

INTERVIEW OF JAMES M. WILSON, JR.

by Howard P. Willens

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- Willens: James M. Wilson, Jr. served as Deputy U.S. Representative in the Marianas and Micronesian negotiations during the early 1970s. Jim, thank you very much for being available for this interview. I have tried to explain to you exactly what we're doing and how we go about to do it. I'd like to begin with soliciting some background information from you if you would be agreeable.
- Wilson: Fire away.
- Willens: Where did you grow up and where were you educated?
- Wilson: That's a long time ago. I'm an old China hand brat—grew up in China and went to school there. I came home and went to college at Swarthmore. From there I went to the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and got a Masters degree. Meanwhile I managed to study in Europe and got a certificate from the Geneva School of International Studies.
- Willens: What took your family to China?
- Wilson: My father was an engineer-architect who went out to build things and to set up architectural schools for the Presbyterian Mission Board back in 1911. That's a long way back.
- Willens: When did you leave China?
- Wilson: I left in 1935.
- Willens: How old were you at the time?
- Wilson: Sixteen.
- Willens: How had you been educated while in China?
- Wilson: At the Shanghai American School, which is quite an institution and is still going strong as a matter of fact, with a number of hiatuses due to the political situation.
- Willens: Where did the family come when you returned to the States?
- Wilson: My mother came back and stayed in Kentucky while my father remained in Shanghai and was a guest of the Japanese for a year and a half after Pearl Harbor, which didn't do his health much of any good.
- Willens: Was he released by the Japanese?
- Wilson: He was released, as one of the early returnees, and went back after the War but was in such bad health that he had to return and died shortly thereafter.
- Willens: When did you go to Swarthmore?
- Wilson: I went to Swarthmore in 1935 and graduated in 1939.
- Willens: Did you go directly to Fletcher at that point?
- Wilson: No, I went to Europe, to the Geneva School of International Studies, and then went to Fletcher after the start of the War in Europe. I was in France when World War II started.
- Willens: Did you serve in the military during World War II?

- Wilson: Well, yes. After Fletcher I went down to Kentucky and wrote for a while for the Louisville Courier Journal. Then, taking the same trip as Danny Quayle, I joined the Kentucky National Guard as a private to escape the draft and five and a half years later came out somewhat older and more experienced, shall we say.
- Willens: Had you planned throughout your education to join the Foreign Service?
- Wilson: No, I was more interested in foreign correspondence in those days.
- Willens: Did your paths cross in those early days with Erwin Canham?
- Wilson: No, they did not.
- Willens: He spent some time in Geneva, as well, as I recall. How did you come about to join the Foreign Service?
- Wilson: That came along much later. I went to law school after the War was over and got out in the fall of 1948. We were on an accelerated program. To make a long story short, I spent the next nine years more or less working for various sections of the Department of Defense negotiating U.S. base agreements overseas.
- Willens: I see. Were you assigned to the General Counsel's office?
- Wilson: No. Initially I was part of a team that was sent over to negotiate base agreements in the NATO countries. We established ourselves in Paris. I lived there as a matter of fact for four years. Then I came back and founded the Overseas Bases Office in International Security Affairs.
- Willens: Really?
- Wilson: Which is still going.
- Willens: Is that under the Assistant Secretary . . .
- Wilson: Yes.
- Willens: . . . for International Security Affairs?
- Wilson: Exactly. That's still going strong. Phil Barringer, I guess, has been a fixture therein for heaven knows how long.
- Willens: So you went directly to work for the Defense Department after graduation from law school?
- Wilson: Yes, that is correct. In my NATO phase I had worked for Douglas Dillon in Paris at several stages, and he asked me to come over to the State Department in 1957, and I went to work for him. He was then Under Secretary. Dillon had been named as coordinator of all the foreign assistance programs, and he had a deputy who looked to this function for him. I was the deputy's deputy, looking primarily after the military assistance programs. This meant coordinating what was then ECA or MSA programs, the foreign economic assistance agencies, the international agencies (World Bank, IMF, etc.), and technical assistance programs, with the military assistance programs coming out of the Defense Department.
- Willens: Were you at that point a reserve officer or a civilian employee?
- Wilson: A civilian employee of the State Department. While there, I joined the Foreign Service laterally.
- Willens: That was fairly rare in those days, wasn't it?

- Wilson: Yes, it was.
- Willens: Did you have to go through some exam process?
- Wilson: Yes. It was not much of an exam compared to the regular Foreign Service exam. They had to make sure that I was not completely ignorant of foreign affairs.
- Willens: When did you officially become part of the Foreign Service?
- Wilson: In early 1961.
- Willens: Did your assignments then change?
- Wilson: They changed the coordinating arrangements, and our office was broken up. I went to Spain to head up the combined economic section of the Embassy there and the economic aid program for Spain, which was still going on in 1961.
- Willens: By that time had your specialty more or less been in the economic aid area?
- Wilson: The overall assistance programs including economic and military.
- Willens: I see.
- Wilson: And the international as well. From there, I went to Bangkok as Deputy Chief of Mission and U.S. Minister. I was also Deputy U.S. Representative to SEATO.
- Willens: What years were those?
- Wilson: That was from 1964-1966. Then from there I moved to Manila, where I was again Deputy Chief of Mission and again U.S. Minister. I spent four years there. About 18 months of that was as American Charge, with gaps between various Ambassadors.
- Willens: What does that mean?
- Wilson: We had no Ambassador for a large part of that four-year period thanks to various glitches in the system. So I was holding forth. Then in 1970 I came back to Washington as Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asian & Pacific Affairs.
- Willens: That was then your first assignment back in Washington?
- Wilson: Since 1961.
- Willens: That was a fairly long tour abroad.
- Wilson: Fairly long haul overseas. That's right. Then I ran into difficulties when I came down with a heart attack in 1971. When I got through with my recovery, I found myself seconded to Micronesian status negotiations. You know the rest.
- Willens: Had you had any experience with the Trust Territory up to that point?
- Wilson: None whatsoever. Zero.
- Willens: Was it technically under the East Asia Bureau within the Department?
- Wilson: It wasn't considered a foreign country. It was a Trust Territory, and I guess the emphasis was on "territory". That's how it came to be in the Interior Department along with the other territories.
- Willens: I remember hearing one of . . .
- Wilson: A complete misnomer in many respects, but that's the way it was.

- Willens: Well I remember hearing that the geographic bureaus did have some interest but because of the international facets of the matter it was the IO Bureau that spent the most time on the Trust Territory.
- Wilson: IO [International Organizations Bureau] of course was very much concerned because it came under the Trusteeship Council at the U.N., and IO was the chief honcho in that respect. The Bureau of East Asian Affairs was only peripherally interested in it for most of the time, but did get involved once the negotiations actually started.
- Willens: Was there any other geographic bureau that had more responsibility for it than the East Asian Bureau?
- Wilson: No. It would be East Asia and IO between them, though there would be other parts of the Department which would come in from time to time, such as Political Military Affairs and the Legal Advisor's Office.
- Willens: Who initially approached you with respect to your being seconded to the negotiations?
- Wilson: Jack Irwin did. He was Deputy Secretary of State and also an old friend of Haydn's. I'd also known Haydn for some years, both in Bangkok and in Manila. He was head of the Asia Foundation at that point.
- Willens: So you don't know whether Irwin proposed your name or Haydn proposed your name?
- Wilson: I have no idea.
- Willens: But they conspired between them, I gather.
- Wilson: Yes. What happened was that Art Hummel and I really changed jobs. He came over to take my old job as Deputy Assistant Secretary, and I went over and took his old job with Haydn. I think it's probably useful to underline though that OMSN per se was not an arm of the Interior Department. It happened to be housed over there, but it was supposed to be part of the White House. There's some confusion (I think) in many people's minds on that score.
- Willens: I think that's true. There were some people assigned to OMSN that most of us thought were permanent fixtures there, but it turns out in fact they were assigned to the Interior Department. How did you go about briefing yourself as to what the status negotiations situation was at the time that you took over from Mr. Hummel?
- Wilson: I can't really give you any chapter and verse on that. It was a matter of reading up on what was available. I talked at some length to Hummel. Hummel became of course the State Department representative on the Inter-Agency Committee guiding the Micronesian and Marshalls negotiations. I was the Chair of that Committee, which operated under the Under Secretaries Committee of the NSC.
- Willens: Did that Inter-Agency Working Group at the working level have any specific title?
- Wilson: It may have had. I can probably check that someplace.
- Willens: I recall from Mr. Hummel that he regarded it as a fairly difficult assignment and he was glad to get back to more traditional assignments.
- Wilson: Oh, he was delighted. Yes, indeed.
- Willens: I have not been able to locate the Executive Order creating OMSN, although Haydn and others tell me there probably was such a document.
- Wilson: There has to be one someplace.

