many of them came from Yap and thought at that time that because they are in the minority group, they might not be a part of the system. But we saw it different. We saw it different. When I was teaching at Hopwood High School, we had Abe Olopai, Limes, Joe Taitano, Joaquin Rabauliman, Felix Rabauliman . . .

Willens: These are teachers or students?

Santos: Teachers.

Willens: All teachers.

Santos: Yes, these were our counterparts, and we never looked at them as a separate entity. We just wanted one group of people. I was brought up in the Carolinian community in the southern part of Garapan when I was growing up. So I have a very close attachment with the Carolinians, even when I went to Truk for two years. That's not strange to me. I can speak a little Trukese.

Willens: Could you talk to the Carolinian leaders and try to persuade them that they need not be worried about a separate Northern Marianas?

Santos: Yes, we explained that, that this is just one status for one Marianas.

Willens: It's been suggested to me that Carolinians tend to be somewhat more passive than the Chamorros and tend to defer to the decisions made by their leaders. Is that a fair characterization?

Santos: Well, the Carolinians I know twenty years ago were afraid. They didn't want the Chamorros to make any determination for their future. They wanted their own leaders. You know, they have their own leaders like Dr. Kaipat, Elias Sablan, deceased now, and John Tagliburu. And we respected that. We respected that.

Willens: You mentioned earlier that in 1969 the Guamanian voters had a referendum on reintegration with the Northern Marianas, and it was defeated. Do you have any judgment as to why the Guamanians rejected that proposal?

Santos: There are several reasons. One reason is that the Guamanians were afraid that the Chamorros from Saipan would go to Guam and take most of the jobs. That's one fear. Second is that there was very little political education on the reintegration issue, unlike Saipan. It was hotly contested here. So even after the defeat there, we never let our guard down. We just said that that's one political accomplishment on our part to show that we wanted to be a part of Guam and that, if the United States subsequently blamed us that we are separatist, we would just show them that all along we wanted to be a part of Guam, so that these islands and the people would become one.

Willens: After the referendum went down to defeat, did the Popular Party then change its strategy for pursuing separate status?

Santos: We were going strong yet at that time for reintegration. We never let it down.

Willens: But it was voted down.

Santos: Voted down. We continued to stress the point that Guam was not ready at that time when

- they defeated the referendum. But then when we had the opportunity to have our own self-government, we took a strong stand.
- Willens: Was the Royal Taga Hotel part of the deal with Ken Jones relating to the lease of land on Tinian? Was that all part of a package deal, or don't you know?
- Santos: I really don't know. I've never heard the two together.
- Willens: I'm not sure, either. Just trying to recall what this island was like in 1969 or thereabouts. Did Continental then have a contract with the Trust Territory government to provide airline service throughout the area?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: And did they have an obligation to build a hotel in each of the districts?
- Santos: I guess so, because they built one in Garapan, the Hyatt now. That was . . .
- Willens: . . . the Continental Hotel . . .
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: That was the first major hotel after the much smaller Royal Taga?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: And that was followed by the Intercontinental Hotel?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: But before Continental got the airline service, if you wanted to fly from here to the Marshalls or Truk, how would you do it?
- Santos: The Navy had an airplane, the so-called SS16.
- Willens: SS16.
- Santos: SS16. I don't know how many passengers, maybe 13?
- Willens: So the Navy provided passenger service? One plane?
- Santos: Yes, very unreliable. One plane. I used to ride on that plane in the 1960s, especially 1961, 1962. And when you get to Yap and you think of going out next week, forget it. You've got to bring at least a one month's supply of clothing and what have you because there's always a problem—they call it a mechanical problem. So, it's a tough undertaking, very tough for the early leaders in Micronesia. And I experienced that staying in the Marshalls, Yap, Palau, month after month.
- Willens: Even though you didn't want to?
- Santos: Even though you didn't want to.
- Willens: Was there telephone service from here to Guam?
- Santos: Yes, there was a reliable telephone. Not the telephone like MTC now, it's a radio.
- Willens: Radio?
- Santos: A radio telephone.
- Willens: And did you have television here? I heard there was just black and white until the late 1960s or the early 1970s.
- Santos: Black and white. In San Vicente we didn't have television until the cable came to San Vicente, because we could not pick up a reception from the cable station.

- Willens: How about the utilities, particularly the supply of water and the supply of electricity?
- Santos: Water was bad, for example, in San Vicente. When I moved here in 1971, there was no city water. I had to get my water out in the street. There was a thousand-gallon tank, so each family would have to get its own container, to get the water from there. But when I moved here in 1971, I made it my project to get San Vicente water, so we got water. We got the half-a-million-gallon reservoir just above the church. That was one of my projects.
- Willens: How about electricity? I heard and read complaints of power outages.
- Santos: You buy a refrigerator today, tomorrow it's no good again. It's the fluctuation of the power.
- Willens: Is that still a problem?
- Santos: Oh, no, now it's better. It was a problem.
- Willens: It was a problem in the 1960s and the early 1970s.
- Santos: Yes, 1960s, early 1970s. Now much better, lot of improvement with power. I don't remember having my refrigerator and other equipment down because of electricity. We have a constant level of good electricity now.
- Willens: When did you first meet Ed Pangelinan? Did you know him as a boy?
- Santos: I knew Ed since he was a student. When he went to school, came back, and even when he was the first Chamorro local attorney to graduate. I remember him very vividly when he became a member of the Congress of Micronesia.
- Willens: What do you remember of him at that time?
- Santos: He ran under the Popular Party banner, he's an attorney, and a very good person.
- Willens: Was he a good campaigner?
- Santos: He's a good campaigner, yes. He's very good.
- Willens: Were you surprised that he won? Did all the Popular Party candidates win that year? I guess that was 1970, wasn't it?
- Santos: No, we were expecting that he will have the opportunity to win the election. In those days not many local people go to school and come back, and especially being an attorney. If you come back as an attorney, as a doctor, a priest maybe, if you are a priest running now, you have a chance to win the election.
- Willens: There's a lot of basic respect in the community for the educated?
- Santos: For the educated, especially attorneys. We learned at that time that with the few attorneys we had from the public defender, they were helping the community.
- Willens: The Peace Corps also supplied some attorneys. What was your impression of the Peace Corps program in the 1960s?
- Santos: It's good that they came out here, some were very good Peace Corps. Some were very good. Some Peace Corps I know, maybe they had this culture shock coming to an island with very little recreational places to go, and what have you, really changed their attitude. So there was an attitude problem with some Peace Corps.
- Willens: Was their attitude one of anti-Americanism or anti-local people, or how would you describe it?

- Santos: It's an attitude of being a U.S. citizen, or American, sophisticated, they come from a big country, sophistication, that type of attitude.
- Willens: Did they tend to look down on the local people?
- Santos: Look down on the local people.
- Willens: Some Peace Corp volunteers were criticized by the Trust Territory Administration because the Peace Corps volunteers helped the local people run their district legislatures or developed complaints about the homesteading program. Do you have any recollection of that kind of dispute?
- Santos: They sent one attorney to my office. I fired the guy maybe two days later.
- Willens: They offered you a Peace Corps lawyer at the District Legislature?
- Santos: Yes, and I fired him two days later.
- Willens: Why did he make such a bad impression?
- Santos: Well, his attitude. It's an attitude problem.
- Willens: At the time you had this experience with the Peace Corps lawyer, was Bill Nabors employed by the District Legislature as legislative counsel?
- Santos: Not yet at that time.
- Willens: When did Bill Nabors come to be employed by the Legislature?
- Santos: My goodness, I don't remember the year.
- Willens: And did he work with you for several years?
- Santos: Yes, he worked with us several years. He helped us.
- Willens: Did he help you with the drafting of statements and resolutions?
- Santos: Yes, statements, resolutions, bills, and he's a great help.
- Willens: After Ed Pangelinan was elected to the Congress of Micronesia in 1970, he and Congressman Herman Q. Guerrero ended up as members on the Joint Future Status Committee of the Congress of Micronesia. I have interviewed Mr. Pangelinan, as you know. Did you and your Popular Party leaders stay in close contact with Ed Pangelinan and Herman Guerrero with respect to the work of the Joint Committee?
- Santos: Yes, we had a good working relationship.
- Willens: Who was part of the group that you would say shaped the direction of the Popular Party in those years?
- Santos: Well, like Eddie and Herman. We look at them because they are higher than us in the delineation of authority. The Congress of Micronesia is the highest legislative body in Micronesia, then the District Legislature, then the Municipal Council. We looked at both of them, Eddie and Herman, as important people. Together with the Municipal Council speaker, the officers, and in the District Legislature it's the Holdover Committee, which represented all the chairmen of the standing committees.
- Willens: Did there come a time when you and the leaders in the Legislature and Municipal Council decided that Ed Pangelinan and Herman Q. Guerrero ought to approach the United States with a request for separate status negotiations?
- Santos: Yes, we discussed that.

- Willens: Do you remember what prompted your decision to encourage them to do that?
- Santos: Because the Congress of Micronesia was already opting for a free associated status. We were afraid that our aspirations would never be discussed and reviewed by the U.S. side, where Ambassador Williams was the spokesperson.
- Willens: But you were aware that the U.S. position was that it did not want to have separate negotiations and it wanted to try to work out a common status for all six districts?
- Santos: Yes, we knew about that. We had, as I pointed out earlier, a very strong historical background supporting closer ties with the United States.
- Willens: The historical background rested on the series of resolutions over the years, the desire for reintegration with Guam, the desire to be U.S. citizens, and then some of the differences that you had with the other districts.
- Santos: Yes, it's all in the record.
- Willens: What was your strategy for trying to persuade the United States to change its mind?
- Santos: Well, the United States cannot put us together, it is very clearly in the United Nations Charter.
- Willens: It was your view that the United Nations could not force the . . .
- Santos: The United States could not force us. Had the United States delegation refused to give us the opportunity to negotiate, we will just secede from the Congress of Micronesia. We told Eddie about that.
- Willens: You will do what?
- Santos: Secede from the Congress of Micronesia, we will secede from the rest of the Trust Territory. We told the United Nations about that.
- Willens: That's true, but there was a visiting mission in 1961 that we talked about. Then there were visiting missions in 1964, 1967 and 1970. All of those visiting missions heard your desire for separate negotiations, and all of them criticized the United States for letting you and your colleagues express yourself in this way. They urged the United States not to tolerate separate status negotiations with the Marianas. Do you remember urging your case to the United Nations visiting missions time after time?
- Santos: Yes, and we said all along that the United States is not at fault. The United States should not be blamed for wanting to give us a separate negotiation, because this is our will, this is our aspiration, and it would just slow down the process of political status for the other districts if the United States never accepted our position for a separate status negotiation. We knew—I knew all along that the United States will have to give us that separate status, we had all the record in the past.
- Willens: But the United Nations visiting mission reports were, in my opinion (and it's very subjective), very patronizing of the Marianas sentiments. They suggested that you were motivated primarily because of the material advantages that you saw on Guam, for example, and they were hopeful that the Congress of Micronesia could work out some loose confederation within which you might find satisfaction. Do you remember conclusions of that kind?
- Santos: Yes, I don't quite remember the exact text. But yes, they expounded that kind of theory, but all along we said to ourselves and we expressed to the United Nations visiting missions that these islands cannot politically get together. It is better that each island run its own

- affairs. Yap, Palau, they are so close to each other, but they have very different cultures, customs.
- Willens: But to some extent the Marianas strategy in the Congress of Micronesia was to emphasize the differences of the Marianas from the other five districts, but then try to discourage the Marshalls and Palau from expressing similar separatist sentiment. Do you recall any discussion within the Marianas political leadership that your cause might not be helped if all the other districts wanted to go their individual ways as well?
- Santos: We had that kind of discussion. We were kind of fearing that kind of action by the different districts.
- Willens: The way you explained a few minutes ago, you knew in your heart that the people of Yap would ultimately go a separate way from the people of Palau, but strategically it was well not to emphasize that point.
- Santos: No, we never even attempted to mention that kind of statement. We didn't want to actually interfere with the affairs of the other districts. As I mentioned earlier, in the Council of Micronesia we were so careful not to mention political status. Because I could feel it, it's like a fire when just beginning, the moment you talk about it then it would just explode.
- Willens: Some of our mutual friends have told me that they think that leaders in other districts wanted to conceive of themselves as nation-builders. They wanted to be able to be president of their country, to have their own minister of foreign relations. That has struck me as a very human aspiration, particularly if you are a political leader. Why was it that you and others in the Marianas didn't feel that you might ultimately be an independent country with all the symbols of authority that come with that?
- Santos: Yes, you know we talked about that too, independence. I looked at it as maybe the political status to have, where you have all your ministers, you are free to open up offices in other countries and set up ambassadorships and what have you, but I didn't believe that it was feasible for our small islands. Maybe if Guam and the Northern Marianas sometime in the future get together, maybe it is possible to get better autonomy than what we have now. But personally speaking, I am satisfied with our self-government where we elect our governor, our legislature, appoint our judges, legislate laws, run our own government internally with some leverage of opportunity to work with the United States. I am contented with this. I even saw the problem with this kind of relationship, and the problem is that we cannot speak to other nations. We have to be cleared first with the State Department. I saw this difficulty. I even saw many of the difficulties we have today. But I said to myself that when you have a partnership you have to relate as closely as possible, and I still believe that the type of self-government we have is good.
- Willens: You mentioned earlier the threat to secede from the Trust Territory. There was a resolution adopted by the Marianas District Legislature in February of 1971, threatening to secede. As I recall, you gave a speech at the opening of that session, and a few hours later some Congress of Micronesia facilities were burned. What, if you remember, precipitated that particular resolution?
- Santos: Well, we never hesitated to talk about it, to even pass that kind of resolution, because we were never going to be a part of a Micronesian state.
- Willens: But did you think it was a useful strategy? It obviously was very strongly worded, and was that done intentionally to get attention?

- Santos: Well, it's a part of our aspirations. It's a part of letting our feelings—out that we wanted to run our own government without any interference from other districts in Micronesia.
- Willens: I think it was about that time that the Congress of Micronesia was considering one of the tax laws that the Marianas felt would unfairly impact this community.
- Santos: Yes, like the income tax.
- Willens: Was it an income tax or one of those taxes.
- Santos: Income tax, yes.
- Willens: But would you agree many years later that burning the facilities as an act of arson by an unknown person was not a very statesmanlike effort?
- Santos: That's right. In fact, one of the members living today mentioned at that meeting that maybe the Congress of Micronesia building should be burned down, and it was on tape. The sheriff at that time called me up to check with me whether or not he can review the tape. I said there's no problem but I have to get a clearance from the Holdover Committee.
- Willens: Was there a tape for that meeting?
- Santos: Yes, there was a tape.
- Willens: Did you make the tape available to the investigating officer?
- Santos: No. We didn't make it available. We told him that they have to find a legal way to obtain the tape, so they didn't do anything.
- Willens: So the fact is there was somebody who made a threat?
- Santos: A threat but . . .
- Willens: That in fact materialized.
- Santos: Then I visited the person. I asked him, I said I was called by the police. In your statement do you know anything what happened after that? He said no, no, no.
- Willens: He said he didn't do it?
- Santos: He didn't do it. He didn't know, he just said it out of context. But we had no motive for burning anything, nothing. That kind of action is totally uncalled for.
- Willens: Well, as I remember, there was also an incident of marching up to the Capitol Hill, burning a copy of the TTPI Code.
- Santos: Yes, I was there.
- Willens: What is your recollection of that particular event and the reaction of then High Commissioner Johnston?
- Santos: Yes, yes, I was with a group. When we got up to Capitol Hill to the High Commissioner's office, about 30 minutes later a fire truck came running right in the middle of the crowd. So when we saw the guys, the old Chamorros, we told them to get out—in fact, we cut off maybe the hose.
- Willens: But who had called them?
- Santos: Well, somebody maybe at headquarters. So nothing happened.
- Willens: I see. So in other words, they thought you might be burning something besides a book.
- Santos: So nothing happens, they just ran away, the drivers. We went there just to express our

- feelings that we mean business. So we burned the Trust Territory Code, we tore it up, and we didn't say too much, a lot of yelling and no threatening. We just wanted the High Commissioner to listen to us.
- Willens: So did you feel that the High Commissioner was in a position to help you achieve the goal of separate status negotiations?
- Santos: Yes, we wanted the High Commissioner, we wanted to force him to inform Washington what's going on.
- Willens: You want to use him as a messenger at a high level?
- Santos: Yes, as a messenger. We wanted him to inform Washington that this is happening here on Saipan.
- Willens: This happened about a month before Ambassador Williams was appointed. Was it your feeling before he was appointed that there really was no one in Washington who was listening to you?
- Santos: Yes, no one.
- Willens: But every so often Secretary Hickel or Assistant Secretary Loesch or someone else would come out here from Interior and would meet with you and others. Did you feel that they did not understand what the Northern Marianas wanted?
- Santos: Precisely. I was disappointed when I heard that Ruth Van Cleve—was she appointed finally?
- Willens: Which year?
- Santos: Just this year by Clinton.
- Willens: She served as an acting assistant secretary, and I think she is about to retire, but she worked as you know in this area since the 1950s.
- Santos: Yes, when I heard her name, I was so disappointed. Because I had an encounter with her.
- Willens: When was that?
- Santos: I forgot the year.
- Willens: Would that have been in the 1960s?
- Santos: Yes, in the 1960s when she was . . .
- Willens: She was head of the Office of Territories from about 1965 to about 1969.
- Santos: In the 1960s, she was the head of the Office of Territories.
- Willens: Yes. She succeeded Taitano.
- Santos: Taitano, yes. And I met with her, but she's arrogant.
- Willens: Did you think so?
- Santos: Yes, and uncooperative to the Micronesian cause. I dealt with her with regards to the war claims issue. I got all the facts, everything. She lied to me many times that the Micronesian people were paid already, so I continuously requested documentation. I showed her my documents. And she was completely arrogant.
- Willens: That's interesting. I mean she is regarded by many people as being very capable and honest. Some people believe that the Interior Department was very much dominated in those days by a congressman named Aspinall. Did you ever get any sense that the Interior

Department was not being more sympathetic to you and your people because they were trying to be deferential to the wishes of important members of Congress?

Santos: Well, let me see. Would you rephrase that again?

Willens: Let me ask the question another way. Did you, when you went to Washington, ever pursue your case with members of Congress directly? I mean, were there any people there that were sympathetic to you before Congressman Burton appeared on the scene?

Santos: We always met with the Director of Office of Territories, Taitano and Van Cleve, and sometimes with a Secretary of Interior before meeting with the Congress. Our encounter with the United States Congress, particularly on the war claims issue and the political status issue. When I mention about Van Cleve, I do not question her capability in office, but her attitude toward Micronesians like myself, she took us as a backward, uneducated group of people who just wanted to make problems, you know, with her. But we were ready. We were educated Saipanese. We knew our problems, our aspirations. Especially when it comes to the war claims issue. I knew more than she did—completely.

Willens: The war claims issue was ultimately resolved along the lines you proposed, is that correct?

Santos: Yes, that's right, yes, exactly. And she lied to us that the Micronesians were totally paid off. And I met with her repeatedly.

Willens: Do you recall any discussions that you had with her about the desire of the Northern Marianas to have a separate political status as part of the United States?

Santos: No, we never talked about that with Van Cleve.

Willens: So this goes back to your point about using the High Commissioner as a messenger. You never, up to that point, felt that there was anyone in Washington in a position of authority who understood what you wanted?

Santos: So, I lost confidence with Van Cleve at that point in time.

Willens: She was replaced in the Republican administration by someone called Stanley S. Carpenter. He was given a somewhat different title, and he was on loan from the State Department, as I understand it. Do you recall any discussions with Mr. Carpenter?

Santos: I know Mr. Carpenter. I didn't have that close contact with him. I don't know why, maybe I completely disregarded the Office of Territories at this juncture already. So I was looking for a much more comfortable group, and we found it in the United States Congress.

Willens: Well, it was shortly after these events in February of 1971 that Ambassador Haydn Williams was appointed. Do you recall when you first met him?

Santos: I don't recall the exact date.

Willens: Did you think his appointment was a favorable development so far as the Northern Marianas was concerned?

Santos: I had no feeling toward that. Wait a minute, let me rephrase that. Yes, his appointment come to an important aspect of our aspirations. We thought that that is another vehicle that will give us an avenue to discuss our views, our feelings, and it's an important appointment for us.

Willens: You will recall that he was supported by something called the Office of Micronesian Status Negotiations [OMSN] that was headed by various military or Foreign Service personnel

- like Mr. Wilson. It was housed in the Interior Department, but it was supposed to be independent from Interior.
- Santos: Yes, I know.
- Willens: Was that viewed as an important development?
- Santos: It was very important. We thought that the days are now numbered. Every day is a day numbered and the eventuality of our aspiration is coming to a closer point in the future now.
- Willens: After Ambassador Williams got organized and ready to reopen the Micronesian negotiations, which had been in recess for some time, there was a session of the Micronesian negotiations in the fall of 1971. I believe they were in Hawaii, Hana I think, but I'm not sure.
- Santos: Yes, Hana.
- Willens: There's some indication in the documents I've seen that Ed Pangelinan and Herman Guerrero met in a graveyard in mid-day with the number two at that time, who was Ambassador Hummel, a State Department official. This was an informal meeting to explore the Marianas desire to have separate status negotiations. Do you remember any discussion either before that event took place or after that event took place as to how it had occurred?
- Santos: I don't, I cannot, I don't remember that event, really.
- Willens: Well, did you have any concern that you did not want to formally request separate negotiations if there was a risk it might be turned down? Did you care whether it was going to be turned down or not? There's some indication in the record that you wanted to be sure that there was an affirmative response from the United States, but Ed says that it was all part of the strategy to make the request anyway, because that's what you wanted.
- Santos: Okay, the two strategies we were getting at. One is that since there is a Micronesian bona fide status commission and our representatives are members of that commission, they should begin talking about it. They should get the feeling of Ambassador Williams or whatever. Some kind of feeling, some kind of hint, at least a little hint that there is a chance for a separate negotiation. That's one. The other one is that we will do it irrespective of that information. We will do it. We were ready to do whatever it takes in a democratic way. There's nothing wrong to keep asking for it. And it will be good for Ambassador Williams and other people in the United States delegation to know that the Marianas is going only on one path. I mean, the majority of the people.
- Willens: Chairman Saliu at the session of the Micronesian negotiations in late 1971 did make a statement that recognized in general terms the separate aspirations of the Marianas. Do you recall that part of the strategy was to try to persuade the Congress of Micronesia or the Joint Committee that it should let you go your independent way and not oppose it?
- Santos: I know about that, yes. There's that kind of feeling.
- Willens: Did you personally play any role in talking to important Micronesian leaders to try to persuade them not to stand in your way?
- Santos: Yes, we were communicating. We were communicating, and there is a feeling that they don't want to disapprove of our feeling. They knew that it's coming.
- Willens: You think they did?

- Santos: They did, they knew it's coming.
- Willens: Are you thinking of any specific Micronesian leader or member of the Joint Committee?
- Santos: Well, like Salii, he knew about all this. Even Amata Kabua knew about the Northern Marianas.
- Willens: I've had one of our colleagues tell me that Mr. Kabua would tell him in private to go ahead and do what you think is right for your people, but that publicly he might oppose it.
- Santos: Right, especially Kabua. He's that kind of person. But some members of the Micronesian Status Commission knew that it's coming. They were prepared, they were prepared to address the issue.
- Willens: Their position seemed to have changed somewhat because, as you say, they knew it was coming and Chairman Salii made some gracious comments in 1971. After the separate negotiations had been agreed to in April of 1972, the Congress of Micronesia subsequently enacted a resolution declaring that the Joint Committee had the sole authority to negotiate for all six districts. So there seemed to have been some hardening of position within the Congress of Micronesia on this subject within that year or so time frame. Do you have any judgment as to what brought that about?
- Santos: They were afraid that other districts might follow suit. They were afraid. So they had to make a strong stand. Otherwise, all the different districts, Yap, Ponape, would be going one way or the other. A good move on the part of the Congress of Micronesia.
- Willens: You think it was a good move?
- Santos: It was a good move. It's good for us, too. In a way, they know it's coming, they knew that eventually the Marianas will have to go its own way, but they wanted the other Micronesian districts to be one as much as possible, not to disassociate immediately.
- Willens: But by that time, certainly there is a Congress of Micronesia session in, I think, early 1972, and a year later in 1973, where there was growing signs of divisiveness within the Congress of Micronesia. Several leaders spoke out about the fact that Congress was now being consumed with inter-district struggles, often over revenues, and some thought that you never could really have a strong central government for all of Micronesia. So the tendencies were already there, especially with respect to Palau and the Marshalls.
- Santos: Yes, it was there. Very early on, even when I was going to school in Truk from 1949, I felt that kind of sentiment. There will be a time when the Micronesian people will feel that they are not a part of the other island districts, even though in those two years we never talked about political status. Nothing. We were busy digging into our books, learning as much as possible, you know, and trying to get on with developing our economics and what have you. Our instructors, too. They never even uttered a word of political status.
- Willens: That's interesting.
- Santos: Yes, it's just get on with business. And going back, you know, to those two years I attended on Truk, many people criticized the island of Truk. You know, Howard, we got the best instructors in the world in those days. All people from the mainland U.S., Ph.D., masters degree, and they were experts in their own field. And then they send smart Micronesians to the area and that's why we were able in one year's time to finish two, three years of school because there's no limit. You moved depending on your capability.
- Willens: Were there many social diversions available on Truk?
- Santos: Yes, actually after that I asked to go to Hawaii, because I wanted to pursue agriculture. But

- there was an agriculture school in Ponape, so I didn't want to spend another two years on an island setting, you know. So I wanted to go to Hawaii, really.
- Willens: In February of 1972, Ed Pangelinan and Herman Guerrero wrote a statement that sort of set forth the Marianas views. It was a dissent from a proposed Joint Committee report to the Congress of Micronesia. Like many of the things written at that time, it was very eloquent and well done. Did you and your political colleagues review that statement and help draft it?
- Santos: I did not participate in the actual drafting. We reviewed the statement. We knew about the statement.
- Willens: Did you decide that, at the next session of Micronesian negotiations, Ed and Herman Q. should be directed to make a formal request?
- Santos: Exactly. It's all a plan.
- Willens: Did you know in advance that the Ambassador was going to accept it?
- Santos: We had that feeling already. We were hinted already about exactly what would happen.
- Willens: There is some documentary evidence that, I forget whether it was John Dorrance at the time or Mary Vance Trent, maybe it was Dorrance at the time, I forget, but some reassuring messages were sent from Ambassador Williams to you, is that fair?
- Santos: The exact background, I cannot recall, you know. I don't recall at all. But we knew what will happen, we knew what would happen. And I wish I could jot down, you know, what has transpired at that very important moment. But just before all this happening, this is a very crucial moment I remember. I went to Washington, D.C. for several purposes, and that I stayed at the old Roger Smith Hotel, remember that hotel? That was torn down already. That's my hotel, Roger Smith Hotel. I got a call from a person, wait a minute, maybe it's Mr. Wilson. I got a call maybe from Mr. Wilson, and the message is that they wanted to meet me at—do you have a certain residential area for Government officials like, let me recall, it's a restaurant. We met in a residential area, the Golden Eagle Restaurant in the Washington area? Do you remember that?
- Willens: No, there's a Golden Parrot.
- Santos: Golden Eagle, or something to do with Golden Eagle, anyway, so I met ...
- Willens: This was before there was a separate negotiation?
- Santos: Before the Palau meeting. . .
- Willens: And so you went out and you met Wilson.
- Santos: So I, on this trip, it was by myself. So I went to the area, so I met Ambassador Williams and Admiral Crowe, he was a Captain at that time. So that's when I first learned about the separate status.
- Willens: And you learned that they were ready to accept?
- Santos: Ready to accept. They have to come to me because I was a great player in the District Legislature regarding all this. So that's how I now remember that incident. So I was ready and....
- Willens: Did you communicate that information to Ed and Herman Q?
- Santos: Yes. I communicated that. Ed must have been told by Ambassador Williams about the eventual happenings. And I communicated that to my Holdover Committee in a

mellow way, not publicly yet. But it was at this point that we about ready for a separate negotiation.

Willens: The letter was submitted on April 11, 1972 and the very next day Ambassador Williams agreed to the separate negotiation. He subsequently visited Saipan to met with political and other leaders on Saipan. How did you first learn that the United States had officially agreed to separate negotiations? Did you get a telephone call or did you not learn for a few days?

Santos: Just a few days, I guess. Eddie Pangelinan must have learned of the change and then related it to us.

Willens: Did you remember Ambassador Williams visiting Saipan after the separate negotiations had been agreed to? I understand that he really wanted to check to see whether this is truly the desire of the leadership.

Santos: Yes. We had a series of meetings for confirmation.

Willens: What happened at those meetings?

Santos: The process of creating the Mariana Islands status commission.

Willens: That was discussed?

Santos: That was discussed.

Willens: That's right. He seemed to have made it clear that the next step was up to you and the Marianas leadership to create an appropriate entity. I understand he also wanted to get the sense whether the business people and others on the island were in favor of this. Do you recall any significant dissent to the separate negotiations after it had been agreed to?

Santos: Not publicly. Not publicly. There was some going on, but our goal had been chartered already. There was no turning back. The majority of the people were behind us, so we set the mechanism and we started moving forward.

Willens: Ben, I just had the unpleasant task of informing you that Joeten, one of the Islands' most distinguished citizens, died last evening in flight from Honolulu. I know there will be many public statements made about Mr. Tenorio over the next few weeks, but I wonder if you could give me the benefit of your reflections on his character and contribution to the Northern Marianas?

Santos: It's really sad news. Joeten has concentrated basically in providing services to the people. He was one of the first entrepreneurs who opened up a small retail store in Chalan Kanoa, about a block away from where I was staying in Chalan Kanoa, so I know him very well.

Willens: When did he first go into business?

Santos: I don't remember the exact date. It should be maybe well over 45 years ago. Just after the war. I saw him grow. In fact, I used his store in Chalan Kanoa because I was also selling beef. I didn't have to buy a business license; I just pay whatever amount that was required to use the scale. So I saw his store move from a very small one up to the present time. Joeten has done a great deal in servicing the people in terms of meeting their needs and for their livelihood at home.

Willens: I heard he was a very generous man in terms of helping people who were short of funds.

Santos: Yes. He's done great. He and I, of course, come from a different section. I became more of a politician and he a businessman. So in a way we watched our growth—while he was growing in business I was also moving forward in politics.

- Willens: Were you able to remain friends and communicate despite your different political affiliation?
- Santos: Exactly. We never shunned away that far. Our political aspirations and affiliations have been different from the beginning. But whenever we meet, we communicate. We shook hands. There was no animosity after elections and during all of the political campaigning. After that is done, I always maintained that we should go back again to normal and start going on with the working of the government.
- Willens: I've heard it suggested that he really believed that it would have been best for everyone if all of Micronesia had been able to stay united. Do you have any knowledge as to whether that was his position?
- Santos: I don't. Most of the position comes from the Progressive Party and the Territorial Party (now the Republican Party), and I always maintained that whatever position is taken by someone comes from the Party. But Joeten was very vocal in shaping the destiny of these islands. We differed in many areas, and I guess our differences were basic. He's been with the business community and I am with the grassroots people. So that's our basic difference.
- Willens: One important theme that we touched on recently, and I will return to today, is that you emphasized in the late 1960s and the early 1970s the need for economic development in the Northern Marianas and the assistance to that objective that foreign investors could provide. Did you believe that Joeten was also interested in economic development here, or did you feel he was somewhat concerned about the entry into this marketplace of foreign concerns?
- Santos: He was very concerned about the entry of foreign investors, especially at the very early stages. He just started then. He knows that, when big investors like Ken Jones and other people from outside come in with all that experience, they will engulf whatever small business we have here on Saipan, including the Joeten business.
- Willens: As history seems to have unfolded, however, he proved to be a very successful competitor against foreign and local companies, isn't that correct?
- Santos: Yes. He's been very lucky because the government gave him all the opportunity to move forward without so many restrictions.
- Willens: How did the government help him?
- Santos: Oh, like in those days he was the only one with the construction company, retail company, shipping company, and all of that. So whatever the government had in mind for development, construction or what have you, then his construction company was selected to do construction and other items. So in a way he had that leverage, and then when we reached political maturity, he's already in place. And it was so difficult for outside entrepreneurs to compete with whatever he's doing at that time. In fact many of the outside investors would go to him for consultation or joint venture. So that was a great plus to him after setting a strong foothold in business.
- Willens: As the most successful local entrepreneur, he was the one to whom the foreign investors would look for a possible partnership in their venture?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: And is that true with respect to some of the auto dealerships and other businesses that he's currently engaged in?

