

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training  
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

**AMBASSADOR PETER R. ROSENBLATT**

*Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy  
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*Q: This is an interview with Ambassador Peter R. Rosenblatt in his office. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies. I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy.*

*I wonder if you could give me something about your background? Where did you come from? I'm talking about education, where you grew up, and that sort of thing?*

ROSENBLATT: Sure. I was born in New York in 1933, brought up there, went to Riverdale Country School in New York City, Yale College and Yale Law School.

*Q: What did you take in Yale?*

ROSENBLATT: Modern European Diplomatic History. I studied with the great, late Professor Hajo Holborn.

*Q: And then you went to law.*

ROSENBLATT: I went to Yale Law School, and spent three and a half years or so as an Assistant District Attorney of New York County. Then four years with a large New York law firm, and came to Washington in 1966.

*Q: This was during the Johnson administration?*

ROSENBLATT: Right.

*Q: How did you get the job, and what were you doing?*

ROSENBLATT: I got the job through a combination of persistent interviews, and the assistance of a dear old friend of the family named Edwin L. Weisl, Senior, who was a close friend of Johnson's, the Democratic National Committeeman from New York, and who set up some interviews for me with Marvin Watson, who at that time was the appointments secretary to Johnson, and his deputy, Jim Jones, who later became Congressman from Oklahoma and is now chairman of the American Stock Exchange.

*Q: What sort of job did you get?*

ROSENBLATT: Well, originally, after my interview with Messrs. Watson and Jones, they told me that I was being interviewed for a second staff position under Marvin Watson in the appointments secretary's office, which was really, under Johnson, the Chief of Staff position. I was to be, I guess, number two assistant to Marvin with Jim Jones. I was cleared by the FBI in a record ten days, and then they told me that the President had changed his mind about giving Marvin the second position, and Marvin advised me to accept an offer which I had received from AID to be Deputy Assistant General Counsel there, and that he would give me the first opening that he thought suitable for me on the White House staff because he wanted me there. So I said, "Fine." I accepted the job at AID, had a wonderful time there between July 1st and Labor Day of 1966 when I was called out -- first to advance a trip which President Johnson was taking on behalf of a congressional candidate in difficulty in Dayton, Ohio; and then to move immediately from that on to the White House staff assuming that I passed muster with the person for whom I was to work. The advancing job was absolutely fascinating.

*Q: Could you tell a little of the advance...particularly getting ready for Johnson who was known as a very difficult person on trips.*

ROSENBLATT: Well, he was but since I was doing the advancing I wasn't working with him directly. I was working for the advance staff which was a very professional operation in the White House. I recall that the person who was breaking me in there was a gentleman who a year or so later was appointed by Johnson to the District of Columbia Court of Appeals -- whose name I can't remember offhand, but it'll come to me.

*Q: You can fill that in later.*

ROSENBLATT: Right. There was a master advance man who traveled with the President, who coordinated the advance staffs, traveled with the President, and took care of everything, place after place, as the President traveled. When the President got there this guy immediately coordinated with the advance staff that was in place, and he ran everything, and then when it was all over he went with the President to the next place. His name was Marty Underwood. He was a Maryland politician, and I recall specifically one story that kind of typified the whole operation. Dayton involved two different meetings; one was at the Vandalia airport, and the other was downtown. One of the big problems that the advance staff had was getting a crowd estimator. The crowd estimator is the guy who tells the press how many people were present to see the President. It's usually the police chief, sometimes it can be somebody else. In this case, as I recall the story, the police chief was unwilling to act as crowd estimator, and some way had to be found to get him to agree to estimate the crowd, or to find somebody else who would do it. The meeting that the President was to address in Dayton took place in a stadium downtown in the city, and I was assigned to preparing the Vandalia airport reception, which was a very interesting experience in itself. But after that was over I traveled with the entourage to the downtown stadium where Johnson was to address a large number of people. And, by God, when we got to the stadium somebody on behalf of the President announced to the crowd present and the media, that according to Mr. so-and-so, the police chief, it was estimated that there were 100,000 people present in the stadium, and along the streets on the way to the stadium

from the airport. So when this whole thing was over, and we rushed off to the airplanes, everyone was there except Marty Underwood, and there was a great buzz of conversation about how Marty Underwood had managed to get the police chief to make the estimate of the size of the crowd. And finally, the door opens to the little airplane, and Marty Underwood comes in, and everyone at once shouts at him, "How did you get the police chief to make the estimate?" And Marty, with a great flair for the dramatic, stood in the aisle of the airplane and slowly pulled his arms up above his head so that the sleeve of the jacket pulled back away from the cuffs of his shirt, and his cufflinks were missing. Well, of course, what he had indicated by that was that he had cufflinks with the presidential seal on them, and they had evidently gone to the police chief.

*Q: After that introduction to high presidential trafficking, what were you doing in the White House?*

ROSENBLATT: My job was to work for Bob Komer, who had previously been the deputy to Mac Bundy as National Security Adviser to President Johnson. The President had asked Komer to establish his own office, with his own staff, and its purpose was to work with the Washington agencies which were responsible for all U.S. government activities in Vietnam other than main force combat, and to ensure that they worked together. Apparently, before my time, they were working at variance with one another, and the President was extremely dissatisfied with the degree of coordination which they exhibited towards one another. He had the embassy at the other end, which was supposed to be in charge, and then there was MAC/V.

*Q: MAC/V was the military assistance command in Vietnam.*

ROSENBLATT: Yes. That was our military headquarters there. There was some dissatisfaction about the way in which they worked together, and that was later resolved to some extent. Part of the responsibility of our office was to see to that, but the main problem was on the Washington side. State wasn't working very well with Defense, and with AID, although they were part of the same organization, and with...

*Q: DIA, CIA.*

ROSENBLATT: ...and so on. So Bob Komer had just established this office -- I guess about three months before -- and he had in it two exceptionally capable economists who were really more than economists, from the Rand Corporation. One was Charles Cooper, another was Dick Moorstein. Dick had already written a number of books on relevant subjects, and died early, unfortunately. He died sometime in the early '70s. In addition, there was a military officer, an Army colonel, a really exceptionally brilliant Army officer named Colonel Bob Montague; and a very young and extraordinarily capable Foreign Service Officer named Dick Holbrooke. There was a fifth member of the staff, a Foreign Service Officer named John Sylvester, who simply did not get along with Bob Komer, and Bob had taken him out of there, and he wanted a different sort of personality. I'll get to that in a minute. There was also a deputy to Bob Komer, who was a senior Foreign Service

Officer by the name of William Leonhart, who subsequently became ambassador to Yugoslavia.

Q: *And to Tanzania.*

ROSENBLATT: He was ambassador to Tanzania before this assignment. He later became ambassador to Yugoslavia, and then retired after that.

Now, so far as this position was concerned, I of course was being interviewed to fill the position that had previously been occupied by John Sylvester. Of course, I had been recommended to him by Marvin Watson, which I guess was a pretty good recommendation in the White House in those days; and Bob said he was interested in me because I had been a DA.

Q: *District Attorney.*

ROSENBLATT: And he said therefore I wasn't going to fuss, the way Foreign Service officers did, about getting clearances on cables. He found that -- somewhat unjustly -- to be a particularly time consuming preoccupation of Foreign Service officers. He wanted somebody who knew when it really had to be cleared, and when it didn't, and who was prepared to go ahead and do things and not be stopped by form over substance. I guess that was the basis of it, and for whatever reason he liked me, and hired me on the spot. So I started there right after the Labor Day excursion to Dayton.

Q: *I wonder if you could tell me your impression -- the staff's impression -- of Bob Komer? I never worked with him but he had the nickname of "the blowtorch." I mean he was a very powerful person. Could you tell me how he operated as you observed him, and his effectiveness?*

ROSENBLATT: Bob didn't brook fools, and he was quite headstrong, had his opinions about pretty much everything, and really scared away people who could be intimidated by him. People who were not intimidated by him, and who spoke back to him, and expressed their views, and who were intelligent and well-informed and had something to say, got his respect. I think I can say that all of us on his staff enjoyed that kind of relationship with him. Evidently my immediate predecessor did not, but all the rest of us, and successors did have that kind of relationship with him, and got along with him just fine. I think we tended to be his greatest defenders. If all the things that others who didn't get along with him said about him were true, we should have been the first to complain about him. But I think we understood him, and knew him, and knew his strengths and weaknesses.

Q: *Well, I think Bill Leonhart, for example, is known in the Foreign Service as being an extremely bright person, but also difficult to get along with too.*

ROSENBLATT: Well, I will say that he was difficult to get along with, extremely difficult to get along with. I guess I can say openly that I don't think that he was a success as Bob Komer's deputy. And indeed he was the major reason why I left the office when I did,

before the end of the Johnson Administration, at my own initiative. That was after Komer had gone over to take over CORDS, which was the acronym for Civil Operations & Revolutionary Development Support.

*Q: It was the civil affairs program in Vietnam.*

ROSENBLATT: Anyway, that's a separate subject. Leonhart was indeed a very bright man, but a very introverted and peculiar personality.

*Q: He had trouble in Yugoslavia too with his deputy chief of mission.*

ROSENBLATT: I heard about it.

*Q: What about Dick Holbrooke, because he resigned later over Vietnam, and later came back under the Carter administration as Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs. How was he as a youngish officer -- bright youngish officer -- in that environment, and dealing with Vietnam?*

ROSENBLATT: He was by all odds the most colorful personality in our group other than Komer himself. First of all, I'm not sure that I would characterize his resignation from the Foreign Service as a function of his views on Vietnam. I will say that to this day I consider myself a good friend of Dick's, and many of us who became friends in this context, remain very close friends to this day. I think we know each other pretty well, and Dick is an endless source of conversation, as he knows, by the rest of us because of his well-known characteristics. At the point that I met him in 1966, he'd just come back from four years in Vietnam, he was operating as many of the younger people that I got to know at that time tended to do, between the field and the embassy. So that they had access both to the highest level of decision making within Vietnam on our policy there, but they were also in touch with the realities of what was happening in the rice paddies, and the roadways of Vietnam, which was something that the upper echelon lacked. And, therefore, these young people who occupied critical staff and advisory positions were in many respects the most interesting observers of what was happening. Dick had been in that position together with Bob Montague who was also on our staff. Bob had been in various advisory capacities in Vietnam with the military, and they had very strong and clear ideas about what was happening there and what was wrong about the way we were handling things. Dick, because of his unusual personality, had access to almost everybody he wanted in Washington. He was in some demand to begin with because he had this considerable experience in Vietnam, but he took advantage of that as few others I've ever known were able to.

*Q: We were just talking about Holbrooke having access to so many people in Washington.*

ROSENBLATT: I mean he would do things like he arranged regular tennis dates with Maxwell Taylor. That was one of the things that just blew his contemporaries' minds.

*Q: Maxwell Taylor had been ambassador to Vietnam.*

ROSENBLATT: He had been a special representative to Vietnam. He was former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and a major figure in American life in those days. Dick did that with any number of people. He had his own relationships with all of these older men who were fascinated by Dick because of his experience and personality, and the fact that he had a distinct set of views about lots of different things. And, therefore, he managed to establish his own personal network of contacts throughout the government. He was on good terms with Bill Bundy who was Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. He was on good terms with a lot of the top people in CIA, including Bill Colby who was then working on our account, and so forth. So he was really quite extraordinary that way. He was the source of all sorts of information for Komer, which was tinged with his own views.