- Willens: What was your overall assessment of OMSN as an inter-agency vehicle for staffing Ambassador Williams and you with respect to these negotiations?
- Wilson: I think it was a reasonably effective organization. We had some good people in it. Bill Crowe, of course, comes to mind immediately. He had been serving as Acting Deputy for a couple of months at least after Hummel departed. Very well versed in what was going on, as you know, and very much with it in terms of what the issues were, what the background was, etc. Haydn had to divide his time almost by definition between San Francisco and Washington. And while he kept a firm hand on what was going on, particularly the stuff that became major points of decision and major events, other things had to be left to what was then the staff of OMSN.
- Willens: At the time you came on board, was there also a number three slot or someone who was the Director of the Office?
- Wilson: Well, sure. Crowe was.
- Willens: Crowe was the Director when you first came on?
- Wilson: Yes. That was his title.
- Willens: And then subsequently other people assumed that position, Captain Scott, for example.
- Wilson: While I was there, Scott was the only one to come aboard. Who may have come on later I just don't know.
- Willens: What was your understanding as you became acquainted with your new duties as to why separate negotiations with the Northern Marianas had been agreed to?
- Wilson: Well my understanding of the thing at that point was that they had asked for it.
- Willens: And what was your understanding as to what the United States interests were that prompted an affirmative response to that?
- Wilson: Well I think there were two considerations. Number one, we had an obligation to respect the desires of the people there for self-government and self-determination. Two, we had security interests of two kinds: first, denial of the area to foreign powers, and second, the possibility of bases in the area.
- Willens: For more than ten years, the Executive Branch under direction from the State Department took a position that fragmentation of the Trust Territory was unacceptable as a matter of policy.
- Wilson: That's what I understand, but somebody changed their minds on that one. There was a considerable body of opinion at one time, I understand, that took that stand. But it did not prevail, as you know.
- Willens: Included in the documents that I've provided you is something that predated your arrival on the scene, specifically notes of conversation between Ambassador Williams and Senator Saliu dated October 5, 1972. Am I correct parenthetically that you came on duty sometime in November?
- Wilson: That's correct.
- Willens: I saw reference to a November 1 date, and I was unclear whether that was in fact the date on which you were scheduled to assume your new duties?
- Wilson: It was sometime in November. I can't remember the exact date.

- Willens: The notes of conversation between Ambassador Williams and Senator Salii refer to the Congress of Micronesia session in Ponape and some recent negotiations between the United States and the Micronesian Joint Committee that were recessed because of new direction from the Congress of Micronesia with respect to pursuing independence as well as free association. As you got involved in this, did you form any opinion as to the significance of this pro-independence segment of opinion within the Congress of Micronesia?
- Wilson: Well there was a considerable body of opinion outside the Marianas which was in favor of independence, and this swung like a pendulum as far as I can make out. Some individuals were persuaded one way and then the other; but a hard core of independence advocates, I think, remained in the Congress—people like Andon Amaraich and to a certain extent Amata Kabua, Roman Tmetuchl, those folks.
- Willens: Was it your sense that those advocates of independence believed that independence was in fact a viable practical alternative for them and their constituents, or did you have the sense that it might have been a bargaining weapon that they thought was advantageous to use?
- Wilson: I can't really answer that. I don't think that we had enough individual knowledge of the persons involved to form an opinion. It was a little maddening because you would have an expression of opinion for free association one week and then the next week the pendulum would swing the other direction. I think probably the worst point from many points of view was that session of the Congress in Ponape which more or less got out of hand, from everything I understood about it. This was just before I arrived on the scene.
- Willens: This memorandum sort of sets out Senator Salii's explanation of how he tried to deal with that independence movement and some of the forces of opposition that developed to the continued negotiations looking toward free association. Did you regard Salii as committed to the free association alternative?
- Wilson: We hoped he was. Salii himself obviously can't speak for himself. But we would detect a little wavering from time to time, depending on how the political wind was blowing. A much clearer indicator, I think, was the opinion of people like Tosiwo Nakayama, who was I think basically a very decent guy, very much concerned, very much troubled with what was going to be happening to Micronesia.
- Willens: Many people associate him and Andon Amaraich together as advocates of independence, and I wonder whether that's your judgment?
- Wilson: Nakayama I think was less concerned on that score than Amaraich. I shouldn't be making a judgment on this from so far away. But my impression after two years of negotiating with the Micronesian group was that Nakayama swung slowly to the free association standpoint. Andon Amaraich I don't think ever did. What happened with Nakayama after I departed I don't know. But he was aboard at the time that we had worked out a draft Compact of Free Association for the rest of Micronesia. That was one of the last things that happened before I departed. You know we had such a document which was initialed by the TTPI delegates.
- Willens: Did that have all the titles, or were there titles missing with respect to Law of the Sea and one other area? Do you remember?
- Wilson: I thought it had them all. I could be wrong. I'm not sure we had anything about the Law of the Sea in there.
- Willens: But it had some resolution of the financial differences, some of which were referred to in the documents?

- Wilson: Yes. I used to have a copy of that thing with the initials on it.
- Willens: Why was it initialed rather than signed?
- Wilson: Because it had to be approved?
- Willens: By whom?
- Wilson: By the Congress of Micronesia. And I guess on our side too by who knows. Obviously it would have had to have been by Congress, but I'm talking intermediate steps there. By the same token, it would have had to have been approved by plebiscite in the rest of Micronesia.
- Willens: Was it your judgment at the time that the initialed Compact did have a substantial chance of being approved on the Micronesian side?
- Wilson: Yes. Most definitely.
- Willens: So by that time had the strength of the independence movement been diluted through some set of circumstances?
- Wilson: I thought it had, but what occurred thereafter I just don't know. The Micronesian Congress turned it down, as you know. They went back to the drawing board.
- Willens: I don't remember when that all happened. But your thought is that it happened after you left in March of 1975 or thereabouts?
- Wilson: Yes.
- Willens: Turning to the Marianas negotiations, do you recall any particular preparation for that first set of ceremonial negotiations that took place in December of 1972?
- Wilson: Not really. It was, as I recall, just that—a ceremonial occasion to make sure that we were all talking on the same general wavelength.
- Willens: What is your recollection today of that two-day session and your first introduction to the members of the Marianas Political Status Commission?
- Wilson: I was I think very pleasantly surprised by the way in which they operated. It was a nice session.
- Willens: Did they seem to be a different group from the Joint Committee that represented all six districts in negotiating with you?
- Wilson: I'm not sure I understand your question.
- Willens: Was there any different impression that you might have had of the Marianas group as distinct from the Micronesian group headed by Salii?
- Wilson: I'm not sure I can answer that. The Marianas group was certainly less contentious among itself than the Congress of Micronesia group.
- Willens: Were there any issues that you recall coming up during that first brief session that were unanticipated or seemed to present some particular problem for the United States negotiators?
- Wilson: I can't think of any in particular. At one point (I can't remember whether it was that session or one that followed) we went through a preliminary go-around of what it was that the U.S. Government wanted in the whole thing. What was supposed to have been a confidential meeting ended up all over the newspapers the next day.

- Willens: Let me refresh your recollection, if I can, by referring to a point at which during that first set of negotiations the United States asked for assurances from the Marianas Political Status Commission that, if an agreement were reached between the two parties, the Marianas Commission members would go out and support it. And the Marianas team promptly called a recess to confer among itself as to what was being sought by the United States here. Do you have any recollection as to why that issue was raised?
- Wilson: No I don't.
- Willens: It looks as though it was very much based on the concern that Ambassador Williams had about the Micronesian negotiations, where agreements were tentatively arrived at and then members of that Committee would dissent from them or campaign against them in the Congress of Micronesia.
- Wilson: Well that's certainly possible, but I just don't have a recollection of it at all, one way or the other.
- Willens: The other peripheral issue that came up, although substantively I guess it wasn't peripheral, was about the use of the word "permanent" in the Joint Communique. Dr. Palacios, a member of the Commission, took exception to the use of the word "permanent". That caused some alarm on the U.S. side because they thought they'd been invited out there to negotiate a permanent relationship between the Northern Marianas and the United States. Do you have any recollection of this issue arising?
- Wilson: I recall vaguely that this came up, but I cannot remember any of the details of it at all, I'm sorry to say.
- Willens: After that set of negotiations was over, there was a decision within the Executive Branch to prepare a thorough-going memorandum in preparation for the next round of negotiations and to develop negotiating instructions for Ambassador Williams. What role did you have in developing the memorandum and draft instructions?
- Wilson: Well, the Inter-Agency Committee put that together.
- Willens: Who actually would do the staff work in preparing that kind of memorandum?
- Wilson: We would.
- Willens: We being the OMSN?
- Wilson: Yes. We would take it step by step through the Committee. It was usually handled in bits and pieces at lower levels, then brought up to the actual working group committee.
- Willens: At what point would you solicit the views of agencies not directly involved in the Working Group, like OMB? Would that be done only after you had reached agreement?
- Wilson: We would probably not consult OMB until we came to some critical stages along the way. They couldn't care less for the most part what was happening until you got around something that they could sink their teeth into.
- Willens: Was the objective of the Inter-Agency Group under your direction to prepare something to be submitted to the Under Secretaries Committee?
- Wilson: Yes. It had to be approved by them.
- Willens: Had you worked with the Under Secretaries Committee in any different assignment that you had before the Micronesian negotiations?
- Wilson: Sure. With East Asian Affairs.