- Santos: Yes. He's very fortunate in that particular area. I guess foreign investors would not like to just come in and compete with him. What they would like to do is consult with him and see what they can do together to help out the economy.
- Willens: Did you personally develop any business interest for yourself after you left the teaching profession and became a full-time president of the Marianas Legislature?
- Santos: Nothing. Most of my work has been free consultation. I am not a businessman. I don't like to get into it. But I did a lot of work, I did a lot of proposals and consultations with other people in business. Many of the foreign investors would come to me and then what I will do is refer them to a businessman on the island. But I have never taken business that seriously.
- Willens: So you viewed yourself as someone who was available to consult with potential investors and not someone who was interested personally in investing in a particular kind of business?
- Santos: Yes, precisely. At one time after I retired I did some consultation with real estate, and I got into it in a very minimum way, getting a minimum commission for whatever I have done.
- Willens: Did you feel there was some incompatibility between being in business on the one hand and being in a political position on the other?
- Santos: I always maintained that to be in politics and to be in business, they contradict each other. There is always a conflict of interest. Therefore very early on I maintained that it was best for me to just concentrate in politics. Otherwise, if I mix the two together, then I might not be able to see where I was going at a particular time. By deviating from business, then I was able to concentrate in politics.
- Willens: Let me go back to some of the events that we were discussing a few days ago, and in particular early 1971 after the Popular Party became very outspoken in terms of its desire for a new political status and the Congress of Micronesia facilities were burnt. There was a session of the Congress of Micronesia in May of 1971 that was held elsewhere, I think it may have been in Truk but I am not sure, and there was a short-lived boycott of that Congressional session by the Marianas delegation. Do you remember some discussion in which you participated with Ed Pangelinan, Herman Q. Guerrero and others that the Marianas delegation might boycott that session?
- Santos: I was involved in all of the political strategy, of course, and the District Legislature (especially the Holdover Committee including the chairmen of all the committees), was involved. At that particular juncture, we were already heading towards cessation of Micronesia. We were not that interested anymore. But the burning of the building of the Congress of Micronesia actually had nothing to do with any leaders being involved in that particular area. Whoever did it, and up to this time I guess they have not apprehended the individuals, was non-political, and it is just so sad that it happened that way.
- Willens: There was a session of the Congress of Micronesia in Truk and the Marianas delegation did not show up at the beginning of the Congressional session. Do you remember whether it was decided that a boycott of the Congress of Micronesia might be a useful political strategy?
- Santos: Boycott has no real sense actually in that particular meeting. That was discussed, but in no way did we think that was the avenue to take to give us the opportunity to secede from the Trust Territory. The holding of the meeting in Truk I remember, but that particular meeting to me was not necessary. We have the structure here, the building and the

facilities, and all that. One of the reasons why the Congress of Micronesia was prompted to go to Truk was the fear that there might be a repetition of occurrences of the same nature as the burning of the building of the Congress of Micronesia and maybe other bodily harm to individual members of the Congress.

Willens: Did you or other political leaders in the Marianas try to reassure the Congress of Micronesia that they could continue to hold their session in Saipan?

Santos: Yes, we had a constant meeting with the police department at that time to give every precaution, every measure of security to all members of the Congress of Micronesia beginning as they landed here and on to their respective stays whether in hotels or other places in Saipan. So that was assured by both the Trust Territory government and also our local police force.

Willens: One of the developments apparently with respect to this short-lived boycott, if that was the term that was used, was that Congressman Atalig, Felipe Atalig, showed up at the beginning of the session and left the other Marianas representatives in the Congress behind, and that persuaded the others that perhaps they had better go and join Congressman Atalig. Do you remember that event?

Santos: I remember Atalig. He is a quite a character really, Atalig.

Willens: Was he part of your leadership group within the Popular Party?

Santos: He's switching back and forth at that time.

Willens: At that time?

Santos: At that time, he was very unpredictable. He is quite a character. He had his own way of doing things, but we did not regard Atalig as a player in the whole movement toward separate status.

Willens: Mr. Dorrance who was here reported back to Washington that Congressman Atalig was generally regarded as a "political lightweight" and that the other members of the delegation were upset with his failure to join in the boycott. Is that a characterization you would subscribe to?

Santos: Yes, we didn't regard him as I said as a player in the whole political situation.

Willens: One of the developments that occurred at about this same time in early 1971 was the publication of portions of the 1963 Solomon Report in a periodical called the Young Micronesian. The Young Micronesian was a magazine published by some students who were critical of U.S. administration of the Trust Territory and particularly its request for land for military purposes. The publication characterized the Solomon Report's conclusions "as a ruthless five-year plan for the United States to systematically Americanize Micronesia into a permanent association in clear and conscious defiance of its Trusteeship obligations." With that kind of publicity coming out about the Solomon Report and U.S. intentions in Micronesia, did that interfere with your thinking or progress toward your objective of having separate negotiations with the United States?

Santos: No. You know, when we started our aspiration, we didn't want anything to interfere with our thinking. Otherwise, if anything had bothered us during all that period of time, it's so unwise to keep deviating. We were not concerned too much about it.

Willens: Did you believe that the United States had in place in the 1960s a plan to Americanize all of Micronesia and make it part of the United States?

- Santos: Nothing like that. We knew all along that the United States had no plan, would not even think about it that way. And in our case, even if the United States had in mind to unite all of Micronesia, we still think for our own we would rather do our own planning. Rather than unite all of Micronesia.
- Willens: Let me ask a very speculative question along that line. If the United States had developed the policy of putting increased funds into Micronesia in the 1960s and had been able to have a plebiscite as early as 1967 or 1968, do you think that all the districts would have voted to become U.S. citizens and be part of the United States?
- Santos: I don't know about the other districts, but Saipan would be very glad to follow that route. But for the other districts, I don't have any idea or the idea of moving that fast. They might want to do it, at a later date, but the Marianas was ready even at that early stage.
- Willens: Shortly after the congressional session in Truk, representatives of the Joint Committee of the Congress of Micronesia and the Northern Marianas appeared before the Trusteeship Counsel. There were several members of the delegation from the Northern Marianas. You were one of those who appeared. Mr. Muna and Jesse Mafnas of the Territorial Party appeared in 1971 before the Trusteeship Council. Had you appeared before the United Nations Trusteeship Counsel before 1971?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: When was your first time?
- Santos: My first appearance was in 1963.
- Willens: Really?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: Do you have a clear recollection of what brought that about?
- Santos: Yes, in 1963 it was less political. I was appointed as the special advisor to the High Commissioner at that meeting in 1963. Each year a Micronesian was selected to accompany the High Commissioner on an advisory basis. So this particular year, 1963, I was very fortunate to be selected as the special advisor for the High Commissioner.
- Willens: And you were relatively a young man of about 30 years old?
- Santos: Yes, very, 1963, yes, I was about 29 going to be 30.
- Willens: Do you have any feeling of being overwhelmed by the situation of appearing before such an illustrious body as the Trusteeship Council?
- Santos: Yes, this was my first time to go out all the way to a place like that. Being a school teacher, I concentrated in history, social studies and what have you. I learned a lot, I read a lot about all this area, and it's a matter of going physically to the place. First I went straight to Washington, D.C. in 1963 and then went up to New York. This trip was non-political. I was there as an advisor for speaking for the entire Trust Territory. In fact, if you find my speech, you will know that it was at this particular time that the political parties on Saipan were very strong. So we had that democratic vision already, we had the Popular Party and the Territorial Party at that time.
- Willens: In 1963 were you able to express the views of the Popular Party in your capacity as special advisor, or were you limited in what you could say because of your assignment?
- Santos: Yes, limited. In fact, I wrote my speech and then it was reviewed by people at headquarters.

- Willens: Were you able to give your speech?
- Santos: Yes. In fact, nothing was added by them or deleted.
- Willens: Did you go again to the Trusteeship Council between 1963 and 1971?
- Santos: 1963-71, no. I don't remember that. I went to the Trusteeship Council so many times I don't remember. But one thing I'd like to inject is that it is at this juncture when I went to the Arlington Cemetery, July 1963, and President Kennedy was supposed to place the wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. I saw him at that time. When he was killed, I went back to that experience, and I said to myself that any president can be easily assassinated because there was no real security. He just walked right in the middle of the people with some barricade protecting him and that was all. And so I saw President Kennedy, and I was supposed to meet with him in 1963. But one of our friends, Chief Roboman from Yap came down with chicken pox.
- Willens: What was his name?
- Santos: Chief Roboman. R-O-B-O-M-A-N. From Yap. He came down with the chicken pox, and so we were unable to see the president.
- Willens: He got quarantined. In 1971, the records indicate that you made a presentation to the Trusteeship Council discussing the need to resolve outstanding land disputes. Mr. Muna addressed the desire of the Marianas to separate itself from the rest of the districts, and Mr. Mafnas spoke on behalf of the Territorial Party in opposition to the District Legislature's position on this latest question. Does that refresh your recollection as to how this delegation was put together?
- Santos: This is the annual . . .
- Willens: Yes, this is the annual meeting of the Trusteeship Council.
- Santos: . . . annual meeting of the Trusteeship Council. Normally we were asked by the Trusteeship Council to come to New York for an annual presentation, I don't remember the year. Now that you mention 1971, I remember Mr. Mafnas was there. I vividly remember Mr. Mafnas had been a member of the Territorial Party and (as I noted earlier) the Territorial Party and Popular Party, when it comes to politics, are far apart.
- Willens: Very far apart.
- Santos: Far apart. So I remember that time.
- Willens: During the proceeding, there was apparently considerable discussion of the need for political education in the Trust Territory. Senator Tun, T-U-N, of Yap stated that the people in the Territory were not aware of the fundamental questions involved in their future political status and that much remained to be done in the area of political education. What was your sense then of the extent to which the United States as administering authority was preparing the people to make decisions regarding their future political status?
- Santos: I don't know whether I mentioned this at one time during our interview. The United States Administration, even from the Navy Administration and the Trust Territory, the only political education they did was the creation of the Municipal Council, the creation of the District Legislature, the creation of the Council of Micronesia, and the creation of the Congress of Micronesia. But there was no real move. There was an office, called a political office. Subsequently, sometime in 1961, 1962, they hired a political scientist, and his job was just to draft the charter of all the district legislatures. But there was nothing about political education.

Willens: As a teacher yourself, what did you think was needed during the 1960s and into the 1970s by way of better educating the people on the subject?

Santos: In a way I was very lucky, especially when I visited the U.S. in 1963 and went all the way to the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico to look into the tourist industry. I was teaching a lot of geography, a lot of social studies, a lot of government, a lot of civics, and I needed more. That's why I went to Guam, you know, to get more education there. But I remember teaching my students about some provisions in the Trust Territory Code. So I was very much interested in government, in politics, how it works. Even at this particular time, 1960-63, I was so dissatisfied about the Trust Territory Administration—the lack of education. There was a lot of discrimination between the whites and the Micronesians. So I was so dissatisfied. I was looking for a way to really get the Micronesians, especially the people of Saipan, to know more about their rights. Even when I was teaching all the way up to 1963, I argued with my principal practically every day, because sometimes a principal would come to our classroom and right in front of the students would tell us that that's not the way to teach.

Willens: Would the principal criticize you for teaching a subject that he felt had a political content?

Santos: Yes. I was teaching the different types of government; like in this particular class, I was discussing communism, how they work, the state and what have you. One of my principals came into the classroom and right in front of the class told me that you're not supposed to teach that subject.

Willens: You were not supposed to teach the students about communism?

Santos: Yes. But I told him right there. I said no, you are wrong. And it is that much sophistication I had already, that although he was a statesider, I have more right than he does. So after that class, I went to his office and told him that you are only a visitor on this island, and if you want to stay longer, you must follow the curriculum, and government is included in the curriculum. It does not say that communism must not be taught, that dictatorship must not be taught, that Hitler must not be mentioned, or that Babe Ruth too must not be mentioned.

Willens: Who?

Santos: Babe Ruth. You know the . . .

Willens: Babe Ruth, the player?

Santos: Yes, the player.

Willens: He was not supposed to be mentioned?

Santos: No, I was just telling him.

Willens: An example.

Santos: But then he told me that he had a B.A. degree in government. I said: "Well, you should teach the class." But he was a very good principal. We could argue, but at the end he would say: "I'm sorry." I found out later that he was ill. He was ill, he was not feeling well most of the time. Then later on he got an operation. The Micronesians were already that sophisticated.

Willens: Would you draw a distinction with respect to political education between the people in the Northern Marianas on the one hand and the people in the other five districts on the other? The comment that I referred to was by a Senator from Yap, and I wonder whether

what he said might have been true with respect to the Micronesians in Yap but might not have been true with respect to the Northern Marianas?

Santos: It was true in Yap.

Willens: So it was true at the time?

Santos: At the time, but not here in the Marianas. With the plebescite on reunification, many people learned about this political process.

Willens: It sounds to me from what you've said that the Trust Territory government had very little to do with the development of those plebiscites and with the preparation of the people to vote. Is that correct?

Santos: Yes. Very little.

Willens: Well, did they believe that it was too soon to begin thinking about future political status for the Micronesians?

Santos: They believed all along that these islands are one. All the Micronesians. All the Micronesian districts must be treated as one unit. There was not a hint that any district administrator, any high commissioner, would ever deviate to say that there was a possibility for one district to be recognized politically and not the others. Maybe that thinking was from Washington, D.C.—that all these islands must be treated as one.

Willens: After Ambassador Williams was appointed, he did come to the Northern Marianas in late July 1971. He had a meeting with the Territorial Party, at which time they presented a statement which favored a unified Micronesia in close political association with the United States. Then he also had a meeting I think with you and others. Do you have any recollection of that first meeting with Ambassador Williams when he visited the Northern Marianas?

Santos: I don't remember our first encounter.

Willens: Let me try to refresh your recollection of it. He met with the Territorial Party, as I said, including Mr. Mafnas, who was apparently then president of the Territorial Party, Mr. Tenorio and Joe Screen. You made a statement to the opening session of the Marianas District Legislature where you said that his visit was helpful but not necessary "because the majority of the people in this district favor a permanent association with the United States of America." You described your constituents as a "stateless people" and expressed confidence that the Marianas people would ultimately be allowed to become part of the United States. Do you have any recollection of making a statement that was precipitated by the Ambassador's visit?

Santos: I don't remember the exact year of our meeting. But going back to the Territorial Party support for unity with all Micronesia, I had a very deep understanding of the Trusteeship Agreement. I knew that there was no way that the Northern Marianas would go with Japan, go with China, or Okinawa. Our aspiration has been toward the United States. We had that very early understanding that if we cannot get through Guam then we will do it on our own. We explained to Ambassador Williams all the time how we felt—that irrespective of the Joint Status Commission of the Congress of Micronesia our view was for separate status all the time.

Willens: One result of your speech, according to the records, was that the district administrator at the time advised you and the other members of the District Legislature that any appropriations bills or other legislation directed at establishing a separate constitutional

convention in the Marianas would be vetoed. That's along the lines of what you were saying earlier as to the position of the TTPI. Is that your recollection?

Santos: Yes. Even the district administrator, we knew that. We had no grudge against any district administrator, because he's appointed by the High Commissioner. We maintained that nothing was impossible when it comes to the democratic preparation of a people like the Micronesians. We thought all along that, although the district administrator might not approve our funding, we would find another way to do it.

Willens: During 1971, as I mentioned to you before, the United States was becoming aware that sooner or later they were going to have to give you an answer one way or the other with respect to separate negotiations. They developed a variety of internal position papers as to how they should deal with you and respond to your inquiries. Ambassador Hummel visited Saipan in late 1971, in December 1971, and at that time the U.S. officials prepared certain papers with respect to discussions with you. Do you remember any meetings with Ambassador Hummel in late 1971? He apparently did meet with the Chamber of Commerce and he probably, though it's not clear, also met with you or members of the Legislature.

Santos: I don't remember meeting with Ambassador Hummel. Not that early or even later.

Willens: The United States had certain positions that it wanted to take in discussions with Ed Pangelinan, Herman Guerrero or others that wanted separate negotiations. One proposition that they urged at every occasion was that it would be best if the Marianas request was approved by the Congress of Micronesia or the Joint Committee. Do you remember hearing that they wanted the Marianas to get the permission of the Congress of Micronesia or the Joint Committee before pressing the request for separate negotiations?

Santos: Yes. I remember discussing that avenue in which we thought it would be a gesture coming from within the Micronesian community and it would smooth everything. I remember discussing this with either Herman or the group. We wanted the Congress of Micronesia blessing, especially for separate status negotiations. I don't know whether it was Eddie or Herman who relayed to us that kind of thinking too.

Willens: Another point the U.S. representatives made in these informal discussions was to try to encourage you and the other leaders in the Marianas that it would be best to work out some reintegration with Guam—perhaps over time with safeguards rather than immediately. Do you remember hearing that the United States would on the whole prefer some effort to integrate the Northern Marianas with Guam?

Santos: I don't remember any such discussion in that particular period of time and even thereafter. We also wanted the blessing of the Territorial Party and the Territorial Party didn't want anything to do with joining with Guam at that time. So we were looking at some kind of avenue that would achieve our aspirations.

Willens: I gather from what you say that the Popular Party leadership really had no serious interest in talking about reintegration with Guam either in the short term or the long term. Among other reasons, because you wanted to have the support of the Territorial Party behind your efforts to open up separate negotiations with the United States. Is that correct?

Santos: Yes. We knew at that time that we had tried so hard to persuade the leaders of Guam and Guam was not at that time ready. We were so excited really to move on and the idea of reintegration slowly died out. Then the idea of becoming a part of the United States increased its momentum.

Willens: What do you think generated the increase in momentum?

- Santos: I guess it had to do with the timing here. We thought that it was difficult for Guam to accept our feeling in the past and that it's useless to keep asking for a group of people who didn't want us. Eventually the question of the future status of Micronesia would have to be dealt with. Giving the Congress of Micronesia the opportunity to begin its status negotiation with Ambassador Williams led the way to a different perspective. If the United States can negotiate with the Congress of Micronesia for some kind of loose association with the United States our thinking had been that we wanted a closer relationship with the United States. We didn't see that opportunity for us and our people under the thinking of the Congress of Micronesia. So at that time we opted for closer ties and separate talks. Not thinking of Guam anymore.
- Willens: There is some indication in the materials that Ed Pangelinan and Herman Guerrero went to visit the Lieutenant Governor of Guam, Mr. Moylan, on or about March 3, 1972. The information available to me comes from Lieutenant Governor Moylan to the U.S. Department of Defense which incorporated this in a memorandum. According to Lieutenant Governor Moylan, the discussions about any future relationship with Guam went nowhere because the Marianas leaders decided not to pursue the question of uniting with Guam and wanted to wait until after the next round of the status negotiations with the United States. Do you remember anything about such an informal meeting with Lieutenant Governor Moylan in March 1973?
- Santos: We never met. I never met with Lieutenant Governor Moylan.
- Willens: Do you remember hearing any reports from Mr. Pangelinan or Mr. Guerrero about such a meeting?
- Santos: I don't recall.
- Willens: The information that I have summarized from Lieutenant Governor Moylan is consistent with what you understood to be the strategy at the time?
- Santos: Maybe Eddie or Herman had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Moylan at that time and in passing they talked about status. But I know that at that time we already had charted our destiny. Our destiny had been charted and we knew where we were going.
- Willens: In the Congress of Micronesia in early 1972, there was a plan as you said earlier to get Congress of Micronesia approval to the separate status negotiations and a resolution was prepared to that effect. But ultimately Senator Pangelinan and Representative Guerrero were told that such a resolution would not pass. They gave up the effort at that time to obtain Congress of Micronesia approval. Do you recall those events?
- Santos: Yes. I remember that the Congress of Micronesia didn't want to sanction our effort.
- Willens: Was that a big disappointment to you?
- Santos: No. We wanted to get all the support we could. We wanted to try everything so that we have a record that we tried and we did not succeed. I remember talking to Chairman Salii, who was so nice to us. I met with him many times—not directly to talk about the status, but every time we met on some social function our first subject would be our aspiration, our desire to negotiate a separate status.
- Willens: Did you find Chairman Salii basically sympathetic to your desires?
- Santos: Yes. He didn't make any decision one way or the other. My impression is that we had that right to pursue. I remember several times when we met we talked about economics too. That even if in the future we would become separate by politics we should pursue helping each other on economics and I told him that as always that has been my feeling too. That

we should share our economic development—specifically in the area of tourism and other matters.

Willens: Did you believe that the inability to get support from the Congress of Micronesia was going to make it more difficult for you to persuade the U.S. delegation to agree to separate negotiations?

Santos: At that time, yes. I had a feeling that if we could get the blessing of the Congress of Micronesia, it would be easier on our part. But if we don't get it, then our plan has been charted already. We have done our work and even the rejection of the Congress of Micronesia would not reduce our determination to move forward.

Willens: Apparently at one point there was the thought that the Northern Marianas would pursue its separate status aspirations within the context of the Joint Committee of the Congress of Micronesia. Then at some later point it was decided to pursue your separate negotiations through your own negotiating entity. Do you remember any discussion of whether or not the Marianas could stay within the Joint Committee and within that context seek a separate status?

Santos: No, I don't recall that strategy. We had a very lengthy meeting with Eddie and Herman regarding the planned meeting in Palau and the request for separate negotiations. But I don't really recall having our separate status pursued within the Joint Committee. Nothing.

Willens: After the United States agreed, we spoke earlier about the fact that Ambassador Williams and Captain Crowe visited Saipan to emphasize that it was up to the Marianas to take the next step. The Marianas District Legislature did meet in May of 1972 for the purpose of establishing a status committee. Originally it had been planned to defer the question until the regular session of the District Legislature in August. What is your recollection of the circumstances under which you convened the legislature at an earlier date?

Santos: Remember I mentioned our first encounter with Ambassador Williams in one of the restaurants?

Willens: In Washington?

Santos: In Washington. My trip to Washington at that time was not to meet with Ambassador Williams on this particular subject. When I received a call from, I guess it was Mr. Wilson.

Willens: Are you sure it was Wilson at the time, because he may not have come onto duty until late 1972? It might have been Hummel or maybe someone else.

Santos: Maybe Admiral Crowe.

Willens: It could have been Captain Crowe, he was on duty during 1972.

Santos: Okay, let me recall. Captain Crowe was Ambassador Williams' number two. So I went to this place, this restaurant.

Willens: You think this was in early 1972 before the Palau session?

Santos: Yes. It's a Golden Eagle restaurant. Maybe when you get back . . .

Willens: I'll look it up and see if it's still there.

Santos: Maybe it's out of Washington, D.C. but it was at this juncture that we discussed the possibility for a separate negotiation. I got all my notes, what to do. That's why we

- met maybe before the regular session, to pass a resolution for the creation of a separate negotiation committee.
- Willens: Who drafted the resolution, do you remember?
- Santos: Let me see, I guess it's Bill Nabors. He's the only legal counsel we had at that time.
- Willens: You did conduct public hearings on the proposed resolution. Several people who testified apparently requested that the number of commission members be increased from 15 to some larger number and some expressed concern about the limited amount of money, \$25,000, that was to be appropriated. Was \$25,000 essentially all the money that was available for this purpose at the time?
- Santos: I guess so. We had very little money to start up the commission. Many of the people who were working for the government of course didn't get paid for that. That's the reason why there were some savings. But those who were not government employees must be paid on a meeting basis.
- Willens: I have in front of me the letter that you signed in August 16, 1972 designating the 15 members of the Commission. Was there any debate about the composition of the Commission? Were there any specific issues that you remember coming up at that time in May of 1972?
- Santos: Yes. There was a very lengthy debate. We wanted to be fair. At this time we wanted to reduce the tension, the opposition. We wanted to be as fair as possible on representation. As you can see, we got the business people represented, the Carolinian community represented, the District Legislature represented. Even members of the Congress of Micronesia, each political party. These were all discussed at length.
- Willens: At that time, wasn't the Popular Party in control of the District Legislature?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: It was in control of the Congress of Micronesia delegation?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: Was it in control of the Rota, Tinian and Saipan councils?
- Santos: Yes. Tinian and Saipan councils.
- Willens: But maybe not Rota. Benjamin Manglona and Johannes Taimanao were the designees from Rota. Were they members of the Territorial Party at the time?
- Santos: Yes. Benjamin and Johannes, yes.
- Willens: You felt that giving these positions to these various political organizations was important?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: An alternative strategy might have been to appoint ten people, members of the public who weren't in political office. Did you consider doing something like that?
- Santos: There were lots of requests.
- Willens: What kind of requests?
- Santos: A number of requests for more involvement. We didn't want to make this a huge number. We wanted people who were knowledgeable, so that we can move on. Our idea was to get to the people, public hearings, visit the people in the villages and get their ideas. But when

we created the Marianas Political Status Commission, we thought that number is sufficient and that the representation was adequate and at the same time fair. It so happened that at that time the Popular Party controlled practically all of the elected bodies. But we had a long meeting with the late Olympio Borja, even Dr. Palacios.

Willens: Senator Borja at the time was still a member of the Territorial Party, was he not?

Santos: Yes, Territorial Party.

Willens: Did you make some effort then to talk to the Territorial Party and reduce the tension between the parties?

Santos: Yes. We did that even with Dr. Palacios. Dr. Palacios, he is so difficult, a very difficult person.

Willens: How would you characterize him and his participation in the Commission?

Santos: He's so difficult. He still thought that Micronesia should be united and with free association. That was his thinking. But I told him that we will have our own political status. Let the Marianas Political Status Commission decide what course of action, what status we will take, and then move on toward that.

Willens: Did you think that he should not have accepted the position on the Commission because he basically disagreed with where the Commission was directed to go?

Santos: No. We knew that he opposed our ideas, our aspirations. But we wanted somebody like that in the Commission.

Willens: Did you think it was better to have an opponent of that kind within the Commission participating rather than on the outside criticizing?

Santos: Yes. It worked, as you will recall.

Willens: Do you recall him as being a persuasive and articulate spokesman of his point of view?

Santos: Yes. I liked that. I liked Dr. Palacios because he's articulate, he was always bringing in some subjects for discussion. We appreciated that kind of attitude.

Willens: How would you characterize Felipe Salas's strengths and participation in the Commission?

Santos: Salas was not that active. He follows. At times I remember he was leaning toward Dr. Palacios thinking, but he knew that that's not the right direction to go to. He knew that and he had been with the Popular Party for a long period of time, so that was very detrimental to him.

Willens: Was he the Vice-President of the District Legislature when he was designated? Was he designated because he was your deputy so to speak?

Santos: I guess so, yes.

Willens: But your sense is that, although he had been part of the Popular Party leadership for nearly ten years or in the District Legislature, that he wasn't as committed to the idea of separate status negotiations as you and others were?

Santos: He was not that committed. We wanted membership with different ideas. We really didn't want just a group of people with already determined views and not have the opportunity to look at the type of status that was most appropriate for us.

Willens: Was it your hope that ultimately you could bring the whole community, if not 100 percent, 90 percent behind the common objective?

- Santos: Exactly, even with the Lieutenant Governor, Benjamin Manglona. I worked with him. We had no real disagreement.
- Willens: I was going to ask you about him next. He was a relatively young man at that time, but he had been active in politics for many years. What was your assessment of him as an individual and as a participant in the Commission's work?
- Santos: I put my vision forward here. Every time we meet my attention goes to him; I studied his move, his facial reaction, his attitude. I had to learn all the different facets in people who have different ideas.
- Willens: Had you worked personally with him before?
- Santos: Yes. He was a member of the District Legislature for a while, so I knew him. I was never an opponent to all of these people. We had a different belief, political party, and what have you.
- Willens: Do you think he was personally committed from the beginning in having a close and permanent relationship with the United States?
- Santos: No. At the beginning he didn't have that motive yet, until during the time of the negotiation.
- Willens: Do you think that as a representative of the people of Rota, he was representing those people and in particular their concerns about being dominated by Saipanese?
- Santos: Ben Manglona has that kind of feeling all the time. He comes into the District Legislature meeting, to the Status Commission, championing the desire of the people of Rota. He knew that Rota was neglected for many, many years during the Trust Territory period. So he wanted something, an assurance. Remember the half-a-million dollars assurance that was injected into the Section 702 funding. He was very pleased with that.
- Willens: Do you remember him being an articulate, active member of the Commission?
- Santos: Yes. He was very active.
- Willens: He was, and still is, regarded as one of the better orators in the vernacular. Is that your recollection that he felt more comfortable using Chamorro than he did using English?
- Santos: Yes, he was very comfortable using Chamorro. Remember the breakdown in one of the status negotiations. I don't know whether you were on Saipan at that time. It started from Dr. Palacios, so Dr. Palacios and Rota, Tinian no, Dr. Palacios and Benjamin and Johannes left the meeting and we had that impasse.
- Willens: Do you remember what prompted the impasse?
- Santos: That's a good question. I want to find out why.
- Willens: Maybe we'll come to it. Do you think it happened during the official rounds of negotiation?
- Santos: Not during the official rounds. Maybe in between.
- Willens: In between. Maybe we'll come to that then or something that will trigger it.
- Santos: Eddie might remember because this is the meeting when Eddie went someplace.
- Willens: Oh, he was not there. You mentioned this the other day and you had to go pay personal visits.

- Santos: I had to go to Tinian and talk to Hofschneider, Bernard Hofschneider, to get us together. I went to Rota and I found Benjamin with his wife riding at his ranch. I went and talked to Johannes. Johannes told me that whatever Benjamin said, it's okay with him. So I was able to get the group together again. I called Ambassador Williams and told him that we were ready to meet again. We could not find Eddie, but the day before we went to meet with our Commission, Eddie arrived. Eddie should remember, Eddie just disappeared, I don't know for what reason.
- Willens: You mentioned Johannes and his inclination to defer to Ben Manglona. What is your general impression of Mr. Taimanao and his participation in the Commission?
- Santos: Taimanao was very, very effective, cooperative. Of course he worked closely with Ben Manglona. I noticed that Manglona was the player in all of the negotiations.
- Willens: There were two representatives from the Tinian Council, both of whom were subsequently replaced and we'll come to that in due course. But one of the original appointees to the Commission from Tinian was Herman M. Manglona, currently running for mayor, I believe. What is your impression of Herman Manglona as you recall him back in 1972 and 1973?
- Santos: Herman has no real commitment. He deviates from time to time. So I thought he would be alright in that whatever the group decided he too would approve the position of the majority.
- Willens: You were confident that ultimately he would go with the majority?
- Santos: Yes, I was very confident.
- Willens: Was he a member of the Popular Party at the time?
- Santos: No. He was a member of the Territorial Party.
- Willens: Territorial Party?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: Were you concerned that he might have more loyalties toward Ben Manglona or Dr. Palacios than he would to you and Ed Pangelinan, for example?
- Santos: Herman Manglona was a member of the District Legislature at one time. Having worked with him, I remember giving him a lot of latitude when I was the President. In one way or the other, he and I have that close association all the time during the negotiations and he assured me that what we were doing was right.
- Willens: The other representative from Tinian at the beginning on the Commission was Francisco Hocog. Do you remember him?
- Santos: Yes. Francisco Hocog was quiet. He is (I guess) a member of the Popular Party, Francisco Hocog. So we have no problem with Francisco. He's a very quiet person and we knew each other, although not that well. But based on my participation in politics on Tinian, I saw him to be a very cooperative individual in the Commission.
- Willens: From the Saipan legislature there was Ben Camacho. What was your impression of Ben Camacho in those years?
- Santos: Ben was a party man.
- Willens: He was part of the leadership group for many years, is that correct?
- Santos: Yes, he was in the Popular Party. A very strong Popular Party man, so most definitely his

goal would be for whatever the Popular Party was seeking—and that was well known on our part to be closely affiliated with the United States.

Willens: Would you characterize him as an active or a passive participant in the Commission's work?

Santos: He was an active member.

Willens: Do you remember him speaking out on particular issues?

Santos: He's not strong on any particular issue. So he's active, but he followed the group.

Willens: The other representative from the Saipan legislature was Dan Muna, who was probably also a member of the District Legislature at the time. I think you have previously described him as outspoken.