*Q: Trying to get some of the atmosphere at that time in the White House, what was Holbrooke pushing, coming from the field, and obviously what he was saying would have quite an impact within a small group there dealing with civil affairs.*

ROSENBLATT: Komer almost never had staff meetings, which meant that the advice that each of us gave to him was almost always one on one. So I cannot tell you exactly what it was that Dick was pushing with Komer at one time or another. I can only tell you what I understood his views to be, and these could be described more or less as follows, and I think they were views that all of us shared. I, of course, didn't arrive in my job with any particular set of views because I had no experience in Vietnam. But the others who did, shared these views and I, in fairly short order after I'd been there and understood something about what was happening, shared it. It was that the military and civil authorities in Vietnam who were passing on advice to the President and senior officials in Washington, really didn't understand what was going on. I'm not talking now about the main force combat that was going on, but about the areas of life with which my office and its counterparts in Vietnam were dealing; chiefly counterinsurgency, politics and the economy. The whole complex of issues that might have, under different circumstances, produced a stronger and more capable GVN as we called it -- the government of South Vietnam -- able to relieve us of some of the burden of the war in Vietnam, rather than itself becoming a burden.

Let me digress for just a moment to talk about how we came to these views. It came not only from the experience which my colleagues had had in Vietnam -- personal experience -- but it came from an interesting series of contacts which we all maintained with contemporaries of our own, people who were basically in their 20s and 30s, on the staffs of the great men in Vietnam. There were those who served as staff assistants, and other officials in the embassy. Not bureaucratic line jobs, but the kinds of jobs that staff assistants have with direct access to their bosses, and direct access down below, which I've referred to before. People like John Negroponte who was assigned by the embassy, because of his command of the Vietnamese language, to sit in the gallery of the opera house in Saigon where the parliament of the GVN met, and listen to their debates and report back to the embassy. People like Frank Wisner who was a staff assistant to the ambassador, and who from time to time, took field assignments as well. Paul Hare, the same sort of thing.

Lots of others. And then there was a special staff over there, of which you know, which worked for General Lansdale. One of the principal staff members for Lansdale was a gentleman by the name of Dan Ellsberg, and there were quite a few others. They were people who were not tied down in bureaucratic jobs, but had access to everything; who could go anywhere in the country, talk to anybody, and come back with views and reports which would really reflect what was going on. Later on, after the establishment of CORDS, there was an evaluation section of CORDS with a lot of bright, young, military and Foreign Service people. People like David Kenny, and former Army Captain David Pabst, and Mike Cook, who also, had that same freedom from bureaucratic constraint, and who were able to go out into the countryside and talk to people; often in Vietnamese; talk to the military; talk to our civilian people in the provinces; talk to cabinet ministers; talk to major figures in the embassy, and in our military; and come up with assessments. So our people, our staff, were constantly in telephone, cable, and letter contact with these young contemporaries in Vietnam, and getting what we felt was the real story of what was going on insofar as the government of Vietnam was concerned, and what was happening in the field in the counterinsurgency area. We did not, because of our mandate, and because of the composition of our staff, and our assignments, get involved at all in the main force war.

*Q: How did you see our operating within this non-main military action type work. Was it moving in the way that you all thought it should be moving? Or how effective do you think you were? We're talking about at the time, not looking at it...*

ROSENBLATT: I'm talking about a period of two years basically from mid-1966 to mid-1968. That was a particularly critical time in the Vietnam war, and I couldn't say that any of my characterizations of what was happening then would be applicable to that entire two year period. When I first came in mid-1966 we were working on a booklet which came out, I guess, at the end of that year. This is the first time I've thought about that in many years. It was a booklet which was designed basically to persuade the uninitiated that things were really going very well in Vietnam on this front. The front of defeating the Viet Cong in the villages; in building up a democratic political structure in South Vietnam; in building up the economy; and in effect making the Vietnamese capable of handling their internal problems with less, and ultimately no American assistance. The booklet that ultimately emerged from this effort was a sincere effort which had a lot of very interesting, and truthful, facts in it. I think that in the opinion of most of us it was not, however, as a totality, a truthful statement of what was happening; although I'm absolutely convinced that it was put together with the best of goodwill on the part of our seniors who were responsible for it. I think that the reason we felt that way was that we understood that the VC were not being defeated, that so called "Revolutionary Developments" which was the whole procedure which was then being used to protect the Vietnamese civilian population from domination, or terrorism from the VC; that this was at best holding its own, and certainly not turning the tide except in certain areas, and in certain respects. There was greater, or lesser, success in one area or another.

Towards the end of my stay, which encompassed the Tet offensive...

*Q: This was in February 1968.*

ROSENBLATT: That actually started on January 30. I was in Vietnam when that occurred, and I came back with a very distinct impression that the tide had turned militarily in our area, in counterinsurgency. I felt when I left that office, which was I believe in May of 1968 -- incidentally, to go on with Marvin Watson, he then became Postmaster General and I became the Judicial Officer of the Post Office Department for the last months of the Johnson administration. When I left with him, I felt that two utterly divergent, and irreconcilable, events had occurred; which incidentally, Peter Braestrup later wrote about in his book on the Tet Offensive. Peter was then the *Washington Post* correspondent in Saigon. Two things had happened. One was that the VC insurgency had been dealt, what I thought at the time, might have been a decisive defeat. The VC was all but destroyed. The whole infrastructure was pulled out in province after province in South Vietnam. And at the same time we had lost the struggle for American public opinion because of the graphic television displays of the fighting during the Tet Offensive.

*Q: Did you all feel this within your cadre, you might say?*

ROSENBLATT: I think so, yes. It's hard for me to speak for others. I'm not sure what others like Dick, in particular, or Bob Montague would say now; particularly in light of subsequent events. So much has happened, but my recollection of how we all felt at that time was that, yes, we were all pretty well united in that view of what had happened.

*Q: What was your impression of the Vietnamese government in the broader sense while you were there? Did you feel this thing was beyond redemption?*

ROSENBLATT: Not at all. No, I felt that it was in bad shape, and that one of the reasons why it was in such bad shape was because we insisted on taking over so much of its functions and responsibilities. And you just got the impression dealing with Vietnamese government officials, as I did when I was there, that they had sort of abandoned the field, and said, "Okay, you guys want to do this, that, or the other thing, go ahead and do it, and we'll just sit back, let you do it." It was exactly the wrong approach from that standpoint. Our effort should have been to give the Vietnamese more responsibility, not take over from them. But, of course, the answer that we got from our people in the field was that they weren't capable of doing it. I'm not sure that in a wartime situation there's any real answer to that, except maybe a wholly different approach. But we were dealing with people on the American side in Vietnam who were trying to make a policy work that was fundamentally flawed. So they were tinkering with it, and that couldn't work. I mean they were finding ways in which to make this massive American presence somehow not prevent the GVN from working, and you could do it in this area or that, but you couldn't do it overall until you changed the whole policy.

*Q: And when things didn't work, you ended up by stepping in.*

ROSENBLATT: Yes.

*Q: I have to plead guilty. I was Consul General in Saigon from '69 to '70, and that was a time when things weren't being done by the Foreign Ministry, and my office ended up doing it. I mean, all these little things...*

ROSENBLATT: It happened so often, and you can't blame people in a wartime situation from saying, "What the hell, this is important and has to be done. So we'll do it."

*Q: Could you give me a short summary of what you were doing between the time...in the first place, you said you left in '68; was this just a good chance to get out of the situation?*

ROSENBLATT: No, I felt very committed to what I was doing. But in 1967 Bob Komer had left to take over what later became -- well, actually had become -- CORDS. I had worked very closely with a number of people to set up a predecessor organization which was known as OCO, the Office of Civil Operations. Frank Wisner and Len Maynard of AID, and I worked to put that one together. That was a U.S. civilian organization in Vietnam which combined the operations of all of the civil agencies -- U.S. government agencies -- dealing in Vietnam other than the civil operations of the Department of Defense. After about four months we all concluded that that wasn't going to work, and that we needed to include in this operation the civil operations of DOD, including counterinsurgency. So OCO was revised to become CORDS; Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support. Revolutionary Developments was our counterinsurgency operation. So CORDS was then established. It was very difficult to find a way in which to separate that from MAC/V, and still have it coordinate with MAC/V. So it was decided that Bob Komer would leave Washington, go to Saigon, take charge of CORDS, and have the simultaneous titles of ambassador, and deputy to Westmoreland. So he was Westy's deputy, but at the same time he had some separate standing and ran CORDS.

After Bob left and took with him Bob Montague from our staff, the office was taken over by Bill Leonhart. Montague was succeeded as the military man on our staff by Colonel Volney Warner. He later became a four-star general. In any event, after Komer left, I just got the impression Leonhart was totally uninterested in taking any initiative, or doing anything more than he had to. We did not get any instructions as to what we were to do. We were left more or less on our own to do, or not do, as we thought best. I became very much involved in a number of things which I can get into afterwards. But after a while I just felt that I was part of an office whose chief was uninterested in seeing its mission through. After Marvin Watson was appointed Postmaster General, I said to him that I had taken about as much of it as I could, and I wanted out. Not because I disagreed with the President's position on Vietnam, but simply because I was part of an office that wasn't functioning. So he said, "How about coming with me?" And I said, "Fine," and I went with him.

*Q: Did you get any feeling about, when you were in that office, during that time, about President Johnson? Was he pushing on you? Or were you able to operate, if you wanted to operate, Bob Komer, and do your thing. Or were there other pressures on you to do this, or do that?*

ROSENBLATT: Well, when Komer was there he had very distinct views about what we were to do, and not do. He took a very pro-active position. He did not hesitate to knock heads together, as he put it, in the bureaucracy when he thought that was necessary to fulfill the President's mandate of making sure that the agencies worked together. He used his position as special assistant to the President to the outer limits of the bureaucratically possible, and he knew how to do it. I mean, he knew how to get on the telephone and say, the President wants this or that, even though the President had no idea that he was making that telephone call, because he knew that it was consistent with his mandate from the President. So he knew how to play that game. And he had us reach into every crevice of the bureaucracy to get things done. For instance, when the State Department was not producing the right kinds and numbers of Foreign Service officers to take civil operations jobs in Vietnam, Dick Holbrooke and I were dispatched to talk to the State Department about correcting that, and we did. That's the kind of thing that Komer would have us do, that Leonhart didn't have us do. I'm not sure that I can remember a single occasion in which Leonhart ever asked me to do something. What I did, I did more or less on my own with his consent, but it was at my initiative or at Komer's request relayed from Saigon.

*Q: Shall we then move to the next stage of the Micronesian thing? Or was there anything else we might cover that I haven't asked?*

ROSENBLATT: Well, I just want to say that what I was actually involved in, each of us on the staff in Komer's office, were involved in different things. The two guys from Rand, Cooper and Moorstein, were involved largely in economic issues. Montague, and after him Colonel Volney Warner, were involved in coordination between civil and military counterinsurgency. Holbrooke was involved in civil operations, State Department issues and really across the board. I was focused primarily on AID and USIA issues. When I took my first trip to Vietnam, which was in December and January of 1966-'67, I was given a whole list of issues to get involved in which crossed a lot of agency lines. I got involved in port congestion in Saigon.