- Willens: As I understand it (and please correct me if I'm wrong on this), the Under Secretaries Committee as a mechanism was a product of the Nixon Administration and put into effect in 1969 with Kissinger.
- Wilson: Yes, I think that is correct. It was Henry Kissinger's organization.
- Willens: There's been some interest in what kinds of issues went to the Under Secretaries Committee as opposed to what issues were reserved for Mr. Kissinger himself. Do you have any judgment, based on your experience, as to the effectiveness of that Under Secretaries Committee?
- Wilson: I really don't remember enough about it. There were several different committees, as you probably know. What the names of them all were, I don't know. They've been changed since. The NSC itself did most of its work through the mechanism of these committees and only met for the big basic decisions, for the most part.
- Willens: Were there meetings of the Under Secretaries Committee that focused on the Micronesian or Marianas negotiations?
- Wilson: Yes. The Under Secretaries Committee would consider this periodically.
- Willens: And would you typically attend those meetings?
- Wilson: Yes, as backup for the principals.
- Willens: Who else from the OMSN would go? Just you and Haydn Williams if he was in town?
- Wilson: Haydn, if he was in town. There were several cases I think when he was away, had other things to do, or was on the road for the Asia Foundation.
- Willens: How did the NSC staff interact with your Inter-Agency Group or with the Under Secretaries group? I'm a little vague as to exactly at what point the NSC staff gets involved.
- Wilson: We had a representative of the NSC staff on our Committee, who was John Holdridge. You might want to talk to John at some point.
- Willens: Is he around?
- Wilson: Very much around.
- Willens: Healthy and in town?
- Wilson: Absolutely. I saw him just the other day.
- Willens: That's a good suggestion. Some of the people I had wanted to interview on the NSC staff are no longer with us, but his name comes up regularly in the documents. So he would provide input to your work and then of course he could report back to his superiors including Kissinger if he thought it was appropriate or important enough as to what was developing within your group?
- Wilson: That's right. Haydn or I would make it a point to brief John after just about every one of the negotiation sessions, and he in turn would brief Henry. We actually saw very little of Henry personally in this whole thing.
- Willens: Can you remember any specific occasion on which you or Haydn did discuss either set of negotiations with Mr. Kissinger?
- Wilson: No. None of them come to mind.

- Willens: There's some indication in the materials that either he (or someone who reported to him from time to time) provided some input to the instructions, but it appears not to be on major matters.
- Wilson: You'd have to ask Holdridge about that. He would know about it. Holdridge had a couple of assistants who worked with us at the staff level, keeping them informed as to what was going on. Incidentally, somebody else that you might want to keep in mind is Harmon Kirby.
- Willens: I just came across that name again in these materials. He was assigned to OMSN, wasn't he?
- Wilson: He was. He was a Foreign Service officer assigned to OMSN.
- Willens: Where's he now?
- Wilson: He's retired. He retired as Ambassador to Togo.
- Willens: He's in town?
- Wilson: He's in town, in the telephone book.
- Willens: And the same with Holdridge?
- Wilson: Same with Holdridge.
- Willens: Also included in the documents are some preliminary reports that the 1973 U.N. visiting mission was visiting the Trust Territory (as they did every three years) and was going to be critical of the agreement to separate negotiations. What was your reaction to the prospect that the United Nations was going to be critical of these negotiations?
- Wilson: Well I think we were a little unhappy about the whole thing. I've forgotten the name of the Russian gentleman who was on that group—Israeli or something of that sort?
- Willens: Exactly.
- Wilson: We more or less reached the conclusion among ourselves (we never said so publicly) that Israeli was perhaps playing fun and games as much as anything, deliberately stirring up the Indians so to speak.
- Willens: I notice in the materials at some point he's cited as saying that the Micronesians ought to take advantage of scholarship opportunities and study in socialist countries.
- Wilson: Yes.
- Willens: Was there anything that you and Ambassador Williams felt that you could do through the State Department to defuse that kind of criticism?
- Wilson: Well there wasn't much that you could do except through the mechanism of the Trusteeship Council. I remember we had several sessions. Our representative on the Trusteeship Council at that point was Barbara White.
- Willens: Was she sympathetic?
- Wilson: She was quite sympathetic and undertook to calm things down in the Trusteeship Council circles. It never really amounted to a great deal, though people were concerned about it at the time.
- Willens: Some State Department officials from IO that I have met told me that it's hard today to imagine the kind of concern that United Nations policies prompted in the State Department in the early 1960s and that things changed over the following decades so

- that criticism of this kind was, if not predictable, at least not a cause for alarm. I may have overstated their view, but they are suggesting sort of a change of perception within the Department and the Administration generally as to attitudes toward the United Nations. Do you have any reaction to that problem?
- Wilson: I don't really have any feeling for it one way or the other because I wasn't around at the time.
- Willens: But with respect to your own dealing, did you personally ever deal with the Trusteeship Council on behalf of the United States?
- Wilson: I was I guess technically as an advisor or something to the U.S. Delegation on a couple of occasions, but I can't remember the circumstance. We used to trek up there regularly, brief Barbara or whomever our U.N. representative was at the time (I can't recall) and to talk to some people in Secretariat.
- Willens: What would be the Secretariat's concern?
- Wilson: Just following what was happening. After all, we were the only Trusteeship left.
- Willens: Did you have the chance to skim over the memorandum, or the summary of the memorandum, in the documents that set forth the major issues . . .
- Wilson: Which one was that?
- Willens: It's under Tab . . .
- Wilson: Tab 4?
- Willens: I guess it's later. It's under Tab 7 actually, which has a sort of the summary of the overall memorandum and instructions.
- Wilson: Yes, I read through all of these things very hastily.
- Willens: Well I appreciate that. I know it's a bit of a burden. Actually before I get to that, under Tab 6 there's a memorandum here about Ambassador Williams appearing before the House Interior Subcommittee, and there's some reference to your testimony at about the same time before the Senate. I think I have a brief statement that you may have given at the Senate that's fairly comparable to what Ambassador Williams delivered. Had you had any experience with either the House or the Senate Interior Committees before you came on board the negotiating team?
- Wilson: Not with those Interior committees.
- Willens: Had you done any testifying before Foreign Relations or other committees over the years?
- Wilson: Oh yes.
- Willens: What is your recollection today of Burton's role in these negotiations?
- Wilson: Burton was key in the negotiations. They could never have gotten off the ground unless he had come along. As we developed the whole scenario, it was I think absolutely essential to have Burton with us on it. Otherwise it would be foredoomed to failure, and for this reason we made a very special effort to keep him informed as to what was going on.
- Willens: What were the principal subjects of concern to him?
- Wilson: He was very much concerned about the idea of separate negotiations with the Marinas in the first place and I think came around to thinking this was a good idea.