Santos: Yes. Dan was outspoken. He likes to attack the issue the way he thinks. He's very outspoken and oftentimes, if you don't know him, you might think that he's already made up his mind on a certain issue. But Dan is just like that.

Willens: Was there any concern on your part when you were thinking through the membership of the Commission that the issues that were going to come before the Commission were going to be difficult to understand and that you wanted to have members who could understand the issues and be effective negotiators?

Santos: Yes, precisely. That's why Danny was also appointed, because he likes to study. He never debated without going at his materials. He was always prepared and he's like myself, I really like to hear him participate because he always brings some diverse view and vice versa.

Willens: From the Northern Marianas, Senator Borja was designated. How did that come to be?

Santos: Senator Borja was a member of the Congress of Micronesia, so in a way he was appointed because he was a member of the Congress of Micronesia. We know Senator Borja, remember he is very outspoken. He spent a lot of time explaining things over and over. We thought that he would be an asset to the Commission.

Willens: Was that because you believed he had a substantial political following of his own?

Santos: Yes, substantial political followers. He has been with the Territorial Party from the beginning.

Willens: Were he and Dr. Palacios more or less viewed as the senior statesmen on the Commission?

Santos: Yes, he and Dr. Palacios.

Willens: The two men were very different in character and approach.

Santos: Yes, very different.

Willens: Would you regard Senator Borja as someone who studied the issues and thought about them before he made up his mind?

Santos: Yes. Although he might be speaking directly against an issue, after a while after learning from different members he can be persuaded and vote in favor of the majority. He didn't pose any problem for the Commission. He's really an asset.

Willens: In fact, even before the Commission met with the United States delegation for the first time in December 1972, Senator Borja switched parties and ran for reelection to the Congress of Micronesia with the endorsement of the Popular Party.

- Santos: Yes, yes.
- Willens: Did political status play a role in his decision to change party affiliations that you know of?
- Santos: No. At that particular election, he ran against an opponent from his inner group, from the leadership. My recollection was that he was not included in the selection for a candidate. One reason was that he was leaning more toward the Popular Party—his action, his sentiments all leaning toward the Popular Party platforms and ideas. So he knew that he would be ousted. When he indicated that he would like to join the Popular Party, we had a vacancy for a seat. So I remember in one particular meeting when he was invited and officially became a member of the Popular Party, in that particular meeting he was nominated to run as a Popular Party candidate. I remember in this particular meeting, Pete A. Tenorio?
- Willens: I have been told that the Popular Party had already told Pete A. Tenorio that he would be the candidate endorsed by the Popular Party for the Congressional seat. Then when Senator Borja indicated his availability to run, the Popular Party leadership, or the majority of them, changed their view and permitted Senator Borja to run with their endorsement. At which point Pete Tenorio ran as an independent. Is that consistent with your recollection?
- Santos: Yes, very consistent. Pete A. Tenorio first indicated that he would run under the Popular Party banner and I should have said precisely that that is what happened. It's a democratic process, nomination and then selection, and Senator Borja got the majority.
- Willens: Who was making the decision, the leadership or the whole party membership together in some kind of a meeting?
- Santos: It's not in a convention. It's not an open convention.
- Willens: It is not?
- Santos: It's not. The delegates of the convention at that time were composed of all the members of the precinct. Each precinct has a membership. So all that precinct members were delegates so all of these had at least one vote. So when they come to selecting, they select the candidate.
- Willens: About how many people would participate in this process? Fifty or a hundred?
- Santos: Less than a hundred.
- Willens: But more than fifty?
- Santos: More than fifty. Between fifty and maybe like seventy. A lot of people. So I remember Pete A. Tenorio was mad, I know he was very displeased because he was promised. I remember one person that really worked so hard for Oly was Dan Muna. Also Herman Palacios, the congressman now running for reelection. I played a very low-key role in most of this.
- Willens: Did you think that Senator Borja was going to be a stronger candidate to be supported by the Popular Party than Pete A. Tenorio?
- Santos: Yes. That was the conclusion of the delegates, that Senator Borja would be more of an asset to the Popular Party at that time.
- Willens: Were you surprised that Pete A. Tenorio ran as an independent?
- Santos: We thought that he could stay.
- Willens: He could what?

- Santos: He could stay with the Party and get an opportunity in the future, because he had that opportunity. Just like Eddie Pangelinan, you know the Party give Eddie that opportunity and Pete could have maybe, who knows, a run for the governor and get a crack at it.
- Willens: From the Popular Party came Mitch Pangelinan as a member of the Commission. What were his credentials for being designated as a member?
- Santos: Mitch was a strong Popular Party member. He's very devoted to the Party and he knew the wishes of the Party already. So his selection was based practically on that premise.
- Willens: Had he been a member of the inner circle that had helped develop the strategy over the past several years?
- Santos: Yes. Mitch is a hard working individual.
- Willens: He was relatively young at the time, was he not?
- Santos: Very young. He was a hard-working individual.
- Willens: Would you characterize him as an active participant in the Commission's work?
- Santos: Yes, he was very active.
- Willens: How would you characterize him in terms of his ability to understand the issues and to take a position?
- Santos: I remember he was also very outspoken. He likes to discuss the issues pro and con and his selection also is attributed to that characteristic. He's an active participant, he likes to talk about the issue.
- Willens: You told me a story of how at one session he remembers using an inappropriate word, a profanity openly in discussions with the U.S. delegation, and that he subsequently apologized. And he said that was not a typical Micronesian thing to do. But he explained that he wasn't Micronesian because both of his parents were Japanese. Was there any tension between Mitch and other leaders in the community because of his parentage?
- Santos: That's a good question because, now that you mention it, I personally never even had the slightest idea that he comes from Japanese parents. Many people here up to this time didn't know it, that his parents were true pure-blooded Japanese. They didn't know that. The only reason they knew it is because sometimes the Territorial Party would make fun of him that he's not Chamorro and he's Japanese, you know, something like that. Off the record, many times the Territorial Party just in passing for a joke would say that he was found inside a pillbox.
- Willens: I heard a story like that 20 years ago. He was discovered in a cave and then raised by the Pangelinan family.
- Santos: He is acting more like a Chamorro when you think of it, but when you look at Mitch, he's a real Japanese.
- Willens: You have spoken about Dr. Palacios. The next name is Felix Rabauliman who was designated by the Carolinian association. Had you worked with Mr. Rabauliman before?
- Santos: Yes. We taught together.
- Willens: That's right, you said he was a teacher.
- Santos: He was a teacher. We knew each other very well. His wife Joaquina, I went to school with her for two years on the island of Truk.
- Willens: Was he a leader within the Carolinian community at the time?

- Santos: Yes, he was a leader.
- Willens: How would you characterize his personality and participation in the Commission's work?
- Santos: Rabauliman was not that outspoken. He's mellow, he's quiet, but he's willing to learn and participate in the process.
- Willens: Do you believe he understood the issues as they were developed?
- Santos: Yes. I believe he understood the issues. Maybe sometime it's complicated because, you know, by the standard of the Carolinians, they have that inner feeling of real respect toward other people. They are the kind of people that don't want to show up whether they are smart or they went to school, whether they're rich or poor, they don't want to do that. Felix Rabauliman was one of my very good friends.
- Willens: Did you think that serving as a representative of the Carolinian community made it difficult for him to express individual views as distinct from those that were held by the leadership of the community?
- Santos: Yes, he had that difficulty, because he cannot freely express his own view in a meeting without getting some kind of sanction from the Carolinian group. That was so difficult because he had to meet with Dr. Palacios, Dr. Kaipat and the smaller Carolinian group, and that could go hours after hours. Then coming back to the meeting, the poor guy might not get what they want.
- Willens: In your years as president of the District Legislature, would you from time to time go meet with the Carolinian leadership on a particular issue?
- Santos: We never arranged a meeting with the Carolinian community. The only time we did that was during the status negotiations.
- Willens: Ben, you were describing your relationship with Felix Rabauliman.
- Santos: Yes, Felix was one of my good Carolinian friends. He's so sweet. We never contradict each other. We talk about an issue and then it just melted, no disagreement, no argument.
- Willens: Do you think that he personally subscribed to the views of the Carolinian leadership that it would be better if all of Micronesia could stay united?
- Santos: Felix had that in mind. Knowing Felix with his constant meetings with the late Dr. Kaipat and also Elias Sablan, he's inclined toward unity with Micronesia. But I knew all along that, after recognizing the needs and the fairness that this is not a Chamorro idea for closer ties with the United States, that it is the Saipanese, Rotanese and the Tinianese altogether.
- Willens: Do you think there came a time when some members of the Carolinian community became convinced that a separate status for the Northern Marianas would be to their benefit just as it would be for their Chamorro neighbors?
- Santos: Yes. I know that that thought has come to their mind, because the only closer ties between the Saipan Carolinians are with the Truks, the Chukese.
- Willens: Chukese?
- Santos: Chukese. In a small way, you know Chief Aghurubw for example.
- Willens: Which chief?

- Santos: Chief of a group from I forgot what island, one that's in Truk. But they don't have any close ties with Palau, Yap, Ponape. Nothing. Only with Truk, and that is all.
- Willens: There always were allegations, and maybe there still are, that the Carolinian minority on Saipan feared discrimination and that they suffered from the Chamorro majority in terms of employment opportunities, educational opportunities and so on. Was it your judgment back in the 1970s that there was any discrimination in this community with respect to the Carolinians?
- Santos: It's nothing at all. That's one thing. I only learned the word discrimination when I went to school, you know, between the whites and the blacks in the U.S. mainland. Here on Saipan, it's only the Japanese who treated the Carolinians differently from the Chamorros.
- Willens: How so, I have not heard that before?
- Santos: The Carolinians wanted to be free, like in their clothing. In those days during Japanese time the women would like to as much as possible to be barebreasted, with lavalava. But the Japanese insisted that they wear some kind of clothing. The men of course were wearing g-strings. And the Japanese insisted that they would be put in jail if they don't change their values. The men must wear some kind of pants and it didn't matter whether they make a top but the women must be dressed and fully covered, their breasts and everything. Then they were concentrated in the southern section of the island. That was about a block from where I stayed, the southern section, and they could not commingle or live together with the Chamorros.
- Willens: That was imposed by the Japanese?
- Santos: Imposed by the Japanese. One particular section in the southern end.
- Willens: Did the Chamorro community have any views about that at the time?
- Santos: Although we disliked it, we had no sayso about it, but we worked together in harmony. But that's the only thing the Japanese did. Maybe throughout the years, because of that separation of residence, the Carolinians thought they were discriminated before and after the war again. But after the war, they chose to live in district number 4. When you hear district number 4, that's where the Carolinians were situated.
- Willens: What villages now are there, is that Tanapag?
- Santos: Chalan Kanoa. You mentioned Tanapag. Some of the Tanapag Carolinians and the district 4 Carolinians are not the same. The Tanapag Carolinians like Felipe Roc.
- Willens: What's his last name?
- Santos: Felipe Roc. Santiago Magofgna, a member of the District Legislature. They are Carolinian but from Ponape, and they speak a different dialect.
- Willens: Do they have different ancestry?
- Santos: Yes, different ancestry. But after the war the person who placed them again in district number 4 was Elias Sablan, their leader. One of their leaders, Mr. Sablan, is half Carolinian, half Chamorro.
- Willens: I've heard it said that he made land available to them that was close to the water, and that was very valuable land then and, of course, in later years.
- Santos: There is only one reason. The water, the ocean has been used by the Carolinians for many reasons—to fish in, to shower, to plant taro and soo potatoes are very good in the sandy

area. Then subsequently when the land value had skyrocketed, many of them sold their land for \$500 per square meter, so they became instant millionaires.

Willens: Did the Carolinian community participate fairly in general terms in the economic development that has taken place here?

Santos: Yes. They had a better deal because they hadn't sold their land when the land was just at regular market price. You know, like I used to buy a village lot for only \$100, a village lot for \$100. Now a village lot in district number 4 about five years ago would be about maybe \$250,000.

Willens: Five years ago?

Santos: Now maybe \$25,000 to \$30,000 only. It's the market. I used to buy one hectare for only \$1,000, but one hectare five years ago, four years ago, was one million dollars. The Carolinians participated in this economic boom, especially in land transactions because they were situated right in the ocean beach area.

Willens: After the Marianas Political Status Commission was created, there was a period of ninety days within which to appoint the members. Was that period of time necessary because of the fact that other organizations had to designate their nominees?

Santos: Yes. It's a kind of buffer period, it's a breather period. We didn't want to rush. We wanted time so that each organization could make its selection in a very comfortable fashion. So everything would start out so that it would be fair.

Willens: During that period, you attended another meeting of the U.N. Trusteeship Council in May of 1972. This time you were accompanied by three other members of the delegation, Senator Pangelinan, Representative Guerrero and Senator Borja. The documents indicate that Senator Borja was added to the delegation because he was still a member of Territorial Party and it would reveal the bipartisan nature of the separate aspirations. Do you remember any discussion about who should go to the United Nations?

Santos: Yes. It's a strategy, it's a political strategy. We knew that Senator Borja would deliver an important message and represent the people as an important individual because he's from the Territorial Party.

Willens: Each of the four members of the delegation from the Marianas submitted a short statement. Each has a somewhat different purpose and together, in my opinion, they represent a very coherent and impressive presentation of Marianas views. Did you and the others work on these statements personally?

Santos: Yes. All the time. We worked on our statements. Eddie worked on his statement. The only time we review our own is I guess after we are ready. Most of our texts were not typed completely until we got to New York, because we kept on talking as we flew. You know, it's a long flight.

Willens: It was even longer then, right?

Santos: So three or four hours we can get together and go over some of our statements to make sure that we don't repeat too much what the other guy will say. We knew exactly what to do, so all of our statements were written by us.

Willens: Did you expect that the Congress of Micronesia delegation at the United Nations would express opposition to the recent decision of the United States to agree to separate negotiations?

- Santos: Yes. We expected something like that. Yet, we had no real animosity against them. When we meet, we meet as cordially as possible.
- Willens: One of the questions that came up from time to time when the Marianas representatives made their presentation was what kind of future status do you want. Representative Guerrero in his statement mentioned numerous possibilities, including reintegration with Guam, incorporation as a separate territory, commonwealth status, or other possible arrangements. Did you and the others have any very specific idea in mind at the time as to what you were looking for in terms of a specific political status?
- Santos: Yes. At that time, we already have in mind a commonwealth status. Remember even after our meeting, the first time we met, one of your instructions was to look into independence and other status alternatives. Then when you came back and recommended a commonwealth, we were ready to move forward.
- Willens: You have spoken as using Guam over the preceding ten years as at least some indication of what you wanted in terms of economic development and so forth. Were you aware of any disadvantages that Guam had in its political relationship with the United States that you wanted to avoid for the Northern Marianas?
- Santos: That's precisely right. One of the strongest arguments we wanted to express upon the United States, even before the creation of the Commission, is that under the Trusteeship Agreement the United States cannot just impose any political status on us. We will make that determination and we knew that Guam's Organic Act was imposed upon them by the United States, not from the people of Guam. This was our chance now to find the most appropriate status, which is commonwealth, and we've learned of some disadvantages with Guam's status at that time.
- Willens: Can you think of any examples with respect to immigration or shipping laws or self-government? What was it that you heard about from Guamanian political colleagues that led you to believe that it could be improved upon?
- Santos: Like shipping laws, tax, immigration especially. Especially in the area of immigration and labor, we wanted to run our own immigration and that too prompted us to believe that the best thing to do is to find a status unlike Guam and move forward.
- Willens: The United Nations Trusteeship Council members did ask many questions of you and your Marianas associates. In particular, you were asked about why the Marianas people hadn't sought to get the approval of the Congress of Micronesia before seeking separate negotiations. Senator Pangelinan tried to explain the background of that. Do you remember the kinds of questions that you got from the Trusteeship Council members?
- Santos: I wish I can remember all of that. Everything just moved so fast. I cannot remember.
- Willens: Did you feel when the session was over that the Trusteeship Council understood what the aspirations of the Marianas were?
- Santos: Yes, definitely. They had an idea already. Our mission was to keep on moving. We thought we would have the blessing of the United Nations. All we wanted was the blessing of the United States, because this is a strategic trust unlike the other trusteeships. Under that strategic trust, actually the United States can make that determination, irrespective of United Nations disagreement with us or with the United States.
- Willens: Do you recall a meeting with the United States representatives before going up to New York to talk about the strategy to be followed at the Trusteeship Council?
- Santos: I know we met with Ambassador Williams, I guess. No question about that.

- Willens: Did the United States encourage you and the Marianas representatives to state your case to the Trusteeship Council?
- Santos: I don't remember any statement like that coming from Ambassador Williams, but I remember visiting him in his office in the Interior Department building. But the Ambassador knew our statements. I guess we gave him copies of our statements. So he knew what we wanted to talk about.
- Willens: By that time, the United States, with some support from the United Kingdom, was emphasizing the use of the word "peoples" in the plural in the Trusteeship Agreement. Do you remember the argument that you and the United States representatives advanced as to your entitlement as one of the "peoples" in Micronesia to pursue your own aspirations?
- Santos: Not to the line. I don't quite remember that argument.
- Willens: The Commission met for several times in the fall of 1972 anticipating that the first round of negotiations would be in December of that year. Do you remember any particular issues with respect to designating or electing Mr. Pangelinan as Chairman and you as Vice-chairman? Was that an understanding that you and he had reached that you felt comfortable with?
- Santos: Yes. Originally they wanted me to be the Chairman. I had support because of the membership in the Legislature and others but I saw it to be kind of a conflict of interest because I was the President of the District Legislature. If I was chosen to be the Chairman of the Commission, that would conflict with my responsibility (as President). Knowing that the appropriation will have to come from the District Legislature, we didn't want that kind of image to be presented to the people. I was the first one to suggest that we should give this opportunity to Eddie Pangelinan. In fact, Herman's name was mentioned. We thought that Eddie and Herman had done a great job as members of the Joint Committee of the Congress of Micronesia. So there was no real argument about that.
- Willens: Was there in fact a vote taken within the Commission or was it done more or less by consensus?
- Santos: It's a vote. It's a vote, but as always you know, before we get into the vote we got our matter ready.
- Willens: Was there any concern about Senator Pangelinan being the Chairman because of his youth?
- Santos: No, because you know he's an attorney and he had good experience as a member of the Congress of Micronesia. We believed that he could be a very, very good and important Chairman.
- Willens: The Marianas Political Status Commission also established some standing committees and then you had the task of hiring consultants. Were you consulted by Ed Pangelinan before Joe Screen was designated to serve as a consultant?
- Santos: Never.
- Willens: He remembers that that's true and that subsequently when funding was sought from the District Legislature a year or so later, you suggested on the whole that funding might be forthcoming more readily if Mr. Screen was released as a consultant.
- Santos: Yes. I was not consulted by Eddie and I know Joe came to me.
- Willens: Joe Screen?

- Santos: Yes, Joe Screen came to me on several occasions. He gave me his credentials verbally but I didn't think he would be an asset to the Commission.
- Willens: What were your reservations about him at the time?
- Santos: He's too involved with business and too close to Joeten. I remember he visited me one time when we were trying to recommend candidates for the Resident Commissioner for Saipan. Remember Mr. Canham?
- Willens: Yes.
- Santos: I told the group that Joe Screen was not the appropriate person for this particular job. We needed someone with fairness. We endorsed Mr. Canham.
- Willens: Did Mr. Screen have well-known views about a political status for the Marianas that were inconsistent with the Popular Party?
- Santos: Yes, very inconsistent.
- Willens: What were his views?
- Santos: His views were for more protection for businessmen. We feared that he would not be a good consultant to the Commission, that it is best for him to associate with only business, not with politics.
- Willens: Was it your sense that members of the business community would have been very satisfied in the early 1970s to stay as part of the Trusteeship for another ten or 15 years?
- Santos: Yes. That was my feeling.
- Willens: That the Trusteeship provided a secure environment in which they could be profitable?
- Santos: Very profitable for them and no tax at all for them. They can decide what price to put on certain commodities. So we didn't like that. I personally didn't like that. I had great reservations. I knew at that time all the statesiders who were on island.
- Willens: All the what?
- Santos: All the statesiders, their background, I knew at that time. So I was very careful of recommending even a statesider who comes from here. You know, even some of the statesiders here, they don't help the political status here. They are here for their own benefit. One of these days after this, I might tell you so much about Article 12, because they are the ones who really messed up the whole thing. Then when they were caught right in the act, they went back to the local people and tried to get help. But they really messed up the whole intent of Article 12.
- Willens: Do you remember any other issues with respect to the hiring of the economic and legal consultants? Dr. Palacios told me at one point that he expressed doubt about hiring a lawyer from the United States on the grounds that a lawyer from the United States might not be a good advocate for the Commission in negotiations with the United States. Do you remember any discussion along that line?
- Santos: We wanted someone with a lot of background. A huge firm with a lot of expertise within the firm. Not a law firm with only one or two persons, even here in Saipan or Guam. I know Guam was mentioned, but this was a small-time firm where they did very little involving political status in conjunction with economic, social and the whole kit and caboodle of political status. So our choice has to be someone who knows Washington, D.C. with a lot of latitude with members of Congress and the White House itself.

- Willens: Did you basically accept Chairman Pangelinan's recommendations based on his interviews of the economic and legal consulting firms?
- Santos: Yes. We had no quarrel when it comes to that area.
- Willens: Let's turn to the first round of the negotiations that took place on December 13th and 14th in 1972. In advance of the negotiations, I recall that the Commission met and I came in along with Jim Leonard and Jim White. We met for a few days in advance of the opening session. What did you hope would be accomplished at the first very brief round of negotiations?
- Santos: Really even when you mention about talking about the first session, I was so pleased. I was not expecting any accomplishment. All I wanted was to actually get together on the record—that finally that's a great achievement. Because once that is done, then the rest is up to us to decide when to meet, where, and try to get to know you. I had some idea about Jim Leonard already and White.
- Willens: Did you have any prior experience with Jim Leonard because he had been here as part of the Nathan team seven years earlier?
- Santos: Yes. I met him, I saw him a few times. I read the Nathan report. So with that limited background, I knew Jim Leonard.
- Willens: What was your impression of Jim Leonard as you saw him again in 1972 and then worked closely with him over the next three years?
- Santos: I thought that he would be a good person to work with the Commission.
- Willens: What did you like about him?
- Santos: He had experience out here. We met before the actual meeting of the Commission. So from the beginning I had no quarrel with him. But in that first meeting I was just waiting whether or not we going to sit and finally open that. It's like a person being born and the first breath of air the baby caught when he got into his nostril it's choking him and starting to cry. That was my impression—that now this is the beginning. It is the beginning after a long waiting period.
- Willens: Unlike the newborn baby, the Commission had to give some kind of a coherent statement of what it hoped to accomplish in the negotiations and what the issues were. Do you remember any discussion among us within the Commission as to what should be the main points to make with respect to this opening round?
- Santos: I don't quite remember everything. I was so excited really—that the idea was to set the tone, that we are meeting, and we want to express on both sides our intention regarding the seriousness of this negotiation. Even when your firm was selected, having the opportunity to meet with you, you were very young at that time and I knew that we had very good attorneys. Subsequently you were accompanied by . . .
- Willens: I had two close associates come out. First, Jay Lapin came out with me for the first, the second and third rounds and then he went into the government; and he was replaced by Michael Helfer. They both subsequently became partners in my law firm. Both were, and are, incredibly talented, loyal lawyers.
- Santos: I remember when we first met, because I really wanted to study it. Maybe because I took some child psychology when I was going to school to teach. Every time I meet a new guy I like to look at his facial expression, his tone of voice, deep or what, and his whole attitude. Within a few minutes I can maybe make a determination of the characteristics of

this individual. Even in a debate I look at a guy, his facial expression. Eddie has explained about your firm. He told us and we said: "Well, that's a very impressive background, let's move on."

Willens: Eddie jokingly recalls that he recommended my firm because money didn't come up in any very substantial respect during our discussion, whereas at some of the other firms, the Commission's limited resources persuaded the Washington lawyers that they did not want to get involved. Some of my partners years later reminded me of that. Do you remember the opening ceremony? I guess there was an opening at Mount Carmel and the Bishop from Guam was there, I believe. In fact the opening of the session generated a lot of publicity in Guam about how the Northern Marianas were embarked on a separate course of negotiation.

Santos: Bishop Flores came.

Willens: Was that who it was? Bishop Flores. I was about to say Camacho, but that would be wrong. That's right. The Guamanians were very interested in what was going on here.

Santos: Yes, I remember every time Bishop Flores would come to Saipan he always remembered to give me a call at home. For about thirty minutes we would chat on the telephone, giving his blessing to our work. He always said as a religious person, "God is on your side, Ben." So we talked about politics with Bishop Flores.

Willens: Did he ever raise the question with you as to whether somewhere down the line the Northern Marianas and Guam might get together?

Santos: Nothing like that. He just wished us a lot of luck. He knew that we were going in the right direction. He was very supportive. I was very surprised that every time he got to Saipan he would give me a call down in Susupe.

Willens: I recall that we drafted an opening statement, reviewed it with the Commission, and that we went into a working session on the afternoon of the first day. It was open to the public and that's where formal statements were exchanged. In Chairman Pangelinan's statement, he indicated that the Commission would be looking at the actual experience of Guam and the other insular areas to see if the political and economic development in those areas suggested any problems or difficulties which the Marianas should avoid. That goes to what we were talking about earlier. Then the statement also said, and this statement was in the headlines the next day, that "it may well be necessary to develop a totally new political status for the Marianas." Did you have any sense within the Commission and in your first discussions with me that we did not want to make any commitments early on as to what kind of specific status we would be recommending to the Commission because we hadn't had the time yet to conduct a necessary study and review it with you?

Santos: Yes, we had that discussion. The statement made by Eddie is in general terms an indication of how we want to proceed. A separate new status, unlike Guam.

Willens: Were you aware that statements of that kind gave some concern to the U.S. delegation because it suggested that we might develop our own ideas as to political status and not be as willing to accept United States proposals as they might have hoped?

Santos: It's a two-way street, you know. Our side has a goal, our goal is to reach that status. Of course, the United States would be coming in with recommendations on funding, recommendations on immigration, recommendations on other matters. We knew that this was not going to be an easy undertaking, but that we were going to get there one way or the other.

- Willens: In the opening statement on the subject of land, the Commission's statement did make reference to the desirability of possible restrictions on the sale of land to those who are not local people. As you know, in the history of this, it's been suggested that the idea of restrictions on land alienation came from the United States side. Is that your recollection or do you recall that the Marianas Commission also discussed this and put this on the agenda very early on?
- Santos: Yes, we discussed that too on our side. And the United States had no problem with that. But that was our thinking too.
- Willens: From the very beginning?
- Santos: From the very beginning were the restrictions on land. I don't quite remember how we arrived at the 25 years arrangement. I don't remember that, but whether we had a suggestion and the United States maybe countered our suggestion, and that's how we agreed on a 25 years period.
- Willens: I think we'll be able to come to that. My recollection is that there was some feeling within the Commission that although the idea of restrictions was a good one, that we should provide the people of the Commonwealth in the future the chance to reexamine the issue. That's why the 25 years seemed like an appropriate period of time.
- Santos: Because our thinking was always trying to give the future generation time to review it, you know.
- Willens: The second day of discussions at the opening round of negotiations involved such things as the procedures that ought to be followed during the negotiations. Do you remember any discussion as to whether the negotiating parties should be free to release the position papers that were exchanged between them or that those papers were to be kept confidential?
- Santos: To the public you mean?
- Willens: Yes.
- Santos: I believe we wanted them kept confidential, yes.
- Willens: You wanted to keep them confidential? You remember some discussion of that kind?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: One of the procedural issues that Ambassador Williams put before the Commission on the second day was the question about what the Commission's authority was. Ambassador Williams had had some recent difficulty with the Joint Committee in the sense that some of its members had not supported in the Congress of Micronesia preliminary agreements that had been arrived at. So he asked you and the other members of the Commission whether you would stand behind and support whatever the Commission agreed to. The chairman requested a recess at that point and the Commission met. Do you recall any reservation within the Commission as to what its authority was and its commitment to support what it had agreed to?
- Santos: We had some discussion. Remember we decided that every time we met we would have a joint communiqué between the U.S. side and our side and that is the one to be released to the public. But we talked about some of the working documents that must not be released, because remember some newspaper people were just waiting for us for comments. I guess in one of the meetings we said that those papers should not be discussed with the

- newspaper. Only after we finalized certain agreements between both sides and then the joint communiqué would be released to the public.
- Willens: After the Ambassador asked the Commission what its authority was, the Commission had a recess and then came back and told Ambassador Williams that the Commission members had unanimously adopted this resolution: “Resolved, when the final product of this Commission is approved by the Commission, those so approving shall support the entire product through the District Legislature and to the people at a later date.” Was it your sense that all the members of the Commission were agreed that if they supported an agreement in the negotiations they would ultimately support it through the District Legislature?
- Santos: Oh yes, yes.
- Willens: The Ambassador seemed satisfied with that. Chairman Pangelinan recalls that this was the first time that the Commission used the technique of a recess to get a break and to permit the Commission to deliberate among itself. That always seemed to me to be a totally appropriate way to do business. Do you remember any discussion of that tactic?
- Santos: Oh yes. That’s a good move on our side. We need it in a way.
- Willens: Why is that, because you had 15 members or what?
- Santos: Well, we wanted to give everybody a chance to deliberate and then come to a consensus as to what to do.
- Willens: There was only one other issue that came up near the end of that session that is worthy of some note. There was preparation of a joint communiqué and Dr. Palacios objected to the use of the word “permanent” in describing the future relationship between the Northern Marianas and the United States and Chairman Pangelinan requested that the word be changed to “lasting”. But that was unacceptable to the U.S. delegation. Now eventually some kind of compromise was worked out, but the U.S. delegation was very concerned about this apparent difference of view. Do you have any recollection of that event?
- Santos: Yes. The word “permanent”—we talked about it. It’s a word that we keep on tossing around and I didn’t know what other words could be used appropriately.
- Willens: Was it your view and the view of the Popular Party leadership that from the very beginning what was being talked about here was U.S. citizenship and that meant a permanent relationship with the United States?
- Santos: Yes. That’s the only word. I guess Dr. Palacios was suggesting that, at one point in the future if this relationship cannot work out in its totality, any group in the U.S. (or in fact the Marianas) can unilaterally just disassociate itself from this type of political status.
- Willens: I think that’s exactly right. He always had this sense of history and wariness of speaking for the future generations and he wanted to leave some flexibility down the line for future generations. And the word “permanent” seemed to him to be a problem.
- Santos: We even discussed, I remember not only once, Japan was mentioned. I remember Dr. Palacios always wanted to bring in something just to confuse the group—like Japan, why not Japan? I guess because he had more opportunity with the Japanese Administration than any one of us at that time. He put down me and Joe Cruz because we attended only first grade, but Dr. Palacios finished sixth grade. He was mentioning Japan, he said: “Well, we never discuss a possible relationship with Japan.” Then he always mentioned free association and independence, never commonwealth status.