*Q: This was a tremendous problem.*

ROSENBLATT: It was a terrible problem. I talked to everybody who knew anything about ports there, and I came back with a report which I guess was later adopted to relieve the port congestion. I got involved in the establishment of OCO while I was there, the Office of Civil Operations. And I also got involved in the whole issue of how to deal with the movement of civilian populations which were loosely termed refugees in South Vietnam, and several other things. When I came back I remained particularly interested in the refugee situation because at any given time about 10% of the population of South Vietnam was termed refugees. Sometimes they were permanent, sometimes they were temporary refugees, and that became the focal point of my return there at the end of 1967 when I spent two months in Vietnam studying this issue, and trying to come up with some proposals for Komer to help ensure GVN control of the refugee populations, not simply their relief from want, but their incorporation into the political structure, in keeping the VC out, etc. So I got very much involved in that.

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-- -Tape 1, side B

...and then I got involved in the Tet offensive. I was in Saigon when that happened.

*Q: While you were there -- I'm not really asking for a war story -- but how were the Americans and all of you reacting during this thing, right at the immediate time? Were you sort of trapped in a hotel, or something like that?*

ROSENBLATT: No, I had actually stayed in a wonderful, incredible house whose address was 47 Phan Thanh Gian. It was on the very edge of Saigon, on the eastern edge of the city next to the Bien Hoa bridge. It was a house which had belonged to a mistress of Emperor Bao Dai, and which was taken over by a group of American Foreign Service officers in the mid-sixties. Originally, or at least originally in my recollection, the occupants were Frank Wisner and Paul Hare, whom I've referred to earlier. In late '67 each of them was out in the countryside. Frank Wisner was the senior American advisor in Da La, and Paul was somewhere else -- I've forgotten where. The occupants then were David Kenney and Mike Cook, two distinguished young foreign service officers who were working for Komer's CORDS Evaluation unit which I referred to earlier. When I came to Vietnam the first time in '66-'67, Holbrooke set me up to stay with Len Maynard Deputy Director of the AID Mission in his house on Cong Ly. When I came the second time I stayed at 47 Fun Phan Thanh Gian, which was a whole culture. I mean it was a legendary place.

*Q: I think I went to a New Year's Eve party there two years later.*

ROSENBLATT: We gave the first New Year's Eve party in 1967-68.

*Q: Was it called the Light at the End of the Tunnel?*

ROSENBLATT: It was the Light at the End of the Tunnel.

*Q: I went to Light at the End of the Tunnel number three.*

ROSENBLATT: Right. That's what it was. I was one of the co-hosts of Light at the end of the Tunnel number one, and the principal guest was Bob Komer, who, because he was known as the blowtorch, arrived in an orange fire repellant navy outfit. In any event, this place could be the subject of a book in itself but I was in 47 Phan Thanh Gian, as a resident, at the time of the Tet offensive at the end of that month. I recall very distinctly having been out the evening before, viewing the Tet festivities in Saigon, and having been warned by the MPs that something was likely to break that night or the next day, and to get indoors. So my house mates and I came back to the house, and I guess it was about 1:30 in the morning I began to hear the fireworks. We got up, Mike Cook, Dave Kenney, and I, and we looked outside our house -- we had a house surrounded by a garden and a wall -- we looked outside, and by God if we didn't see a number of rather startling things. We could see the Bien Hoa bridge, but we saw that there were North Vietnamese troops coming from the

Bien Hoa bridge and past our house, and some of them stopped in front of the house and set up a machine gun, fortunately pointed away from us. So there we were inside the house. We had some ancient weapons which no one in our house had ever used, some carbines and pistols, and odd bits of ammunition. We loaded up our weapons as best we could and stood around the rest of that night. Fortunately, no one ever tried to break into the house. I discovered when I came back to Washington, incidentally, that the local VC intelligence headquarters was in a shop across the street from our house. So obviously they knew who was in the house, and clearly had higher priority targets, fortunately. The next morning our part of Saigon was cleared of VC and NVA troops by the ARVN.

*Q: Army of the Republic of Vietnam.*

ROSENBLATT: Right, not by our troops. Our troops didn't arrive until about three days later, at least in our part of town. So I think we owe our lives to the ARVN troops who cleared the NVA out of there. The immediate target in our neighborhood was the radio station which was two blocks from our house. The NVA captured the radio station during the night, and the next morning the ARVN laid siege to it and we were able to see, I guess at about 9:00 or 10:00 in the morning, the radio station go up in flames as ARVN troops went in and cleared it. I had some interesting opportunities to view the fighting over the next several days in Saigon, Gia Dinh suburbs and Cholon and then left about ten days later -- I think it was February 10th, to be exact, that I left.

*Q: Your feeling, when you left and before you got back, was that the Viet Cong and all gave it a shot, and they lost.*

ROSENBLATT: I had not personally seen the NVA cross the bridge and go down Phan Thanh Gian, our street. But I heard from people who were next door and who lived in a high rise, and who could see the whole thing happen, that the NVA troops banged on the doors in Phan Thanh Gian and the neighboring streets, and hollered and yelled for the Vietnamese to come out, telling them that they were being liberated, and no one came out. And those who saw this said the NVA troops were obviously very puzzled, because they had expected that everyone was going to come rushing out and welcome them as liberators. It was clear from all the reports that I heard, and what I saw, that the NVA and VC had suffered a tremendous military defeat. Their losses were stupendous. Their whole infrastructure was exposed and uprooted. Of course, I didn't realize what was going on over here while this was happening.

*Q: You have to be here to see it. At the end of the Johnson administration you were with the post office, and then you didn't come back until sometime later for the Micronesian negotiations. What were you doing in between?*

ROSENBLATT: I went with Marvin to the Post Office Department at a time when, you will recall, the Post Office Department was the political headquarters of the party in power. But this was after Johnson had indicated that he was not going to run. So I worked with Marvin there on a number of issues as his Judicial Officer and Chairman of the Department's Board of Contract Appeals. I guess most of what I did really had to do with

postal matters, which are not of outstanding concern. Marvin was working on the idea of setting up an independent postal corporation which he initially opposed but then supported, and which is Today's Postal service. I was still in office when Nixon took office, January 20, 1969. His Postmaster General, Blount, asked me to stay on, and I said that I really didn't want to and that I thought it appropriate that I should leave. So we agreed that we would each be free, he to get rid of me, and I to leave, on appropriate notice to the other.

So I guess it was June or July of 1969 I left there and participated with a couple of other refugees from the Johnson Administration, Sanford D. Greenberg, and Orville Freeman, in establishing a little company that was in the computer software field. Unfortunately, while that little company was very well financed, and set up, its whole future was based on the idea that there would be a public offering for the stock of the company, and the public markets for those kinds of stocks collapsed at about the time we had set up our company. So it was a struggle to keep it alive for a couple of years. We did, it's now a major corporation listed on the New York Stock Exchange. It did survive due to Sandy Greenberg's hard work, skill and resourcefulness, but then I left in 1971.

I became actively involved in the presidential campaign of Ed Muskie. I did that, even though as a result -- I should add that while I was in the Postal Service one of the things Marvin Watson asked me to do was to attend the famous 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago. I did that with Marvin as a kind of representative of the President there. That's a whole other issue, but as a result of my experiences in that convention, and seeing what was happening with the anti-war movement, and all the rest of it, I could see the Democratic Party literally falling apart into its anti-war, New Politics wing, and its more traditional wing. I was heart and soul a part of its traditional wing, and utterly opposed to the New Politics group, which later became symbolized by McGovern in 1972. Some of my friends and colleagues felt that the best person to support, to resist this wave, was Henry M. "Scoop" Jackson. I was a great admirer of Scoop Jackson, but I didn't feel...

*Q: He was a Senator from the state of Washington.*

ROSENBLATT: Yes, in 1970-'71 I didn't feel that Scoop had a real shot at getting the nomination. I thought the better chance of resisting the extremism in the Democratic Party was through Senator Edmund S. Muskie of Maine, and I therefore supported him. Although I must say that my views were very much more in accord with Scoop Jackson. I worked on Muskie's campaign, acting as his liaison with the Jewish community, and advising him on foreign policy as well. Together with Tony Lake, who was a full time employee of the campaign -- I was there as a volunteer -- we advanced the one trip that Muskie took abroad before his campaign got started, to Israel, Egypt, Soviet Union, and Germany. The Miami Democratic convention, which I also attended for Muskie, nominated McGovern and I thought the convention was an utter zoo. I mean it was bizarre, it brought out every freak in American politics. It was really a disgusting experience. I felt that it was essential that some of us who felt as I did, should come together and try to work to put sense in the Democratic Party. After the election was over, I participated with a number of political leaders of that persuasion. We established an organization called Coalition for a Democratic Majority. Some of the participants in that were Ben

Wattenberg, who has been the chairman of it since the beginning; Jeane Kirkpatrick, who later served in the Reagan Administration; Eugene Rostow, who also served in the Reagan Administration; Norman Podhoretz, and quite a number of others. We worked, as best we could, to argue against what was known as the New Politics wing of the Democratic Party, which, as I said, was symbolized by McGovern. We worked with organized labor, which had been all but excluded from the party by the McGovernites in 1972. And we did the best we could. We did not succeed very well, and around 1975 we, just about all of us, decided to throw in our lot with Scoop Jackson. We worked for him wholeheartedly, really without reservation. When, after the Pennsylvania primary in 1976, he dropped out; he reached an understanding with Jimmy Carter, who was obviously going to be the nominee, and made all of us feel fairly comfortable with supporting Carter, although we had lots of reservations about him. After Carter won the presidency in 1976, we felt that as supporters of Scoop Jackson, whom Scoop had loyally and faithfully brought into line behind Carter, and who supported Carter during the general election, that we had a right to offer our suggestions to the Carter Administration on who should be appointed to positions, particularly in the national security field in which we were primarily interested. We did offer such a list to the Carter transition people, and it didn't take us very long to discover that anyone that was on that list, was on a black list so far as the Carter Administration was concerned. I saw Senator Jackson, I guess about a week after the election, and I found him somewhere between frustration and despair in his relations with Carter. He was complaining that he wasn't even able to get an appointment for an interview for a young black candidate that he had for a middle level position of some kind in the government; and that this is how it was going. Well, it became clear very rapidly that our list was the route to oblivion for anyone that wanted to serve in the Carter Administration. And it became clear that the people that were being asked to staff the State Department under Secretary Vance, were people who were for lack of another word, McGovernites. I mean there was no one there in a senior position who shared our views, and no one was being appointed to any position in the Carter Administration that shared Scoop Jackson's views, or that was in any way identified with him.