- Willens: Your recollection is that he was originally opposed?
- Wilson: Well, not opposed but concerned. He was very sympathetic to the idea of independence for the rest of them. But again, I think he had an open mind on the subject. He was not taking an adversarial position on it at all. He was very much concerned about making certain that all the Bill of Rights was applied to the TTPI. He was very much concerned that nobody shortchanged the people in Micronesia so far as funds were concerned for future development. Very liberal on this issue. But by the same token, I would say he was not inclined to give things away too easily.
- Willens: In view of the current debate about fast track legislation, was it your understanding that it was Burton's view that the Congress would accept what was produced by the negotiators and vote it either up or down?
- Wilson: Yes. But this was conditioned on our keeping him informed as we went along, so that he could make his objections known if he had any.
- Willens: Was that something that had been established between Ambassador Williams and himself before you arrived on the scene?
- Wilson: Yes. Very definitely. Fellow Californians.
- Willens: Fellow San Franciscans.
- Wilson: Exactly.
- Willens: Were there any differences between the House Committee's attention to these negotiations and the Senate Committee's?
- Wilson: I don't recall. The Senate was not as much concerned with the details as the House was. Our principal contact in the Senate of course was Senator Jackson.
- Willens: I gather most everyone had difficulty meeting with Senator Jackson on this subject. Do you recall any personal meetings that you had with him on this subject?
- Wilson: Oh, yes. We had quite a few. And again, relations between Haydn and Scoop Jackson were I think really very close.
- Willens: Was his interest primarily focused on national security?
- Wilson: Haydn was at one time teaching at (I think) the University of Washington, and he got to know Scoop during those days.
- Willens: I see.
- Wilson: And he also knew him when he [Haydn] was in the Department of Defense.
- Willens: Some materials suggest that Jackson's interest was predominantly on the national security and the military side. Is that your recollection?
- Wilson: Pretty much so, yes. Other people on the Committee were concerned with some of the other things. I recall particularly that Bennett Johnson was interested in a lot of the other things—economic, social.
- Willens: Did you encounter any opposition or reluctance in Congress to the idea of free association for the districts other than the Northern Marianas?
- Wilson: I don't recall any.
- Willens: Do you recall any specific issues again with respect to the Marianas that were important to Burton or to Jackson that required some alteration of U.S. strategy?

- Wilson: Again, I don't recall.
- Willens: Turning to this memorandum that was generated by the Inter-Agency Group to be submitted to the Under Secretaries Committee, it sets forth the issues in summary fashion (I think this is probably only the summary; there's a much longer memorandum). It deals with the status alternatives and with the strategy with respect to negotiating land for military needs, financial support, and so forth. As you prepared for the 1973 negotiations with the Northern Marianas, what did you personally believe were going to be the most difficult issues to resolve with the Marianas negotiators?
- Wilson: I don't know if I can answer that one. I really can't say that there were any specific areas where we felt we were going to run into trouble. I don't remember any.
- Willens: There's a letter here under the next tab that came from the Justice Department to Seymour Weiss, who was Staff Director. The Department of Justice seemed to be suggesting that the concept of a territorial status relationship may be too precise (or not precise enough) to satisfy United States interests in these negotiations. Do you recall seeing this letter at the time?
- Wilson: I don't remember seeing this at all.
- Willens: You don't remember seeing it?
- Wilson: I don't remember ever having seen it.
- Willens: It came in after the memorandum went forward from the working group to the Under Secretaries Committee, and this letter was addressed to the Under Secretaries Committee. Do you have any recollection of Department of Justice input to this memorandum?
- Wilson: No. It is a complete surprise. I may have seen it, but I don't have any memory of it at all.
- Willens: Do you have any reaction today to the substance of the points made in the letter?
- Wilson: I haven't studied it very carefully.
- Willens: The principal point really is that the focus ought to be on United States sovereignty and, as long as there's no doubt that United States sovereignty exists with respect to the Northern Marianas, that may be sufficient for U.S. purposes.
- Wilson: Well, I think we all felt that. That was not unique to the Justice Department.
- Willens: The strategy with respect to acquisition of land on Tinian is the subject of considerable discussion in this memorandum. Did you have any view before the negotiations as to whether the effort to acquire the entire island of Tinian should be pursued, or were you concerned to any extent about an adverse reaction that that proposal might have on the negotiators?
- Wilson: Yes, we were concerned very definitely on that one. It was one of those things where if the Department of Defense had its druthers, they would like the whole island, but if they couldn't get their druthers then we had a fallback position, the one which was adopted finally.
- Willens: There seems to be the sense that it's better to try to get a lot with some confidence that any adverse reaction wouldn't be more serious than one could handle. Was that basically the sense that the U.S. negotiating team had?
- Wilson: I think the earlier question was whether to let people in Defense go for the whole apple (so to speak). If that didn't work, then they'd try something a little bit less. It would have been more convenient for them, let's put it that way, to have the whole island. (This

is something that happens quite frequently, I've discovered, in some of our Defense requirements.)

Willens: You mentioned earlier that in your background you had done some negotiating on base rights.

Wilson: Quite a bit.

Willens: And did you know that you were

Wilson: I made my living out of it for nine years.

Willens: Right. You were a feared member of the U.S. team because of your expertise.

Wilson: Well I wouldn't say that. There's an awful lot of bureaucratic wrangling that goes into these things.

Willens: I'm sure of that. There were some informal and confidential working sessions at the beginning of the May 1973 negotiations. On the day that the formal negotiations were to begin (if I'm correct), the *Pacific Daily News* had a massive headline disclosing U.S. proposals to take over all of Tinian.

Wilson: I had forgotten that, yes.

Willens: This was immediately charged as being an unauthorized leak. Do you have any idea how the PDN [*Pacific Daily News*] acquired that information?

Wilson: I think we told them.

Willens: Really?

Wilson: I'm sorry. Who acquired it?

Willens: The *Pacific Daily News*.

Wilson: Oh, no. We didn't, no, no, not remotely. We had told members of the Marianas Delegation, and I'm pretty sure that's where it came from. But who among them, I haven't the foggiest idea. It was all water over the dam anyway.

Willens: It created quite a storm, as I recall.

Wilson: Yes.

Willens: And I've said in subsequent years, perhaps with some exaggeration, it probably was the biggest headline I've seen since World War II was declared. What is your recollection now on the efforts to explain the U.S. needs to both the Commission and to the people on Tinian? Do you have any recollection of the meetings on Tinian, the public meetings at which Haydn and others would try to respond to questions?

Wilson: Yes, I certainly do. We went over there. Did you attend any of those sessions?

Willens: Yes.

Wilson: Well you remember them then. I can't remember whether it was in a school room or outdoor pavilion of some sort.

Willens: I remember one that was indoors in some municipal council building that was too small for the assembled crowd.

Wilson: That's right.

Willens: Did you have any sense based on those discussions and meetings that there was going to be significant opposition on Tinian to accommodating U.S. military requirements?

- Wilson: No. I don't recall any feeling along those lines. I guess we were dealing with the Mayor of Tinian for part of that. You'll recall this better than I probably.
- Willens: Mayor Mendiola . . .
- Wilson: That's right. I'd forgotten his name.
- Willens: . . . became an opponent of the U.S. military requirements at some point in this process.
- Wilson: Yes.
- Willens: Do you recall any particular issues or exchanges between Haydn and the assembled crowd that stuck with you over these years?
- Wilson: No, I don't.
- Willens: Early on the issue was defined as to purchase vs. lease, and the memorandum and the instructions definitely express a preference for purchase.
- Wilson: That is correct.
- Willens: Had it been your experience in your dealings in other areas that purchase of land for military purposes was the preferred Defense Department position?
- Wilson: Well you've got to distinguish between domestic and foreign.
- Willens: Right.
- Wilson: As far as foreign is concerned, it was a no-no. Nobody would give it up on a purchase basis. As far as domestic goes, I think it was a matter of the Defense Department's trying to figure out which was the cheapest.
- Willens: The other issue that came up relatively early (I guess) was going to be the question of price either for a lease or for purchase. Do you have any idea how the figure \$20 million found its way into this memorandum as an appropriate ceiling?
- Wilson: I am completely blank on what any of those figures were or how they came by it.
- Willens: Who would have supplied that kind of data? Would that have been the Defense Department?
- Wilson: Yes.
- Willens: And how about the figures with respect to economic support?
- Wilson: I cannot recall any of those figures or how they were derived at this point.
- Willens: But they were sufficiently within the realm of reasonableness that they could function as instructions for the time being?
- Wilson: Yes.
- Willens: How did Haydn and you feel about instructions in terms of whether they were immutable or whether as time wore on you would be able to secure relatively minor changes in them if necessary?
- Wilson: Well, I think it depended almost entirely on what the issues might be. Having worked out the instructions to begin with, we were pretty clear as to where there were areas of softness and where things were immutable. The Defense Department would be strong on some things, weak on others. Ditto Justice. This was a matter of feel more than anything else.
- Willens: What kind of input did the Interior Department have to the work of the Inter-Agency Group?