- Willens: What was your impression when the two days were over? Were you generally pleased with the way in which the event had taken place?
- Santos: Yes, I was pleased. We had now a vehicle to set up our goal, we heard the U.S. delegation, and the next move now was to begin working in a more specific way.
- Willens: What did you understand was the direction to the consultants to prepare for the next meeting? What did you expect them to do for your?
- Santos: The different political status alternatives, its government, like the unincorporated territories like Guam, commonwealth status. So we are in the right direction.
- Willens: You have described the individual members of the Commission earlier as you knew them at the time of their appointment. When you saw them all in the same room beginning to work together as a Commission under your leadership and Ed Pangelinan's, were you optimistic that this group of 15 people, including some with very diverse views and backgrounds could become an effective group?
- Santos: Yes. I believed at that time, although we have two or three members whose ideas differ from many of us when comes to voting for certain matters on a particular subject, that eventually we will come together as one. Thinking that whatever we decide has been explained already by our consultant, you and your colleagues, and that it is clear. One very important aspect in the negotiations was the consultants. The consultants were able to answer questions, clear up confusion and other matters that are not too clear and familiar to many of us at that time. This was very important. Otherwise if we don't get a clear view from our consultants, then they would be a lot of questions and delays in the process of negotiation.
- Willens: After the first round of negotiations in December of 1972, the consultants, both Jim Leonard and my firm, were told basically to prepare working papers in our respective areas for the Commission to consider before the next round of negotiations. Meanwhile back in Saipan, there was considerable publicity with respect to the negotiations and a focus on Tinian. As you remember, the U.S. delegation indicated in general terms that it had some need for land on Tinian for military purposes. When did you first become aware that the United States was ultimately going to request a substantial part of Tinian for military purposes?
- Santos: I don't recall the exact day, but this idea had been advanced to us very early, that the United States would be coming forth with such a request. We knew very early on that that request is forthcoming. We were already prepared to respond. It was a very sticky issue because it deals with land—land that is so scarce and limited in the Northern Marianas.
- Willens: The *Pacific Daily News* in late April 1973 and early May ran a series of articles that featured Tinian in all aspects of its life. Do you remember that kind of publicity increasing with respect to Tinian?
- Santos: Yes. There was a lot of write-up. Yes, I remember. That also posed a great concern on our part, because in a way we thought it's very premature for the newspaper and other media to be talking on all these areas without clear indication of what's going on. But it's very clear to us that with regard to the land needs of the United States a request was forthcoming.
- Willens: During the early months of 1973 there was a growing number of proposals with respect to the use of Tinian land. There were proposals for two large hotels, a coconut oil processing plant, and a petroleum refinery. There was some concern that these were speculative proposals and were not really serious economic ventures. Do you have any recollection

- of the kind of economic development that was being considered for Tinian at about that time?
- Santos: Yes. I was very aware because, even myself I have 4.4 hectares of property next to the cliff land.
- Willens: Next to which line?
- Santos: Next to the cliff line on Tinian.
- Willens: The cliff line.
- Santos: Yes and one stateside guy from Guam had approached me on two occasions to lease the property for tourist-related development, hotels and what have you.
- Willens: How long had you had that land?
- Santos: I had that since 1970, I guess.
- Willens: But long before the negotiations began?
- Santos: Long before the negotiations.
- Willens: Was your particular land located in what ultimately was the two-thirds of the island that the military leased or was it in the other one third?
- Santos: It's in the two-thirds.
- Willens: So, it was in the area in which the military had an interest?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: Did you anticipate as the negotiations began that your private property might be affected by the negotiations?
- Santos: Not at that particular time, because I had no idea how much the United States would be requesting. I had the impression that the United States would be requesting maybe half of Tinian in the northern section. My property was located maybe in-between. It bordered the north and south boundary of the U.S. military interest when finally it became clear. I was very unhappy because my property—I had a small beach in front of my property. It was located right on the cliff line. It was a prime property. In fact, when we hired an attorney to appraise it, the appraiser came up with \$10 per square meter in that cliff line area.
- Willens: When did you have the appraisal done?
- Santos: That's the time when MPLC offered us like, I guess, eighty cents per square meter.
- Willens: That was after the negotiations were completed and it was the Marianas Public Land Corporation job to acquire the land from private owners that was to be leased to the United States?
- Santos: Yes. And I guess MPLC came up with eighty cents per square meter. At that juncture when I learned, I was so disappointed because it was a prime property and I got a very unfair monetary exchange.
- Willens: How was it eventually resolved?
- Santos: I agreed to sell it to the government for \$2.74.
- Willens: Going back to 1972 or 1973, what did you say to the Guamanian developer that wanted to lease your land?

Santos: Well, they read this in the paper. I remember there was a letter, I received a letter with respect to the prospective leasee and I told him that my land was included in the United States requirement.

Willens: Did that then terminate his interest in your land?

Santos: Immediately, that's the end.

Willens: Was it your sense that you really were not able to develop that land in any direction whatsoever until the negotiations with the United States were concluded?

Santos: Yes.

Willens: The newspapers reported in early 1973 that, for the most part, the Tinian residents were enthusiastic about the prospect of the United States developing a good portion of their island for a military base. Do you believe that that's an accurate report at the time?

Santos: At that time it was very accurate. With all the prospects for developing the area under the U.S. military, the school, the hospital, and other economic benefits like produce, whatever the Tinian farmers produced right there and then, the U.S. military will buy that. The people at that time saw that that was an added economic benefit for the island of Tinian.

Willens: The newspaper reports that I've read suggest that Tinian was very under-developed. For example, there was a report that there's not even a nurse, much less a doctor, on the island. There was no high school. There seemed to be no real prospect for tourist or other economic development. Is that a fair picture of Tinian as it existed in 1973?

Santos: At that time, of course, there was no real development, just like Saipan. Saipan was developed because Saipan has been a very popular area for many things. It's a bigger island, but to say that Tinian had nothing to offer even at that time and in the future is wrong, because Tinian can be developed. Not at that particular time, but in the future.

Willens: There was some indication that there was opposition among the younger Tinian residents, some of whom had been to college, and that they were very apprehensive about the U.S. military development of the island. Do you recall that sentiment existing?

Santos: Yes. We heard about that. We were confronted with all that opposition. I guess one other reason is that these younger people had gone out from Tinian and knew exactly what a military installation is. At that particular time, we were also confronted that once the military gets into Tinian, that's it. It is very difficult for them to get out.

Willens: One of the leading spokesmen on Tinian for welcoming the U.S. military was then Mayor Antonio Borja. Do you remember him?

Santos: Yes.

Willens: How would you characterize him as a political leader?

Santos: Mayor Antonio Borja was a Japanese-educated person. He's one of the very few persons from Tinian who is very knowledgeable about economic developments and about life and what have you. I regarded Mayor Borja at that time as one of the very helpful Tinian residents. Very fair and knowledgeable about many aspects of life.

Willens: Was he a Popular Party leader?

Santos: Mayor Borja at that time was a Popular Party leader.

Willens: Another outspoken advocate for return of the U.S. military was Joe Cruz. You have spoken earlier about Mr. Cruz. What's interesting about these reports that I've read is that the people on Tinian seemed to be ready to accept the military back, but they really had

no firm idea yet as to exactly what the U.S. military was desiring. That wasn't revealed until the next round of negotiations which we'll come to. Did you have any sense before the next round of negotiations that the U.S. might request access to the entire island?

- Santos: Not the entire island. By this time, with prior consultation with Ambassador Williams there was an indication that they were ready to request a huge piece of land on Tinian—with exchange of course with other economic matters.
- Willens: Did you have any inside information from Ambassador Williams or the U.S. delegation as to what they wanted before the next round of negotiations with the MPSC?
- Santos: I don't remember even the size of the land area. I don't remember if that was discussed. Maybe that was discussed with Eddie, but not with me.
- Willens: Another development in early 1973 came about during the session of the Congress of Micronesia. This was the session at which the Congress enacted Senate Joint Resolution Number 38. This Joint Resolution expressed the sense of the Congress of Micronesia that the Trust Territory was a single and indivisible political unit and that the Joint Committee had the "sole authority" to negotiate for all of the districts. Do you remember hearing about these developments as they unfolded?
- Santos: Yes. Even at that time, we knew about it. We were ready to just secede from the rest of the Trust Territory. We knew at that time that we have that very right, because we were never united altogether at one time even before the war. So, the Congress of Micronesia of course tried so hard to unite the whole six districts. But I personally knew at that time that this was impossible.
- Willens: The Chairman of the Commission, Senator Pangelinan, spoke out against the resolution in the Congress of Micronesia. One of the interesting aspects about the debate before the Senate was that it took place when the visiting mission from the United Nations was on island and was actually in the chamber listening to the debate. Were you aware that 1973 was one of those years when a visiting mission was going to come and conduct an investigation with respect to the administering authority's performance in the TTPI?
- Santos: Yes, very much. We were even prepared at that time, as in the past, to advance to the United Nations visiting mission our aspirations for a political status unlike the other districts.
- Willens: Do you recall a meeting with the visiting mission on or about March 1, 1973 that involved members of the Marianas Political Status Commission?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: What is your recollection of that meeting?
- Santos: We again advanced our thoughts regarding the status as desired by the people out here. We were told repeatedly by the United Nations that this is one trust territory and must be adhered to. There was no indication from the United Nations visiting mission of any chance to even give us some sort of a green light—that they too, the United Nations visiting mission, was in favor of our separate negotiations and separate aspirations.
- Willens: The record indicates that they were not persuaded in any respect by your representations to them. Do you have any recollection as to why individual members of the visiting mission took such strong views that the Trust Territory had to be considered a single and indivisible entity?

- Santos: My guess at that time was, first, lack of knowledge on their part. None of these visiting mission members knew exactly about our social life out here. They had read very limited information coming out from the Trust Territory and that lack of education about this area was maybe the only reason that they didn't want to even give us a hint that these islands were not the same as the other islands, not the same as Yap, Palau and the other districts.
- Willens: But the members of the mission appear to have been very experienced, well qualified, foreign servants. Do you think that they did not perceive the differences in the districts as they made their visits in each of the districts?
- Santos: Well, I can only speculate that they didn't want to start creating some animosity within the visiting mission and the Trusteeship. They just wanted to wash their hands off, and ultimately let the United States make that determination.
- Willens: Do you remember any particular statements or attitudes taken by the Soviet Union representative who was present at that meeting with the Commission?
- Santos: I don't recall any particular statement by the Soviet Union.
- Willens: Do you remember any discussions that you or Ed Pangelinan had in advance of the meeting with the U.N. mission with Mary Trent or any other U.S. representative?
- Santos: Oh, yes. We have had the occasion of meeting with Mary Trent, but I don't remember discussing with her some specifics about our status.
- Willens: There are some telegrams suggesting that she was under instructions from Washington to reassure you and the other members of the Commission before you met with the U.N. visiting mission that the United States was firmly behind the separate negotiations and committed to it. Do you remember receiving those kinds of reassurances?
- Santos: I don't remember.
- Willens: Did the members of the mission give you any indication during that meeting as to what they would ultimately say about the separate negotiations?
- Santos: Of the U.N. visiting mission?
- Willens: Yes.
- Santos: They were negative. The U.N. mission was negative. They were very nice. In all of our meetings they were very nice, noncommittal. There was no way that you could be displeased about what they say. They were always nice and they are very intelligent people, of course. I've met many of these people and hold them in high regard—very intelligent members of the United Nations.
- Willens: Without putting words into your mouth, did you think they were patronizing in their dealing with you? Or, put another way, did they deal with you as though you were political leaders of a community that was fully capable of self-government?
- Santos: Maybe at that time, because they had been going from one island to the other, their perception was of the whole Trust Territory and they saw these islands as one. So in their mind they say that these islands were not ready yet. But if they single out the Northern Marianas, I guess that they would have a different approach. But yes, this particular district at that time was ready to move on.
- Willens: Your suggestion is that, because they came at the task with sort of a preconception and

they had visited the other districts for the most part before here, they were not looking to make distinctions between the Northern Marianas on the one hand and the others?

Santos: Yes, precisely. They have that in mind.

Willens: While these activities were going on with the visiting mission and in the Congress of Micronesia, the Marianas Political Status Commission had to prepare for the next round of negotiations. One of the developments in early 1973 that occurred was an interview with Dr. Palacios in which he expressed some views that seem to be at odds with the negotiations that had just recently been opened with the United States. In an interview that was reported in the *Marianas Variety*, he took issue with the permanency of the proposed relationship and indicated that any relationship that did not provide for modification, or termination, of the relationship, was not in harmony with the Territorial Party's view of self-government. Do you think that his views in that regard accurately reflected the views of the Territorial Party at that time?

Santos: I don't believe that was a correct assumption of his statement. The Territorial Party at that time had already recognized that the idea of becoming part of the U.S. by direct annexation was being realized through commonwealth status. So there was a lot of favorable reaction within the Territorial Party to moving toward this status to be a part of the United States. The Territorial Party from the beginning wanted to become U.S. citizens directly.

Willens: And that necessarily meant permanence?

Santos: Permanent. That's the only word.

Willens: Were you surprised when Dr. Palacios went public with these views?

Santos: I knew him so well because he came from the Popular Party before and his mind is not steady. It's always changing.

Willens: I didn't realize he had been with the Popular Party before. When was that?

Santos: He was with the Popular Party and then he switched parties maybe in about 1970.

Willens: When he was elected to the Congress of Micronesia, was he elected as a member of the Popular Party?

Santos: As a member of the Popular Party. Then he switched parties. There is a reason behind it. There is an economic reason. He was given a huge cattle ranch by the land management. The land management was run by all Territorial Party members.

Willens: The land management operation of the TTPI?

Santos: Of the TTPI, all Chamorro Territorial Party.

Willens: And he was . . .

Santos: He was offered a substantial piece of land by this office for cattle raising.

Willens: Were they asking him to lease and pay lease payments for that privilege?

Santos: Oh yes, very small lease payment in those days.

Willens: Do you think it was a condition of his accepting the land that he become a member of the Territorial Party?

Santos: Yes.

Willens: Do you have any basis for that in terms of what you were told by knowledgeable people at the time?

- Santos: Yes. I learned about this from insiders in the land management.
- Willens: Did you ever talk to Dr. Palacios about it?
- Santos: We never discussed this in particular.
- Willens: Do you think he would disagree with your assessment?
- Santos: Yes, he would disagree. Many of the people with whom I have associated in the Popular Party knew about this transaction. It is at this juncture that he started to cater to all Territorial Party plans and platforms. But we really lost him, because we thought that he would be an important leader in the whole government.
- Willens: Another view that he expressed in the interview was concern about the impact on the remainder of Micronesia if the Northern Marianas went their own way. Do you think his concern here reflected in part his allegiance and leadership in the Carolinian community?
- Santos: Yes. He is part Carolinian so he, by loyalty, is also obligated to look after the Carolinians. But again let me stress that the Chamorros have, we have not even heard anything like discrimination, discriminating against the Carolinians. As I said earlier, many of the Carolinians taught with me at the Hopwood High School, Edward Olapai, Luis Limes, Felix Rabauliman, his wife Joaquina Rabauliman, John Tagaburru. Five or six and this is many, considering 1950, 1951. Then you see that there are Carolinians working with us, and when we work we don't differentiate whether he's a Carolinian or Chamorro in the workplace. Joe Taitano, for example, also, and Joe is a Carolinian and Joe right now works for the government as administrative officer.
- Willens: What's his last name?
- Santos: Jose Taitano.
- Willens: One other point that Dr. Palacios raised in his interview was concern about economic development that was based largely on tourism. He was one of the first to express concern about the need for alien laborers in developing that kind of an economy. What is your recollection of the awareness among people like yourself who were actively concerned with economic development that alien laborers would have to play a substantial role?
- Santos: We foresee in the future that alien labor is a necessity. No matter how you look at it—to build our hotels, to help with our infrastructure. But we never envisioned the lack of control over aliens that exists right now. This was never envisioned. When I was a member of the legislature, we allowed aliens to work but did not allow dependents to come in altogether. We disallowed their dependents to come in.
- Willens: But now aliens can bring their dependents with them?
- Santos: Dependents and extended families, just name it.
- Willens: You think over the past several years that there has been inadequate control?
- Santos: Inadequate control. When I was working for the Administration this has been my main objection to all of the governors. That they must find some solution to all of this. I even recommended to Governor Tenorio ("Teno") for a moratorium for six months so that we count how many we have now. Nobody listened and this is what happened.
- Willens: Was that because at the time economic development seemed so promising that no one wanted to interfere with it?
- Santos: No. Many of the businesses who have holdings are Chamorro too.

- Willens: What kind of holdings?
- Santos: Business, you know their own business here on Saipan. They have influence through the Governor. They are missing the whole point. They are used to paying cheap labor. They are used to paying only \$2 an hour, \$2.15 an hour, so they get what they call volume, not quality, but this volume really creates a lot of problems right now.
- Willens: Going back to 1973, as the Commission prepared for its second round of negotiations in May of 1973, it received reports from its consultants. One of the reports was prepared by Jim White who served as the executive director of the Commission. What is your recollection on a personal level of Jim White?
- Santos: To be truthful with you, I was surprised. I didn't know Jim White was our consultant, to be truthful with you.
- Willens: Was that someone who was retained by Eddie Pangelinan without consulting with you?
- Santos: Yes. He was already on board and I truthfully didn't know him. We were not involved in the process of employment and I emphasized to Eddie very clearly that we needed good people on board. Good people who wanted to help the Commission.
- Willens: Do you know why the chairman selected Mr. White?
- Santos: I don't know.
- Willens: One thing that Jim White did during the period was to do a study on a wide variety of land issues in the Northern Marianas. He submitted a very lengthy report to the Commission that sort of summarized the land problems that you and others here had been complaining about for many years. The problems included such things as inadequate land records, the lack of a survey, deficiencies in the current homesteading program, the need to get the public lands back. The list of problems went on. Which of those to you were truly important, and maybe they all were?
- Santos: I tell you, those are not new to us, especially to me because I was involved with land sales back in 1960 when I was a member of the Municipal Council.
- Willens: How did you get involved in land issues as far back as then?
- Santos: In 1960, homesteading. Many land owners have been cheated by the Japanese and the inadequacy of the Trust Territory government to expedite return of real private land to the land owners. I was involved in 1960. When I went to school I studied a lot of culture, Micronesian culture, customs and I even wrote social studies for the Saipan high school.
- Willens: Between the period from 1960 when you became actively involved until 1973, 13 years later, had the Trust Territory done anything of substance to deal with some of these land problems?
- Santos: Oh yes. They had to do it because every time I was asked to talk about something, I always touched on the importance of lands. We had what we called the Land Commission, for example. The homesteading program. The Land Commission started adjudicating.
- Willens: Did they do a good job within the limits of their resources?
- Santos: Yes. They substantially did a good job. Slow, although slow.
- Willens: Were they adequately funded in your judgment?
- Santos: No. But they started working, at least there was a vehicle to go to. In other words, if I have a land claim, I know where to go now. So there is a vehicle to go to. An area of concern.

- Willens: I don't understand how anyone could deal with the absence of records. It seems to have been agreed that records had been destroyed during the war and subsequently. Was there an effort to try to recreate the land records that would define particular pieces of property and reflect who owned the property?
- Santos: After the war, the majority of land records came from the NKK Sugar Company where they were kept intact, they were not burnt. All of these were in Japanese. Subsequently, the Trust Territory hired someone to translate all of these into English.
- Willens: Under the Japanese system, were individual Chamorros or Carolinians or their families allowed to own private property?
- Santos: Yes. In fact, maybe the Japanese have completed, if not 100 percent maybe over 90 percent, land survey. The reason they have to do that is because the Japanese government was interested in developing the island economically, especially the sugarcane plantation. They had to make a survey for the lease of private land to Japanese company.
- Willens: So you think that there was a substantial record and survey available to the TTPI after the war?
- Santos: Yes. All in Japanese language and then subsequently they were translated. Many of these, of course, are available right now at the Archives at NMI College.
- Willens: With respect to the homesteading program under Congress of Micronesia law, there seems to have been extensive disagreement with the way in which the TTPI administered the program. I have seen reference to litigation that went on for several years and reflected the claims of many homesteaders on Saipan that they were entitled to get homesteads but the TTPI Administration had never awarded the deeds or completed the transfer. Is that your recollection?
- Santos: Yes. There are many. In fact, the last case where I assisted a family on homestead was about three years ago.
- Willens: Are you telling me that these cases are still going on?
- Santos: Still going on. Now, even privately owned land still going on. There is one case now where I am helping a family. Land that all seemed to be used and records were already found, but MPLC was slow.
- Willens: Let me turn your attention back to 1973. I've seen some reports to the effect that there was a real difference between the Northern Marianas citizens on the one hand and the TTPI Administration on the other as to whether there should be a homesteading program at all. Do you have any recollection of a difference in view along that line?
- Santos: This homestead program was created by the Trust Territory government I guess in about 1950. I guess the big mistake was that they allowed five hectares maximum.
- Willens: Why was that a mistake?
- Santos: It's too big and people are not utilizing at least 50 or 60 percent of the land area. There was no real study as to whether or not the land was good for planting papaya. They just give it out, rocky area or what have you.
- Willens: Who determined that five hectares was an appropriate amount?
- Santos: TT government.
- Willens: Was that ever revisited and changed?
- Santos: No change. Right now here on Saipan we have no agricultural homesteading. There is an

- agricultural homestead program for Rota and Tinian but it is limited in size now. I don't remember how big now, maybe just one hectare or two hectares per person, which is a good size for one person.
- Willens: For a village homestead.
- Santos: A village homestead, we have that program going on even right now, but only one lot per person, minimum 800 square meters to 1,000 square meters.
- Willens: Did the five-hectare minimum apply to village homesteads on Saipan?
- Santos: Just agriculture.
- Willens: In the 1960s and 1970s then, agricultural homesteads were awarded on Saipan?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: But that is no longer the case?
- Santos: No longer now. What we have now in Saipan is village homestead. There is no more land. With the huge amount of land being leased to the Japanese now, there is no more land good enough for the people. That's sad.
- Willens: What were the problems with the homestead program that you remember in the early 1970's?
- Santos: The worst problem is that they will give a person a maximum of five hectares, that's the maximum, and this one person or a family will never cultivate the whole area, just too big. Second, it's not economical. They planted very little produce and raised a few chickens, and that is all. As a result of that, we ran out of land.
- Willens: You basically would agree with those who took the view that it was not a sensible way to distribute and use property in Saipan?
- Santos: Precisely. I am in agreement with an agricultural homestead, but maybe on a smaller scale, like a maximum of maybe two hectares per person.
- Willens: One of the other land issues that was very much on the agenda was the public land issue. I've seen figures indicating that so-called public land on Saipan might have been as much as 80 or 90 percent of all of the available land back in the early 1970s. As an active political leader in the Northern Marianas at the time, what was your position as to the need and timing for the return of this public land to the local people?
- Santos: The public land belonged to the government. At that time in 1970, we had about 80 percent of public land. I envisioned that this public land should be utilized especially in the beach area for hotel and tourist-related activities. I don't know if you read someplace, but remember we opened up for just one golf course along the side of—remember the Coral Ocean Point?
- Willens: Right.
- Santos: That's it. That's the only one we opened for a golf course.
- Willens: When was that done?
- Santos: That was done during the negotiations. During the transitional period, we opened that up for an 18-hole golf course. We thought that that might be enough to deal with the tourist industry. But now it's just too much. We've got so many proposals for hotels—there are two now in Obesin, two at Kagman area, three in Marpi area. One is already going on, two to build.

- Willens: Those are hotels or golf courses or both?
- Santos: Both, combination. Just too many. They haven't built anything yet, with the exception of Shimizu. Shimizu is starting to build 18 holes.
- Willens: Did you undertake any efforts through the Marianas District Legislature to try to persuade the TTPI or the United States to return public lands to the districts?
- Santos: Yes. Remember these public lands were subsequently returned to the new government in 1973.
- Willens: Yes. The United States announced a policy for the return of public lands in November of 1973. What I am trying to ascertain is whether it was a major political issue for you and the Northern Marianas leaders at the time?
- Santos: No. In 1970 or 1971 we were satisfied to wait for the control of United States public land until we finally get into the new status. But remember again, Howard, because of the inability of the land management office under the Trust Territory to deal with the land problem, we came up with a corporation to handle that. It's not working.
- Willens: Why is it not working?
- Santos: Well, because we are back again worse than the old Trust Territory land management. It's worse now. With less study, with less public input, and even when they open up a public hearing, these people never listen to the public. Even the legislature, the Seventh Legislature, passed a lease at 10:30 p.m. one evening. Only a thief will work at night. So, the Seventh Legislature at 10:30 in the evening passed that resolution awarding Shimizu 200 hectares of public land—while the people were sleeping.
- Willens: As I understand it, the legislature was required to approve leases of a particular kind?
- Santos: Over five hectares.
- Willens: Over five hectares?
- Santos: Five hectares for a period of time like 25 years and then another option of 15 years.
- Willens: So it is your recollection that the Seventh Legislature passed a resolution approving the Shimizu lease for 200 hectares in the "dead of night" as we would say.
- Santos: In the dead of night while you and I were sleeping. And only a thief will do that. And then the Eighth Legislature did the same thing again. They passed UMDA 210 hectares. They knew that UMDA was not doing anything with the first lease. That's about 100 hectares.
- Willens: What is the name of that company?
- Santos: UMDA, United Micronesia Development Association. The original lease was for cattle grazing. They didn't accomplish that. Then they amended the lease for a Cow Town for horse riding, movies and what have you. That didn't go through again. Then they requested 210 hectares for two championship golf courses, with the understanding that UMDA will build the landfill in Marpi for the tune of \$10 million. UMDA has not spent a penny for the Marpi landfill. The government has spent several millions of dollars. The Eighth Legislature approved the 210 hectares even knowing that UMDA has not fulfilled its commitment under the first lease. So UMDA now has a total of over 300 hectares. It's lying idle, so idle.
- Willens: Why do you believe that the Legislature has acted to approve these leases?
- Santos: It's a connection. It's an economic connection. One member of the Legislature, his son

- is a huge shareholder in UMDA. Governor Guerrero himself is a huge shareholder in UMDA. All this.
- Willens: Do you think some of these important decisions about utilizing land had been made on political and personal grounds?
- Santos: Political, personal and a plain conflict of interest. So that's why I say MPLC is worse now than the old Trust Territory Land Management. I believed that to create a separate entity would improve the land problem. It's a problem. Remember the exchange of land between Tinian land and Saipan? Many of the board members of MPLC, knowing where all the prime property is located, exchanged land from Tinian to Saipan selecting the prime property on Saipan.
- Willens: One of the issues that was discussed in Mr. White's land report was how to deal with the U.S. military. Several members of the Commission, Dan Muna, Felix Rabauliman, Frank Hocog and Felipe Salas, went over to Guam actually in November of 1972 even before the first round of negotiations to seek the advice of Guamanian officials about how best to deal with the U.S. military. Mr. White's memorandum summarizes those discussions in great detail and the Guamanian officials were very helpful. Do you remember any discussion within the Commission about sending some Commission members over for that purpose to Guam?
- Santos: There was already an interest trying to get help, because Guam had experience in the past and at the present time with the military. Even at that time we were very dissatisfied with the military land taken on Guam. I obtained a copy of a Guam legislature report regarding military land taking. We wanted to learn more about it. In that report I discovered that the military bought land in some instances at one cent per square meter.
- Willens: They paid one cent?
- Santos: One cent per square meter for private land on Guam. I noticed that those land owners on Guam whose political status was recognized at that time, you know, a high-ranking family was paid higher—some ten cents per square meter, some 20 cents.
- Willens: One of the problems that you were aware of on Guam was the inadequate and discriminatory prices paid by the U.S. for land needed for military purposes.
- Santos: Exactly.
- Willens: What were any other problems on Guam arising from military use of the land that were of concern to you?
- Santos: We have learned even from this report that the military use was temporary.
- Willens: Was temporary?
- Santos: Temporary. That once the military has no more use of certain land on Guam that they will return it to their rightful owner. Now when I read the report, I kind of agreed that that will happen because of the very inadequacy of payment. That one cent, five cents per square meter, is almost nothing to the Guamanian because after the war they felt that kind of kinship with the United States. Guam was under the U.S. before Japan came into Guam, so they were liberated by the United States. So they had that kind of kinship, so they gave it away for the use of military, but knowing that when the United States has no more use of this particular land it would be returned. We were interested in all this experience with the U.S. military on Guam.
- Willens: Do you recall when you received this particular report that you are referring to?

- Santos: I have it here in my house. I don't know exactly where, but I had that with me all the time. In the 1970s maybe.
- Willens: Do you recall giving attention to these issues at about the time that the Marianas Political Status Commission became active?
- Santos: Yes, precisely. I had the opportunity to get a copy of this report because of my close association with the Guam Legislature at that time.
- Willens: The Guamanians, including the Lieutenant Governor who was present at the meeting, urged that the Marianas proceed very cautiously in dealing with the U.S. military. Was that generally your attitude as you looked forward to the next negotiation?
- Santos: Yes. I could not sleep. We have some expectation of the U.S. requirement of land on Tinian and that's a huge, that's a big issue. Because all along we thought that we could be a part of the United States without all this huge land requirement by the U.S., and I personally knew that it's coming, it's coming.
- Willens: The second of the major reports that you received from consultants in advance of the second round of negotiations was from the economic consultant Jim Leonard and his associates. He submitted two papers. One discussed the level of financial assistance that the Commission should seek from the United States and the second paper looked at investment requirements for commercial and housing development in the Northern Marianas. Do you recall having any impression as to the quality and the substance of these reports?
- Santos: Yes, we discussed the reports. Our thinking of U.S. assistance at that time didn't jive with Jim, I mean with Leonard. We differ really. We thought that maybe Jim had got some inside information from Ambassador Williams as to how much maybe would be fair for us.
- Willens: Are you suggesting his figures were on the low side?
- Santos: On the low side, yes.
- Willens: Did you personally have any sense as you began thinking about the economic side of the negotiations what would be an appropriate and generous level of support?
- Santos: I was comfortable with what was advanced by the U.S. side and even with our economic consultant. What I was not comfortable was that during all these years the Trust Territory administered these islands, it had done nothing to really move these islands towards economic development. So I was thinking of much more assistance, maybe not included in the whole package but a lump sum to identify the areas in which the Trust Territory had been negligent—like our dump. Other economic areas—like roads, infrastructure. I even advanced the idea that this was going to cause us a problem. It will give us a problem in the future in the sense that if we're going to use our regular funding as approved by the United States and us, we're going to spend many of those dollars in correcting what the Trust Territory was not able to do for the last few years.
- Willens: One aspect of Jim Leonard's report that tried to deal with that issue proposed future capital requirements in the range of \$47.7 million for a period of five years. This amount included \$20 million for public roads, nearly \$7 million for water, \$4 plus million for power facilities and so on. He developed this sum by looking at all the master plans and other documents that had been developed over the years and that had not been implemented. He came out with this very substantial figure. Do you recall having the

- sense at the time that even that figure didn't begin to grapple with the kinds of problems you were concerned with?
- Santos: Yes, because at that time I knew that all of this takes time and as we move forward you know this dollar money is going to keep on dwindling in its value.
- Willens: You were concerned about inflation in that regard?
- Santos: That's right. I was concerned about inflation. Like upgrading a one-mile road only, no real construction, in 1970 would cost the government at that time only \$100,000. Only \$100,000 just for upgrading, and that for complete construction it would cost \$300,000. At that time, when I looked at the road, I serviced some of the roads. Some of these roads only required upgrading because I saw a study that when they built these roads they were compacted.
- Willens: They were what?
- Santos: Were compacted.
- Willens: The roads were?
- Santos: The roads, yes. Many areas needed minor repair and then just upgrading. In other words, repave on top of the existing pavement. That would save money and it would last many years.
- Willens: Did you recall any discussions within the Commission before the second round of negotiations began that dealt with the economic issues? As I recall generally, the consultants would distribute the reports in advance, they would summarize them, respond to questions, and help the Commission try to formulate a position to take with the United States. Do you recall debate on, for example, the extent and type of capital improvements it would require?
- Santos: I can divide the sort of concern we had at the time in two ways. One is a new U.S. financial commitment. That is already clear.
- Willens: A new financial commitment?
- Santos: Financial commitment. The other one, as I said, is repair, infrastructure, development that the Trust Territory had not even started to move and do it for us. Because remember too that, when we were under the Navy, I never heard the words "budget", "deficit". But when we came under the Trust Territory government, that's the first time I heard about budget, deficit and so forth. So I told you that when the Trust Territory came to Saipan they dismantled many items here, telephone poles, steel work, and they were sent to Truk for the construction of the Truk harbor. Here we had all of these things already intact on Saipan and then they sent them to other districts. So we became worse and worse every year. There was nothing more we could do.
- Willens: Did you truly have the hope that that United States could be persuaded to recognize all the mistakes that had been made in the past and all the shortcomings with respect to infrastructure of the TTPI and promise the Northern Marianas a sum over time that would try to rectify those problems?
- Santos: We appreciated what the United States was doing from the time we conclude the negotiations and the implementation of U.S. financial assistance, because we knew it's coming. We knew that we have a new government, a separate government. But even at that time, I was afraid that many of these infrastructure needs would just be waiting for some money to be released for repair and upgrading. This is happening today. Of course

we continue to receive the federal highway money and all of this, but this takes a lot of time. We are now in our 16th, 17th year of commonwealth status, and while we try to develop whatever funding we have, now we having some problem with the United States and our own problems here with regard to alien labor, minimum wage, and all of this. So maybe part of this is our own making.

Willens: With respect to the cost of the future government, did you anticipate that the future commonwealth government was going to be more costly to support than the district administration government was?

Santos: Yes.

Willens: Why did you think so?