*Q: Looking at this for people who might not be familiar, you represented more the right wing of a fairly liberal party, as opposed...*

ROSENBLATT: No, not the right wing. Nobody could accuse Scoop Jackson of being on the right. He was as liberal as the next man where it came to domestic policy, but he sure was hardline where it came to national defense, and foreign policy. He supported a strong national defense. He utterly opposed the McGovernite proposal of 1972 to reduce defense expenditures by 25%, and proposals of that type. And he was also in favor of an assertive U.S. foreign policy, as distinguished from the McGovern's slogan of "Come Home America" and his call to come home from our overseas commitments, etc. So, where it came to domestic policy, I think we were in the mainstream of Democratic thinking. We very specifically opposed racial quotas in allocation of jobs, and things of that sort, we came out strongly against that. Otherwise we were very much in tune with Democratic thinking, but we were totally divorced from the thinking of McGovern, and as it turned out, Carter and Vance -- at least in the early years of the Carter Administration, on foreign and defense issues.

Anyway, to get to my own experiences, it was clear that I could anticipate being kept out of the Carter Administration, although I was very anxious to serve in it to influence the evolution of its policies. In about May or June of 1977 I was in New York on some legal business -- I should add that after I left this little software company, I set up my own law office and I practiced law by myself in Washington. I was in New York when I received a call from Dick Holbrooke, who at that time was Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, and who was working with Matthew Nimetz, who was another colleague of ours in the Johnson White House, and who at that time was Counselor of the State Department. Dick asked me if I would consider taking over the Micronesian Status negotiations. It didn't take me very long to discover what the motivation was there. The Micronesian negotiations had begun in 1970, had collapsed in 1976, and were under the oversight jurisdiction of the Senate Energy Committee, rather than the Foreign Relations Committee. Scoop Jackson was the Chairman of the Senate Energy Committee which had oversight responsibility for Interior.

*Q: This was the Department of Interior, therefore it got into the Micronesia.*

ROSENBLATT: Well, actually a separate office, separate from the Interior Department, had been set up in 1970 under what turned out to be my predecessor, F. Haydn Williams. It was an inter-agency office staffed and financed by the three agencies that were chiefly concerned with the Micronesia Status Negotiations -- Interior, Defense and State. As it turned out, that office was in many respects a replica of the office that Holbrooke and I had served in under Komer in the White House. It was a White House office, it was inter-agency, etc. So Holbrooke and Nimetz, who were good friends from the Johnson White House, had figured that somebody had better run this office that had Scoop Jackson's confidence. And nobody in the State Department, or almost anywhere else in the administration, did. I wasn't exactly sure how I felt about this, so I went and talked to Scoop about it, and he encouraged me strongly to take it. He was very much involved in Micronesian affairs. He was completely informed on what was going on, and thought that it would be a wonderful idea if I took this job, understanding as we both did, what the state of his relationship was with the administration. It had, I should add, gone from bad to worse between the time of the election, where I last referred to him in this account, and May or June, when I was asked to do this job.

*Q: Just to give a little feel for this; I mean here are two democrats, the Carter administration comes in, obviously a powerful Senator, it doesn't take an awful lot to make a Senator happy; I mean we call this diplomacy in the treasurer. Why did something like this happen? Why in the broader sense? I mean why do you all of a sudden find a White House slamming doors that don't have to be slammed?*

ROSENBLATT: It is one of the greatest mysteries of the Carter administration. It's one which in subsequent years I've tried to get answers for. During the 1984 election campaign Ben Wattenberg, Penn Kemble and I went to see Carter's Vice President, Mondale, on behalf of Coalition for a Democratic Majority. At that point, in 1984, he was our presidential candidate. We asked him as part of an interview how he accounted for this.

"Well," he said, "it was all Vance who was responsible for it." I don't know whether that's so or not. I suppose there's good enough reason to believe that it might be so. Vance was not a good politician. He had very strong views on foreign policy which were very much in accord with the sort of McGovernite approach. He apparently laid down the law that nobody that could possibly have had Scoop Jackson's confidence would be taken into the State Department. It was really foreign policy issues more than anything else that divided Scoop Jackson from Carter during the Carter Administration. He was not as discontented with the way in which the Defense Department was being run by Harold Brown. He was number two in the Senate Arms Services Committee after Stennis, as a practical matter he was really running the committee.

*Q: Stennis was getting old.*

ROSENBLATT: Stennis was very old already at that time. You will recall, for instance, that Scoop Jackson was the leader of the nearly successful effort to deny Paul Warnke confirmation as director of the State Department's Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. It was a very close vote; it would have been absolutely unprecedented if he had managed to pull that one off. But he got very close. This was on diplomatic issues. It was not on defense issues, really. And his major problem was with the State Department. So it would have been easy to establish a Carter Administration foreign policy that would have had the strong support of Jackson, as well as the left of the Democratic Party. But there was a deliberate decision on the part of the Carter Administration not to do that, and to put Scoop Jackson out in the cold.

*Q: Shooting your toe off.*

ROSENBLATT: Oh, absolutely, absolutely. I've talked to Stu Eizenstat, who was in charge of domestic policy in the White House under Carter. He tried to argue strongly against this policy of excluding Scoop and his people. Some others probably did. But I guess it was probably the Georgia mafia -- other than Eizenstat -- that supported Vance in doing this to Scoop. In any event, the offer was made to me, and after talking it over with some of my good friends, I decided to take it, and I've never had a regret about it since.

*Q: I wonder if you could tell me, in the first place, when we talk about Micronesians, could you say what this involved? And then what was the state of it when you arrived in 1977.*

ROSENBLATT: Well, it was in total chaos. First of all, when we talk about Micronesia, we're talking about those islands which we had seized from the Japanese during the Second World War, and kept. We, of course, liberated a number of islands such as the Solomons, etc., which we didn't keep. The Micronesian islands were part of the League of Nations mandate which the Japanese had acquired at the end of the First World War from the Germans. The Germans had acquired them over a period of time in the 1880s-1890s from Spain with the acquiescence of Britain. The Germans had organized them, for the first time, into some sort of meaningful whole with an economy of their own. The Japanese took them over, and after an initial period of more or less benign governments began fortifying them and filling them up with colonists from Japan, so that they became tremendously

productive. They were sort of agricultural colonies and military outposts, but at the end of the Second World War, the U.S. had expelled all of the Japanese colonists, and these islands were for the most part an economic social, and economic shambles. They had to be reconstructed in many cases. There had been terrible fighting on some of them like Majuro and Peleliu, Eniwetok, and Kwajalein in the Marshals. Half of the Japanese navy was at the bottom of the Truk lagoon, etc. We took it over as the only one of the United Nations trusteeships set up at the end of the Second World War called a strategic trusteeship. That put it in a slightly different category than all the others. There were eleven trusteeships in all, and by the time I came to this job in 1977, all but ours had been terminated. So the U.S. government felt a good deal of pressure to terminate its trusteeship as well; but to do so on terms which safeguarded U.S. national security interests.

Interestingly enough, Scoop Jackson was not only the chairman of the Senate Energy Committee that had oversight responsibility for the Trust Territory, but he was also there at the creation, so to speak. As a member of the House in 1947 he was involved in fashioning the trusteeship agreement between the U.S. and the UN and he remembered exactly what the thinking was at the time. He was absolutely adamant that the U.S. agreed to trusteeship only upon the condition that it become this new kind of strategic trusteeship so that we would have control over the strategic use of those islands forever.

*Q: When we talk strategic, basically we're saying military.*

ROSENBLATT: Yes. The U.S. felt that the islands in unfriendly hands represented a strategic threat to the United States. The occupation of those islands by the Japanese certainly was. No hostile power should ever again be permitted to take over those islands. Scoop had no ambition for us to govern them forever. Rather, what it came down to was one of the major topics of my later negotiations; the so-called doctrine of strategic denial. Scoop and his colleagues in the Senate were absolutely adamant that no matter what agreement we reached with the Micronesians for their future, we must incorporate into it a guarantee of perpetual denial of access to the land, air and waters of Micronesia to the military forces of any third country without our consent. That became one of the principal elements in the negotiations and it is, in fact, incorporated into the agreement which emerged from them.

In any event, the Nixon Administration had set up...

*Q: The Nixon administration being basically from '69 to '74.*

ROSENBLATT: The Nixon Administration, deciding that an end had to be made of this Trusteeship; first tried to get the Micronesians, through their elected representative body, the Congress of Micronesia, to agree to territorial status of some kind within the United States. They rejected that outright, and agreement was therefore reached around 1971 to commence negotiation of a status called free association. Now free association is a status which is recognized in international law, and which lies in some undefined place between territorial status and full independence, but is neither one. The negotiations began in 1971. By 1972 it became clear that one of the island groups in the Trust Territory, which

included, the Marshals, the Carolines, and the Northern Marianas; one of those groups, the Northern Mariana Islands, decided that it did not want to go along with the Carolines and the Marshals in the negotiation of their future political status, and wanted commonwealth status in the United States rather than free association status. So in 1972 the negotiations were separated. The Northern Marianas were permitted to negotiate commonwealth status in the United States, while the others simultaneously negotiated for free association with the United States.

My predecessor, Haydn Williams, was responsible for both sets of negotiations, and by 1975 had reached agreement with the Northern Marianas on their status. He signed with them something called the Commonwealth Covenant. And at the same time he reached an incomplete so-called Compact of Free Association with a negotiating commission which had been appointed by the elected Congress of Micronesia, representing the six other administrative districts in the Marshalls and the Carolines. There were a number of items missing in the Compact of Free Association and, as later events demonstrated, it was clear that the kind of free association which Haydn, and the Nixon and Ford Administrations envisioned, was not satisfactory to the Micronesians. But as very much the weaker party in the negotiations, they had to adopt a strategy in dealing with this form of free association, which they felt was being pushed on them, commensurate with their lack of negotiating leverage. So they initialed this incomplete Compact of Free Association that had left out a couple of important areas for later resolution. The day after the Compact was initialed the entire Micronesian negotiating commission resigned. Once its members had resigned, they tended to denounce the Compact which they had initialed. Haydn apparently saw the handwriting on the wall and himself resigned.

Shortly thereafter the U.S. Senate held some hearings which disclosed that the U.S. side in the Micronesian Status Negotiations had bugged the Micronesian negotiators -- recorded their internal conversations. This was brought out...

*Q: How did this come about?*

ROSENBLATT: I don't know, and I didn't want to know. When I came into office, and my staff brought me papers and stuff having to do with all of this, I told them to go take it away and stuff it. I wasn't interested in anything that was in there. I didn't want to be responsible for having read any of it. I didn't want to know about it. I didn't want to know who had initiated it. We were just starting over again. I felt that any negotiator worth his salt is going to know what the other side wants without having to listen to bugs.

*Q: This is before your time, when this knowledge became public, is that right?*

ROSENBLATT: Yes, it became public sometime during 1976.

*Q: This must have had a tremendous impact on those involved.*

ROSENBLATT: Oh, absolutely. It was devastating to the Micronesians. This together with the resignation of their negotiating commission just blew the negotiations sky high.

So by the time Carter came in there really wasn't anything there. In addition, the excellent office which my predecessor had built up, which was called the Office for Micronesian Status Negotiations -- OMSN -- this inter-agency office, had all but dissolved. When I came in, there was no one left there except for Phil Manhard, a Foreign Service Officer who had been Haydn Williams' deputy and was acting in his place during the interim. I really had to start all over again.