- Wilson: Well the representative of course was Stan Carpenter in our day, and they had considerable input on the money side.
- Willens: They were the ones who were administering the Trust Territory budget so to speak.
- Wilson: Yes.
- Willens: Did they also have input with respect to the nature of the political status?
- Wilson: Not anything special that I can recall.
- Willens: Do you remember any emphasis on patterning the Northern Marianas relationship on Guam's then-current status with a view toward ultimate reintegration?
- Wilson: Oh, of course, this was a very strong sentiment in Congress.
- Willens: Was it?
- Wilson: Yes. Most of the people that you talked to in Congress on this issue simply said well why in the hell isn't this combined with Guam if they want the territorial relationship, and that will be the end of it.
- Willens: What was your response to that?
- Wilson: I guess it was that it wouldn't fly.
- Willens: And the historians among them said well the Marianas used to want to be part of Guam...
- Wilson: That is correct.
- Willens: . . . until the Guamanians rejected them. But you recall that being an important element on the Hill.
- Wilson: Oh yes, very definitely. And I think from everybody's point of view it would have been much simpler. But completely out of the ballpark in terms of what the Northern Marianas wanted, as it developed.
- Willens: There is in this memorandum that was sent to the Under Secretaries Committee a very ambitious timing scenario as it's called. It suggested that in fact there might be an agreement by the end of 1973.
- Wilson: Yes, I saw that. I'd forgotten it.
- Willens: I was referring to this timetable. Did you think that this was a realistic timetable, or is it more or less aspirational?
- Wilson: No, I don't remember any specifics of the thing. I think the expectation was that this would go a good deal faster, both of them would go faster, than they actually did. But it was obviously too optimistic.
- Willens: Was there any particular sense of urgency that accompanied either set of negotiations?
- Wilson: Nothing specific. There was a considerable sense of, I would say, maybe frustration that we couldn't end things in the U.N. This had been going on for a long, long time. We were the last of the trusteeships. It should have been ended probably sooner. From the standpoint of the Defense Department, I think they would have been happy to let the status quo continue indefinitely.
- Willens: There is some support for that view in the Department of Defense documents, as you would imagine. Did you anticipate opposition from the Congress of Micronesia along the

- lines that ultimately developed here, or was that something that you thought you could live with?
- Wilson: Well I think our expectation, when we finished with the Congress of Micronesia negotiations, was that it stood a fighting chance of being approved. That was not the case in the event. I think Salii felt he could swing it at that point. At least he told us so. But things changed.
- Willens: After this was reviewed by the Under Secretaries Committee, there is a memorandum that went from Kenneth Rush as Chairman to the President. It looks as though the issues put before the President for decision are basically the issues as defined in the basic memorandum. Do you recall any change that the Under Secretaries Committee made with respect to these instructions?
- Wilson: Not to my knowledge.
- Willens: It doesn't look as though there are. Some of the dissenting views are included here as footnotes, from OMB in particular and to a lesser extent the Justice Department. When a memorandum like this went forward for the President, was that really in effect the same as sending it to Kissinger? Sometimes one sees memos in the materials addressed to Kissinger, but usually it's a format of being sent to the President.
- Wilson: This would go to the President.
- Willens: But would it normally be staffed by Kissinger and his people before it went to the President?
- Wilson: It would be staffed by them, yes. The decision would be made by the President himself under these circumstances, and if there was any special input or emphasis from any of the constituent departments, it would be up to the Secretary concerned to make them at that time.
- Willens: Up to the Secretary of the respective Department to weigh in independently if he or she wanted to?
- Wilson: Exactly.
- Willens: But by the time something went forward to the President from the Under Secretaries Committee, there has already been ample opportunity for the NSC staff to reflect their views and presumably Mr. Kissinger's views?
- Wilson: Oh, yes. Absolutely.
- Willens: Under Tab 10 we have the cable hand-carried from Guam over to you, because I have a feeling you may have been out in Saipan already.
- Wilson: I must have been out there or someplace close.
- Willens: Right. And the instructions basically are as recommended to the President by the Under Secretaries Committee.
- Wilson: Yes.
- Willens: One subject that came up during this round of negotiations pertained to political status. An issue that the lawyers in particular got involved in was the degree of self-government and mutual consent and the provisions of Article IV(3)(2). I've included in the documents a statement made on the U.S. side. I'm not sure whether it was made by Ambassador Williams or by you, but it just sort of sets forth basically the United States solicitation of views from the Commission to make sure that people were, as you say, working on

the same set of basic requirements. Then there are two memoranda, one dated May 21, 1973, which is a memorandum of conversations among lawyers, in which I participated, and then the next day a memorandum of a meeting in which the principals, you and Ambassador Williams and Captain Crowe and others, participated along with Senators Pangelinan and Santos.

Wilson: I don't know who wrote this one.

Willens: No, the memos are very good actually and I think accurate and useful.

Wilson: Probably Mr. Whittington.

Willens: Yes, maybe so.

Wilson: Who knows?

Willens: What was your sense then of this issue? Did you regard this effort to some extent as raising fundamental issues regarding U.S. sovereignty? Do you have any recollection at all of the back and forth discussions we had on this set of issues?

Wilson: Yes. I recall this as being one of the major points for discussion. It was also an area in which we had virtually no leeway as negotiators. It was not only a matter from the Under Secretaries Committee; it was also a point of considerable importance as far as the Hill was concerned. I think if my memory is correct that both Burton and Jackson were very firm on the issue.

Willens: And what do you recall being the issue?

Wilson: The issue is to whether or not U.S. sovereignty would apply.

Willens: So to the extent that the Marianas were seeking some limitation on plenary authority by Congress, it was viewed as undercutting U.S. sovereignty or putting it into question.

Wilson: That's right. And we were told flatly, as I remember, by Burton and others that we could not dilute the plenary authority of Congress. But we got around that, as you remember, by . . .

Willens: How did you do that then? How did you explain that a mutual consent provision, which was acknowledged as a limitation on plenary power, was necessary or should be accepted by Congress?

Wilson: I don't remember the precise details of it, but I know that it was discussed. Given the practicalities of the situation, I think that the members of Congress who listened to it were willing to accept limited areas where there would have to be mutual consent. But at first they were adamant that there should be none.

Willens: Is that right?

Wilson: Yes.

Willens: And for the reason that we just discussed?

Wilson: Exactly.

Willens: That Congressional plenary authority was essential.

Wilson: That's right. They were adamant on that. They were adamant on the "no Puerto Rico".

Willens: What was it about Puerto Rico other than its ambiguity, which I always thought was the problem—that if you could deal with the relationship in a specific, unambiguous way, you

- would have solved the problems? But the resistance on the Hill was more fundamental than that, was it not?
- Wilson: They were very funny on that in many respects. You tried to pin them down as to what it was they didn't like about Puerto Rico, and most of it came down to generalities—that it was too vague or it was an area where Congress could not be usurped, etc., etc.
- Willens: As a result of these discussions on the political issues, the Joint Communiqué reflected a reservation by the Marianas Political Status Commission that it wanted to pursue the matter further and so forth. Did you have any recollection today of how you felt about that reservation? Was that an appropriate way to sort of deal with the issue, at least temporarily?
- Wilson: Reservation to do what?
- Willens: Well the quote from the Joint Communiqué is on page 2 of the Joint Communiqué which is under Tab 15. It says that, subject further to the reservation of the Marianas Political Status Commission that it will explore means to reconcile the plenary powers of Congress under Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2, with the exercise by the Commonwealth of maximum self-government. Did you and Haydn have any concern about that particular reservation, or were you prepared to see what developed in future sessions?
- Wilson: I'm trying to remember here. Well this was a very difficult point in many respects. As you will remember, we had considerable discussion on it. It was also an area where (as I indicated earlier) we didn't have much flexibility, so it was a matter of considerable concern.
- Willens: You expressed that concern not only in the working sessions, but did you also express those concerns to the members of the Commission individually when you had the occasion to do so?
- Wilson: I expect we did, though I don't remember any specific conversations on the subject.
- Willens: Whom did you regard over your experience with the Commission as being the most active members of the Commission and influential within the Commission.
- Wilson: Well Eddie of course, and I guess Pete Tenorio as much as anyone.
- Willens: He came on the Commission . . .
- Wilson: He came on late.
- Willens: He wasn't at the second round. He came on before the next round. Do you have any particular recollection of Senator Borja?
- Wilson: Oh indeed, yes. I was never quite sure how much weight he carried with the group, but he was always very jovial, very pleasant.
- Willens: How about Joe Cruz of Tinian?
- Wilson: Joe Cruz of Tinian. No, I don't remember him that well.
- Willens: He was the one who burst into song . . .
- Wilson: Yes. I don't really recall him that well. What was the fellow's name from Rota?
- Willens: Benjamin Manglona?
- Wilson: Yes.
- Willens: What's your recollection of him?