Santos: Because here we have entered into a new political entity with the United States. It is more open now and I foresee a growing number of people coming to Saipan for economic purposes. It's going to cost this government more in terms of our infrastructure, our services like power, water, hospitals and schools. But the type of development we have now, I had not foreseen this fast rate. I thought that we would have a very good and controlled development, but our development is so fast and now I see it is going to come down again. As it comes down, this is where I am afraid now. That we have no control for the last few years, like the last maybe six or seven years. No control and now we find ourselves in a jam of not having the right kind of money to move us forward.

Willens: There are those who say, to be fair to the Commonwealth, that some of the factors in operation here are beyond your control. For example, global recession, certainly a recession in Japan. Do you think that the Marianas government should have been exercising more restraints on development so that it would not be as susceptible to the ups and downs that are caused by large-scale economic factors?

Santos: Yes. I envisioned a slow, gradual development. Take a look at the garment industry. Two years ago we had maybe over 20, 28 going down. Rather than get that fast, get maybe up to just ten. Control it from the beginning, the housing for the employees, salaries of the employees, even the tax. Now the garment industries are paying only three percent user tax.

Willens: Three percent user tax?

Santos: Only three percent. They use much of our infrastructure and they employ a lot of people.

Willens: They pay the gross receipts tax, don't they?

Santos: Oh yes, of course. So it's uncontrolled. No one is looking at how much they get. For years they are free to do whatever they want. It's about time maybe to look into all this kind of business and see what they can help. If businesses from outside are looking for a tax haven and try to get away with not paying the tax, they have no place here on Saipan. They must share the responsibility and burden of running a government. That is paying their share of tax and assisting the economy, but not to get away from paying.

Willens: Going back to 1973, Leonard made a point out of identifying the fact that the government pay level in the Northern Marianas was less than the pay levels that existed in Guam and certainly less than the pay levels at the Trust Territory. Did you believe that the future Marianas government should have a higher pay scale that would approximate the scale in Guam?

- Santos: Early on we wanted to have our own pay schedule and would pace that up to meet, maybe not the Guam standard because Guam is paying more than the U.S. minimum wage. Even a long time ago we saw the need for that increase and it's not coming. It has been slow, \$2.15 is just too slow. That is the only reason why many of the local people will not go to work for any hotel here, because even though they have five or ten years experience outside, the moment they get to the hotel they only get \$2.15 an hour. But their Japanese counterpart, they show on record here that they get paid maybe \$2.15 but what we don't know is how much they pay at their main office in Japan. This arrangement we don't know about. They are paying more than the minimum, the U.S. minimum. They get a large payment so that is the reason many of our local people would like to go to work for the hotel but with a good salary, not \$2.15. Today maybe we should be paying \$4.00 an hour minimum. People are just afraid. When I retired four years ago, my last salary in that position was \$35,000. Now the same guy, four years later, is making \$50,000 in the same job. Those below him make \$40,000. So many persons now with \$35,000 salary. Is it fair for the judges to be making \$120,000 and in the same token one of the judges during the Constitutional Convention, when they tried to raise the salary of the legislature from \$8,000 to \$12,000 in 1978, stated that what kind of monsters to pay these people \$12,000? And today the same guy is making \$120,000. Is it fair to say that let the judges make \$120,000 and other people let them make only \$30,000? There is this disparity today in government and all they are doing now is just raising the ten percent. Only the higher echelon people, they just look at themselves. But the people who really do the work get very little. I'm ready to say that we should implement right now a U.S. minimum wage or, maybe—Guam is paying more than U.S. minimum now, about maybe \$5.00, and there is now a bill, maybe before the legislature, for \$7.00 an hour. Here on Saipan the business people are afraid. They should not be afraid because a long time ago they were paying 25 cents an hour, 33 cents an hour. Now they can get a lot of people, aliens, and pay them just \$2.15. But if you pay people \$4.00 an hour they would do a better job, they will not steal from your company, and you save a lot of money because you get quality people to work for you with good paying salary. Like myself here, if I hire people here, boy they steal from my house. Because if I had a construction company and that construction company pays only \$1.00 an hour and keeps the \$1.15, that guy will find everything, any small thing that he finds in the house before going home he will put it in his pack and steal it. By the end of the construction period, after six months, check around the house. You lose your saw, you lose your hammer, sooner or later maybe you lose your entire house.
- Willens: Do you remember any differences within the Marianas Political Status Commission on economic issues? Were there any particular members that you remember taking positions that were different from yours on economic issues?
- Santos: Within the Marianas Political Status Commission? Well, there are so many issues, you know, different people have different ideas. Remember Joeten was a member at one time, early on.
- Willens: Do you recall any specific views that he advanced on economic issues?
- Santos: Basically he is catering for a slower, much slower pace and local control.
- Willens: A slower pace of economic development?
- Santos: And local control, more local control. That was followed by maybe one or two, Dr. Palacios oftentimes would refer to the minority Carolinians—the Carolinians' right to be involved in economics. We spent so much time talking about economics and everyone has a different idea. But our belief is that when we enter into closer ties with the United States,

there will be better economic development because this island will be self-governing. We will have our own control for our economic and our political destiny.

Willens: Okay, let's turn to political status issues. Before the second round of negotiations, my law firm submitted a bulky memorandum that analyzed alternative political arrangements and addressed a series of legal issues. Do you recall receiving that document and do you remember having any reactions to it?

Santos: Yes. I read the recommendation. Maybe I was biased, because I looked at the other alternatives but then I went into commonwealth. I went into it so slow and looked at it and, having the opportunity to also study the Puerto Rico commonwealth, it's not totally the same, but I was satisfied. I was satisfied that the commonwealth status would give us a better relationship with the United States. Of course I liked independence. Who doesn't? That would give us a great hardship and we don't want under independence other nations to be knocking on our doors with all kinds of offers and not having the power to really control it because we are independent. Then sooner or later we would be overwhelmed by uncontrolled individuals who would be coming to our islands. Naturally, I personally was pleased with the commonwealth arrangement.

Willens: Ultimately after many days of discussion, the Commission did instruct the consultants to prepare a position paper which was reviewed and presented to the U.S. delegation. Do you recall any debate within the Commission about the commonwealth proposal? For example, do you remember any debate about the issue and meaning of sovereignty?

Santos: Yes, especially because we always wanted to run our government. But if we are to be part of the United States, like any other offshore territories, they cannot be sovereign and likewise the United States would be sovereign. I knew about that. What I was going after was self-government, local self-government. Sovereignty of course from the beginning, I was reading a report (I forgot who wrote it, whether your firm wrote it) about how it would relate to the United States. That was very clear in my mind that the new Northern Marianas government comes under the sovereignty of the United States of America.

Willens: Do you recall some reservation being expressed by Dr. Palacios or others to that concept?

Santos: Yes. Not only by Dr. Palacios, there were other members that questioned that. Here we want to run our own government, then why can't we run it all? Somebody explained from your side how this works, you know. Even the 50 states, they are not sovereign by themselves but come under the federal umbrella. You mentioned Dr. Palacios, which is good for him because he bring this kind of subject altogether, so that we would have an opportunity to talk about it and hear from your side the information that was needed for our insight and understanding.

Willens: Do you think the members of the Commission felt free to discuss difficult issues like this among themselves?

Santos: Oh yes.

Willens: Did they feel uncomfortable because the consultants were there?

Santos: No. I don't know whether the Commission remembers, but some suggested that we get our consultants from Guam. I went against it strongly and said we need someone from much farther than Guam because they cannot help us. We want people that we don't know that close, so that we have that great opportunity to go over and engage in rebuttal. Otherwise, if I knew you from before, then it's so difficult for me to confront you.

Willens: Do you feel that the members of the Commission felt comfortable in asking questions of

- the consultants and getting what they regarded as straight answers. Was there a problem of this kind?
- Santos: The Commission was comfortable. They wanted to know more about this type of relationship, every aspect of it. We were very comfortable.
- Willens: One of the recommendations presented to the Commission was that any future commonwealth relationship with the United States have what came to be known as a mutual consent provision. Was the concept of mutual consent new to you?
- Santos: When that was advanced, remember we had that kind of disagreement, a lengthy discussion.
- Willens: What do you remember about that discussion?
- Santos: Because we didn't want the federal government to keep on interfering with our local affairs. But then it's a healthy discussion, so that we know what we're getting into, and at the same time we should be able to relay this message to the public, that on certain matters there is this provision for mutual consent and that's the way with this kind of relationship. But when mutual consent was first advanced to us, we didn't take it lightly. It's a serious matter, and we needed to know more about it.
- Willens: Did it offer to you some sense of confidence that you would retain some control over the important elements of the relationship even after you had become part of the United States?
- Santos: Yes. We had that kind of confidence. We are getting something new that we didn't have before, and it's a blessing really that after 400 years of foreign domination finally we can elect our governor, our legislature, choose our judges, internal control of our government. So this was very brand new to all of us. It's God-given really that finally we have achieved this kind of relationship and especially with the United States after many years of experience with that kind of relationship. Even those people who were under the Japanese government felt that this is the best, and cannot be compared with the Japanese Administration because under the Japanese there was this limited authority of the local people.
- Willens: But there were some local people who retained an affectionate remembrance of the Japanese Administration, isn't that true?
- Santos: Yes, especially in economics. What I heard too from the older people, even my dad will tell me that the Japanese are better when it comes to economics. Whatever you produce, the surplus materials, produce, banana, what have you, there is a marketplace, and you will not run out of cash. Keep whatever you want, sell whatever is left over. And my dad will normally tell me that his experience with the Japanese, he said that after finishing the work by 6:00 o'clock in the evening, they will normally get together with his friends and have some drinks and other things, and as they go nighttime to their houses in Garapan, don't be afraid of highway robbery. Nothing like that. But under the U.S. Administration, there are so many, many things going on, he said. And then we discuss this, that maybe it's because there's so many people from outside coming in slowly in those days.
- Willens: One of the topics that concerned the Commission members before the second round of negotiations was how to deal with the desire of many Northern Marianas citizens to become U.S. citizens. Do you recall the discussion of U.S. citizenship and the fact that some people in the community might not want to become U.S. citizens?
- Santos: Yes.

- Willens: What was it that you understood was the reservation of people about becoming U.S. citizens?
- Santos: Some Carolinian individuals here wanted more time to think about it. Basically there were a few that didn't want to become U.S. citizens, and remember that we opened up the option of a national later on.
- Willens: Is it your view that the Carolinians who felt that way thought that if they opted not to become a U.S. citizen they might have some ability in the future to become something else?
- Santos: We envisioned that eventually they will have to be absorbed in the system. They fear that the Chamorro majority will control everything, and so they had that fear, but I envisioned that eventually they will be consumed by the system, because they will see gradually that this is a good system now. I maintained personally that those individuals who do not want to become a part of the United States are free to choose otherwise.
- Willens: Was this a desire that you think was found for the most part within the Carolinian community, or were there some elderly Chamorro citizens who also may have felt the same way?
- Santos: There were some elderly Chamorros. One very intelligent person confronted me in one of the meetings and outside of the meetings and expressed his disappointment with us—that this is too early, that people should be given the opportunity to learn more about it. And our conversation continued meeting after meeting. I told him to attend as many meetings as possible, because many of these will be dealing with your concern, and eventually it will be up to you. I said the Commission is not going to make this determination. After we learn and achieve our responsibility for political education, that's a time when we will put the question to you, and that's a time for you to exercise that right of choosing whether you want to maintain the status quo or get into the association.
- Willens: Was his concern focused particularly on U.S. citizenship or just generally on the whole relationship that the Commission was negotiating?
- Santos: It's in general. He was not ready. Not that he was not ready, he said that many of the people were not ready yet. He calculated the type of material we're giving them, and he's relating that to other individuals, that if he cannot completely comprehend what was going on during that meeting, other individuals might have worse comprehension than he. So what he's trying to do is to try and guess what other people were thinking, as he was thinking that many of the people were not ready yet for this kind of status. And I asked him how long do you think? He said, well, give this generation time to finish high school at least.
- Willens: How many years would that be?
- Santos: That was, well, make it 1971, 1972, yes. So we're talking about ten years.
- Willens: Ten more years.
- Santos: Ten more years. I find this guy to be very intelligent.
- Willens: Was he well off financially?
- Santos: I guess he's medium. He's very intelligent. He had a good Japanese background. He speaks very good English.
- Willens: The point that he was making to you came up from time to time in the Northern Marianas negotiations, and we'll come to that. But it also came up even more frequently

in the context of the Micronesian negotiations that we haven't talked about that were going on. Often Micronesian leaders were told and said that they could live under the status quo under the TTPI if needed for another ten, 15 or 20 years. And they were not as opposed to staying within the Trust Territory as you and other leaders in the Marianas were. Do you have any reaction to that?

Santos: Yes. Every time we went to a village meeting, in Rota too, I was assigned once by the Commission to head a group going to Rota. The same thing was asked of us. Why are we rushing? Are we ready for the new political status—economic and what have you? We responded that we have a responsibility under the law to move on to this one, and eventually the people will make a determination on this particular matter.

Willens: Did you think the Commission was rushing?

Santos: Yes and no. Yes and no at that particular time. I must be frank on that matter, yes and no. Yes, because to some people, maybe this is too sudden, because the only people who at that time were knowledgeable as to what's going on are elected people, elected individuals, because they have the opportunity, and high-ranking government officials, because they have the opportunity to meet with the United Nations visiting mission, U.S. members of Congress. And the majority of the people, you know, in those days there's very little media, radio, black and white television, and there was no cable at that time yet.

Willens: But you and other members of the Commission increasingly made an effort to go out and meet with the people and inform them as to what you were doing and solicit their feelings, and there's many good examples of that that we'll come to. But I'm interested in your response because you suggested that even from your position of leadership, that sometimes you wondered whether the Commission might be proceeding too rapidly in working out this very important future relationship.

Santos: Yes, but after meeting with the people, then I was confident; and they answer yes, that we are ready. We have put some of these issues to test the people in the way of the reintegration of Saipan and Guam, so I guess it balanced, it balanced. And I remember one time in Garapan, a lady stood up and asked the committee, this is a political education, well, we are all going to be Americans under this arrangement? Don't you think that if one million Americans all of a sudden move from California to Saipan that this island will sink? And I responded that this is a small island, and it will continue to grow, but that one million maybe will never come. There will be some people coming in because of our change of status, our political status is already stable, the American flag will be flying here, not the Trust Territory flag anymore, so outside businesses of course will be more secure to establish businesses because of that protection. But definitely there will be people coming in, but not one million.

Willens: Did that take place during the public education before the vote on the Covenant, or was that from an earlier stage?

Santos: Before the vote of the Covenant.

Willens: Do you remember whether the lady who asked the question was in any way reassured?

Santos: She's still questioning. In fact, she married an Israeli. Maybe that's it. This lady married an Israeli, and you know, Israelis being Jews, they have a different attitude. But right now she has a good job at education, she saw what's going on, and I have never heard her. She remembers that question, I know. Every time I saw her, I kind of remember, because in fact she points at me: "I want you, Mr. Santos, to answer this question."

- Willens: One of the problems that the Commission discussed before the formal negotiations began related to the fact that the United States was clear in its position that it would not terminate the Trusteeship Agreement except with respect to all of the Trust Territory at the same time. Did you begin to think about how the Marianas could achieve what it wanted to achieve as quickly as possible if the other districts were not able to reach some resolution of their status with the United States?
- Santos: Well, we were awarded the opportunity to negotiate separately. That was good. Remember we also requested for an early separate administration. Maybe this was done in the second round of negotiations.
- Willens: Well, the Commission urged that from time to time, but the United States decided not to do it until in fact after the Covenant had been approved by Congress. Were you disappointed that separate administration came so slowly?
- Santos: At that time, yes, we were disappointed. But not with great seriousness. Because we started negotiating already, and after final approval of the status we wanted and with the United States concurring, I knew that sometime in the future, there should be a separation of administration between the Northern Marianas and the rest of the Trust Territory districts.
- Willens: There is some indication in the documents that you and the other leaders in the Northern Marianas were somewhat concerned that separate administration within the Trust Territory might further alienate the Northern Marianas from the other five districts, and you were not certain that that would be in your interest. Do you remember any reservations along that line?
- Santos: I don't recall that particular incident.
- Willens: All right. Let's turn to the negotiations. The negotiations actually began officially on May 15, 1973. However, there had been an agreement between the Commission leadership and the U.S. delegation that there would be some informal working sessions before that formal opening. There was such a meeting on May 10, 1973, at which time the Commission presented its position paper on political status, and the Commission heard from Deputy Representative Wilson setting forth the views of the United States on a variety of subjects. What was your impression of Mr. Wilson?
- Santos: Well, my impression of him is that whatever is coming from the U.S. side, even with Ambassador Williams, is already prearranged. The Commission's great interest is how much the U.S. side will be listening to our views, our statements, and how much they will favor our aspiration. But I found Mr. Wilson to be sometimes, and I sympathize with him because he cannot just say everything that he wanted, but I find him to be sometimes too negative on one hand. But that didn't bother the Commission, didn't bother me. Because eventually we will be dealing with many of these difficult issues as we go along in subsequent sessions.
- Willens: The Commission developed a practice of delivering position papers. The United States delegation delivered position papers. You have to assume that each side exercised care in deciding what position to take. Were you looking for more flexibility and spontaneity from the U.S. delegation than you initially saw?
- Santos: Yes, we were looking for more flexibility, flexibility that will accommodate our interests. We also knew that the United States would not just close the door for whatever is requested from our side that will give us a better relationship with the United States. The Commission also understood at that time that since we are negotiating for this

- type of relationship, there is a limitation of what the United States can extend to the Commonwealth and we had no problem with that.
- Willens: There were occasions when Ambassador Williams and Mr. Wilson thought that the Commission was being inflexible in taking certain positions. Do you recall ever hearing from Ambassador Williams or Mr. Wilson that the Commission should be more flexible?
- Santos: Well, sometimes Mr. Wilson will come to me, and we'll go to a corner, and we start talking about some of the things we're not supposed to say that will slow down the negotiations. And sometimes I ask Mr. Wilson, but what else am I to say?
- Willens: What?
- Santos: Sometime I will ask him, but what else am I going to say when we're trying to find a better relationship with the United States and a lasting one that will not have to be questioned in the future.
- Willens: You're suggesting that he would occasionally take you aside and try to persuade you not to raise certain subjects or press certain points because they were complicating matters?
- Santos: Complicated matters. They have to go back to the Congress for consultation and what have you. And that in some complicated areas they cannot immediately respond to the concerns of the Commission.
- Willens: And what was your response to that kind of statement by him?
- Santos: Well, as usual, I would just say that we thought that this is acceptable under the present system of the United States, that there is no constitutional problem, and that it can be negotiated.
- Willens: Actually, some of those points came up in Mr. Wilson's statement on May 10, 1973. One of the points he made in his very first statement on political status was that the Marianas and the United States should agree on some simple and straightforward relationship rather than a complicated one. And he made reference indirectly to the fact that some members of Congress did not approve of the ambiguities with respect to the relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico. Do you remember any general sense from the United States delegation that the Commission should avoid relying on the Puerto Rico precedent in determining its own future relationship with the United States?
- Santos: Yes. Remember we sometimes refer to the Puerto Rican experience, and at times Ambassador Williams would say that: "Well, Puerto Rico should not be—it has a different concept." But often times we tried to speak highly of Puerto Rico commonwealth status, and I guess what the United States wanted us to do was just design our own commonwealth status as it related to our way of life here in the Northern Marianas.
- Willens: Did you have the impression early on that the U.S. delegation essentially wanted the Commission to accept a relationship that was as close as possible to Guam?
- Santos: I don't quite remember. Maybe because the Commission has taking out references to Guam in what we are working on, and even if the Ambassador advanced that kind of thinking, we were very reluctant to continuously mention Guam. You know, because Guam does that we should also do it but improve on it.
- Willens: In fact, in this presentation on May 10, Mr. Wilson floated the idea that the Commission might consider a future status relationship that would look forward in the future to unification with Guam. Do you recall having any reaction to that suggestion?

- Santos: I don't recall that particular incident really.
- Willens: Another point he made in his initial statement was that the relationship between the United States and the Northern Marianas in the future should be understood to fall under Article IV-3-2 of the U.S. Constitution. Were you aware of Article IV-3-2 and the issue of plenary federal authority before these negotiations began?
- Santos: No, not at all.
- Willens: Was that something new to you?
- Santos: Something new to me. And remember, you came up with a write-up in that regard? And so that particular section of the U.S. Constitution was entirely new. There was some discussion of Guam and the Northern Marianas possibility of uniting, but there was a statement made by our Commission that maybe if that has to do with statehood, because we knew at that time that Guam would not be accepted as a State by itself. Guam and the Northern Marianas must first get together and request such a possibility. I remember that was discussed with the U.S. side at one point, but then it died down because there was no assurance when. And I guess we were more concerned of achieving our goal to be a part of the United States, and then let a future generation maybe deal with statehood.
- Willens: Mr. Wilson made a presentation with respect to the U.S. plans for Tinian. He promised more specifics in future sessions, but he did describe the facility with somewhat more detail that had been made available before. One of the points he made was that the United States would like to have as much of Tinian as possible, and indeed that he would like to see the entire island under military control. Do you recall having any reaction to this initial presentation by Mr. Wilson as to what the United States had in mind for Tinian?
- Santos: Yes. We were actually shocked, you know, by the United States request of Tinian, and we were not at that time ready to respond. It came as a big surprise, because we knew that the United States required some land for military, but not that size. And when he requested Tinian, and also some on Saipan, it's a big setback on our part. Because if we're thinking about the size of California and then maybe there's no real issue, no real question, but these are small islands, and to get even like 2/3, that's a huge chunk of property.
- Willens: This first working session took place on May 10, which was a Wednesday, and the formal negotiations were going to open the following Monday on May 15. There's some indication in the records that there were some informal sessions between the two delegations either on the Thursday or Friday of that week. I have no recollection of that. Do you have any recollection of some give and take particularly about Tinian before the negotiations formally opened on the following Monday?
- Santos: If there was one, maybe I was not in that particular meeting. But I'm sure Joe Cruz was already advised of this situation.
- Willens: He was not yet on the Commission.
- Santos: Joe Cruz?
- Willens: He didn't come on the Commission until later in 1973.
- Santos: I see.
- Willens: You may be thinking of some later event?
- Santos: Maybe. But I'm sure that if there was a meeting prior to the session, I was not in that prior meeting.

- Willens: Well, your mention of Joe Cruz is interesting, because he was of course an active figure back on Tinian, and there were two Tinian representatives on the Commission. And the next thing that developed of critical importance on this subject is that on the very morning after the formal negotiations opened, the *Pacific Daily News* of May 16, 1973 had a headline that filled half the page, and it said: "Say Navy Seeks All of Tinian." It represented a leak of the detailed U.S. plans for Tinian that had been outlined in general terms by Wilson five or six days earlier. Do you recall waking up and seeing that headline in May of 1973?
- Santos: I don't recall that particular period of time.
- Willens: Well, it created enormous furor and debate in the community, because it now officially put out into the entire community exactly what the United States was seeking. According to the newspaper reports, neither Chairman Pangelinan nor Ambassador Williams responded to inquiries from the press as to whether these reports were accurate. Do you remember any discussions with Eddie or within the Commission as to how to deal with this new highly public development?
- Santos: I don't remember specifically about the news article, but I remember one thing very clearly. That is, after learning it, our strategy now was to get back to Tinian and try to handle it on Tinian. And it's not that easy.
- Willens: Let me explore that. I think you're exactly right. The inhabitants of Tinian were outraged by this development and several leaders, including Mayor Antonio Borja, Council member Leonardo F. Diaz, and Representative Felipe Atalig, all said they should have been consulted before the U.S. proposal was developed and that a proposal that involved the whole island and relocation of San Jose Village would be strongly opposed by Tinian representatives. So there was then a joint press release that was put out, and subsequently the Commission did go over to visit . . .
- Santos: Oh, yes.
- Willens: . . . and meet with the Tinian people. You went over on Friday evening, May 18, whereas during the week you had been discussing political status issues, and we'll come back to that. But do you remember discussing with Ed and the other members of the Commission the need to go to Tinian?
- Santos: Yes, immediately.
- Willens: What was your thought?
- Santos: That no matter what, no matter how mad the people of Tinian, this has got to be done and cleared. And we wanted the U.S. side to come with us.
- Willens: They did not come with you on the first occasion. You went by yourself.
- Santos: That's right. Not yet. But I remember when we came together, we were met at the airport with all kinds of—they even have—oh, the people were yelling that they have—what do you call that? Like a machine gun, something like that. They had some machine gun and all that stuff, you know. And they were just mad.
- Willens: That's when you went over with the Ambassador.
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: But at the first meeting that you had over in Tinian, Speaker Mendiola, for example, said that the people on Tinian had perhaps been too eager to say they were pro-military and that they ought to tell the U.S. Delegation that certain aspects of this proposal were

unacceptable. Chairman Pangelinan told the meeting that the Commission hadn't yet begun to discuss this subject, and they could be confident that the Commission would consult with the people. What do you recall being the impact of the meeting that the Commission had by itself with the Tinian residents?

Santos: Well, the big impact there is that there had been no consultation. In some instances we were told that they are looking for this status with regards to changing from a Trust Territory, but they questioned the way we handled it, no consultation. I guess it was Bernard Hofschneider who tried to explain to the people that this has not come up yet and that as a representative of Tinian, this will be relayed to them when all the facts were relayed to the Commission.

Willens: Now you do remember the second meeting, which was on the evening of June 1, I guess that was two weeks later, after the subject had officially come up during the negotiations and the Commission had taken its position against various aspects of the U.S. proposal. Ambassador Williams wanted to go and meet with the citizens of Tinian personally to present the proposal. Do you recall whether the Commission favored his going over to Tinian or opposed his going to Tinian? There's some suggestion in the materials that some Commission members may not have wanted him to go.

Santos: On this trip, I guess, the Ambassador was to bring with him some information.

Willens: Yes. The colonels who had briefed the Commission with their charts and slides were going to go with him, and there was going to be a complete presentation. Who was the interpreter that night, do you remember? Was that Oly Borja? I remember Ed Pangelinan told me at one of these meetings he used Senator Borja as an interpreter.

Santos: I'm not sure who made the interpretation. But we got all those charts, you know.

Willens: Were the people impressed by the presentation?

Santos: It offered some kind of economic security, like the relocation of San Jose Village to another place where people are offered economic opportunity, relocation funding, and new concrete houses. All of these were advanced to the people. I remember the late Mendiola had a huge cattle ranch on the other side of the island next to the ocean, and he was very interested to find what will happen to those people with cattle ranches in the 2/3's area. So this was all explained, and gradually as we moved on, I guess the meeting went to late that evening.

Willens: It went on for about seven hours, and it lasted well past 1:00 a.m. in the morning.

Santos: Yes.

Willens: Do you think Ambassador Williams did a good job in presenting his case?

Santos: Oh, he was strong. He was ready. Although some people started leaving the meeting hall, those people in attendance and stayed that late received good information as to why the military wanted Tinian and the relocation of San Jose Village to another place.

Willens: Do you recall some of the younger participants opposing the plan and some of the elderly residents endorsing the plan?

Santos: Yes. There's a young person there who from the beginning was very vocal against the plan. I remember even at that juncture he mentioned that some Commission members had bought land in anticipation of this economic eventuality, and I responded. I told the person that I have land on Tinian, but I bought my land long before all these negotiations took place.

- Willens: Did you think he was referring to you?
- Santos: Referring to me, referring to Oly Borja.
- Willens: There was a land transaction involving Herman M. Manglona, who sold it then to Senator Borja, that reached the media several months later.
- Santos: Yes. But in my case, I don't know. So to set the record straight, I told this chap that in the event the original owner wants his land back, I am always willing to resell it at the same price. I bought the land for \$11,000, and that's the highest price on that land, because in those days you can get land for \$1,000 for one hectare. But in my case, it's 4.4 hectares for \$11,000. That's the highest price. In fact, I was the only person who increased the price at that time.
- Willens: Do you think that the meeting in Tinian, the two meetings, but particularly the last one where Ambassador Williams was present, undercut the position of the Commission in dealing with the United States on this subject?
- Santos: When you say "undercut", what . . .
- Willens: There were some people who were concerned, in fact some people from Tinian who were concerned that the meeting may have operated to limit the bargaining power that the Commission would have subsequently in dealing with the U.S. delegation. Those people and others on Tinian expressed confidence in the MPSC. Do you recall having any feeling one way or the other as to whether this meeting helped or hurt the ability of the Commission to represent the people in negotiating with the United States?
- Santos: All right. The question of land on Tinian. We felt, the Commission felt, that it has slowed down our chance because here the United States is making a new approach—that it wants this land on Tinian. The Commission was afraid at that time that if the people of Tinian don't want to release this land, it might slow down our negotiations.
- Willens: Referring to Commission members Hocoq and Manglona, what was their role at this stage of the negotiations given the fact that the Tinian residents seemed to be opposed to the U.S. proposal as it was originally announced?
- Santos: We tried to get back with these two Commission members and tried to meet with as many people as possible on a one-to-one basis.
- Willens: As many people as possible on Tinian?
- Santos: On Tinian. To try and explain the U.S. land requirement. And at this juncture, we felt very uncomfortable that this huge piece of land is made a part of the political negotiations. I felt even from the beginning that the United States will use this for leverage in the negotiations.
- Willens: But you knew from the beginning of the negotiations that ultimately the U.S. was going to request land on Tinian and that that was one of the elements of the quid pro quo for the future relationship.
- Santos: Yes. But not that huge, you know.
- Willens: Well, the Commission by this time had taken the position that the United States was asking for too much. The Commission was taking the position that it would never sell the land, it would only lease it, and the Commission had taken positions on a variety of other subjects. Did you and the other Commission members make sure that the people on Tinian knew what the positions of the Commission were on this subject?

- Santos: Yes. But then subsequently, remember the lease-back arrangement. That is a—what do you call it— it's a lifesaver.
- Willens: It was a compromise by the United States?
- Santos: That lease-back, looking back at Guam military land taking and the fear that once the military takes property that it will never release it again. But then when we have that lease-back arrangement, that opened up again more leverage for the Commission to go back to Tinian and relay this message that this is up for a lease and that in the event that the military does not use certain areas of this lease area, it will be leased back to the government and subsequently the government will sub-lease it to any individual for economic purposes. So the land question and issue on Tinian has taken a dramatic turn regarding this uncertainty. Then remember the other economic aspects on the use of the military area by the people—the hospital, the schools, and the produce that will come from all these developments.
- Willens: Let me interrupt on that point. In all the discussion about financial assistance over the next few rounds of negotiations, the United States always referred to the economic benefits that would flow from the construction and actual operation of a major facility on Tinian. Did you and the other Commission members think that those economic benefits were real and important?
- Santos: Yes, definitely. Especially when we learned that there's so much construction that will be going on on Tinian, and imagine the kind of economic benefit that the people of Tinian can have by selling hardware goods, you know, lumber, cement, rebars, and what have you. And to supply the military section with farm produce. These are all economic benefits and then slowly the people understand that these are good economic benefits that they have not seen before.
- Willens: Going back to May of 1973 when the United States first announced the proposal, the Commission took very important positions in opposition to it, and the people on Tinian were overwhelmingly opposed to the United States proposal. Did you ever think possibly that the whole negotiations might fail because the United States would not compromise on important elements of its Tinian request?
- Santos: The Commission has not feared that reality—that the status negotiations would fail because of this one thing. Because the United States also advanced the other economic possibility, and this has slowed down the fear of completely losing the flavor of continuing the negotiations. But the Commission felt that this is an important United States compromise on status, and that we must be ready to find ways and means to accommodate the United States and in return the people also will be benefitted by such a request from the United States.
- Willens: Was it your personal opinion that sooner or later the United States would give up its request that the land be sold and would agree to leasing the land?
- Santos: Yes. I had the impression that eventually the government will lease it to the U.S., with the understanding of course with an economic benefit like a lease-back arrangement in the future.
- Willens: And was it your personal judgment in May of 1973 or thereabouts that ultimately the United States would give up its request for the entire island and settle for what it actually needed?
- Santos: Yes, I have that feeling, that that request for the entire island is only—to me, it's a request,

- it's a request that eventually we will compromise for a lower amount, for some of the property on Tinian but not the entire island.
- Willens: Well, without using inappropriate language, would you consider it to have been sort of an opening bargaining position by the United States that you thought would ultimately be compromised?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: Let's turn back to the political status issue as it unfolded in the second round of negotiations. It involved an extended discussion between the two delegations about the position paper that the Commission had presented to the U.S. side on May 10, 1973. Ambassador Williams responded to this and generally emphasized that the commonwealth aspects of this were acceptable to the United States in general terms. But he then went on to make certain specific points. He told the Commission that the U.S. was not prepared to define a status that copied Puerto Rico, and he was not ready to agree to the concept of mutual consent. Do you have any recollection of your reactions to his statements along those lines?
- Santos: I don't recall, but we were afraid at that time because we thought that without the mutual consent arrangement the United States Congress can at any time interfere with our self-government. But I don't recall exactly what happened during that period of time.
- Willens: The mutual consent issue was one of the two principal issues in the political status area during this round. The other was the question of the United States insistence that the United States Congress retain unlimited legislative authority under Article IV-3-2. Eventually, the United States agreed to compromise on the mutual consent provision, and the United States made a statement that they would agree in principle on a preliminary basis to mutual consent so long as it was very narrowly applied. Do you recall any discussions within the Commission about the mutual consent or Article IV-3-2 issues?
- Santos: It's so hard to remember.
- Willens: It is. Let me just refresh your recollection in this regard. There were a series of meetings in which I participated representing the Commission with lawyers from the United States side. In these meetings, I urged the U.S. delegation to accept the Commission's position on mutual consent, and ultimately they did do that. But there was a big debate that developed about Article IV-3-2 because I came back and I told the Commission that there would be some doubt as to its ability to exercise self-government or indeed to have mutual consent protection if the United States insisted on having plenary authority under IV-3-2. So I recommended that we try to defer this issue and study it during the recess and then come back with a position on it. Do you have any recollection of discussions within the Commission on that or perhaps any private conversations that you had with Ambassador Williams or Mr. Wilson on that subject?
- Santos: Yes. The Commission was concerned about too much authority of the United States Congress over our relationship, and if that is the case, we kept on moving back and forth regarding self-determination, self-government. If the United States Congress is to have that kind of authority over us, then it's not self-government. The United States maintains sovereignty, and that's enough already to us. But to further interfere with our local government and so-called self-determination, it is defeating the purpose of that affiliation and partnership with the United States.
- Willens: I should have brought the document with me, but I have a copy of a memorandum of a meeting in which you and Chairman Pangelinan along with the lawyers participated

in a meeting with Ambassador Williams and Mr. Wilson on this subject. And at that meeting, we emphasized the importance of exploring this issue further and our concerns about impact on local self-government. Ambassador Williams was very concerned. Do you remember any conversations with Ambassador Williams where he suggested that the Commission was trying to push too hard for limitations here on federal authority of a kind that no other insular area had?