*Q: I just want to put on the tape my last thing. I wanted to ask who was running Micronesia -- what was their actual administrative status?*

ROSENBLATT: That's very interesting. There was a whole administrative substructure for Micronesia. You'll recall that because Micronesia was a Trust Territory, it was not sovereign U.S. territory. The U.S. administered Micronesia by virtue of the Trusteeship Agreement with the United Nations. We had plenary authority in every field, although we had to report to the United Nations Trusteeship Council once a year on our stewardship. Although it was not sovereign U.S. territory, it was considered to be in the same category as our "flag" territories so far as our constitutional procedures were concerned. Under our Constitution it's the Congress, not the Executive Branch, that has control over territories. But the Congress has the right to delegate authority to the Executive Branch for administration since obviously Congress is not set up to administer territories. And it did so; first to the Navy, and subsequently to the Department of the Interior. The Department of the Interior in turn delegated a fair amount of its authority to the so-called High Commissioner, who was appointed by the President, confirmed by the Senate, and was the, in effect, governor of the Trust Territory with headquarters in Saipan, in the Marianas. There was also an office in Interior known as the Office of Territorial Affairs -- OTA -- whose head was comparable to an assistant secretary of the Interior. This official who was responsible for discharging the Interior Department's responsibilities towards the Trust Territory and the so-called flag territories -- the other insular territories that were sovereign U.S. territory. The High Commissioner and the Director of OTA were responsible for administering the Trust Territory, but I was responsible for negotiating and working out its future political destiny. As it happened the director of the Office of Territorial Affairs and the High Commissioner, had one set of ideas about the future of the Trust Territory and I had another. I was working under negotiating instructions signed by the President. The conflict was built in, and the next time we talk we can talk about that.

-- -end tape 1, side B

-- -Tape 2, Side A.

*Q: Today is July 24th, 1991. This is tape 2 of an interview with Ambassador Peter R. Rosenblatt.*

*The last time we were talking, we were just entering the negotiations. You had given some of the background, but you mentioned that as you went in, that Interior and others on the American side had their priorities, and you had your instructions through the presidential process. I wonder if you would explain the problem of American negotiating with everybody in the act.*

ROSENBLATT: I have often said, in those days and since, that I spent a great deal more time and energy negotiating within the U.S. government than I did with the Micronesians, even though there were three separate Micronesian parties, and that was kind of a circus. But, yes, Interior did have different objectives, and a different approach, and it went back, I suppose, to two factors. First of all, Interior had a certain institutional resistance to accepting the feasibility of status negotiations with the Trust Territory, and to ending the Trusteeship. There were a lot of jobs at stake. As I recall it, the Trust Territory government directly employed something like 600 people, a fair number of whom were Americans. The Office of Territorial Affairs back in Washington also had a stake in the continuation of the trusteeship. But I don't want to overdo that. People at Interior were civil servants who took orders. When they were told that the trusteeship was ultimately to end, they accepted that. The major reason, we had difficulties with Interior was one Philip Burton, a very powerful congressman from San Francisco, who had turned himself into the czar of territorial affairs in the House of Representatives. He was number two, as I recall it, in seniority in the House Interior Committee; and he was chairman of a peculiar sub-committee that combined under its aegis national parks, which are a major pork barrel item, and therefore confer a great authority on the chairman, and territorial affairs. Now, Congressman Burton, in addition to having the authority that came with being the chairman of this sub-committee, was otherwise a very powerful figure in the House. Before I met him, he had just lost -- I think it was in 1976 -- the House majority leadership to Jim Wright by one vote. He was obviously not very pleased about that. He had a rather jaundiced view of the world. He was pretty far on the left in the Democratic Party. He was in absolute control of the congressional reapportionment process in California through his allies in the California legislature. He set up a system in his subcommittee which went something like this. That portion of the sub-committee's activities which related to the territories was of no political interest to any committee members other than the territorial delegates who were members of the subcommittee and two very conservative California Republican members of the subcommittee happened to emerge as the chief spokesmen of the Republican subcommittee members on territorial issues. I leave it to those who listen to this tape to conjecture as to why two conservative Republicans from California, a state in which Burton controlled the reapportionment process, emerged as the territorial spokesmen for the Republicans. The Republicans no political stake in territorial affairs, and these two men were both willing. Consequently, Burton was able to do what he wanted to do with the territories under an umbrella of bipartisanship which he was careful to trot out in every meeting that I had with him. At every meeting I had with him in Washington he had present other members of the sub-committee. Usually they were Congressmen Clausen and Lagomarsino, the two Republicans from California, and Congressional Delegate Tony Won Pat, of Guam, who was a fairly senior Democrat. With those people present, several times during the course of every meeting he would turn to them and ask for their assent to what he was saying which they invariably gave. They said very little in the meetings, and hardly ever spoke unless called upon by Burton. He would make a demonstrative show in this way of bipartisanship in talking to me.

In fact, Chairman Burton had ideas about the future of the Trust Territory which were at total variance with the administration's conception; which had been cobbled together

before my appointment. You will recall that I was sworn in on August 23, 1977. The administration came in January 20th of that year, and in between had formed a Micronesia inter-agency group under the chairmanship of Matthew Nimetz who at the time was Counselor of the State Department, with the approval and support of Dick Holbrooke, who was the Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. Those are the two men who, I think, were the most responsible for bringing me into the position because they had both been colleagues of mine in the White House under Johnson. The inter-agency group had held several meetings with the Micronesians, and had conducted its own internal dialogue and come up with an approach which was put in the form of a presidential directive had been completed by my arrival. I did not participate in putting it together. I found myself in substantial accord with it, I had no complaint about it at all, and it left plenty of wiggle room. In fact, I believe that the Compact that we ultimately turned out to be somewhat different from the conception held by the framers of the presidential directive when they did so.

In any event, the idea of the presidential directive was that the free association, which we were going to offer the Micronesians, was going to be genuine free association, and not a disguised form of territorial status. It was also clear that the intention of the administration was to give the aid which was to go to the new Micronesian government or governments in the form of cash. That is, that the U.S. economic assistance would come in the form of cash, rather than in the form of federal programs, and that with the cash the Micronesians would be enabled to establish their own priorities, and decide how to run their own lives. Burton's approach was fundamentally opposed to this. Burton intended that the U.S. would maintain effective control over almost all aspects of Micronesian life under a new Compact of Free Association, by administering most of our economic assistance in the form of federal programs. Federal programs are subject to annual congressional appropriations, and therefore to the control of the committees that are responsible for them. In other words, Burton wanted to see a Compact of Free Association which would perpetuate his control of the Trust Territory.

*Q: To get a little of motivation on these things. Did he use this trustee business to go out and do a lot of trips, and all that? Or was this really a matter of having power within Washington?*

ROSENBLATT: This was ego. It wasn't power in Washington because control over territorial affairs doesn't confer power in Washington. Yes, he took very occasional trips. He went to the Trust Territory not once during the four years that I was in office -- nearly four years. And, in fact, there were some incidents during his last trip that made it unlikely that he would go again. He did go to Hawaii every winter, for the winter congressional break, but I'm sure he would have done that even if he had nothing to do with territorial affairs. He did it, as far as I know, at his own cost and expense.

*Q: So we're talking about...*

ROSENBLATT: We're talking about ego. This was a man who thought of himself as the most important person in Washington on territorial affairs. He received constant

delegations of people from the various territories, not just the Trust Territory, but Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Marianas, the Virgin Islands, even Puerto Rico, which is a Commonwealth. I don't want to get into psychoanalysis. Suffice it to say, without getting into the question of just why he got gratification out of this. It was very clear -- very, very clear -- that he did, and that he felt that it was important as a policy matter, for him to continue to have control over territorial affairs. He said to me, time and time again, that the people in the territories were not capable of managing their own affairs. If they did they would fall into the hands of corrupt and manipulative Americans, Japanese, and others; and that he was the thin red line that separated them from fiscal and other forms of disaster.

*Q: Did you know in this initial time as you were getting there...I mean, one of the things to the outsiders seeing this fairly apparent is, that the Carter administration had a poor understanding of Washington. I'm talking about the White House, and its connection to Congress, and how to placate, to get people on their side. Did you find this? Because I would think you would be between these two centers of power.*

ROSENBLATT: It's a good question. Unquestionably, unquestionably. I assure you that not a single meeting with Burton went by without his complaining about how terrible the Carter Administration was, how inept it was in its dealings with Congress, and all the rest of it. Yes, I was certainly in a sense being ground between the administration and Burton. But I will say two things on that: first of all, I did not complain, and do not now complain about having been in that position. I think that I was on the historically right side of this dialogue with Burton. I know that the kind of free association relationship envisioned by Burton would never a) have been accepted by the Micronesians, and b) worked if they had been forced to accept it. I know that the only chance there was of maintaining a good relationship with the Micronesians, which was important to us, was to make them substantially independent, and to make their independence meaningful by giving them the means for a shot at economic development. So I have no doubt that the administration was on the right side of this issue. I know, furthermore, that if things had worked out the way Burton wanted them to, and if through some miracle it had been accepted by the representatives of peoples of the Trust Territory there was no good reason to expect that that would have worked out well. [The way in which the same committee has handled itself in the years since Burton's departure, demonstrates clearly to me that they are the wrong people for the people of the then Trust Territory to have to go back to for their annual subsistence.]

*Q: But Burton raised something that to the outsider could be considered a valid point, and that is these people really could be taken advantage of by others. One has the feeling of relatively unsophisticated, a lot of sharp traders out there. I would think at a certain point you'd have to satisfy yourself how they would deal with this.*

ROSENBLATT: Burton was absolutely right in certain respects. These people are prey to sharp dealers. There are any number of disreputable types who have been through there in the ten years since we initialed the Compact of Free Association. But that's all part of the process of becoming independent, and learning how to handle oneself in the world. It's just something that has to be put up with and understood as a phase, hopefully a short one, in

the national life of new states, and it's not a sufficient reason to deny them genuine authority over their own affairs. What we did try to do, was to set the Compact up in such a way that, with their knowledge and consent, we maintained sufficient rights of an auditing and other such character, as to minimize the chances of this happening.

One of the things that I'm rather disappointed about in the administrations that succeeded Carter's, is that those policing mechanisms have not been used to the extent that they might have been. That is something that may still be done in the future though.

Let me add a couple of other points along the lines that we've been discussing. First of all I want to say, I was certainly a willing participant in this conflict between the administration and Burton. In my opinion, the conflict between Burton and the administration on this subject was inevitable, and that I know of no way in which it could have been avoided other than by complete acquiescence to Burton's views. The issue had to be confronted, and Burton had to be beaten. And in fact, he was confronted, and he was beaten. One of the things that I think upset him the most in dealing with all of this, is that nobody had ever taken him on before on a territorial matter and beaten him -- no administration of either party. I think that was just inevitable and necessary, and it was done. So I would not take the Carter Administration to task for having handled its congressional relations poorly in this regard. In fact, I think it was done very well. The Carter Administration never backed down in its support of me in dealings with Burton. They supported me to the hilt. That's one thing.

The second thing relates to the conflict between Interior and me -- because of Burton's control over territorial affairs in the House, the Office of Territorial Affairs, in the Interior Department was extremely responsive to Burton.