- Wilson: Being somebody who was very serious, very much concerned, very dedicated. Impressive.
- Willens: Did you have the sense at the time that there were tensions between Saipan on the one hand and Tinian and Rota, in particular Rota?
- Wilson: I didn't get any sense of that. You would be much more up to date on that than I.
- Willens: After the second round of negotiations was completed, Haydn wrote a letter to the President that's under Tab 16 dated June 29, 1973 reporting on the negotiations. As I recall, he did this on several different occasions. Were these letters also circulated to the Under Secretaries Committee and so forth?
- Wilson: Oh yes. As I recall, he did one after every session. I don't know what you've got under the Freedom of Information Act.
- Willens: I have some of them.
- Wilson: Do you have some of the others as well?
- Willens: Yes, at least one or two as I recall. Actually, one thing that particularly interested me in this letter and some of the others is his discussion with respect to Guam on page 3 of this letter, where he says that although the political relationship between Guam and the United States government falls outside my area of responsibility, I have kept the Guamanian people informed and so forth and so on. Did you and/or he have any sense of what impact a relationship with the Northern Marianas would have on Guam's own political status?
- Wilson: It's hard to say at this point. We did make it a deliberate point to keep the Governor and the Governor's office informed as to what was going on and, of course, Won Pat, who had the political connections in Guam. I think everybody recognized that there could be considerable fallout as far as Guam was concerned. This was a matter of prudence more than anything else. We didn't have any authority at all to do anything as far as Guam was concerned, but it seemed prudent to keep them informed as to what was going on.
- Willens: Do you recall any success either in Congress or in the Executive Branch in getting people to address the Guam problem while your negotiations were under way?
- Wilson: I don't recall any. No, I don't remember any pressures at all.
- Willens: Because it is a persistent and consistent theme of these reports, and there is in some of the materials I've seen some suggestion that the Guamanian political leaders thought they were promised ultimately whatever status the Northern Marianas achieved.
- Wilson: I don't know how they could have gotten that idea.
- Willens: Did you hear at any point along the line that Congressman Burton or others provided them assurances in that direction?
- Wilson: No, and I don't remember anything out of Won Pat.
- Willens: What were his attitudes?
- Wilson: Who? Burton?
- Willens: No, Won Pat.
- Wilson: Well, he was very much concerned certainly. He followed the negotiations probably as closely as anybody with the exception of Burton. We made it a point to keep him up to date on what was going on.

- Willens: Were you concerned at any point that he might oppose the relationship with the Northern Marianas unless there were some assurances with respect to Guam?
- Wilson: He gave no indication of doing that. No, on the whole I think Won Pat was helpful.
- Willens: In what respect?
- Wilson: In getting and keeping the other members of his Committee informed as to what was going on and in securing approval of the Covenant when it was completed.
- Willens: It is an historical point that has some current relevance, because Guam has now struggled for 20 years to improve its status.
- Wilson: That's right. And it's not getting very far.
- Willens: Not getting very far. Exactly. There is a Department of Defense document under Tab 17 that is interesting because it suggests some internal difference of opinion within Defense as to the . . .
- Wilson: Yes. I hadn't seen this one.
- Willens: . . . current state of planning with respect to Tinian. I don't know that I have a cleaner copy. This handwriting was on the document that we were provided and obviously seems to reflect a difference of view with the author's assessment of the situation.
- Wilson: We don't know whose notes they are?
- Willens: No, I don't. And then later on of course there is an exchange of correspondence between Ambassador Williams and the Secretary of Defense. What was your understanding contemporaneously in 1973 as to whether the Secretary of Defense had in fact approved the plan for Tinian and construction of a base?
- Wilson: Well I don't really remember. We were concerned, as I recall, that there were elements within the Defense Department that apparently were not as enthusiastic about Tinian as somebody else might be.
- Willens: Were you aware of that?
- Wilson: Oh yes.
- Willens: How did you become aware of that?
- Wilson: Probably through the grapevine. Somebody like Crowe for example could have had his sources in the military establishment. Tinian was an Air Force requirement, for the most part. There were some minor Navy interests in the whole thing. And there's always competition for funds between the several departments along the way. If people haven't funded these things, then you get suspicious.
- Willens: That's right.
- Wilson: And we were concerned because there hadn't been any funding for Tinian, but the answer from the Defense Department was, well you can't fund it until you've got an agreement.
- Willens: There's some plausibility to that point of view.
- Wilson: That is right.
- Willens: Were you aware, and I'm not confident that all the facts in this memorandum are necessarily true, but this memorandum suggests that there was not any proposed funding for this even in looking forward over a five-year period of time and that there had not been any plan approved by the Secretary? Were you aware of that at the time?

- Wilson: We became aware of it.
- Willens: When did you become aware of it?
- Wilson: I can't remember.
- Willens: You mean later on when ultimately you informed the Commission that there was not going to be a base? That was in December of 1974 near the end of the negotiations.
- Wilson: I'm not sure when.
- Willens: Do you recall how you became aware?
- Wilson: You've got this piece from Haydn going to the Secretary of Defense, Jim Schlesinger. So I'm sure we must have been concerned at that point.
- Willens: Well that's right. And then there is a response from Secretary Schlesinger.
- Wilson: Yes. Somewhat weasel-worded, to say the least.
- Willens: Well I'm trying to explore exactly what you and Ambassador Williams knew at the time that the negotiations were under way and particularly the extent to which you were aware that there were people in Congress who apparently were not sympathetic to this proposal either. Did you regard the Schlesinger letter in December 1973 as providing sufficient assurances for your going forward on the assumption that there would be a military base constructed on Tinian?
- Wilson: Yes, though it wasn't, shall we say, the most definitive statement in the world.
- Willens: Based on your own experience and other assignments, what was your reaction to the Joint Chiefs of Staff planning effort that was presented to you and through you to the Marianas negotiators? Did it have the imprint of a final decision, based on your experience?
- Wilson: About as much of a final decision as you usually get in this sort of thing, which is to say, you ran into this all the time when you got into a base situation. Which comes first? The plan or the money? Looking back on it now, I don't remember what my reactions were at the time with any degree of specificity, but just looking at it in general terms here, I suspect this is about the best that you could have expected out of the Defense Department. It's worrisome.
- Willens: When you were negotiating for . . .
- Wilson: Because you can get into a situation where with all the best good will in the world, even if you've got something funded, you can run into a budgetary crisis or something of the sort and the funds go off, and then you're leaving an awfully lot of people high and dry. One of the great disadvantages of the whole base negotiating business.
- Willens: When you would negotiate in earlier years for base access in foreign countries
- Wilson: We had this problem all the time.
- Willens: How did one typically handle the funding vs. lease situation?
- Wilson: You forged ahead and took your chances on it.
- Willens: So you would be prepared to make the commitment for the land . . .
- Wilson: That's right.
- Willens: . . . even though you weren't assured of funding.

- Willens: If you could put this in the context of an international negotiation when there was a military interest in having land rights in a foreign country, was it assumed that getting access to the land could be treated independently from what you might do on the land, or was it always clear you were leasing the land for a particular purpose?
- Wilson: There had to be a particular purpose for it, but again you get into this never-never land of priorities and defense requirements. If the funds are not forthcoming, then obviously the priority was reduced.
- Willens: And as a negotiator would you then provide an out from the deal if the funding did not materialize?
- Wilson: No. You were simply embarrassed.
- Willens: And stuck with the leasehold or whatever?
- Wilson: It rarely happened, but there were occasions when it did happen. It was a matter of embarrassment, but nothing could be done about it.
- Willens: Did you personally participate in any meetings at the Defense Department where the issue of Secretarial approval and funding for Tinian was discussed?
- Wilson: I don't recall any except one, which was just before the final announcement that we were not going to go ahead, and that was with Bill Clement.
- Willens: What was the substance of the meeting, as best you can recall?
- Wilson: Clement said flatly that funds were not available. That was that.
- Willens: Had you or Haydn to your knowledge in this case done any canvassing on the Hill yourself in order to check whether there was Congressional support for this element?
- Wilson: I don't recall doing any.
- Willens: It would be primarily something you would entrust to the Defense Department, because they had the mission and they had the contacts?
- Wilson: They had to sell it.
- Willens: Even after this memorandum raising questions about it, there was further approval within the Defense Department, because the Secretary of Defense makes reference at some point (I think later on) to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Installations and Logistics approving the programming plan and making money available for planning and surveys. The issue of the base and its relationship to economic support for the Marianas were very much dovetailed. What was your assessment of the discussions with the Commission regarding the level of economic support and the rate of growth, to identify a few significant issues?
- Wilson: Not really, I'm sorry to say. This is an area where I draw something of a blank. I remember the discussions, but in terms of the actual items and their relationship to each other, I just have no recollection at all. It's gone.
- Willens: After the second round of negotiations in May, there was an interview given by Commission members Palacios, Tenorio, that's Joeten, and Rabauliman, who complained publicly that the negotiations were proceeding too quickly, that the Marianas was being out-negotiated by the United States representatives, and so forth. Do you remember any reaction to this public indication of resistance within the Commission?
- Wilson: No, I'd forgotten all about the incident.