Santos: Yes. The Ambassador repeatedly mentioned that to us, about our differences with other insular areas—Guam, Puerto Rico and even the Virgin Islands—that this is the only area that the United States is giving more autonomy. So the Ambassador was concerned both in meetings with the Commission and even during the recess period.

Willens: As a result of the meeting, the Ambassador said he would take it under consideration. The next day, he did make an announcement saying that basically the Commission could reserve on this issue and study it further during the recess. But he emphasized the U.S. position with respect to the need for Article IV-3-2 and the lack of any precedents for limiting that authority. But the joint communiqué did indicate that the Commission was going to explore means to reconcile the plenary powers of Congress under Article IV-3-2 with the exercise by the Commonwealth of maximum self-government with respect to internal affairs. Do you remember the term “maximum self-government” being used early on in these negotiations?

Santos: I don't really recall that word “maximum.”

Willens: What did the self-government mean to you? You suggested earlier it meant more than having your constitution and your own institutions of government. It meant some limitations on Congressional authority. Is that correct?

Santos: Yes. I guess we discussed several times the words “maximum,” “lasting,” “permanent,” “enduring relationship,” yes, and we were afraid that the United States still wants some authority over our government. And yes, we insisted that we must get the maximum possible relationship with the United States.

Willens: The other major subject discussed at this second round of negotiations was the question of finances and economic support. The Commission presented a position paper that was based largely on the consultant's analysis. It announced a three-stage period. Phase I as it came to be known was for a transitional planning stage that would last approximately a year and require U.S. funding for certain transitional steps. This became a subject of considerable discussion at the next two rounds. Do you remember the concept of a transitional planning phase, and what did it mean to you?

Santos: Yes, because the transition is so important too. I always maintained that to give us the status without some funding before we get into the actual government—we're going to use up all our Covenant funding doing other things that relate to what the Trust Territory has not done in the past. So the Commission was concerned on having that type of funding that will help us during the transition.

Willens: The Phase I program would include such things as economic and social planning, legal research and planning for the new government, preparation for the constitutional convention and so forth. Did the members of the Commission as you recall it have some general agreement among themselves that there were a series of steps and studies that ought to be taken in order to facilitate the transition.

Santos: Yes. In fact I was a co-chairman of the transition.

Willens: Co-chairman?

- Santos: Co-chairman, yes.
- Willens: During the actual transition period?
- Santos: During the actual transition period. And that is needed.
- Willens: The other major proposition put forth by the Commission in this round of negotiations was a proposed level of United States support during Phase II which it defined as a seven-year period of time. Do you recall any discussion within the Commission about the need to have multi-year support for the future Commonwealth government?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: What was the significance of the multi-year aspect of the matter?
- Santos: Especially the first seven years, you know, the multi-year period. Our discussion was based on our desire that we don't have to go back to Congress to request funding every year during the first seven years.
- Willens: Why did you not want to do that?
- Santos: Well, we feel that to do otherwise we might not get the level of funding that was already agreed to, and that if we were to go during the Phase I period, if we were to go every year to Congress, no telling what problems we might face. So we wanted the first seven years considered as a multi-year period so that we can plan. We know how much we're getting next year, the following year. It was the Commission's understanding that this is a ceremonial thing—that it will be requested in the budget altogether with the Commonwealth budget, but this money's already forthcoming, that is, the first seven-year multi-year funding.
- Willens: The Phase II proposal that the Commission put forth did project capital improvement projects in the range of the \$48 million that I mentioned earlier, and it proposed that the Marianas government be supported in the range of \$8.6 million and increasing to about \$12 million a few years later. Do you remember generally being satisfied with the figures that were put forth by the Commission in these two areas?
- Santos: Realizing the experience we had before, although the money is not that satisfying, we said that we can live with that funding, adding of course our local revenue plus other federal assistance that come from outside the Covenant agreement.
- Willens: You're referring to federal programs?
- Santos: Federal programs. And that will add up. The Commission indicated oftentimes that this might not be sufficient, but we were assured that other federal program funding will be available to us.
- Willens: After the Commission made a very detailed financial presentation to the United States, the U.S. delegation responded with a very general position paper. It did not contain any specific data, analysis or projection of estimated Marianas needs. The Commission was very upset with that. Do you recall any reaction in that round of negotiations to the way in which the United States responded to the Commission's proposal in this area?
- Santos: Yes, because we were looking for a more specific response really, so that we will be able to compare it with our request.
- Willens: Were you hoping to see a specific U.S. proposal including dollar levels of support at this round of negotiations?

- Santos: Yes, because it's important already to start talking about the funding level, because that's very key, especially the first seven years and the ensuing years after the seventh.
- Willens: Why do you think the United States did not present specific figures at this time? Was it unprepared to do so, or do you think that it wanted to reserve that for future discussion down the line after the political relationship had been negotiated?
- Santos: I suspected that they did that as leverage in the negotiation. They didn't want to just give it away right away, and maybe I'll do the same thing, leave that for a later date after more political negotiation and compromise.
- Willens: You think if they had come up with a dollar level at the early point, there would have been a very significant difference between the two sets of figures and that might not have helped very much?
- Santos: That's right. Maybe that's what they were thinking.
- Willens: What the Commission did was provide a strong statement and ask the United States to answer some very specific questions. The United States failed to do that, and a joint press release was put out on this subject. At that time, though, Chairman Pangelinan at the direction of the Commission told Ambassador Williams "that the Commission is of the unanimous view that the commitments made by the United States in the area of economic and financial support in this release are not as specific, definite or generous as the Commission believes appropriate." Those sound like strong words today. Do you remember feeling that kind of a statement was justified?
- Santos: In those days? Yes, it's justified. We wanted the United States to be serious about it, and we cannot keep on playing around with words. We just had to deliver to them a stronger sense of seriousness on this particular matter.
- Willens: One result of this round of negotiations which concluded on June 4 was that the two delegations agreed to create two working groups, one to consider economic and financial issues and the other to work on legal and political status issues. Did you think that creating these kinds of working groups to function during the recess was a good strategy on the Commission's part?
- Santos: It is.
- Willens: Why did you think so?
- Santos: So that we can deal with the question on financial support, which is becoming very important. It's economics. And that the Commission needs to move on and get as much information, reports from two different committees, rather than just the whole Commission becoming involved with the political and economic issues. It's good to divide into two groups so that we will have the benefits of experience and at the same time more timely discussion on these two particular issues.
- Willens: Now stepping back from the second round of negotiations then, to summarize, there was a general agreement on a commonwealth relationship with some important and new features like mutual consent but with an unresolved question as to Article IV-3-2. The United States announced its land requirements, and the Commission had reacted to it and staked out its positions. And the Commission had made a specific proposal on finances and the United States had taken a very general position delegating this to be looked at further during the recess by a committee. What was your personal sense with respect to the second round of negotiations as to its success in moving the objective along?
- Santos: We've made great progress, especially with the mutual consent. We were not satisfied, of

- course, with the U.S. response in general terms on financial assistance. And of course the huge land the United States has requested on Tinian and also with the American memorial park. So we were hoping that the United States heretofore will come back and present us with a clear view of financial assistance. We look at the economic assistance as one of the important aspects of our relationship, aside from the political aspects of the thing.
- Willens: Did you hope that during the recess the United States would revise its military land request so as to meet some of the Commission's concerns?
- Santos: Yes, we were hoping that the United States will revise its request, and the Commission believed that after doing that, it will accomplish just that. Because we just didn't believe that the United States would like to take the whole of Tinian at one time, you know.
- Willens: Shortly after the second session concluded, the United Nations Trusteeship Council met again to consider the report of the visiting mission. This visiting mission took an even stronger view with respect to the Marianas negotiations than its predecessors had. It recommended that the negotiations be stopped completely until the United States had completed its negotiations with the Micronesian Joint Committee. Do you remember that report of the visiting mission?
- Santos: Yes. We were aware of the strong opposition of the United Nations visiting mission with regards to our separate talks with the United States. At times we were kind of afraid that the United States would take it seriously and slow down or stop the negotiations and our future meetings with the U.S. delegation. But we were assured that the negotiations will continue as planned.
- Willens: Do you remember whether you personally received any assurances along that line?
- Santos: Yes. After getting the assurance and the green light that definitely the negotiations will be continued, I personally thought that there is nothing to stop us from that point on, that the negotiations will continue as planned irrespective of the United Nations visiting mission's strong opposition to it.
- Willens: Two members of the Commission, Mitch Pangelinan and Ben Manglona, were designated to appear before the Trusteeship Council. I recall that I helped them with the statements and went with them to the Council meeting. Do you remember how it came to be that those two were selected? You had gone for the last two years to the Trusteeship Council. Did you decide that you should not go and that somebody else from the Commission should?
- Santos: Basically because we liked other members of the Commission to participate. Ben Manglona had been very helpful in the negotiations, so we wanted Rota to be represented as much as possible during the negotiations. And that was precisely the thinking behind Ben Manglona. We looked at Ben Manglona as an asset to the Commission because we didn't want Rota to feel that Rota is not that very important. From the beginning, we thought that Rota and Tinian are as important as Saipan in the process of the negotiations.
- Willens: How about the selection of Mitch Pangelinan?
- Santos: Mitch—I don't remember why. We regarded Mitch at that point in time as a very vocal and knowledgeable individual in the whole process. And he is an important individual too in the negotiations, even in the Popular Party membership. He's very active and very vocal when it comes to political status.
- Willens: As a result of their appearances and the representations made by the United States, the Trusteeship Council itself took a much more moderate and realistic view of the

negotiations than the visiting mission had. They didn't necessarily approve of the separate negotiations, but they did not ask that they be stopped. Do you remember hearing that the Trusteeship Council had taken a more favorable position on this subject?

Santos: I do not recall that kind of sentiment from the Trusteeship Council at that particular point in time. I have no recollection of that.

Willens: After the negotiations, there was the usual publicity in Guam that compared what the Marianas Political Status Commission was doing with Guam's own political status. Mr. Murphy, the editorial writer, always generated several articles on this subject. It happened that the Guam Political Status Commission invited your Commission to a meeting on Guam in early July 1973. The meeting was designed simply to exchange information about the negotiations. Do you remember participating in any meeting in Guam with the Guamanian Political Status Commission at that time?

Santos: My goodness, I don't recall that meeting. I really don't recall that I participated in that meeting.

Willens: It's unclear to me whether you did or not. I have information that the Chairman participated, and Herman Q. Guerrero participated, but it was unclear to me from the documents which other members might have participated. Did you generally feel that keeping in communication with the Guamanian political leaders was good strategy for your Commission?

Santos: Yes. We didn't want to close the option of meeting with Guam. It's an important strategy to continue dialogue irrespective of our desire for a different status from Guam. To me that's a good strategy. We wanted to maintain that uniqueness of being Chamorro, and we didn't want to close the door on this opportunity, and it's an important aspect during all of our discussion. That particular meeting I don't believe I attended, but I have had other one-to-one meetings with members of the Guam Legislature, we were that close, and they were advised of what is going on during our negotiations.

Willens: It was about at this time that Congressman Won Pat asked President Nixon to create a political status commission or at least to recognize Guam's right to choose its own status, and Congressman Won Pat conducted a poll of his own constituents. Did you personally have any discussions with Congressman Won Pat about what he was trying to do on behalf of Guam?

Santos: Not directly. I don't recall, but I knew that Guam was already much more interested again in trying to have its own status commission.

Willens: Governor Carlos Camacho of Guam at the time complained to Ambassador Williams and others that he was being excluded from the Marianas negotiations with the United States. He asked to be able to have a representative participate as an observer at the negotiations. His request was turned down, and the Ambassador said that the Marianas Political Status Commission did not want to have any observers from Guam or any other groups. Do you remember any discussions with Ed Pangelinan or others on that subject?

Santos: Yes. That's a good point, because it was just like yesterday. That request was brought to our attention, and there was no real objection for a Guam observer to participate in some of the meetings. I guess there was an indication from the U.S. side that that might not be a good idea.

Willens: Really?

Santos: Yes.

- Willens: At one point, Chairman Pangelinan told the press that the Commission decided it had to turn down that request because it had similar requests from many other groups, such as the Congress of Micronesia, the Joint Committee, the Municipal Council, and so forth. Do you remember having more than one request from outside groups to be observers?
- Santos: The only requests I knew at that time were from the news media. They wanted to participate, and we strongly rejected that idea, especially the news media, we just didn't want them to be a part of anything. The U.S. side indicated that it was up to us to make that determination whether or not we wanted to—like in the case of Guam—and I don't quite remember what was our decision. Perhaps we thought at that time that it might not be a good idea, because many of the things that we might be discussing are still premature in nature that we don't want to be disclosed outside of the negotiations and then have the responsibility for us to reply to the newspaper what has transpired. So maybe one of the reasons why Guam was not included is because of the difficulty that we cannot monitor what happened after a representative left the meeting.
- Willens: There was the Liberation Day ceremony on July 4, 1973, and there were many speeches that were generally supportive of the negotiations to date. Do you have any recollection of what the general public sentiment was about the kind of work that you and the other Commission members had been doing at the time?
- Santos: Yes, we received good praise from all sectors in the community, maybe because the majority of the people wanted change, and that was compounded maybe by the awareness of the people of the interest of the Congress of Micronesia for a new status. So it's kind of a race; we're now racing against time. We didn't want the Congress of Micronesia to interfere with our negotiations. So it's an opportune time. Had we negotiated with the United States not having formed the Congress of Micronesia, maybe the whole thing would be a different aspect of the negotiations. But here the people were really interested to move on and try to accomplish what we were doing at the time.
- Willens: Are you suggesting that the Northern Marianas people were generally aware that the Congress of Micronesia had established a Joint Committee that was pursuing its own negotiations?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: And is it your sense that they felt that there was some kind of a competition now between the two negotiating entities to see who could reach a satisfactory conclusion first?
- Santos: Mainly that sense, and that really also geared up the feeling of the people that they wanted this status issue settled as soon as possible.
- Willens: There was an interview that was publicized in June of 1973 that contained some dissenting views from three members of the Commission—Dr. Palacios, Joeten and Mr. Rabauliman. They were responding to questions that the *Pacific Daily News* had apparently made available to them some time before. They complained about such matters as giving up sovereignty to the United States. They complained about not being as well prepared as the United States was, and they were concerned about the fact that negotiations were proceeding too rapidly. Do you remember that interview, and what were your reactions when it became public?
- Santos: Yes. There's some question whether we answer that, especially to the members of our party, especially in the area of sovereignty. Here we wanted to become a partner of the United States, just like a corporation.

Willens: What other thoughts did you have about the interview in which some Commission members criticized the direction and pace of the Commission's work?

Santos: Well, it is true. We were moving very fast. We were prepared. Our consultants, of course, were all the time giving us a lot of materials to read and to go over, so we got enough materials to move on. Even the U.S. side was also excited about the whole thing. I remember some criticism, especially with regards to the plenary power of the United States federal government and especially sovereignty. Sovereignty was explained to some people as meaning that the kind of status we were pursuing at that time is not good, because the federal government will continue to have a say-so in our government. But we explained the reality to the people, that this is a partnership agreement and that, when it comes to sovereignty, the federal government still has to come in and assist us, not interfere with our local government. And when it comes to defense, of course, the United States will come in and assist us in that area and other matters of international interest.

Willens: Ben, do you have any recollection that Joe Screen was involved in helping these members present their answers to questions?

Santos: Yes, that's why precisely why I objected to Eddie Pangelinan about Joe Screen's hiring, because Joe Screen is not going to help the Commission. To me his mind was set for his own goal. I was very glad that the majority members of the Commission never approved of his becoming a consultant of the Commission. But yes, he was involved from the beginning—with Dr. Palacios especially. You know Dr. Palacios was always trying to disrupt the smooth operation of the Commission.

Willens: I have a personal recollection that I and either one or two of the other consultants, I think including maybe Jim Leonard and maybe Jim White, went at one point to visit Mr. Screen. I think we were trying to persuade him not to issue a statement of some kind that we thought would be contrary to where the Commission was going. That would have been several weeks before this article came out, because I would have gone back home immediately after the negotiations concluded. So I don't know what prompted that. Do you have any recollection that you or others on the Commission knew that there was the possibility of this public and critical statement regarding the work of the Commission before it actually came out?

Santos: Oh, yes. We expected that kind of criticism. Joeten from the beginning, having Joe Screen on his staff, didn't like to see Saipan move toward any new political status. He wanted the status quo, and that is absolutely out of the question. We want to move. This is the opportunity. If we lost this opportunity, that's it. We will become just like Palau, where every year we vote and disapprove certain ideas. We knew at that time that we cannot satisfy everybody. But even early on, we had information that the majority of the people here are for a status with the United States. This is an opportunity for Saipan, Rota and Tinian.

Willens: Did you have some sense that this was a unique window of opportunity and that if you did not take advantage of it, the United States might take a different view with respect to separate negotiations in a year or two or three?

Santos: Well, yes. We were afraid that the leadership will be changed in the future and that this leadership might not go along with the aspiration of the majority of the people. One lucky thing is that the leadership has not changed. The leadership has been constant.

Willens: On the United States side.

Santos: On our side.

- Willens: On the Marianas side?
- Santos: On the Marianas side. The leadership was constant. The Popular Party was the majority since 1963, all along up to the change of the administration in 1978. The Popular Party has been in control of the Legislature for 14 years, and that was I guess the main contributing factor to the creation of the Commission and the expediency with which we proceeded in the negotiations.
- Willens: One thing that happened after the negotiations concluded was that the people on Tinian continued to debate the U.S. request for land on Tinian that had been publicized during the negotiations. We've spoken already about the visit that the Commission paid over to Tinian and Ambassador Williams' visit there during the negotiations. What was your strategy with respect to dealing with the concern of the people on Tinian during the recess between the negotiations?
- Santos: Tinian was a very difficult problem because of the United States military land requirement. So we had to deal with Tinian as a separate situation, and this is one area where we have to find out from the United States, from Ambassador Williams, what prompted the U.S. to request this amount of land and what other benefits are there that we can relay to the people of Tinian. Although the people of Tinian will be willing to let go 2/3 of Tinian, what benefit comes after that—to just release this land and nothing will come about? And then after hearing from the United States side of the economic benefits, then we had leverage, more ammunition to advance to the people of Tinian that, although this use of land will be for the United States military, the economic benefits will balance it. Only through this offer by the United States we were able to persuade the people of Tinian that, although it's not the best idea, here we are negotiating, we are going to receive a lot of assistance from the United States, and it's a partnership arrangement. And later on we were able to persuade the people of Tinian that this was a fair arrangement.
- Willens: Later in the negotiations, the United States changed its position on some important issues so as to make agreement with the Commission easier and not as much of an intrusion on the people of Tinian. During July of 1973, the Joint Committee on Future Status conducted a series of hearings throughout all of Micronesia. Half of the members of the Joint Committee including Chairman Salii held hearings on Rota, on Tinian and on Saipan, including meetings with the District Legislature, the Municipal Council, the Commission and the general public. Do you remember participating in any of those meetings?
- Santos: Yes, our meeting, especially with the members of the Legislature. We were low-key. These meetings were all nice meetings.
- Willens: What did you understand to be the purpose of the Joint Committee's conducting those hearings?
- Santos: I believe that they wanted to fulfill their obligation. Remember, too, that there were some groups here on Saipan who wanted to have that kind of meeting and that the Joint Committee had no reason not to do anything like that, because it was a request I believe from some business people, the Chamber of Commerce here on Saipan. It's a strategy for the minority to come in and kind of just interfere with our status talks.
- Willens: The Joint Committee explained its purpose as an effort to find out what people really thought about political status in each of the six districts. They did go to all six districts. Do you think the hearings were fairly conducted, or did you feel that Chairman Salii and

the other members of the Joint Committee were trying to advocate the free association alternative that their committee was then endorsing?

Santos: I believe that at that juncture that was the purpose of the Joint Committee—to advocate free association and closer ties with all the six districts.

Willens: At some of the meetings on Saipan and on the other islands, people from the Northern Marianas, especially members of the Commission, asked the Joint Committee members there to stop interfering with the Northern Marianas and to let the separate negotiations go forward. Do you remember what the Joint Committee response was to that kind of request?

Santos: Yes. We never received any response to our dissatisfaction with the Joint Committee continuing to interfere with our affairs, but we told the Joint Committee vividly that our situation was different. We have decided to move separately and that we wanted their blessing in this matter. As to the kind of response, I don't recall any in writing or verbally to our approach.

Willens: Chairman Salii tried to find out exactly why the Northern Marianas residents wanted to go a separate way, and he used the device of asking this question. He would ask the people whether, if the Joint Committee agreed on a future commonwealth status for all of Micronesia, would the Northern Marianas still want to go its separate way. Do you remember that issue coming up?

Santos: Yes. It's even in the paper. That was advanced to us, too. And we've set our mind that we want separate negotiations all along.

Willens: But what he was trying to get at was whether the Marianas basically had a series of economic, political and other objectives that persuaded them to go a separate way even if the other five districts had the identical same aspirations for commonwealth.

Santos: Yes. We told the Joint Committee that we envision a separate status even though the Joint Committee wishes to pursue the same status commonwealth with the whole Trust Territory. Ours has been always a separate entity. And even if the United States failed to adhere to our request for this negotiation, we will definitely secede from the Trust Territory. That was our motive already. The District Legislature at that time was planning on a move like that, meaning we will not attend the Congress of Micronesia meeting. We will not follow certain laws that were in the book for the Trust Territory. We have determined to have our own say in our political status.

Willens: The Joint Committee did hear some dissent from the community about the direction in which the Commission was going. It had a meeting with the Chamber of Commerce, it had a meeting with the Carolinian association, and it had a meeting with the general public where some young people, now not so young, showed up and raised doubt. Did you have any reaction to those meetings where some dissent was voiced?

Santos: Yes. I guess the Joint Committee was meeting much more often with members of the Chamber of Commerce, business committee, the Carolinian community. Less meeting with, like members of the Popular Party. No meeting I guess was ever held with the Popular Party, because the Joint Committee knew at that time that this was the majority population on the island of Saipan that really wanted to have separate negotiations.

Willens: Chairman Salii made the point at one meeting that if the Micronesian negotiations had not taken as long as they had, the differences between the districts might not have appeared to have been so substantial, and the Joint Committee might have been able to

maintain unity. I gather from what you've said here today and in earlier sessions that you disagree with that.

Santos: I disagree with that. When we were with the other five districts, laws were imposed not by our own willingness but just by a stroke of the pen. I believe that even if we did not have commonwealth status today the Northern Marianas would be a separate entity by itself, irrespective of the Joint Committee. And this is what happened in Micronesia itself. Palau and the Marshalls have always maintained that we cannot be politically all together. Maybe economically it's feasible.

Willens: There were two changes in the membership of the Commission during this recess. Herman M. Manglona resigned and was replaced by Joe Cruz. What is your understanding as to why Mr. Manglona resigned?

Santos: Well, maybe there was an agreement between Manglona and Joe Cruz. But we had no real explanation from Herman Manglona. Maybe there was this understanding on Tinian.

Willens: Do you think that Joe Cruz added more strength to the Commission in terms of his ability to represent the people of Tinian?

Santos: Yes. Joe Cruz' membership is important because he knows and follows the proceedings of the Commission and at the same time he was much more vocal and active. So we welcomed that kind of membership in the Commission.

Willens: His initial statements after his appointment were very critical of the U.S. military plans in terms of the U.S. request to purchase the land, the amount of land requested, and the requested relocation of the village of San Jose. He was quoted as saying that the U.S. military should be satisfied with only 1/3 of Tinian. Do you think he was advancing these views as part of a strategy to demonstrate to the U.S. delegation that there was strong opposition on Tinian to what they wanted to do?

Santos: Yes. Joe was very concerned. Joe really was a strong representative of Tinian. It's a good motive, because we wanted to know the feeling of Tinian from Joe. Of course, subsequently, as you might have known later on, Joe had been moving toward more of a harmonious relationship in assisting the Commission toward its realization of a commonwealth status. Joe knew at that time that these are part of the negotiations to achieve a status relationship with the United States.

Willens: Just a few weeks after Mr. Manglona resigned, Joeten submitted his letter of resignation. He identified his business commitments as one reason, but he also said that he thought that he was being viewed by some members of the Commission as preoccupied by his own desire to protect his business and political interests, and he thought that he should be replaced by someone who might not be tainted by that kind of a concern. Did you think his feelings in that regard were well-founded in terms of how he was viewed as a member of the Commission?

Santos: Well, Joeten's membership was very important, because at that time, he had several business enterprises, and his background in economics was so important. So his membership in the Commission was an important asset. Although in some instances his ideas were different from ours, and that has been always the case, we welcomed that kind of membership. We cannot have 100% favoring one way or the other on any issue.

Willens: Were you sorry to see him resign?

- Santos: Well, I had no real feeling toward that. Anybody who resigned the Commission, I personally had no real feeling. But we wanted as many knowledgeable people in the Commission as possible, and Joeten was one of them.
- Willens: But he was also one of the few members of the Territorial Party, and you wanted to continue to have some Territorial representation on the Commission. Isn't that correct?
- Santos: It's important.
- Willens: So did you assume that his replacement would be also someone from the Territorial Party?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: And what was your reaction to the appointment of Pedro A. Tenorio as his replacement?
- Santos: Pete A. to me at that time was almost the same as Joeten's membership. I had no real problem with that, and we accepted it with open hands. Pete A. of course had achieved some academic success. He went to school and came back, and that might be a good asset also with the Commission. But really we wanted someone like Joeten with his background. We needed that kind of background so that we will have help when it comes to economics. Pete A. didn't have any economic background. Pete A. was so new then to the political scene, so he had very little experience with these kinds of dealings.
- Willens: Is it your recollection that, after he resigned from the Commission, Joeten basically stayed neutral and quiet on political status issues from that point forward?
- Santos: Yes, Joeten was very quiet.
- Willens: For example, looking ahead a few years, do you recall whether he participated on one side or another when the Covenant was going to be voted on?
- Santos: I didn't see him that active. He was very mellow, you know what I mean, he was quiet and unlike before the creation of the Commission. But I didn't see him as detrimental to the move of the Commission.
- Willens: During 1973, there was increased activity with respect to economic development in the Northern Marianas. Did you have any personal involvement in the obtaining of funds to renovate and expand Isley Field?
- Santos: Isley Field.
- Willens: Apparently funds were obtained from the United States government and there were some matching funds budgeted by the TTPI government. Let me ask a more general question. Was this an important step forward in the economic development of the Marianas?
- Santos: Yes. I was aware. Yes, it's an important move. I was a member of the committee with some Trust Territory individuals in the planning of Isley Field from start to the end. I was involved in looking at the specifications, so I was asked to be a part of the planning of Isley Field.
- Willens: At about this time, the Japanese were continuing their practice of coming here to locate bones of their ancestors and to engage in a religious ceremony in honor of their ancestors. What was the reaction that you and the community generally had to the return of the Japanese for this purpose?
- Santos: First, at this time, we welcomed and we assisted the Japanese groups. We were very much in favor of Japanese groups coming to Saipan and locating their dead and others. So we welcomed this kind of gesture.

- Willens: Did you see it as additional evidence of the interest of the Japanese in Saipan as a tourist destination?
- Santos: Very much so. Early on during our interview I mentioned my visit to the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico in 1963 and our request to Interior Secretary Hickel to relax the most favored nation clause so that the Japanese can come in and visit with us. Our favorable consideration of the Royal Taga Hotel, the construction of the Royal Taga Hotel, so all of these are coming into one huge perspective of our endeavor to begin work with the tourist industry.
- Willens: It was about this time that there was a competition between Air Micronesia or Continental, Pan American and Northwest for a direct service route between Japan and Saipan. I know this was the subject of considerable controversy in the community. Was that an important development with respect to economic development?
- Santos: Oh, yes. We took it as a very important economic development. Without it I didn't think we could survive in our tourist industry, because we saw the beginning of larger-body aircraft coming into the Trust Territory and into Saipan, unlike the old Navy SS16-type craft. Now we had a larger one that could link this area to other parts of the world.
- Willens: Was there an agreement between the United States and Japan to permit such a direct flight and then the issue was which airline should be committed to service it?
- Santos: Yes, that was the agreement. Now it's a matter of selecting which airline, whether Pan American or Continental.
- Willens: Which one did you support?
- Santos: I supported Pan American at that time.
- Willens: What did you think were the real issues involved, if there were any, as between the airlines?
- Santos: Maybe because I have had a lot of exposure to Pan American—you know, it was an international airline at that time already. Continental was basically still domestic in the U.S. mainland at that time.
- Willens: Who got the award?
- Santos: Continental.
- Willens: Continental got the particular award here?
- Santos: Yes, Continental. Continental had a head start already. It was serving the districts already, and of course the Congress of Micronesia was supporting Continental. It was very obvious because of UMDA participation all over the Trust Territory.
- Willens: UMDA operates all over Micronesia?
- Santos: Yes. So that was basic. But the District Legislature by resolution supported Pan American for the reason that it was international, it had a lot of experience going into Japan and other destinations.
- Willens: Do you think that the preferences of the people including the Congress of Micronesia had any impact on the ultimate decision?
- Santos: I guess so, I'm not sure. It's up to FAA now to make that determination on the facts that were presented to them. After Continental was awarded, that's it. That's the end.
- Willens: When was it that other airlines received the authority to service this route?