Q: *Oh, yes, I'm sure.*

ROSENBLATT: Consequently, when Burton expressed dissatisfaction about this and other subjects, he got a very attentive audience at Interior. Moreover, the two people in the administration who were chiefly responsible for the administration of the Trust Territory, as distinguished from my job and working out its future, were a Ruth Van Cleve, who was the Director of the Office of Territorial Affairs, and High Commissioner Adrian Winkle. Adrian got his job as High Commissioner of the Trust Territory, the governor of the Trust Territory, because he had been Phil Burton's administrative assistant on the Hill. So here we had two very liberal people in Interior who may have genuinely shared Burton's philosophical outlook and were certainly very much subject to his influence and control. They tended to subscribe to the Burton view of the future of the Trust Territory. They were in most significant respects non-participants in the implementation of the administration's own policy with respect to the future of the Trust Territory. In fact, I found myself sabotaged by them on a number of occasions. I guess the most generous interpretation of some of the things that Adrian did was that he did them without regard to the impact that they might have on the negotiations. The more cynical interpretation of some of the things that he did was that they were designed specifically to undermine the negotiations.

In the end I found that most of what he was doing that upset me the most involved what I viewed as fiscal irresponsibility. I was always able to get the Office of Management and Budget to back me up on that and pull him in. And if they hadn't done so, along with the rest of the administration, I could not have reached agreement with the Micronesians.

*Q: You'd already talked the last time about this immoral, but also an egregious error of taping of the delegation. But here would seem to be almost a counterpart, where you had somebody who was in our administration involved supposedly in the process -- the High Commissioner. Did you feel that he was telling the Micronesians things? I mean, could you open with him, or did you pretty well have to work on your own?*

ROSENBLATT: No, I was entirely open with him. I had no reason not to open with him. He knew my negotiating instructions. He had a copy of my instructions in his safe, the same as I did. So he knew what I was supposed to be about. He was informed through Interior's participation in the inter-agency group that supported my efforts of what was going on. And I felt the only way to deal with Adrian was to deal with him openly and straightforwardly, and I told him what I was doing as I was doing it. I can't recall any trip that I took to the Trust Territory, except maybe one to Palau in relation to the Palau crisis, which is a different matter; in which I did not stop off and visit him in Saipan, at his headquarters, and discuss with him quite explicitly what I was doing. In fact, I was rather anxious that he know exactly what I was doing, precisely so that he could not plead ignorance of it. I knew from reports that I had from my own staff, and others whose information I trusted, that in fact his headquarters in Saipan was a hotbed of cynicism and opposition to what I was doing. Here, of course, you have the other motivation for opposition that I referred to earlier, of people losing their jobs.

*Q: Before we get to the actual negotiations, I assume you made a good number of trips to the islands. Did this help you by being on the ground? After all, it's very hard to know about what's going on in a remote area like that unless you see what the territory is like, and the people are like. After your initial visits, did you come away with a different attitude perhaps than maybe you had had when you were sitting back looking at this as a lawyer, or a legal problem?*

ROSENBLATT: I never saw it as just a legal problem. I saw it as part of the historical process of decolonization. I also saw it as having a role in our cold war dispositions. These were areas which, after all, we had fought for during the Second World War because they had strategic significance. And while their strategic significance was not as great in the cold war context as it was in the Second World War, there was still a significance that the Defense Department was quite emphatic about. You have to remember that these islands sit firmly astride the lines of communication between Hawaii, which is the headquarters of our Pacific military command, and all of Southeast Asia, Oceania, Australia and New Zealand. We had a number of different strategic motivations, but these were reasonably significant. So I did not go about it really as a lawyer, but rather someone charged with strategic responsibilities.

There were a number of dimensions to the problem. One was to understand just what had happened in U.S. policy during the period after we acquired this territory during the war. The second was to understand the people and their motivations. The third was to understand the motivations and policies of key outside players, particularly the Japanese. And the fourth, and by far the most important, was to try to bring some sort of harmony into the U.S. side. I can't over emphasize how difficult that was, and how much of my time it consumed. And I don't ascribe ill-will to anyone on the U.S. side, with the possible exception of the Interior situation which I have described. There were genuine divergent interests among the various Executive Branch agencies as well as Burton.

*Q: You know the Marxist approach is, everything is motivated by economics. Were there any economic imperatives in these negotiations? Like United Fruit in Central America.*

ROSENBLATT: Oh, no, not that sort of thing. The only economic issue there was, was that -- unlike the administration -- neither Burton in the House, nor Scoop Jackson in the Senate, gave a damn whether we spent ten or a hundred million dollars more or less on the Trust Territory. It really didn't matter. Their interests were elsewhere. They were quite different, but they were elsewhere. I mean Burton's and Jackson's were different, but they were elsewhere. They didn't reside in the economic sphere. Defense, State and Interior were conscious of economic factors, and OMB was always trying to save money, which was, of course, its job. So I very often found myself in a situation where OMB was resisting something out of economic considerations that the others weren't much concerned about. I was concerned because I was permitted under my instructions to spend only a certain amount of money on the Compact of Free Association. And if I felt that agreement was not possible within those limits, I had to go and get more money authorized, which I did.

*Q: You had your instructions, you had your problems on your flanks within the United States, but when you were going over to deal with the Micronesians, what did they want that we didn't want to give them? I mean, as far as you were concerned.*

ROSENBLATT: Oddly enough, it's hard to put a general characterization on things that they wanted that we weren't ready to give them. Let's put it this way: they wanted as much money and as little control from us as possible; and we wanted -- I was concerned about money, and I couldn't give them limitless money, of course, and I made every effort to hold down the cost of this thing...But I had certain strategic objectives that I had to achieve.

*Q: You were talking about the strategic denial was the major...*

ROSENBLATT: Strategic denial was an absolute sine qua non. It was non-negotiable.

*Q: Could you explain once again what the strategic...*

ROSENBLATT: The doctrine of strategic denial meant that the Micronesians would undertake that under no circumstances, and forever, no third party would have the right to station troops in their territory without the consent of the United States. That's it. And that was non-negotiable.

Let me digress for a moment. Scoop Jackson held one hearing in the three and a half years of my incumbency, on what I was doing. It was a general review, a closed hearing which wound up with a ringing declaration from the members of his committee, led by him, that the committee simply would not consider any Compact which omitted a provision for permanent strategic denial.

*Q: Did the Micronesians accept this as a fact of life?*

ROSENBLATT: Yes.

*Q: And I assume from a practical point of view they would just as soon not have to worry about the Japanese coming in, or Russians, or somebody else?*

ROSENBLATT: Well, their negotiating position was that they didn't perceive any threat. In fact, I told them and they understood that this was a sine qua non, and it never really became a major subject of conversation. They would manipulate it, of course, in the context of the negotiations. They'd say, "Well, you want this strategic denial," or "You want this or that in the military area, so we've got to have thus and so in return." They wanted money.

*Q: As you went into this, was there also in the background the idea that maybe this might be a fallback position because of our always troubled existence in the Philippines where we have major bases -- we had major bases at that time.*

ROSENBLATT: The Micronesians thought so. Of course, throughout the period of my incumbency there were noises from the Philippines about some possible termination of our stay at Clark and Subic. So the Micronesians would use that as a means of...

*Q: Clark being the major airbase which we've just said we no longer want because of the volcano within the last month, and Subic being the major naval base.*

ROSENBLATT: Subic Naval Station. Yes, they tried to use that. In fact the possibility of the need for a fall back from the Philippine bases affected only two areas in the Trust Territory. One was the Northern Marianas, which was already off the table, having negotiated its commonwealth arrangement, because of the potential for an air force base on Tinian Island; and the other was Palau in which we had identified five parcels of land in which we had a contingent, but not an active interest, and not all of those parcels of land did we even state we needed contingently for exclusive use. Some of them were for part-time use, and the other areas were very small. The major military facility that we had in the Trust Territory, and still have, is in Kwajalein in the Marshall Islands, which is the end of our missile testing range. Missiles are fired from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California and they splash down in Kwajalein Lagoon. We spent a lot of money in putting together a rather complex facility there which measured the accuracy of our missiles, and so forth, which had absolutely nothing to do with Clark and Subic.

What it really came down to, was a bit of palaver and maneuvering with respect to their areas. And all of this figured into what later became the virtual breakdown of the negotiations with Palau which still hasn't been resolved.

*Q: Each country, or group of people, has their own style of negotiating. The Americans go at it one way. How did you find the Micronesians? Do they have a different negotiating style, would you say?*

ROSENBLATT: They were brilliant negotiators, particularly the Federated States of Micronesia, partially out of necessity, and partially out of choice. Now, let's talk first about the other two.

Palau, when I first came aboard, was dominated politically and economically, by a single individual by the name of Roman Tmetuchl. Roman was a tough, experienced, capable, smart, businessman, and he ran these negotiations the way he would if he were running a business negotiation. He would have his American lawyer present, he would have the members of his commission present at most of our meetings. He produced the members of his commission in order to help him in his internal meetings with them -- to demonstrate parameters of what was possible. Very often he would just have me state the U.S. position which he knew from me so that he would not have to be the one to state it to them. His lawyer was there to argue and negotiate with me, a very capable young man by the name of Stuart Beck from New York. But Roman was always ready to cut a deal. Very often I'd have breakfast with him, or we'd get off in a corner someplace and we'd work things out. He'd tell me to forget about what Beck was saying, and not to worry, we had a deal. He wanted a deal cut as quickly as possible which, of course, conformed with our own desires. And if we'd been negotiating with Palau alone we probably would have had a deal at the end of the first year, or at most two years of negotiation. However, we'd deliberately crafted the structure of the negotiations so that most of the terms had to be agreed to by all three Micronesian parties; what later became the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Marshalls as well.

I should add about Palau that in 1979 Tmetuchl lost his control of the political system there, and that was all part of the crisis with Palau which I would have to describe separately. We had a very different situation there after that.

The Marshall Islands also was dominated by a single individual, Amata Kabua, who is today the President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Kabua was then the chairman of the Marshalls' political status commission, and the members of that commission were duly produced for important meetings for the same reason that all the others produced their commissions in order to obtain internal consensus. Negotiations could be conducted with him directly from time to time, but he was not, except in rare cases, willing to cut deals. I had to deal with Kabua through layers. There was his chief negotiator, Tony deBrum, who incidentally is writing his own book on this subject which will be coming any month from now. And various others whom he advanced for this or that purpose which was part of a deliberate negotiating strategy similar to that which I'll describe in greater detail with respect to the FSM. Then there was the lawyer who represented the Marshallese, a

Washington lawyer by the name of Richard Copaken. Copaken, I believe, was single-handedly responsible for delaying these negotiations much longer than they needed to be delayed. That was because of his propensity for negotiating and litigating every single issue that ever came before us, in infinite detail. The result was that we wound up with a massive document, the Compact of Free Association. Whereas my original objective was to try to produce something in the spirit of the U.S. constitution; that is, something that would deal with concepts and use broad language, and leave it for later practice to work out the way in which it was actually implemented. We could not do that primarily because of Copaken's insistence on nailing absolutely everything down. In fact, the document that we have now is so detailed, and the negotiations that were necessary to produce this document were so extensive, that we produced a degree of understanding about the relationship on the part of all sides which made subsequent misunderstandings less likely. And that's all to the good. On the other hand, the delay that resulted from this form of negotiation, and this type of document, made it impossible for us to conclude the negotiations in the Carter Administration, which meant that we came very close to losing the whole thing when Reagan came in in the early '80s. That was a close call. That was due to the Marshallese.