- Willens: Do you recall any personal conversations you had with Dr. Palacios during the negotiations and how you generally viewed him?
- Wilson: No.
- Willens: How about Joeten? Did you have any conversations with Joeten?
- Wilson: We used to talk to Joeten considerably, but not very substantively, as I remember.
- Willens: How about Felix Rabauliman or other members of the Carolinian population in the Northern Marianas?
- Wilson: I don't remember any specifically. We talked to quite a number of people, of course, on social occasions. I don't remember any specifics outside of generally being pleasant.
- Willens: After that second round of negotiations and the publicity that surrounded the Tinian land question, you and Haydn Williams came out in August of 1973 to meet with various groups because of concern about the moratorium on homesteading and land development on Tinian. There's one memo in here I guess suggesting that there was concern (I guess it's under Tab 18, a joint statement by Ambassador Williams and Commission leaders as to the moratorium issue), and there's a reference in some of these materials to an earlier statement that you made in visiting with the District Legislature on the subject. Do you have any recollection of that particular issue and the United States' reasons for imposing a moratorium?
- Wilson: No, I don't.
- Willens: Do you recall concern within the United States about land speculation on Tinian?
- Wilson: Vaguely, but details, no—gone.
- Willens: How about the public land situation? There seemed to have been a considerable effort within the Executive Branch to look at the public lands issue in the Trust Territory and develop a policy for returning the public lands. There ultimately was a Secretarial Order to that effect in late 1973.
- Wilson: Yes.
- Willens: Why was the return of public lands given that measure of attention by your group and others?
- Wilson: I think the principal reason was that almost every district in Micronesia at the time, including the Marianas, had indicated very strongly that our continued retention of the public lands was something that they found offensive and wanted to make sure that we were not parlaying our hold on the public lands as a bargaining chip in any of these discussions. The simple answer to it, at least as far as I was concerned on it, was that we were bound to give them the public lands under any circumstances; why not do it now and get it out of the way as an issue, which is what we did.
- Willens: That's certain correct. And the public lands also embraced lands that you wanted to lease or purchase.
- Wilson: That's correct.
- Willens: And you couldn't really do that or come to conclusion in the negotiations unless the people with whom you were negotiating had the land?
- Wilson: That is right.
- Willens: I suppose one could have devised ways around that problem, but nonetheless . . .

- Wilson: The simplest way was just to go ahead and do it. We were going to do it anyway.
- Willens: Did you find any resistance in the districts, including districts other than the Marianas, to this policy?
- Wilson: Let me see if I can remember this. I went around to, I guess, the Marianas and Truk and Yap.
- Willens: There's some reference to your doing the western districts. I'm not too sure what the western districts are.
- Wilson: And Bill Crowe did the Marshalls and Palau. Went around and talked to the District Legislatures in each of these places to see what their concerns were and what their reaction would be to an early return to public lands. Having found no great dissent along the way, we went ahead and recommended to the Secretary of the Interior that he issue the Order.
- Willens: There was some concern in the Congress of Micronesia that it ought to be the vehicle for taking possession of the land.
- Wilson: That's right.
- Willens: Do you recall having any debate on that issue?
- Wilson: There may have been one, but I certainly don't remember.
- Willens: When you went to other districts, did you meet with traditional leaders as well as the elected leaders?
- Wilson: Yes, that is correct.
- Willens: Do you have any recollection of a particular district in which you had a chance to observe the interplay between the elected leaders and the traditional leaders and form some judgment about that?
- Wilson: Well, I recall Yap in particular. We had a session with the elders, a rather remarkable gathering, someplace in the district headquarters, a large room with a large table in the middle of it. The door opened, and in walked the elders, all of them clad in native costume, which consisted of a red tui, and each was carrying his own little box of betelnut. And they filed in and sat themselves down on one side of the table, and each got out his betelnut, opened it up and partook thereof, and the meeting began. They nodded attentively and consulted among themselves after we made our presentation and said they had no objection because it was fine.
- Willens: And you were there to lay out the proposed return of lands?
- Wilson: That's right.
- Willens: And was it assumed by them that they would be the custodians of the land and decide how they should be used?
- Wilson: They didn't say, as I remember that one, because there was the issue as to whether you were going to give it to the district government or whether you were going to give it to the tribal chieftains. I have forgotten how we settled that one. Maybe we let each district decide.
- Willens: That's my recollection. Did you have any dealings with Neiman Craley during your years out there? He was the former Congressman who served as Assistant High Commissioner for Public Affairs for a while?

- Wilson: The name is familiar, but I have no recollection of him.
- Willens: There's a memorandum here about a meeting in which you participated with the High Commissioner Johnston and Strik Yoma and others on the subject of political education. I guess Salii was present as well. It was the beginning of discussions that led ultimately to a program called Education for Self-Government.
- Wilson: That's right.
- Willens: What's your recollection today about the political education efforts that had been made in the Trust Territory and were made during your tenure?
- Wilson: Again, I've lost the details of it. My overall impression in retrospect is that we were not terribly impressed with the education effort that had been made until that point and felt it needed considerable improvement, particularly if we were going to go ahead with the Covenant and with the Compact. One of the things that I remember later on, Canham when he came in was very much concerned with—and it was a very important point, quite a serious point—if you were going to have people respond to a referendum on the agreements, you had to have some assurance that they had at least a reasonable understanding of what it was that they were being asked to do.
- Willens: When you went around to the districts and participated in public meetings, did you find a high degree of political awareness as to the negotiations and what they might mean to people?
- Wilson: It varied. I don't recall specifics in the thing, but I do recall a general concern about the whole state of affairs as far as public awareness was concerned.
- Willens: There also is reference in that memorandum to the fact that the Congress of Micronesia had failed to pass a Constitutional Convention bill even though the United States had agreed it would fund a Convention if one were provided for by the Congress. What is your recollection as to why the Congress of Micronesia hesitated over such a period on that subject?
- Wilson: I don't know; I don't remember.
- Willens: Did you get the sense near the end of your assignment that the districts other than the Northern Marianas were reluctant to confront the issue of future status?
- Wilson: No. I think it was just inertia, as much as anything.
- Willens: Did you get the sense that a Constitutional Convention among the districts, either five or six of them, was going to expose internal difficulties of a kind that they were apprehensive of revealing?
- Wilson: I can't answer that. I just don't know.
- Willens: There is a memorandum reflecting a discussion with Paul Warnke at some point after the separate negotiations had begun where he took the position that in negotiating financial arrangements, he and his client had to negotiate for all six districts. And there is discussion in here about \$100 million. Who was Mr. Quinn? Was he an economic consultant for the Joint Committee?
- Wilson: I think it says in here.
- Willens: Did it?
- Wilson: I didn't have any recollection of Mr. Quinn at all, but I think it says in here that he's some kind of a