- Santos: Subsequently Braniff attempted to come in. It had a direct flight from Guam to the West Coast, and for a while they were servicing Guam and other destinations.
- Willens: Now from Japan to Saipan there is JAL, the Japanese airline . . .
- Santos: JAL, yes.
- Willens: . . . Northwest Airlines, and there's Continental, those are the three principal ones.
- Santos: Yes, these are the three. So that when we get Japan Air Line, that added again to the industry, and up to now, it's still moving. The tourist industry has grown so big because of this airline participation.
- Willens: One of the other big issues in the summer of 1973 was the so-called moratorium on homesteads and economic development on Tinian. This came to the attention of the Northern Marianas leadership in late July 1973. When did you first become aware that the Trust Territory Administration was no longer processing homestead applications for Tinian?
- Santos: I do not recall any particular date, but yes there was a moratorium.
- Willens: Did you think it was a needed step by the United States in order to avoid further speculation on Tinian?
- Santos: Yes. It's an important decision. We didn't want to see it get out of hand in issuing homesteads, and we wanted to survey whatever land we had at that time, especially for the island of Tinian.
- Willens: But the political leadership of the Northern Marianas was extremely critical of this step. Chairman Pangelinan was quoted as calling the unilateral moratorium a dirty trick and maintained that "to deny the growth and development in the interim of the negotiations is to place a serious handicap on Tinian." Was the complaint principally because the Commission had not been consulted in advance?
- Santos: Maybe so. Because during all these negotiations, I guess both sides should be consulting with each other of whatever changes occur during the negotiations. But I guess one of the good things about the moratorium was that for both sides it helped to make sure that nothing is done out of the ordinary.
- Willens: The controversy reached such a point that Deputy Representative Wilson came out to make a statement to the Marianas District Legislature in early August 1973 and then subsequently Ambassador Williams came over to Saipan from Guam to meet with the Legislature and apologize to some extent for the lack of consultation. Do you have any recollection of the efforts that Mr. Wilson and Ambassador Williams made to explain the moratorium and to justify it?
- Santos: I do not recall that particular period.
- Willens: How long did that moratorium go on?
- Santos: I do not recall whether it was relaxed a little and when.
- Willens: Do you remember that Marianas district legislator Dan Muna introduced an amendment to the law creating the Commission that would authorize the Commission to negotiate with a country other than the United States? This was done out of anger over the moratorium, and I forget whether it was passed or not. Do you have any recollection of that particular incident?
- Santos: Dan Muna had his own mind oftentimes, so that kind of action I don't believe reflected

the thinking of the majority members of the Legislature or even the Commission. It's very unfortunate. That kind of action, although not important, creates a record, and we didn't want to smear the name of the Status Commission and the manner in which the Commission was proceeding. It was an unfortunate event.

Willens: The consultants during this period were busy working in various joint committees. The Commission itself met in June 1973 to consider at least two important issues. First, they needed some additional funding from the District Legislature to continue the work, and secondly, they were deciding how to inform the people about what they had done. The Commission ultimately decided to submit a report to the Legislature that attached copies of the position papers that had been exchanged. Do you remember discussions within the Commission about whether or not to publish those position papers as a way to show the District Legislature the kind of work that had been done and to help inform the public generally?

Santos: Yes. It was necessary to inform especially the District Legislature. I remember at times some members of the Legislature who were not members of the Commission would attempt to ask me as a member of the Commission a question. Sometimes I was reluctant and hesitant to make certain information available to them, because of our continuous working relationship with the United States. But it was an important gesture.

Willens: Did you believe that some of the members of the District Legislature were concerned that the money was not being well spent? Did you think that providing this kind of a record to them would help persuade them that the Commission needed substantial funds?

Santos: Yes. This was a question of management, of appropriations to the Commission, and the Legislature needed some concrete financial information and sign of concrete progress of the Commission. I remember the question of expenditure had been raised several times in the Legislature.

Willens: Were you aware that Ambassador Williams was opposed to the Commission's decision to publish the papers?

Santos: Many times. I don't know whether you remember, but it was also the Commission's feeling at this juncture that it was not yet appropriate at that time to publish any of the Commission's work.

Willens: Who expressed that view?

Santos: That was the U.S. side. But with respect to the Marianas Political Status Commission, we had no problem. It's important to give the Legislature some information as to the progress of the status negotiations.

Willens: The Legislature ended up appropriating a substantial amount of money, although not quite as much as the Commission had requested. The Commission had requested approximately \$165,000, including \$55,000 for travel expenditures. Do you have any recollection as to approximately how much money the District Legislature had available to appropriate in that time frame?

Santos: Yes. I guess the Legislature appropriated about \$100,000 for that particular request. I don't remember how much in total, you know, the total amount given to the Commission. But for that particular request, we appropriated about \$100,000.

Willens: Was that a major appropriation for the Legislature?

- Santos: Yes, it was a major appropriation, because the District Legislature at that time was limited in its revenue collection. Most of the revenues were collected by the Congress of Micronesia at that time.
- Willens: Did you anticipate that once you supplied the position papers to the Legislature that they would sooner or later become available to the newspapers?
- Santos: We thought that that eventually some of this information would land in the hands of the newspaper.
- Willens: Did that strike you on the whole as a desirable outcome?
- Santos: I personally felt at that time that giving some information to the newspaper—with all kinds of analyses and what have you—was not a good idea at that time. I agreed to give the newspaper anything that came out from the joint communique, but not any analysis that normally we saw for review and discussion purposes.
- Willens: As it happened, both the *Pacific Daily News* and *Marianas Variety* ran a series of articles that featured the position papers on political status, land, financial support. On the whole, the treatment was very favorable of the Commission positions. Did you believe after the articles came out that it served a useful function to help educate the people of the Northern Marianas as to exactly what had been done and what remained to be done?
- Santos: Yes, anything that was favorable to our Commission was important.
- Willens: What was your sense after those articles came out as to the desirability of making the papers available?
- Santos: Well, it was always in my mind that we wanted to impress upon our people that, with the money we were spending in support of the Commission's work, the public should know that something was going on, especially if we are moving toward more progress on our side. Of course, we were sometimes reluctant to put something out in the paper because we didn't want the U.S. side to feel that we were not negotiating in good faith. But the public should have some knowledge as to what's going on.
- Willens: Let's turn to the third round of negotiations which began on December 6, 1973 and ended up on December 19, 1973. Do you remember any controversy as to the scheduling of this particular round of negotiations?
- Santos: I don't remember.
- Willens: The Commission met for approximately ten days in advance of the session, and you received a series of reports from Jim Leonard and from my law firm. Several of the issues had been worked up in the joint groups during the recess, for example, proposals on citizenship, on applicability of income tax laws. Do you have any recollection of receiving voluminous memoranda from my firm and from Jim Leonard's firm by way of preparing for this session?
- Santos: Yes, in fact this is one time where we had all these papers, and in many cases they were so difficult to comprehend because of the magnitude of information. Many of these things we had not dealt with before internally on Saipan until we hired consultants, both economic and on the political side. So it was a huge volume of work for the Commission to read and to really achieve an intelligent understanding of what they meant. So we needed a lot of time with our consultants to review the background information as presented to us.
- Willens: Do you recall any general discussion within the Commission as to what kind of negotiating

strategy to follow during this round of negotiations given the fact that there was a fairly short period of time within which to meet with the U.S. delegation?

Santos: I don't know whether that's the time when we discussed who should present first and whether we should present ours first or the U.S. side. But I remember a discussion like that.

Willens: Well, that's certainly true. The Commission decided that it had to take the initiative on certain issues in the political arena dealing with self-government, U.S. citizenship. The Commission also was on the economic front pressing for some commitment from the United States. But as to land, on the land issue, the Commission had stated its views at the last session and was now ready to wait to see if the U.S. was going to change its position. Does that refresh your recollection?

Santos: Yes. That was the intention of the Commission to wait a little while until we get more information regarding land requirements and all that relates to the land issue on Tinian.

Willens: In the area of the political relationship, the Commission delivered several position papers to the United States on the very first day of the negotiations. They dealt with such subjects as U.S. citizenship and nationality, income tax laws, customs, and so forth. On the subject of U.S. citizenship and nationality, the proposal basically was that people born in the Marianas and falling into certain categories would be eligible to be U.S. citizens, but if they did not want to become U.S. citizens they could take some affirmative steps to become a national. Do you remember any discussion within the Commission on this subject, or by this time do you think the Commission had more or less reached its conclusion to support this kind of an approach?

Santos: Yes. We talked about the U.S. citizenship issue, especially those individuals who do not opt for U.S. citizenship but can become a U.S. national or a resident alien. We talked about resident aliens, and I didn't think anybody would like to fall under that. We have agreed that those individuals who at that time do not want to become United States citizens are free to choose U.S. national status, and we talked more about their relationship with United States citizens. So we decided that would be the decision of the Commission.

Willens: Agreement with the United States on that subject was relatively easy because the matter had been talked about at the earlier round and had been the subject of a lot of discussion among the lawyers between the sessions. The Commission made one new suggestion, however. It expressed concern about those people who might come to the Marianas and establish residency in the Marianas and become naturalized U.S. citizens. The Commission expressed concern about the Marianas being used as an entry point for those persons who wanted to become naturalized citizens, and the Commission proposed that only immediate relatives of those already in the Northern Marianas should be permitted to reside here for that purpose. Do you recall any concern along that line?

Santos: Yes, remember we identified only a few people of Filipino descent who have married local people. We identified only a few of them. During the discussion of citizenship, we also emphasized the need to strengthen the applicability of a provision that will protect us here—like they must maintain a residence here, and if they move outside of the Commonwealth that, no matter how long they stay outside of the Commonwealth, they have the intention to return. And we wanted to make that as an important aspect in becoming a U.S. citizen, not to use these islands in the hope of becoming a U.S. citizen. Maybe we should talk about what's happening nowadays that has contradicted that realization of U.S. citizenship.

- Willens: That's in part because the alien laborers are now bringing in dependents.
- Santos: Yes. We never meant to say that if an alien pregnant woman, pregnant seven months, pregnant eight months, comes to Saipan and gives birth here, that that offspring is automatically U.S. citizen. That was not the intention. I still think that they are not U.S. citizens, because this is not their domicile. They must domicile in the Marianas. This is not their home. And then eventually they go back with the intention of staying in Korea, in Japan, in the Philippines, and not to come back. So this contradicts the requirements of becoming a U.S. citizen. So I maintain now that those aliens who are pregnant on Saipan and give birth here on Saipan, that those children are not U.S. citizens.
- Willens: This was all part of a larger discussion about the immigration laws and the extent to which the future Commonwealth would be able to control immigration into the community. The Commission had been provided a legal memorandum on this subject in advance of the third round, but it decided not to make a proposal on this subject. My recollection is that there wasn't sufficient time to consider the issue and it was very sensitive politically and otherwise and the Commission wanted more time to study and think about it. Do you have any recollection as to what your initial reactions were to the question about trying to have the future commonwealth exercise its own control over immigration?
- Santos: Yes. We wanted to control our immigration, to draft our immigration law. It's a very sticky issue, because we're looking at Guam. Guam had been invaded with a lot of aliens and when aliens give birth on Guam, the children will normally become U.S. citizens according to U.S. law. We wanted to get away from that, and even before the status negotiations and our commonwealth, we have always maintained that those aliens who come from other places are not eligible to become a U.S. citizen, irrespective of how long they stay on the island, especially when they give birth on Saipan and try to take advantage of becoming a U.S. citizen. Those aliens who give birth on Saipan, their children are not U.S. citizens. So I remember discussing this particular fear. Particularly in my case, I always was aware that Guam had been invaded with aliens and I was worried that Saipan would be the same. And this is what's happening now. But I guess we were not that careful. During the 16 years of our Commonwealth status, our leaders were not very careful. They were very careless in dealing with U.S. citizenship.
- Willens: One of the other legal questions that came up at this round was the applicability of the United States income tax laws. The United States agreed with the Commission's position that the United States income tax laws should not be applicable here and that the Marianas government should have the authority to enact its own income tax laws. You will recall that subsequently the United States had to come back and revise its position because of reported opposition in the U.S. Congress to the Marianas having a different tax system than the one that existed in Guam. What is your recollection now of the importance of the income tax issue during the status negotiations and the fact that the United States ultimately had to come back to the Commission and ask the Commission to accept a territorial tax patterned after the Internal Revenue Code?
- Santos: We always maintained that when we entered into a relationship with the United States, especially in the tax area, this was an important aspect of self-government. We needed as we have discussed maximum self-government. We wanted to write our own tax law, to collect our own tax and to administer its collection. I remember the U.S. side had very little disagreement with this until of course some members of the United States Congress aired their concern.

- Willens: Do you remember hearing from Ambassador Williams or Mr. Wilson in more detail exactly who in Congress had expressed that view?
- Santos: Let me see. I don't quite remember. You know, Congressman Burton was so helpful but he always mentioned Guam. Always when we talk, during visits to Washington, D.C. in his office and outside the office, he always mentioned that Saipan will have a better deal with the United States and that Guam has been with the U.S. for many, many years. But I don't quite remember who in Congress really expressed that concern.
- Willens: As it worked out ultimately in the Covenant, the Commonwealth did have the authority to grant rebates to its citizens. Did you think that was an appropriate recognition of local self-government?
- Santos: That was good, yes. That was an important aspect in our local self-government, yes.
- Willens: On the subject of customs taxes and excise taxes, the big issue was whether the Commonwealth would be within the Customs area of the United States. Do you recall having any views at the time as to whether this was an important issue?
- Santos: It's an important issue. The U.S. side was very supportive of our collecting own excise tax. And they were in agreement with us that we are to be outside of the United States Customs territory, which of course gave us duty-free benefits.
- Willens: Did you think that aspect of the Commonwealth has worked out in the way that you had hoped it might?
- Santos: Yes, it's one of the important aspects of our self-government.
- Willens: It also generated the current dispute about the garment industry.
- Santos: Yes, it's very unfortunate. It's an unfortunate thing, because we handled it so carelessly. Our government thought that since we're making a few million dollars from the garment industry, our government was so careless not to look at it and follow the regulations and the laws as we wanted. So we gave over 25, 35 garment licenses, and it just went out of hand. So many people came in from China, poor housing conditions and labor problems and the fact that some garments here will use the tag "made in U.S.A." This was all carelessness on our part. We want to correct this. And I am afraid that the United States Congress might not feel that we are doing our share to uphold our obligations.
- Willens: One of the other legal questions that had to be addressed in this round of negotiations related to making some determination about which federal laws would apply in the Northern Marianas after there was a status agreement and a new commonwealth government. The United States took the view generally that the whole matter should be left to a future commission on federal laws like they had in Guam. The recommendation to you and the other members of the Commission from your consultants was that we ought to try to identify the important areas of federal law and deal with them in advance and then work out some formula approach that we could evaluate and agree to before as part of a status agreement. Do you remember discussion generally about these two different approaches?
- Santos: Yes. We did not favor that subsequent review. The Commission wanted at that time to move on to identify areas of understanding with respect to federal laws applicable to the Northern Marianas.
- Willens: You've already made reference to the immigration laws and their importance to the future government. What were the other categories of federal law that you felt at the time might be important enough to deserve a specific inquiry and some judgment about?

- Santos: We understood at that time that, in the area of defense, we were willing to give that to the United States. That has been the general feeling of the Commission. But intra-state we liked to maintain that ourselves.
- Willens: Control over intra-state commerce?
- Santos: Yes. We want to control that ourselves.
- Willens: At two of these sessions, the law firm produced memos on things like the maritime laws, banking laws, in addition to the tax laws. The maritime laws and the Jones Act had been identified by some members of the Commission as matters of some concern. Do you remember any discussion on those subjects?
- Santos: Yes. We talked about it, the Jones Act. We talked about that. In fact, you had an extensive explanation to the Commission as to how it relates to our economics. I was thinking of other items that we have discussed in terms of federal authority.
- Willens: The banking laws, minimum wage laws, social security, a wide variety of subjects like that. It's a long time ago, and what seemed important then may not seem important today.
- Santos: Yes, like minimum wage, Washington representation, we talk about that too. I'm not sure. We were given by the United States a lot of latitude, like the minimum wage for example. We were given that opportunity to make a determination on our minimum wage.
- Willens: Why did you feel it wasn't a good idea to sort of leave these technical legal issues to a future commission to look at after a status agreement had been signed and approved?
- Santos: We wanted to be assured that we have this in the book. I personally didn't have any objection for a future review of our relationship with the federal government. Remember, we had that law review commission. I had no problem with that. That's an important group. But I wanted to see in the book so that we can feel that it's what we negotiated. Even at that, we have difficulty now. Remember during our discussion on Article IV-3-2, I was so afraid that self-government was not going to work if the federal government would continue to extend federal interference in our relationship. That was my fear.
- Willens: That subject came up at some length in this third round of negotiations. You remember that after the second round, the joint communiqué said that the Commission wanted to explore reconciling its desire for maximum self-government with the U.S. insistence on plenary authority under Article IV-3-2. The law firm produced a memorandum for the Commission, making a proposal on local self-government and limiting Article IV-3-2 so that the federal government would have the authority in the Northern Marianas very similar to that in the States but no more authority. A position paper was developed and presented to the United States on that basis. That produced a good deal of discussion by both Ambassador Williams and Mr. Wilson who tried to reassure the Commission that they didn't have to worry about this kind of problem. Do you remember any of the discussion at this round of the negotiations on that subject?
- Santos: You also mentioned Mr. Wilson, Ambassador Williams, past experiences with federal authority in Puerto Rico, Guam, and other instances in the U.S. mainland. You gave us a huge write-up of all these relationships and some of the cases that were taken up by the federal government. Still at that juncture we were very uncomfortable that at some time in the very near future, distant future, the federal government will enforce certain authority over our self-government status and that that will reduce the extent of our self-government.
- Willens: As a result of this discussion, the United States agreed, and the joint communiqué

reflected the agreement, that the United States authority in the Marianas would not be plenary because it would be limited by the mutual consent provision. They agreed that the mutual consent provision operated to limit Congressional authority. It then was agreed that a joint working group of lawyers in the recess would explore the mutual consent provision further and decide how to protect local self-government under mutual consent. Do you recall that kind of a resolution being reached at that period?

Santos: Yes. That was a good approach, and we were very appreciative. I remember your firm and you came up with that suggestion. That was very important, because it gave us now more assurance that self-government was going to work, that the federal government would not make amendments to our relationship such as to abolish our relationship unilaterally, and that this mutual consent would be an important aspect of the agreement.

Willens: In the middle of this session of negotiations, the United States delegation handed to you and the other members of the Commission a draft Covenant dated December 11, 1973. It was marked as a working document, and Ambassador Williams said it was simply offered as a guide to the discussion. Do you recall being surprised by being given a draft status agreement by the United States?

Santos: I don't recall whether I was excited or I have some questions about it.

Willens: Do you have any recollection to how the Commission handled that?

Santos: I don't remember.

Willens: The Commission more or less instructed the Chairman to tell the United States that the Commission would provide its comments in due course on the Covenant. During the internal discussions of the Commission your consultants suggested that we ought to wait for the recess to look at it with more care, because the consultants were recommending to you that a draft agreement representing the Commission's views ought to be developed. In other words, rather than react to the U.S. version, the Commission ought to develop its own status agreement.

Santos: I don't remember what happened when we received that draft from the U.S. side.

Willens: All right. Let's turn to the economic field. There was considerable discussion during this round about what was known as Phase One dealing with transitional planning and funding. Jim Leonard generally reported to the Commission that during the recess, the United States representatives of the working group hadn't been as forthcoming in reaching agreement as he had hoped. So the Commission was somewhat concerned about whether or not the United States was prepared to commit to a transitional program and commit to funding it. What is your recollection of this issue and its importance to the Commission at the time?

Santos: The Commission looked at economic development and U.S. financial assistance to the Marianas as an important factor. We have not had the opportunity for a freer say-so in the budgeting for the Marianas. Everything had been taken care of before by the Navy, the Trust Territory, and now this is an opportunity for us, when we reach our status agreement, to develop our own budget and whatever is needed for the operation of our new government.

Willens: The United States seemed willing to agree to some kind of economic and social planning, but they disagreed with the Commission's desire for extensive physical planning. The United States view was that there had been many master plans developed in the Northern Marianas over the past several years and that future physical planning would just duplicate that work. There were some sessions at which individual members of the Commission

took issue with that position. What is your recollection of the extent to which there were master plans in existence at the time in the late 1960s and the early 1970s that you thought represented your desires?

Santos: These physical plans were made and planned by people not from the islands and we did not have too much planning say-so. Many of these plans, of course, were outdated. They were outdated, and without consultation locally and many other things, and definitely we wanted to have our own physical planning as we see fit for the new government.

Willens: One of the other issues that came up was that the Commission wanted the United States to agree to a program of transitional planning and fund it as soon as possible. The United States took the view that they could not go to Congress for funding until there was a status agreement in place. Do you remember any discussion on that issue?

Santos: I'm trying to collect my memory on that particular issue. There were so many things discussed about the transition, that this is needed, and that we needed funding for it in order that, when finally we get the new government, we have something to rely on, and that whoever is to be responsible in the new government will have some kind of fiscal planning and other important aspects that are readily available for execution.

Willens: After a lot of discussion on this subject, the two delegations essentially agreed to refer it to something that was called the Ad Hoc Preparatory Committee on Transition, which was to look at the matter and give a report back to the two delegations before the next round. Do you recall feeling that that was a useful way to move the ball forward on that subject?

Santos: Well, at that time we thought it was a delay tactic, but at the same time we thought if it's that useful, we had no real problem. Maybe we needed a more thorough discussion of the issues at hand.

Willens: Did you have confidence that your economic consultant would be able to represent the Commission's position in these working groups?

Santos: We thought that was the case. We have no real disagreement.

Willens: This was the session where for the first time the United States put forward a proposal for financial support. The proposal was for approximately \$11.5 million in direct assistance for a five-year period of time and an estimated \$3 million by way of federal programs and assistance. The \$11.5 million was broken down into \$7.5 million for government operations, \$3 million for capital improvement projects, and \$1 million for Marianas development loan fund. This was advertised by the United States as being 50% more than the district administration was presently receiving. What was your reaction when you heard this U.S. proposal for the first time?

Santos: Well, the U.S. side might be right to say that was more. Definitely it's more, because of the division of the budget that was given to the old Trust Territory and subsequently divided among the six districts. But realizing the important development that is needed under separate administration, and that amount of money, of course, is an increase. I don't quite remember our thoughts on that area.

Willens: The way the negotiations ended on this subject, the joint communiqué summarized the U.S. offer and it reported that the Marianas Political Status Commission had not agreed to it and was going to study the proposal during the recess. It was regarded by some people as being useful to have it out in the public domain, because it showed the people of the Northern Marianas some of the tangible benefits that might come. And it also provided a base from which the Commission could then begin to negotiate.

- Santos: Yes. I remember there was some criticism from the public. I remember that, because we are going to be separated from the other districts and there would be a massive program that we have to undertake, perhaps the amount given to us is not sufficient. Of course, as I said, the U.S. saw it as a substantial amount. Maybe it is substantial if there is little planning to be done, but the work that will have to be done when we separate is very monumental.
- Willens: On the subject of land, this third round of negotiations happened to take place about a month or so after the United States had announced its policy for the return of public lands to the Micronesians in the individual districts. The Marianas Political Status Commission had received a proposal from counsel with respect to creating a public land corporation, and generally it was unclear that this was a subject that needed to take much time during the negotiations. Did you think the U.S. policy was something that was important to the Northern Marianas?
- Santos: For the return of public lands?
- Willens: Yes.
- Santos: Yes. It's an important aspect, especially during this time of the negotiations. Remember, we were also already thinking—I guess you'd drafted a bill for the creation of the public land corporation. It's a very important policy.
- Willens: The last subject that was considered during this round of negotiations was the question of U.S. military land requirements. It finally was reached just a few days before the negotiations had to end. When the United States made its statement on the subject, the Commission concluded that the United States really had not changed its position in any important respect since the last round of negotiations. Do you recall having any impression of the U.S. statement on this subject?
- Santos: At that . . .
- Willens: Were you surprised that they had not revised their proposal in any significant regard?
- Santos: That's the only aspect. We were surprised that nothing of that particular nature happened. We had thought the United States would revise its military land requirements.
- Willens: This was one of the subjects where, after the United States made its statement and the Commission responded, there was an informal discussion between the two delegations. There was a discussion on military land along this line and one on the transitional planning. The documents include some notes from the U.S. side and the Marianas side about these discussions. The notes indicate that many members of the Commission felt free to ask questions and that the United States representatives for the most part tried to respond in a forthright way. Do you have any recollection of these informal discussions and any sense that they were useful?
- Santos: That informal discussion was useful, because we didn't usually have that kind of informal discussion. In the past, normally the chairman would present our view as already agreed upon. But this kind of free exchange was important. It was an important aspect of this particular issue, especially when it comes to Tinian land matters.
- Willens: Did you have confidence that the members of the Commission would conduct themselves appropriately?
- Santos: Maybe in some fashion it could have gone overboard, because every time we have some free discussion like this, there is no guaranty that every member will abide by certain rules. But to me, it's very healthy.

- Willens: Actually in this case after the informal discussion where the Ambassador responded to questions and comments, the Commission went back to prepare a written response. The Commission basically reaffirmed its position on sale vs. lease, and not wanting to give up all of Tinian. A new aspect of the matter was introduced into the negotiations at this time, and that was the idea of a memorial park on some of the land that the United States wanted to retain in the vicinity of Tanapag Harbour. What is your recollection as to where this idea came from?
- Santos: Originally came from Ambassador Williams. Ambassador Williams had some kind of drawing already envisioning the memorial park area.
- Willens: What were your reactions to that idea?
- Santos: Well, it's a good idea. I had two things in mind.
- Willens: You have made reference to the fact that Micro Beach and this area in general were attractive and of interest to tourists.
- Santos: Yes. I am remembering what happened. We thought that the United States was asking too much again, you know, to buy Tinian. And again on Saipan—we thought that this was too much at that time. We had some discussion about it.
- Willens: Discussion within the Commission? Or with the Ambassador?
- Santos: With the Ambassador on a one-to-one basis. I remember I was with Eddie (I guess) at that time. We went to the place, by the way.
- Willens: Which place?
- Santos: Micro Beach.
- Willens: You went with the Ambassador?
- Santos: With the Ambassador.
- Willens: You and the Ambassador and Chairman Pangelinan?
- Santos: I guess so. I went with somebody, maybe Eddie. But at any rate, Ambassador Williams was introducing this idea, this concept. I thought at the first time that it was too much already. Here's Tinian and now Saipan, the next where? But then when I saw the drawing of the area, I had two things in mind. One is it will benefit the local population. Second, it will secure the land. This government will not give it away to investors to build hotels.
- Willens: You were reflecting some concern that the future commonwealth government might lease the land or give it away, whereas if it was retained by the United States and used for this purpose, it would at least be available to the public?
- Santos: Yes. That was my thought. I never discussed this with Ambassador Williams. It was my thought. You know, the Continental Hotel was there already. And I didn't want to see too many concrete buildings on public land, especially the beach area. So I studied that request by Ambassador Williams, and then I said to myself that maybe this is a good idea—to deny that area for future tourist development and open it up for the public. In fact, I became the first chairman of the American Memorial Park. I was appointed by the first Governor, Carlos Camacho, to chair the group that will eventually study the use of the area and consult with the Park Service people.
- Willens: Are you satisfied with the way in which the plans have developed over the years?
- Santos: I am less satisfied with the recent planning, with all those huge structures. When I was a chairman and my group, we envisioned only minimal structure with more open space.

But when I saw the structure and the many plans of the current committee that will require about maybe \$26 million for the whole structure, I strongly opposed that kind of planning, because that was not envisioned by anyone of us, by any of the status negotiators and even the United States side. We wanted the American Memorial Park to have minimal structure with a lot of open space with different kind of trees and flowers. My idea was working. Had we not entered into an agreement with the United States regarding the American Memorial Park, today you would see nothing but concrete structures in that area.

Willens: One of the most important decisions made during this round of negotiations was made by the United States on what might well have been the very last day of the negotiations. The United States informed the Commission that it was prepared to limit its request for land on Tinian to only the land needed for military purposes and it was prepared to leave the remaining one-third under Northern Marianas ownership and control. Do you recall hearing about this concession, and what was your reaction?

Santos: Yes. When we heard that new approach, it was getting closer to a better and negotiable approach. One is the reduce . . .

Willens: The reduced amount of land?

Santos: Amount of land plus lease rather than purchase.

Willens: So did you conclude at that point that there really was almost certainly going to be a final negotiated agreement with respect to the land?

Santos: Yes. It is working, although that was not my feeling of the two-thirds, but the idea that finally the United States gave in on two areas of great concern—lease rather than purchase and the reduced size of Tinian military land requirement.

Willens: There's some indication in a telegram that Mary Trent sent back to Washington after the end of the negotiations that you, Chairman Pangelinan and Joe Cruz met in private with Ambassador Williams. This might be the meeting you were referring to earlier. She reported that during that private meeting the three of you said that the United States ultimately would get two-thirds of Tinian and that you would actively work during the recess to get the support of the people for that objective, even if it included the relocation of San Jose Village. Do you remember having a private meeting with Ambassador Williams during which you expressed generally that sentiment?

Santos: Let me see. I don't really recall, but I remember making repeated requests of what other, besides the reduced area, what other economic benefits can be extended to the people of Tinian. You know, we wanted to know other things, because it was not enough just to get the land reduced without any other benefits to the people. We knew that if this was going to be used as a military operation, we were also envisioning (like Andersen on Guam) all the added economic benefits like construction employment. Eventually of course the people of Tinian and even Saipan and Rota will benefit from it.

Willens: Another theme that emerges from this memo and others is that you and the Chairman and Joe Cruz were telling the Ambassador that you and the Commission were not in fact opposed to the U.S. military land requirements, but that you needed the time to discuss this with your constituents and to persuade them that there were benefits that would result from this kind of U.S. military presence. Is that an accurate summary of the kind of approach you were communicating to the Ambassador?

Santos: Yes. It's an important approach, because we didn't want to just say: "All right, this is a new approach from your side and that it is acceptable to us," but the most important thing

right here is to go back to the people and explain the new offer by the United States and further explain to the people that we have gone a long way to achieve this new offer by the United States.

Willens: I know it's hard to sort of assess these negotiations in a piecemeal fashion, but at the conclusion of the third round of negotiations in December 1973, you and the other members of the Commission had been through two very substantial sessions in that year. You had considered political status and a variety of legal issues. You had considerable discussion about Phase One transitional planning, you had an initial offer from the United States on Phase Two, and on the military land there was beginning to be movement toward an eventual compromise that did in fact emerge. Everyone seemed reasonably satisfied by these negotiations both on the U.S. side and on the Commission side. Do you have any recollection as to the point at which in these negotiations you felt that we're definitely going to be able to pull this off and complete it in a way that will be acceptable to people?

Santos: Yes. We had a good feeling at this time. We had more things to digest from the United States side and it has given us some more latitude and confidence for future negotiations. Now we are seeing the requirements of the United States. We are seeing now that the United States is serious about moving forward.

Willens: Mary Trent's private report back to the Department of State has some very interesting observations about the Commission. She expressed the view that the Marianas Political Status Commission was greatly improved in caliber and competence by the addition of Pete Tenorio and to a lesser but lively degree by Joe Cruz. Would you generally agree with that—that those two individuals at least were articulate, active members of the Commission?

Santos: Well, I guess both Pete and Joe Cruz were an important component of the negotiations, especially Joe Cruz with the Tinian military land requirement. So I would say that both Pete A. and Joe Cruz contributed greatly.

Willens: She was very complimentary of the Commission in terms of the work that the Commission had put into preparing and the way in which you conducted the negotiations. She also said in passing that although the Commission's counsel and advisors were prominently on hand and on occasion participated at the Chairman's request in the discussion, the members themselves clearly held the initiative. And that of course was a very important objective that I think you had—to make it clear that the consultants were just that and that the Commission members were making the judgments.

Santos: Yes. Especially, you know, when you mentioned about the new U.S. approach on the land on Tinian. At times the Commission did not know what the U.S. was doing. The Commission wanted to know what's behind Ambassador Williams' new approach on most of this. But at this juncture, we knew that something was going to happen very shortly.

Willens: She also drew a distinction between the way in which the Commission performed during this third round and the way in which they had performed six months earlier. She said that, whereas the Commission seemed to be proceeding rather cautiously six months earlier, now they seemed committed to the negotiations and committed to the decision of working out a way to become part of the United States. Do you have a sense that that was simply the natural process of the Commission working together as a group, or was there something else going on?