With respect to the FSM, which I think in many respects is the most interesting.

Q: *FSM is?*

ROSENBLATT: The Federated States of Micronesia. They are a federation of four different island groups in the Caroline Islands. Each of them has its own language, its own culture and its own political leadership. Therefore for the FSM negotiators it was difficult to constantly keep these four different groups of people on board. They created a negotiating commission which was called the Commission on Future Political Status and Transition -- CFPST. It had two different dimensions. One was status negotiations which we were involved in; and the other was transition -- from trusteeship to free association. And there were two different committees under the commission; one dealing with status negotiations, and the other with transition.

-- -end tape 2, side A.

-- -tape 2, side B.

ROSENBLATT: The chairman of the CFPST was a man by the name of Andon Amaraich. Andon operated under the President of the Congress of Micronesia, which by that time represented only what later became the FSM. The President was Tosiwo Nakayama. So you had Nakayama who was the top political person in the FSM, and you had Amaraich, who was the head of the CFPST. And then under Amaraich, you had Bailey Olter, who was the chairman of the CFPST committee dealing with the status negotiations. Bailey Olter has just been elected President of the FSM. Consequently, when I negotiated, it was almost always with Bailey Olter, sometimes with Andon Amaraich intervening, but neither of them was the ultimate authority. Consequently, I found myself dealing with three different layers of authority, and of course with individual members of the commission, and the status committee. It was a brilliant approach for the weak negotiating with the strong. Bailey could never agree to anything without consulting with Andon, and Andon would

not agree to anything without going back to Nakayama who stayed very far in the background and rarely presented himself. He would attend negotiating sessions simply as a visitor. He would rarely even sit at the table with the rest of us. He'd sit off on the side. And Andon would sometimes speak at the table, but most often leave it to Bailey Olter. But Bailey Olter himself, didn't speak very much. He left that to their Washington counsel, whose name was Jim Stovall, who remains the counsel to the FSM in Washington today. So, in effect, I really had four layers to deal with. I was dealing most often with Jim Stovall, behind him was Bailey Olter, and behind him was Andon Amaraich, and behind him was Tosiwo Nakayama, which was a most brilliant way of dealing with their obvious weakness. But I found them all wonderful people to deal with. They were honest and sincere, and very well intentioned, and confronted with endless political problems internally, with which, of course, I sympathized.

So with the FSM you had the most obvious, if you will, exaggerated version of this kind of layered negotiating approach. But I had the same thing to a lesser degree with the Marshalls, but not really the same thing at all with Palau, both under Tmetuchl when he was chairman of the commission, and subsequently when I simply had an aggregation of people to deal with, without any strong control by anyone.

*Q: Well, you found yourself up against...we wanted to get something done, but here you have four desperate people in the FSM. Was tribal customs...I mean, one went at it one way, and one went at it another, was this a problem?*

ROSENBLATT: I was not dealing directly on status issues with the individual island groups, which incidentally are Yap, Truk, Ponape, and Kosrae. Of course, I dealt with individuals from each of those places, and I got to know each of them as well as I could during the course of the negotiations. But they did not negotiate separately with me. Whatever differences there were among them were worked out internally. This sometimes resulted in inaction, or even paralysis in the commission.

*Q: Did you find yourself being pushed from Washington? Or were you pretty much, say, "you get it done," "and do it." I mean as far as time goes.*

ROSENBLATT: No, I wasn't being pushed. One of the nice things that was contained in my instructions, which as I say, were written before I came on board; was a provision that the objective was to reach agreement before 1981, which, of course, was to have been the beginning of Carter's second term. Also, contained in the instructions was permission for me to state openly that that was contained in my instructions, which was very valuable. So it imposed a degree of discipline on the negotiations. I used that as often as I could from day one that I was in the job. That that was the outside limit; that we expected the negotiations to be finished by then; we hoped that they would be finished well before then. But they absolutely had to be...sometimes some of the press, or others, would ask me, "What would happen if we didn't?" and I sort of fudged that. It was very useful. Certainly there was no desire on the part of the Micronesians to stretch the negotiations out longer than we had to -- not even the Marshallese, though that was the consequence of Copaken's negotiating style -- so everyone sort of accepted 1981 as the outside limit.

*Q: You mentioned that Palau was a particular problem, that appeared later on. What was the problem?*

ROSENBLATT: The Palauans have a distinct national character. They are a very small group, only 16,000 or so Palauans living in Palau, some elsewhere. But strategically positioned. They were the part of Micronesia, along with the Marianas and Yap, that was furthest to the west. Therefore, if one looks at the map, one sees that they constituted a kind of strategic line. The first fall back line after the line of say the Philippines, Taiwan, and Japan. They are also the closest part of Micronesia to the Philippines, and they were the area, along with the bases that we have in Guam and those we had designated as having an interest in the Northern Marianas; which we indicated we had some interest in militarily. The Palauans were also the custodians of one of the great national resources in the world; the coral islands of Palau, and the reef, which attracts enormous numbers of tropical fish. So environmentalists were interested in Palau. The environmentalists were kind of mixed up with pacifists and other anti-war types who were basically anti-American. I'm talking now about the anti-war type Americans who believed...and remember we're talking about the mid-'70s...that the United States was the major source of evil in the world. All of these things came together in a terrific internal political struggle in Palau centered around the personality of Roman Tmetuchl. I've described Tmetuchl. He controlled the Palauan legislature, an elected body. He was a traditional leader, and therefore was influential with the traditional leaders of Palau. He was the richest businessman and he was chairman of the political status commission which was responsible for negotiating with me -- a body created by the Palau legislature. There are a lot of people who were ambitious for themselves and who wanted to see Tmetuchl out of the way.

When we were getting the negotiations started in 1977, one of the major questions was whether we were going to be negotiating with one group, which my predecessor had been negotiating with under the Nixon and Ford Administrations, representing all of the island groups, save for the Northern Marianas, which had been separately dealt with; or whether we were going to acquiesce in the desire expressed by the leaders of Palauans and the Marshalls to negotiate with us separately.

The first issue that had to be disposed of was that. We reached agreement in a conference at the end of July in 1977 in Guam, that the legislatures of each of the six districts of the Trust Territory other than the Northern Marianas would make a decision as to whether it wanted to deal with us together or separately. We knew what the outcome was likely to be because the legislatures had pretty well declared themselves on that subject. Four of them, those that I named as what later became the states of the Federated States of Micronesia, were in favor of dealing with us together as a unit. Two were in favor of dealing with us separately, the Marshallese and the Palauans.

The agreement was that the decision would be made initially by the legislatures, but it would have to be supported subsequently by a vote of the people of each of these districts when they voted on the constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia. That vote was to take place in the summer of 1978, and it was understood that a vote by any district against

the constitution of the FSM would be taken as a vote in favor of separate status for that district. And that ultimately happened. The FSM constitution was adopted by Yap, Truk, Ponape and Kosrae, and it was rejected by the votes of the people of the Marshall Islands and Palau. So that meant that from the summer of 1978 onwards, it was necessary for the peoples of the Marshall Islands and Palau, having rejected the FSM constitution, each to adopt a constitution of their own.

In Palau -- I'm setting aside the Marshals where everything went smoothly -- the first thing that had to be done was to elect a constituent assembly, a constitutional convention. That was done and therefore we had in Palau after those elections in 1979, three representative bodies. One was the legislature, controlled by Tmetuchl; the second was the political status commission appointed by the legislature and chaired by Tmetuchl. The third was the constitutional convention, of which, as it developed, Tmetuchl lost control. The constitutional convention used its position as a means of not only writing the constitution, but undermining Tmetuchl's control of the political system. They convened in early 1979 in Palau. I felt that because of the extreme sensitivity which all the Micronesians exhibited to any appearance of U.S. interference with their constitutional processes and because the constitutional convention was an independently elected body I should withdraw from Palau my principal eyes and ears. I had a two-man Foreign Service post working out of Saipan in the Northern Marianas, but covering the entire Trust Territory and reporting back to me on political developments there. They were also very helpful in representing the U.S. views to Micronesian negotiators and worked with them very closely. But I thought it was unwise to have present in Koror, the capitol of Palau, a person who -- as a conspicuous American in a tiny place reporting to me -- could be charged with attempting in some way to interfere with their internal processes. So I withdrew him and instructed him and his deputy not to go there. I was not, however, without information as to what was going on, which came to me through something called the Micronesian News Service which was actually not an independent body. It was funded and staffed by the Trust Territory government and produced daily reports on news events from the Trust Territory, including, of course, what was happening in the constitutional convention.

After a while, on the basis of news reports from the Micronesian News Service, it became evident to me that things were happening in the constitutional convention which we had legitimate interest in expressing alarm about. I therefore called together the U.S. government inter-agency group, shared my concerns with them. With their backing I sent a cable to the president of the constitutional convention saying that we had certain concerns about the impact of what they were doing on our negotiations, based on the news reports that we were getting. I asked if they were interested in an expression of our views as to these concerns.

*Q: What were the problems?*

ROSENBLATT: There were a number of problems. Some dealt with human rights questions, and political freedom which we thought might be abridged by some of the provisions that they were debating. And there were three others which I'll mention specifically.

One was what appeared to be an effort on the part of the framers of this constitution to extend the territorial boundaries of Palau into international waters to an extent absolutely unheard of in international law. What they were trying to do was to establish what are termed archipelagic lines. This is a practice of drawing straight lines from the furthest points in an island archipelago, to other furthest points, and closing thereby vast tracks of what we regarded as open sea; a practice extremely adverse to freedom of the seas and rites of passage and one which we could not be seen to tolerate anywhere.

The second was a provision which precluded a future Palauan government from using its power of eminent domain on behalf of a foreign government. Since we had already negotiated provisions with Tmetuchl which indicated our desire for options on certain Palauan areas for military purposes in the future, we thought that was a direct attack on what they knew to be our interests.

The third was a sweeping anti-nuclear provision which would, in the opinion of our experts, have precluded someone wearing a radium dial watch from entering Palau. It was not only a ban against nuclear weapons, it was a ban against nuclear powered aircraft or vessels and the importation of any kind of nuclear material into Palau. We regarded that as inconsistent with a provision of the future Compact to which all the Micronesians had already agreed in principal, which would give the U.S. plenary authority in the area of national defense. On April 9, 1978 we, the U.S., had reached agreement with the representatives of Palau, what later became the FSM, and the Marshalls, on the basic nature of our future Compact of Free Association. We had nine points laid out on two pieces of paper, and one of those points was that we were to have plenary authority in the area of national defense. We had gone off since April 9, 1978 and spelled that out to a very considerable extent. We had a pretty substantial draft by the time this crisis erupted in Palau so there was no question as to what was under negotiation.

I received an answer from the president of the Palauan Constitutional Convention accepting my suggestion that we express our views on some of these issues. I therefore worked with the inter- agency group to put together a telegram which we sent to them laying out our concerns in, it must have been eight to ten different areas. Again, based entirely on these Micronesian News Service reports. I also asked them whether they had any objection to the introduction of my representative out there -- the Foreign Service officer stationed in Saipan. They said they had no objection to that, so he came and further represented our viewpoint with respect to each of these areas. There was no direct response to these initiatives. However, the constitutional convention, in its subsequent deliberations, cured our concerns on all but the three areas which I have described; the archipelagic lines, the non-use of the power of eminent domain on behalf of a foreign government, and the anti-nuclear provision. They resolved all those other things, but they incorporated what we regarded as the offending provisions in each of these three areas in the constitution which they approved and adopted. And that produced a crisis in our negotiations with Palau.