- Willens: Yes, I'm sorry. He's the Deputy Budget Director of the TTPI, that's right. This is a so-called second session of the Drafting Committee in November 1973, and it indicates that you were more or less coordinating or presiding at the session. So were you the principal figure on the U.S. side who was trying to move the drafting of the Compact along at the same time that the Marianas negotiations were progressing?
- Wilson: No, Haydn was obviously.
- Willens: But would you be present? I mean this is a Drafting Committee. It's under Tab 22. Obviously Sali and Silk are there, along with Warnke.
- Wilson: I don't know where this took place.
- Willens: No, I'm not clear either.
- Wilson: You might ask Paul. He ought to remember, or at least have records.
- Willens: This suggested that as in late 1973 the financial issue was very much an outstanding one in the Micronesia negotiations. I think they had previously put forth the figure of \$100 million, and the United States had indicated that was substantially more than it was prepared to agree to.
- Wilson: Well again I've got no recollection of the numbers in any of this. It's completely gone.
- Willens: Do you have any recollection, putting the numbers aside, of the way in which the Micronesians addressed the economic or financial issues?
- Wilson: I can't remember the details of that either. We finally ended up with a financial appendix or annex or something to the draft Compact. I don't even have a copy of that anymore, along with my records, such as they were. I shipped them out years and years ago to the Ford Library.
- Willens: Your materials are at the Ford Library?
- Wilson: Yes, but I don't think there's much of anything on the Micronesian thing. I sent them my signed copies of the Covenant and my initialed copy of the Compact, as I recall, and I don't think I gave them much else.
- Willens: At the third session of negotiations in December 1973, the United States delivered a draft Covenant to the Marianas Political Status Commission. What do you remember about the inter-agency efforts to prepare that draft document?
- Wilson: Frankly not much. I think it was Tom Johnson who was one of the principal drafters, along with a guy by the name of Emmitt O'Neill who was with Interior. We had somebody from the Legal Advisor's Office and the General Counsel's Office in the Defense Department, and who it was I just don't know.
- Willens: At one point Harry Almond authored a lot of memos.
- Wilson: It may have been Harry.
- Willens: He's one of the few people who has refused to be interviewed.
- Wilson: Oh, really?
- Willens: I don't know that this is a particularly sensitive issue, but was it your hope that the draft Covenant would provide the basic vehicle then for the Commission to review and, with such amendments as appropriate, sign up to?
- Wilson: Yes. It was a basis for discussion along the way, and hopefully it would form the framework for the final thing.

- Willens: What is your recollection now as to how that unfolded?
- Wilson: You'll remember this probably better than I. It seems to me we tabled our draft and you all came back with a counter-draft, which is par for the course.
- Willens: Do you recall what your reaction and Haydn Williams' reaction were?
- Wilson: Not specifically. It was not unanticipated, let's put it that way.
- Willens: I don't think it was unanticipated. There was some suggestion that it was unanticipated and that it breached all kinds of solemn agreements and undertakings. But after the initial exchange of views on this, things settled down into where you and I would have thought they would have settled down months earlier.
- Wilson: That's right.
- Willens: Also at this third round in December the United States put forth its proposal on financial support for the first time, \$11.5 million plus \$3 million in federal programs. This figure was very close, as I understand it, to the maximum authorized under the instructions, which as I recall say \$12 million. Do you recall any discussion internally on your side as to how best to achieve agreement here?
- Wilson: I'm sure there must have been discussion on it, but what the details were I haven't the foggiest at this stage.
- Willens: There also was some discussion at this point about the military land requirements. This is where the United States decided to adopt one of the fallback positions and leave one-third of the island under civilian control on Tinian. As I recall, that eliminated the need to relocate the village. What was your sense at the time as to the reaction of the Commission and the Tinian residents? Did you think that eliminating the need to relocate was advantageous to securing agreement, or did you hear people say they wanted the new village and that they would have preferred to relocate the village?
- Wilson: I have only a vague recollection of this one. I think it was a little of the latter. I do recall vaguely the disappointment that they weren't going to get a new village. But what our reaction to all this was, I just don't know.
- Willens: Where did the idea of the Memorial Park come from?
- Wilson: Damned if I know, to tell you the truth. It probably originated in the Defense Department someplace.
- Willens: I'm not sure. I think it may actually have come from Haydn.
- Wilson: It may have come from Haydn.
- Willens: But it actually turned into a beautiful park. When is the last time you were back on Saipan?
- Wilson: I haven't been back.
- Willens: Since 1975?
- Wilson: That's correct.
- Willens: We'll try to finish here in the next several minutes. I've not provided papers about the fourth and fifth rounds, which included a lot of drafting effort and so forth. What do you remember about the completion about these negotiations on any front—either the political issues, legal issues, economic issues, military land? What do you recall about the joint effort here to bring these negotiations to a conclusion?

- Wilson: You're talking about 1974
- Willens: Yes. There was a spring session in 1974 and then a December round, and there was a lot of drafting over that summer between your people and the Commission's representatives. And then there was a round in December, the fifth round, and it was recessed.
- Wilson: Yes, that's right.
- Willens: Do you have any recollection of the clearance process? When you brought a draft Covenant back to Washington, there were some reservations on a few issues. Do you recall any of the discussions back in Washington?
- Wilson: I don't remember any of the issues that may have held things up on our side.
- Willens: When you and the team returned in February of 1975, it was expected that there would be a signing ceremony shortly thereafter.
- Wilson: Yes.
- Willens: The Commission at that point presented this position that they wanted the Covenant to provide for a bicameral legislature in which the one house would provide equal representation to the three major islands. This initially had been left to the future constitution of the Northern Mariana Islands, so there was some concern on the U.S. side that this might be an unnecessary complication. Do you have any recollection of what your reactions were on the U.S. side?
- Wilson: No. I don't recall the issue, I am frank to say.
- Willens: Well it's now in the courts.
- Wilson: Is it?
- Willens: Again. Do you have any recollection of the lawsuit that was filed the night before the signing of the Covenant?
- Wilson: No. I draw a blank on that one too, I'm sorry to say.
- Willens: Did you have any general reaction to the role of the High Commissioner in the Trust Territory Administration during these two sets of negotiations? Were they briefed by you periodically?
- Wilson: Oh they were briefed all the time, as were the military on Guam. We had to keep Johnston informed and I can't remember who it was now who was on the Navy side of things in Guam, CINCPAC rep, whatever it was.
- Willens: That was principally just a matter of courtesy so they were informed as to where things were at the time?
- Wilson: Yes, that's right. Well of course they both provided logistical support to our operation. It was a very close relationship all the way around on both sides.
- Willens: There are some indications that the Trust Territory people were deliberately kept oriented on their own responsibilities and were not involved in the status negotiations.
- Wilson: I think that's right. But the High Commissioner himself was kept informed as to what was going on. Ditto with the military.
- Willens: Did you think that the Trust Territory administrators, including the High Commissioner, had any particular views about these negotiations, either that they were opposed to the Marianas negotiations, or they thought they were proceeding too rapidly or too slowly?

- Wilson: No I didn't have any sense of that.
- Willens: Were there any other people in the Northern Marianas—District Administrator Frank Ada or others—that you recall dealing with during the time you were working on this matter?
- Wilson: Not offhand, I don't.
- Willens: When it was all drafted and signed and approved on that February 15, what was your overall assessment of the product and the relationship that had been established?
- Wilson: Well I thought we had a pretty good document, frankly.
- Willens: Did you have any responsibilities in dealing with Congress after the signing ceremony and before you left the office?
- Wilson: None.
- Willens: And were you there when Erwin Canham came in as Plebiscite Commissioner?
- Wilson: No. He came in after I departed.
- Willens: Do you know who proposed his name?
- Wilson: Mary Vance Trent.
- Willens: Well she certainly knew him.
- Wilson: That's right.
- Willens: And I gather Haydn may have known him as well.
- Wilson: I think Haydn knew him, yes.
- Willens: So we're trying to find out exactly how that happened.
- Wilson: You've talked to Mary, I gather?
- Willens: Talked to Mary. Had a good interview with Mary. Also interviewed Sue Canham, and took away some materials from her house up there in Cape Cod. Did you have any further contact then either with the Marianas or the Micronesian negotiations after you left?
- Wilson: No.
- Willens: What was your next assignment then, and how long did you remain with the Department?
- Wilson: My next assignment was a little curious, because I took the job of becoming the first head of the Office of Human Rights in the State Department. But this was combined with the refugee program in the State Department, and I had no sooner arrived back in the department than we were hit over the head with the evacuation from Vietnam. So I was held up for about two months, sidetracked to being Deputy Director of the Presidential Task Force on Indo-Chinese Refugees.
- Willens: Do you recall any discussion of placing some of them in the Trust Territory?
- Wilson: Oh, yes, considerable. They were actually placed in Guam.
- Willens: Is that where they went?
- Wilson: Yes. Quite a major refugee center in Guam, which we then had to evacuate to the centers here in the United States. But then I went on for two more years as so-called Coordinator for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, a State Department job at the Assistant

Secretary level. Obviously when the Carter Administration came in, they wanted their own guy.

Willens: It was a political appointment?

Wilson: It was political.

Willens: Did it require Senate confirmation?

Wilson: Yes. And right afterwards they changed the title to Assistant Secretary. Still going strong.

Willens: What did you do then?

Wilson: I retired.

Willens: What year was that?

Wilson: I retired in 1978 officially.

Willens: Living happily ever after?

Wilson: Living happily ever after.

Willens: Well thank you very much, Jim.

Wilson: You're very welcome.