- Santos: Well, it's a regular process. In the beginning, we're kind of cautious. We don't know exactly what to expect from the U.S. side, and after these rounds of negotiations and the materials we got from you, we now have a lot of materials to work with. The materials in fact you gave us are basically in tune with the negotiations with the United States. We got many materials, and even myself, every time I get back home, I spend hours reading the materials and they're very professionally done.
- Willens: Let's turn to the fourth round of negotiations which took place in May of 1974. At this session, there were a handful of important issues that were negotiated. First, it was at this session where the Commission put forward to the U.S. delegation its own draft Commonwealth Agreement. This had been prepared by my law firm. It was accompanied by a memorandum comparing it with the draft Covenant and explaining the differences and why the Commonwealth Agreement that counsel proposed was drafted as it was. This was discussed in detail within the Commission before it was handed over, but as I recall, it prompted a rather strong reaction from the United States delegation. Do you have any recollection of that?
- Santos: I'm trying to remember what happened, because this is an important period of time. But I don't quite remember what happened at this particular period.
- Willens: Do you have any recollection as to whether you and the other members of the Commission on the one side and the U.S. delegation thought that the negotiations would end in the summer of 1974, or did you always think that they would probably require an additional session or two before there could be a signed status agreement?
- Santos: In 1974, we're still hopeful that we get all these nitty gritty things in place. But at that time I still felt that maybe the United States was not prepared yet to conclude the negotiations and finalize whatever document we've had, especially our draft of the Covenant.
- Willens: Well, one thing was clear, that the draft Covenant that the United States had prepared and the draft Commonwealth Agreement that Commission's counsel had prepared were so different in substance and style that it was going to require considerable negotiation at the technical level. Did you recall feeling that that was an appropriate way to proceed at this point—to delegate the harmonizing of the two documents to the lawyers representing both delegations?
- Santos: Yes. That's the way that we thought it should be done. There was no way at that time to say that we are concluding, because this was a time to compare documents. I saw that time that 1974 perhaps will be a period of reviewing our document and the U.S. presentation. So I suspected that 1974 would be filled with a lot of further review and meetings.
- Willens: The United States at the fourth round of negotiations increased its offer of financial assistance from \$11.5 million that it had announced at the last round to \$13.5 million. It increased government operations to \$8 million, provided \$1.5 million for development loan fund, and \$4 million for capital investment projects, including \$500,000 for each of Rota and Tinian. Do you have any recollection as to how it was that the negotiations reached this point in deciding on financial support?
- Santos: The \$1 million addition, giving Rota and Tinian \$500,000 each—I remember discussing this with Ambassador Williams.
- Willens: Was that an initiative that came from the United States side, or was that an initiative that came from the Commission side?
- Santos: Remember that after getting the figures from the United States side on the \$11 million sum, we continued to press upon the need for more funding, especially in government

operations and infrastructure. I remember Ambassador Williams coming back and saying that they are ready to add another \$1 million.

Willens: Another \$1 million to capital improvements?

Santos: Yes. Improvements.

Willens: And did it come back at a formal session, or do you remember this happening at a private meeting?

Santos: It's not formal, in a private meeting and he was willing to offer the additional money, but that half a million would be set aside for Rota and half a million for Tinian.

Willens: How did you and the other members of the Commission who were from Saipan feel about that?

Santos: We had no disagreement with that. We thought that Rota and Tinian had been overlooked in the past for infrastructure and other development and that this gesture was really needed so that it can secure funding for Rota and Tinian. It was a good idea.

Willens: Did that help to solidify the support that the Tinian and Rota representatives would have for the ultimate agreement?

Santos: It's a good ingredient. It's an important offer, because right here Rota and Tinian knew exactly that they'd be getting this amount directly instead of having to come to Saipan and request funding.

Willens: Do you remember a session of the Commission in which individual members of the Commission spoke briefly about the needs of the community for health, for education, or for infrastructure, and that it was planned in advance that the Commission members would speak along those lines?

Santos: This is where the Commission members spoke openly?

Willens: Right.

Santos: Oh, yes. It was a good way to give every Commission member a chance to speak in an open manner.

Willens: It also was a very different approach than having formal position papers exchanged across the table.

Santos: Yes, it was a different approach. Oftentimes some members would express views different from what had been discussed before the meeting.

Willens: My recollection may be wrong, but it is that this particular time it was planned in advance by the Commission and that it was felt by you and the Chairman that this was a way to drive home to the United States delegation the needs in this community as they were felt by political leaders represented on the Commission. It was felt that this might be a more effective way of communicating the sense of need than simply putting it on a piece of paper.

Santos: Yes. It's a good strategy.

Willens: Do you remember any discussion about a power barge being made available to the future Commonwealth as part of an overall financial settlement?

Santos: Power barge. Yes, I kind of remember that discussion, but I don't quite recall everything that transpired. But now that you mention it, yes, and I don't know what happened to it.

- Willens: My recollection is that the power barge had been brought in for the use by the TTPI and was supposed to be made available to the Northern Marianas as part of an overall financial settlement, but I haven't seen any documentation of that yet in the records.
- Santos: Yes. I haven't seen that. It was here. It was brought in to augment our—there was some kind of typhoon here, and I saw the thing, but there's more to be done on that barge. It's not a brand new barge. It's an old one. So it would be more expensive to keep it than give it away, you know.
- Willens: Well, at this fourth round of negotiations there appears not to have been much progress made on the military land requirements issue. A joint land committee was created. Do you have any recollection as to whether any new positions were taken by the United States at this round?
- Santos: I'm not sure whether that's the round where they gave us a listing of economic benefits for the people of Tinian. I'm not sure whether that's the round, but subsequently the United States gave us a listing of economic developments that will be attached to the lease of land on Tinian. Is that the round?
- Willens: Let's turn to the fifth round of negotiations in late 1974. Before that negotiation session began, there was an election here in November of 1974. That was the election at which the Popular Party candidates, including Chairman Pangelinan and Herman Q. Guerrero, were both defeated. They were defeated by Pete A. Tenorio and Oscar Rasa. Did you recall whether the status negotiations were a significant issue in that election?
- Santos: I remember that election. I was very uncomfortable with that election. It was at that election that we had some discussion. We thought that something happened with that election.
- Willens: Herman R. Guerrero was the only Popular Party candidate who was successful, and in his case it was by a very few votes. But there was some concern within the United States delegation and elsewhere that because of this election two things would happen. One, Ed Pangelinan would no longer be on the Commission, and the same with Herman Guerrero, and also that the Popular Party and the Commission would feel that politically they could no longer press for completion of a status agreement. Is it your recollection that status was not an important issue in that election?
- Santos: It didn't bother me, that outcome. People were dissatisfied with sending anybody to the Congress of Micronesia. It's not that the defeat of Herman and Eddie had to do with status — people just didn't go to that ballot box. If we check the turnout on that election, it's not that huge. So people were just ready to say forget about the Congress of Micronesia.
- Willens: I've heard that suggested—that the Popular Party no longer attached great importance to representation there, whereas the Territorial Party might have attached more importance.
- Santos: Yes. So the turnout during that election is not that big.
- Willens: Did you as a leader of the Popular Party take it as a personal or political affront, that your party candidates lost?
- Santos: That loss had no real impact on the negotiations and the continuance of the negotiations between our Commission and the U.S. There was no real impact. Otherwise, we could have all gone out strongly and supported our candidates. But we kind of buckled down to the negotiations.
- Willens: Did you think that by this time Pete A. Tenorio was a strong supporter on the Commission for the status agreement as it was beginning to emerge?

- Santos: Yes. We considered him to be an important member, especially after becoming a member of the Congress of Micronesia. We still thought that he'll be an important member in the Commission.
- Willens: There was some report in the press that the defeat of Pangelinan and Guerrero was a sign that the public wanted the status negotiations to go more slowly. I gather from what you say that you don't agree with that.
- Santos: I don't agree with that.
- Willens: Now there were some changes in the Commission that resulted from this election. First, there was a departure from the Commission of Felipe Salas because he accepted a position as Clerk for the Court. That was unrelated to the election, and he was replaced by Juan Cabrera in the District Legislature. How did that appointment come about?
- Santos: Juan at that time I guess he was a senior member of the District Legislature, and so his appointment was regarded as an important support to the status negotiations.
- Willens: Was he someone that you were close to personally and politically?
- Santos: Yes, and I regarded him as strong, because he has his own mind. He doesn't favor all the time one way or the other. He has his own mind, he can be very constructive, and at the same time can also ask a lot of questions as to a certain issue. But one reason why Juan Cabrera was appointed was that he was one of the senior members in the District Legislature.
- Willens: Now because of the election, Pete A. Tenorio took the seat on the Commission that was assigned to the Congress of Micronesia, and Manny A. Sablan was appointed by the Chamber of Commerce to replace Pete A. Tenorio as the representative of that group. What was your assessment of Mr. Sablan at that time?
- Santos: Well, I didn't have too much information at that time on Manny, where he stands.
- Willens: Did you expect him to be a supporter of the agreement, or were you concerned that a new person coming in from the Chamber of Commerce might turn out to be a negative vote?
- Santos: Yes, I had that feeling—that Manny Sablan might have some kind of meeting before any decisions and that he might be a controversial person coming from the Chamber of Commerce. Yes, I had that fear, too.
- Willens: What was your reaction to Oscar Rasa coming on the Commission?
- Santos: Just the same as Manny. Oscar is very unpredictable.
- Willens: Well, was Oscar known as a critic of commonwealth status at the time he was elected to the Congress of Micronesia?
- Santos: Yes. He's leaning more toward not moving too fast and more Micronesian unity. So my fear again was very definite with Oscar's involvement and also Manny Sablan's involvement in the Commission.
- Willens: Did you still think you had enough votes ultimately to carry the day?
- Santos: Yes, at that time. I had a good feeling. We were working very closely with Rota and Tinian, because we needed their support, and at this juncture, with Ben Manglona's interest in the Commission and also Joe Cruz, we thought that we could get the support of the four members from Rota and Tinian. This is in addition to the assurance of that economic development of the half-a-million dollars.

- Willens: What were the circumstances that resulted in Senator Borja resigning from the Commission and Ed Pangelinan being appointed to take that spot?
- Santos: We had a lot of meetings going back and forth, and . . .
- Willens: Who did? The people in the Popular Party?
- Santos: Yes. And the decision, of course, was made by Oly. The final decision would have to come from Olympia.
- Willens: From Senator Borja.
- Santos: Senator Borja, yes.
- Willens: I read somewhere that at one point Mr. Camacho of the Municipal Council was prepared to resign from the Commission and let the Council designate Ed Pangelinan to fill that slot so he could continue as chairman. Is that an accurate report?
- Santos: I don't remember. The thing that was clear is that Senator Borja at that time was very cooperative, and he and Eddie were very close. So the real decision was made between the two of them. But great concern was raised when Eddie was defeated, because that defeat meant that he no longer was a member of the Commission.
- Willens: Do you remember any contacts that United States representatives made with you to sort of find out what your reading was of the significance of this election and what impact it would have on the negotiations?
- Santos: Yes. Ambassador Williams was concerned. He was concerned about this outcome of the election, and he wanted to know the next step—how much weight we can assert to make sure that the negotiations can proceed without too much change. We have come a long way now, and to begin the negotiations again from the beginning would be a difficult thing. But I assured him, because I had met with all of the members who I thought at that time would be supportive of all our undertakings. So we got a majority vote.
- Willens: You told him that?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: In advance of his coming to Saipan for the negotiations or after he arrived?
- Santos: In advance.
- Willens: When the negotiations began in December 1974, the principal task was to work out numerous issues relating to the draft status agreement. The Commission ultimately agreed to call it a Covenant. Do you remember any debate within the Commission on that subject?
- Santos: Yes. That's right. There were different words used like "treaty," "compact." I remember Ambassador Williams, I don't know whether he's the one who first offered or you the term "covenant" after its biblical use. We had some discussion regarding a treaty, and we were laughing because we didn't want these islands to repeat the Indian treaty of the United States a long time ago under which the United States can unilaterally terminate any agreement. So we didn't want to use the word "treaty." And then "compact" of course is a better term, but then finally we decided to use "covenant." It's more appropriate.
- Willens: It was at this session of the negotiations where the United States finally agreed to a lease of 50 years with an option for another 50 years. Did you have any indication before that was communicated across the bargaining table that Ambassador Williams was finally ready to make this agreement?

- Santos: Yes. We learned that already, at least Eddie and myself. I learned that this will take place sometime.
- Willens: It also was at this session that a price was agreed upon with respect to the land on Tinian and also for the land on Saipan. You will remember that the Commission hired an appraiser and that there had been a report issued with respect to that. What is your recollection of the process by which the amount of money to be paid to the Marianas for the leasing of the land was arrived at?
- Santos: I thought that the U.S. price was so low. There were several transactions made that indicate that the land on Tinian was not that low. Many of the transactions on Tinian were done between brothers, sisters, cousins, and the price given to the sales at that time were done at that level. But I knew of land sales. Like myself, I bought 4.4 hectares for \$11,000. Now that translates to about 25 cents per square meter. But when we were reading the U.S. side, I guess it went down to four cents per square meter.
- Willens: So you remember there being a very substantial gap between the price offered by the United States and the price requested by the Marianas.
- Santos: Yes, substantial.
- Willens: How was that resolved, as you recall it?
- Santos: I don't remember how that was resolved—whether the United States just gave us a blank amount of money. But I don't remember that specific issue, how it was resolved.
- Willens: It was also at this session where the United States increased its offer of financial support from \$13.5 million to \$14 million, and the additional \$500,000 was devoted to two specific programs. This was related to an announcement at the time that the U.S. military had no immediate plans to build any facility on Tinian. Do you recall that information being communicated to you, and what was your reaction?
- Santos: I was concerned that with this huge lease we didn't have any timetable as to when the military will come in and develop, because the people were supportive of development. Tinian had nothing in those days, so they wanted the military to come in. And when we heard that statement from Ambassador Williams, then we kind of felt unhappy about it, because the people on Tinian were expecting, not a speedy development on Tinian, but at least some kind of timetable so that we would know four, five years ahead of time that some development would be had on Tinian.
- Willens: Do you think in retrospect that the additional \$500,000 was a fair amount to adjust for the change in U.S. plans?
- Santos: Well, to me it was a fair amount. It's fair for Rota and Tinian, too. This is the first time that this amount was assured to Rota and Tinian, and definitely it's a good and fair approach.
- Willens: What is your recollection as to why it was decided to take a recess and reconvene six or seven weeks later with the hope of signing a final document?
- Santos: I don't quite remember. There was a recess?
- Willens: There was a recess between December of 1974 until February 5 or thereabouts in 1975. One reason given was that the United States had put asterisks in two or three places in the draft document, and they wanted to clear those matters back in the United States. The second reason given was that the lawyers on both sides wanted to look the document over further before there was an actual signing ceremony. But do you recall any political or strategic reasons for the recess?

- Santos: I don't recall what happened, why we had to recess and then come back again.
- Willens: One thing that happened that may refresh your recollection is that when the Commission met again in early February 1975 to prepare for what was supposed to be the final signing ceremony, the Commission was told by the Rota and Tinian representatives that they wanted to have a bicameral legislature in which each of the three major islands would be represented equally in one house. And the draft Covenant that had been negotiated to date did not include a requirement for a bicameral legislature. That was left to the constitutional convention. Do you remember the circumstances under which the Rota and Tinian representatives made this demand of you and the other members of the Commission?
- Santos: Of course I remember, especially Joe Cruz advancing that requirement for a bicameral legislature, and especially equal representation.
- Willens: Was this a surprise to you when they finally requested that it be included in the Covenant?
- Santos: They were talking about this. There was a discussion about this possibility, and we were of the opinion at that time that the bicameral legislature is a very difficult process, very expensive. We advanced that idea, not only expensive, but the body would be very small. But then Rota and Tinian kept on insisting that to make it fair, it was important that this is required. And subsequently we decided that to get the approval of Rota, which was needed irrespective of the number of people that we show, to accept the request of Rota and Tinian regarding the bicameral legislature.
- Willens: Is it your recollection today that Rota and Tinian representatives on the Commission would not have agreed to the status agreement unless there had been a provision in it for a bicameral legislature?
- Santos: This was advanced to us.
- Willens: Did you believe it?
- Santos: At that time, we have come a long way. The Commission must sign off and let the people make this determination. We didn't want to take a gamble at first, but my reaction was that the Covenant could pass without the bicameral legislature. That was my feeling at the time, that the people wanted self-government and that the new government would be different from the present one at that time, and that Rota and Tinian would be given assistance. The feeling in Rota and Tinian was that they didn't get any assistance from Saipan and that they wanted more equal representation so that Rota and Tinian could join together in the Senate to fight for more funding.
- Willens: While the Commission was considering this problem and discussing the Covenant before a vote, Ambassador Williams and his staff were waiting for the negotiations to begin. Did you and the Chairman have any private meetings with Ambassador Williams to keep him and his staff informed as to what the Commission was doing?
- Santos: Yes. Eddie had contact with Ambassador Williams. I don't remember meeting with Ambassador Williams that often with Eddie. But Eddie I remember. There was no real threat from Rota and Tinian, just that they wanted to see that this bicameral arrangement is given to Rota and Tinian.
- Willens: Do you remember the Commission spending two or three days discussing this, going around the room and having every member of the Commission express his views? Was that a process that you and the Chairman agreed was necessary?

- Santos: Yes. It's important.
- Willens: Why was that?
- Santos: We are coming to the end—to agree on the Covenant. And we want a feeling of mutual understanding and respect with each other in the membership—not to show some kind of animosity because of our differences. So it's an important process.
- Willens: Did you hope that all 15 members of the Commission would ultimately support the Covenant?
- Santos: Yes. It was our hope. Eddie and I had a high hope that all 15 members will sign off, and that's the reason why we wanted the members to continue talking about all of the provisions in the Covenant.
- Willens: Did you have any private meetings with Oscar Rasa in which you expressed the hope that he would support the Covenant?
- Santos: We were having some private meetings, as you said, on a one-to-one basis with every member of the Commission. And it was our hope at that time to sign the Covenant with all 15 members.
- Willens: Do you remember the circumstances of an evening meeting when a group of citizens, particularly women, assembled on the balcony outside the Council chamber where the Commission was meeting?
- Santos: Yes, now that you mention about that. Yes, it was mostly women, you know.
- Willens: What is your recollection of how that came about?
- Santos: Well, I guess they heard about—I tell you, I didn't expect that group and a lot of disturbance.
- Willens: Do you remember any members of the Commission saying that they felt exposed or under pressure because there were people outside listening to the Commission's discussion?
- Santos: I guess several members expressed that concern, and we were very uncomfortable.
- Willens: Do you think it was a form of subtle political pressure from the Popular Party to persuade the Commission members that what they did there that evening was going to be known in the community?
- Santos: It's a sign of pressure, yes. It's a sign of pressure. And these were active local people that have followed the negotiations and wanted a change.
- Willens: Were you disappointed with the vote when two members of the Commission ultimately decided not to vote affirmatively?
- Santos: Yes and no. I had hoped that everybody can agree, and that would also give the U.S. side our feeling of unanimous support of the document. But it is so difficult to get unanimous support, especially when we had different ideas within the Commission. This was a huge undertaking, the first time in the history of the Northern Marianas, and we were so lucky to pass that Covenant. We were so lucky. It's a huge undertaking, and even myself up to this time I didn't know how we managed to get to that point, because it's a difficult undertaking, so difficult. And up to this time, I have no answer why we managed to get over all this controversy and other things. Many people say even today I hear that it's not a good document. I maintain that no document is perfect, that we need some kind of documentation so that we can look at it and discuss it, and maybe in the future we can improve it. That's the way democracy works.

- Willens: Do you remember any discussion with the Ambassador after the Commission had voted? Any recollection of what his reaction was?
- Santos: I don't remember hearing the kind of reaction from the Ambassador really. I was excited really. We have done a very important assignment.
- Willens: The vote came, I think, I forget precisely whether it was Wednesday, February 12, 1975, three days before the signing ceremony on February 15, 1975. Do you remember the fact that there was a lawsuit filed on the day before the signing ceremony to enjoin the signing?
- Santos: Yes. Joe Mafnas was a member of the Congress of Micronesia at that time, and he was represented by Mike White. You represented the Commission.
- Willens: What was your reaction to the lawsuit?
- Santos: I had never seen your performance in the court, but after hearing Mike White's deliberation, I was not a judge, but it was so clear that Mike White should not even bring this kind of case to the court.
- Willens: Were you in the court house?
- Santos: I was in the court house, and I remember you delivered a very excellent presentation. I remember when you asked Mike White: "Where were you all the time during all this negotiation?" I guess that's the turning point, because we have been negotiating for years, and public meetings held all over the islands, Saipan especially, every district on Saipan was visited, plus other organizations, Rota and Tinian, and that if anybody wants to take the Commission to court, it should be done at this juncture, and on a specific matter, whether or not we have that authority to do so.
- Willens: Do you remember that the court house was full of people and that there were many people who had approached the court house knowing of the fact of the lawsuit?
- Santos: Yes. Many people came.
- Willens: How did people know that there was a lawsuit filed that was going to be heard in court in the morning of the signing ceremony?
- Santos: Well, it's so easy. Everybody was concentrated, most of the population of Saipan was concentrated in Chalan Kanoa at that time, and it is so easy. We had one newspaper here on Saipan, and other communication.
- Willens: My recollection, perhaps overly romanticized, was that there were a lot of elderly people and people expressing real concern that their long-standing desire to become U.S. citizens was threatened by this event. Is that anywhere near the truth?
- Santos: We were confident that we would prevail in the proceedings. We had all the reasons to win the case.
- Willens: Some people have a recollection that at some point Joe Mafnas stood up in the courtroom and fired his attorney. I don't have any recollection of that. Do you?
- Santos: He was displeased with Mike White. So Joe on his own stood up and started talking. But that was true. He dismissed Mike White. He was dissatisfied because Mike White was not doing a good job. With this kind of magnitude—this is important—we're talking about a change in political status in running our own government for the first time in 400 years. I know that Mike White was very uncomfortable at that time. So I remember Mike was talking, but he was told I guess by Joe Mafnas to sit down, so Joe started talking.

- Willens: Did the judge let him talk?
- Santos: The judge in a nice way told Mr. Mafnas to stop, and that's it. So Joe just stopped.
- Willens: Well, what is your recollection today about the actual signing ceremony that afternoon on February 15? Can you describe the scene as you remember it today and what your feelings were?
- Santos: Yes. It's so exciting. Remember we had Bishop Flores from Guam, a very good friend of mine. We'd been communicating. And with a lot of people, it's a moment, really, it's a moment to be desired by people who supported us all along. And I guess many people who supported the work of the Commission came for the ceremony. I guess I was up there not knowing whether I was standing on clouds or on solid ground because of my happiness and the feelings that we finally realized the dreams of many people who died and those people who were present at that time. It's a huge undertaking.
- Willens: It represented ten, 15 years of your efforts in the political life in the Northern Marianas. Just briefly about a few more points, and then we'll conclude the interview. What role did you personally play in the political education program and advocacy regarding the Covenant before the plebiscite?
- Santos: I was assigned to go to Rota and Tinian. These two islands are very difficult. I had great experience with Rota and Tinian, being a member of the Marianas District Legislature, and it's a difficult place. You have to know how to handle the people. You have to present good diplomacy with understanding of the culture of the people.
- Willens: So because you had that assignment, did you go to each of those islands on several occasions and conduct public meetings and answer questions?
- Santos: Yes. Some of us were assigned to Rota and Tinian, some here on Saipan. I also participated with the Saipan meetings. We will normally divide the group, but as much as possible we tried to be present. So we went around, and we explained to the people. I remember the meeting in Garapan, a lady pointed at me and said: "I want this question to be answered by Mr. Santos." She says: "Now we are going to become American citizens, and Saipan is very small. What guarantee you offer us if one million from America will immediately make their residency here on Saipan?" I said: "Well, this is a free, once we become U.S. citizens, or even now, so we don't have to become U.S. citizens for people to come in. Even now, anybody can come to Saipan and leave here and stay here. We don't have to wait to become a U.S. citizen. But I don't believe that all of a sudden one million people from California, from Texas, will come to Saipan and make their residency here. I don't believe that will happen."
- Willens: What do you think were the principal criticisms of the Covenant that the opponents urged in public?
- Santos: One is that outside investors will come to Saipan and take away the business on Saipan. Two, there will be a lot of people coming into Saipan just like Guam, like aliens. Three, many of the jobs will be taken by the outsiders because they are more trained and sophisticated they say.
- Willens: There are some people who maintain that they were pro-commonwealth but they thought that they could negotiate a better agreement.
- Santos: Oh, we heard that many times, that what we had in the Covenant is not the best agreement, that we could have negotiated effectively—especially with foreign countries, you know. Well, this is a partnership, and sometime we answered them that the best

avenue perhaps is independence. But are we ready to do it? Do we have the resources to do it? Are we ready for more problems in the future where ten, 20 nations will be coming to Saipan, you know, and all of that?

Willens: Do you think the people understood the issues before they voted on the plebiscite?

Santos: Yes. They understood the issues. The leases, they knew it. The American Memorial Park, Tinian, the representation in the bicameral legislature, and all the issues were understood. Even the plenary power of the United States Congress. We told them plainly that the federal government will still be interfering with our government, like our defense and others, and that the federal government will continue to come out here and check things on our behalf, for the good of the people.

Willens: After the plebiscite, did you have any reactions to the number of the people that turned out or the percentage of approval? Were you generally pleased with that?

Santos: We were pleased. That's a huge turnout, and the percentage given for the approval of the Covenant, that's an important—you know, 75 or 78?

Willens: 78 percent.

Santos: 78 percent. That's a huge margin, an indication of the maturity the people had in those days.

Willens: What do you recall about your participation in the United States Congress to try to get Congressional approval? You went to Washington on more than occasion, I recall, as part of a team to help win Congressional approval. Do you have any specific recollection of particular meetings or hearings in which you participated?

Santos: Yes. We were with Joe Cruz at this particular meeting, where Joe stood up and started singing "America the Beautiful."

Willens: "God Bless America?"

Santos: "God Bless America." Our presentation of course deals with our intention to be partners with the United States, after so many years of foreign domination.

Willens: Why do you think there was opposition in the Senate Foreign Relations and the Senate Armed Services Committees?

Santos: I'm not sure why some Senate members were opposed. I am not particularly sure of their intention.

Willens: Did you work closely with any individual members of the U.S. delegation during the lobbying effort?

Santos: Well, we met with Marcuse, for example, and Ambassador Williams naturally was there.

Willens: Who were the people from the Marianas Political Status Commission who played the most active role in the United States while Congress was considering the Covenant?

Santos: Of course Eddie, and Pete A. was there too. Joe Cruz. Let me see who else. Then for the signing, of course, besides the members of the Commission, we got some members from the public.

Willens: What do you remember about the signing ceremony picture which I see on the wall?

Santos: Oh, yes. You were there, and, like my granddaughter said, will you show me where he is?

Willens: My head.

- Santos: I said: "Well, that's him behind Eddie." And I said there's another person in between, between you and Eddie.
- Willens: I wonder why I was standing on my tiptoes. Let's turn to one more subject, and that is the transitional effort. You told me a few days ago that you were part of the transition commission. Is that correct?
- Santos: Yes.
- Willens: And how long did you serve in that capacity?
- Santos: Up to the First Constitutional Convention. I was a co-chairman, and Mr. Zeder . . .
- Willens: Mr. who?
- Santos: Zeder.
- Willens: Zeder.
- Santos: Yes. Fred Zeder.
- Willens: This was after Ambassador Williams had resigned?
- Santos: Let me see. Why Zeder was . . .
- Willens: I could be wrong in that regard. What do you remember being the principal issues that came up during the transition?
- Santos: This is the committee. I guess it's Zeder, we were called the two chairmen. Remember this was designed and recommended in the . . .
- Willens: Ad hoc committee.
- Santos: Yes, and so I was appointed from this side, and Mr. Zeder I guess from the U.S. side. And our main job is to set up an office. So we hired Pete A. Tenorio.
- Willens: Was there any controversy about his appointment?
- Santos: This is an important aspect of all this negotiation. We didn't want to show bias, so Eddie and I recommended Pete A. So we had no problem. We thought that Pete A. deserved to be the executive director of the office. Then we hired other people to help him out. So we prepared for the transition, especially for the constitutional convention. Were you involved in only the constitution?
- Willens: For the constitutional convention, we were retained as consultants. Do you remember any disputes with Mr. Zeder or other members of the U.S. delegation, or generally was it a cooperative venture, as you recall it?
- Santos: It's a cooperative venture. I don't remember any disagreement.
- Willens: Were you generally satisfied with the planning work that was done by the numerous consultants that you and the secretary retained?
- Santos: I guess so.
- Willens: I have heard that virtually none of those plans were adopted by the new Administration under Governor Camacho. Do you have any knowledge on that point?
- Santos: Well, like any other plan, you know, sometime the Administration just failed to look at it, and often they were just mistook as another plan. But the planning of the golf course,

- that's in the plan. That's the only one that was set aside. Other plans, I do not recall whether the Camacho Administration implemented some of the plans.
- Willens: You also sat as a member of the Pre-convention Committee before the Constitutional Convention. Do you recall whether that Committee, which consisted of two members of the Popular Party I think and two in the Territorial Party, made a decision about how to organize the Constitutional Convention into three committees?
- Santos: After the election for the Constitutional Convention, they took over.
- Willens: Who took over?
- Santos: The elected.
- Willens: The delegates.
- Santos: The delegates. They took over. But we had a plan already. So after the election, they took over.
- Willens: So the decision as to how to organize the Convention was left to the delegates after they had been elected, and it was not decided by you and the other members of the pre-convention committee?
- Santos: Precisely.
- Willens: Do you have any recollection as to why it was that the Popular Party, which had won so many elections over the past decade or so, lost so many seats to the Republican or Territorial Party in the campaign for the Constitutional Convention.
- Santos: Yes. That's strange. Really.
- Willens: I've heard it said that the Popular Party really didn't attach that much interest to the Convention, because it had already worked so hard on the Covenant and that they had less interest in it. I've also heard that the Republican Party may have nominated a more younger, well-educated candidates to run for the position of delegate.
- Santos: I don't have any answer to that, really. I don't have any answer. Every election is different; it's so unpredictable. I remember one time I heard rumors that well, the Popular Party has done this, maybe they should give a chance to other candidates, other people, and that's the only rumor I've heard. But like any other election, it's very unpredictable, the outcome.
- Willens: Ben, in concluding the interview, I'd like to ask you to give me the benefit of your judgment as to how well the new political status under the Covenant has worked out during the past 15 years, focusing both the strengths and weaknesses of the Commonwealth government and also on the federal government's honoring of the Covenant and its commitments under that document.
- Santos: Our strength has been that we were given the right to govern ourselves. We have our own constitution since 1978. We elect our own Governors, our own Legislature; we appoint our own judges. It has worked so well, but we were so careless, we were so careless because we thought that we were doing the right thing with economic developments. Maybe we were so greedy that we saw the increase in economic development. We wanted to improve our economic development, but in the process the elected leaders, the Governor and the Legislature, were so careless. They didn't many times follow the law. In alien laborers, for example, there's so many aliens now running around, illegal aliens. Lack of control of substances, drugs, ice, and all of that coming from the Philippines. Marijuana coming from Palau. Lack of control. We do not control our development. Now there

are more aliens than local people. The Executive Branch—we're afraid that they execute a moratorium. They were so afraid. We have a law in the books that was passed in 1988 to limit four years of alien stay on Saipan. The Governor signed off on this legislation without any real study whether this is going to hurt all the people. They amended the law without having the opportunity to test the law.

Willens: What do you think about relations with the federal government?

Santos: It is bad now. That's why I say, we were so careless. The abuses on labor laws and employees, of aliens, and although these are very true, we continue to deny that it actually existed on Saipan, Rota and Tinian.

Willens: What do you want to see happen here in the Commonwealth over the next ten years?

Santos: I see a new beginning now, a new beginning. The change of administration now, I believe, will address those issues. Everybody knows the problem now, so it's easy to identify and set a goal as to how to correct that and make implementation. So it is important for the elected leaders now, the new elected leaders, to address those issues. Otherwise, we are going to lose our identity. We're going to lose our relationship with the United States government. We might lose our immigration control, our labor control. And once this is done, then we begin to also lose our self-government. When we were negotiating with the United States about our Covenant and our new government, I personally thought that this was the thing to have, because for the first time after 400 years of foreign domination we have a vehicle that will give our people a chance to govern themselves. But as I said, we were very careless, and I hope that this new leadership in the Executive Branch and the Legislature will look at our problems. One of the things that makes it very unfortunate is that we see a lot of conflict of interest from our elected leaders and other officials in government. That makes it very, very bad for our government. I hope that we will move and make some changes.

Willens: Well, your optimism is shared. You have made an incredible contribution both to this community and to this project. Thank you very much.