Now let me turn back for a minute to the political dimension of this which I regard as having been the dominant factor here. Tmetuchl argued strongly in the constitutional

convention against each of these three provisions. He indicated that it was contrary to what he had already agreed to in the name of Palau in the negotiations and would produce a situation in which no agreement was possible on free association. He was overridden by a majority of the members of the constitutional convention and thereby effectively repudiated as Palau's spokesman. It was clear that Palau was therefore headed towards a showdown between Tmetuchl and his opponents who controlled the constitutional convention. That showdown occurred later in November of 1979 when there were elections for a new Palauan legislature. Tmetuchl's followers lost those elections and lost control of the legislature. He was consequently deposed as chairman of the political status commission.

The people who came in as his successors agreed on only one thing; that they wanted someone other than Tmetuchl to run things in Palau. The minute they had succeeded in that their own conflicts and conflicting ambitions came to the surface. The first beneficiary of the victory of these diverse forces was a man by the name of Haruo Remeliik, who was elected the first President of Palau under the new constitution in 1980. Remeliik was not a strong personality, or a strong leader, and he had all of these problems which he had inherited and had helped to create with the different forces in his legislature.

One of the other major leaders of the anti-Tmetuchl forces in the constitutional convention was a man by the name of Lazarus Salii. Lazarus Salii had been the chairman of the old all-Micronesian commission which had negotiated on behalf of the entire Trust Territory, except for the Marianas, with my predecessor under the Nixon and Ford administrations. During the Carter years he had served as Deputy High Commissioner of the Trust Territory government in Saipan. I maintained rather close contact with him in those years because of his obvious importance. His brother, Carlos Salii, became the successor chairman of the political status commission after the defeat of Tmetuchl.

As you can see, in early 1980 we were faced with a situation in which the man with whom we had been negotiating was now out. The group which had, in essence, defied the United States by including these three provisions in the constitution was now in charge of the negotiations with us and made no move whatsoever in our direction. I got reports from our representatives out there, the Foreign Service officers, as to what was going on internally, but our negotiations with Palau had come to an effective halt. Therefore, in mid-1980, after having given the new groups sufficient time to get its act together, to stabilize the situation, to take over the positions of power within Palau, I sent out a proposal to the new commission suggesting that we meet in Honolulu -- the head of the commission and I -- to try to get an understanding of each other's positions, and to permit us to give the new commission our view with regard to all of the provisions of the draft Compact of Free Association which had been negotiated thus far, and of the nine points of the so-called Hilo Declaration of April 9, 1978 which was the basis for our negotiations. That was accepted, and Carlos Salii came to Honolulu with a group of a half dozen or so members of his commission. I came with only one aide, James D. Berg, who was a very valuable member of my staff. We sat down in a hotel room for a couple of days and went through the draft Compact as it then stood, point by point by point. We discussed all of the open issues, and got a dialogue started. At that point the Palauan commission retained a new Washington

counsel, one Lynn Sutcliffe of Van Ness, Feldman & Sutcliffe, a Washington law firm, who very effectively represented the commission, and acted as an indispensable bridge between us and the commission.

The upshot of all of this was, that we found a way to deal with each of the three outstanding issues during the balance of the year 1980.

*Q: Were they following the election results -- the election developments in the United States with the idea that the clock was ticking? You had already set a time, but you had set a time limit before with the idea that Carter would be coming back, but this was becoming more and more apparent that the issue was in doubt. Was this having an effect?*

ROSENBLATT: Yes, it did because all of the Micronesians, Palauans included, were afraid of the Republicans. They knew that the Nixon and Ford administrations, had proposed a form of free association which was unacceptable to them. It was a disguised form of territorial status. They knew the power of Phil Burton who sent a Republican member of his staff to the Trust Territory to argue strongly against their initialing a Compact with me. According to the reports which reached me this man was out there not just arguing, but threatening the Micronesians with retaliation if they initialed the Compact with me. They were very receptive to my argument that if they didn't hurry up and reach some agreement with us, the issue would be very much in doubt if Carter was not reelected. The result of all of this was that we resolved the three outstanding issues in the following way. We didn't force them to change the constitutional provision establishing these archipelagic lines, but we did include a provision in the Compact that their national boundaries would conform to international law. We had the Law of the Sea negotiations going on, and we knew what international law was at present, and was going to be. So that took care of that.

So far as the inability to use the power of eminent domain on behalf of a foreign power, we simply agreed in the context of the negotiations on the precise areas in which the U.S. had an interest. Palau was to commit itself in the Compact of Free Association to make those areas available to us, if in the future we desired to exercise those options.

On the anti-nuclear provision, everyone understood that there was to be no Compact without overcoming that anti-nuclear provision. And we therefore agreed that the provision of the new constitution which made it possible to override that provision with a 75% vote would be employed. Now 75% vote which subsequently proved impossible to attain, was possible in the political circumstances of late 1980, because Tmetuchl was for the Compact and would have voted in favor of an override of the anti-nuclear provision. All of the forces which had been responsible for inserting the anti-nuclear provision had come to agreement with us on the need to override it. So there was no one against it.

The upshot of all of this was that we initialed the Compact of Free Association with the Marshalls and the FSM four days before the American presidential election in 1980. And we initialed the Compact of Free Association with the Palauans two weeks after Carter had

lost the election and this was in the face of all these threats from the Republicans and from Phil Burton. That's how it wound up.

*Q: You initialed it but then what happens? Does the Senate have to confirm it?*

ROSENBLATT: No, the initialing is not the same as a signature. The reason that we only initialed it and didn't sign it, was because a number of technical issues still had to be worked out in subsidiary agreements. The approach that I took in these negotiations was that, whenever we came to a complex or time consuming technical issue in which we were in agreement in principle but had a lot of negotiating to do to work out the details, we pushed that down into a subsidiary agreement and agreed we would get to it that after the Compact had been completed. So we had a number of such issues such as, for instance, compensation for Marshallese victims of our nuclear testing policy in Bikini and Eniwetok in the 1950s, which had to be worked out -- which in fact took quite a while to work out. Until we had all those subsidiary agreements worked out, we couldn't sign the agreement. We could only initial it, to indicate that we had reached agreement on those terms, subject to our working out the subsidiary arrangements. When it was signed by the Reagan Administration it needed to be approved by both houses of Congress as, for us, it wasn't an international treaty requiring only senate ratification.

Now what subsequently happened, of course, after the Reagan Administration came in, is that they took a year to determine whether they wanted to keep the Compact which I had initialed. They did ultimately decide that they wanted it and then they took another while to appoint my successor. By the time my successor was in almost a year and a half had passed and the political situation had further unraveled in Palau. It was also a little bit more complicated in the other places, but it was mostly Palau that really unraveled in the interim.

*Q: But the basic agreement was established?*

ROSENBLATT: Yes.

*Q: Just a feel about Washington. Here you had been intimately involved in these things, you were an American -- not just an administration person; I mean this was not a partisan thing particularly. Did those that were involved in the further negotiations under the Reagan administration call on you for information, and get your thoughts?*

ROSENBLATT: Not at all.

*Q: I find this incredible. I'm thinking as an American, and efficiency, and all this.*

ROSENBLATT: No. I was excluded from any role in the consideration of this topic. And this, despite the fact that I was well known to be of a political persuasion among Democrats, which was sympathetic to the Reagan administration's major foreign policy complaints, against the Carter Administration. I described to you in our last session how the Democratic group of which I was an important part had been rigorously excluded from

the Carter Administration, except for me, Jim Woolsey and, at the very end, Max Kampelman.

*Q: What you might call the hawk side, the Scoop Jackson group.*

ROSENBLATT: A great many of my colleagues in this effort among Democrats, came in and took prominent positions in the Reagan Administration. No one who had any sense of where I stood politically could feel that I was out of sympathy with the basic tenets of the Reagan foreign policy. What did happen was that Phil Burton, an extremely liberal Democrat, had mobilized his conservative Republicans on his committee to be the cutting edge to get me out of there. So it was particularly Bob Lagomarsino, who was a conservative Republican, who in fact was the President's congressman from California, who made it a point of personal privilege that I was to be gotten out, and kept out. And he had been doing this work on behalf of a liberal Democratic chairman, who was opposed to me for all kinds of reasons that were antithetical to the Reagan Administration.

*Q: These ebbs and currents of American politics are incredible, aren't they? I know we're sort of running out of time, but this is fascinating. Just one quickie -- on Micronesia, what's your thought?*

ROSENBLATT: Well, there are short term issues, and long term issues. The short term issue has to do primarily with Palau. Oddly enough, the Bush Administration -- or at least some personalities in the Bush administration -- have been much more receptive to my thinking on this issue than the Reagan administration had been. And I am in touch particularly with Dick Solomon, the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. I've had consistent dialogues with him and his deputies and others and I've expressed my concern with the approach they have followed up 'til now with Palau, which is to let the Palauans stew in their own juice and wait for them to come to us with a proposal for resolving the problem there. I've expressed concern, and opposition, to that approach. I guess the most recent dialogue between us in the last couple of months, has been that they're going to try to send someone out there to make a deal with the Palauans, and if that doesn't work they'll accept my proposal which is a much more elaborate full court effort to reach agreement with them.

There are some minor current problems between the U.S. and the Marshall Islands and the FSM, but they're not even worth discussing.

The longer term is much more interesting. The Marshall Islands and the FSM -- this is not known, and I'm saying this under a very temporary seal of confidentiality, because it will all be out in another month or so -- the FSM and the Marshall Islands have indicated to the U.S. government and other concerned parties their desire to become full members of the United Nations. That was excluded during my time in the Carter Administration. I told them that the position of the Carter Administration was that free association was incompatible with their being members of the United Nations. To be frank, I thought that was okay at the time and I didn't have too many qualms about presenting that viewpoint. But the way free association has worked out in actual practice since it was implemented in

1986, demonstrated that it works best when it is designed as the next thing to independence. In most respects indistinguishable from independence. So this request from the FSM and the Marshals has a quite natural consequence of the way in which the Compact has been implemented since 1986. And I have no problem with it at all. The U.S. government under the Bush Administration has reached the same conclusion, and has indicated that it will actively support the application of the Marshalls and the FSM to the United Nations. So that says something about the way in which free association has evolved in our thinking and in its practical application. It isn't the only way in which it can evolve. It can evolve in any number of different directions depending on what the parties want. So I think free association is a useful concept for all kinds of things that are happening in the world today. The breakup of the Soviet Union, the destiny of the Soviet republics, the relationship of a myriad of small areas with larger ones...

*Q: Yugoslavia today, Palestine...*

ROSENBLATT: ...the West Bank, that kind of thing. Some of these things can be worked out on the basis of free association. But as it applies to the Micronesians, and the destiny of Micronesia, that's a rather different issue. We now see that free association has been applied in a way which is indistinguishable from independence, except in the area of national defense. And I must say that when the issue comes up again, which will be at the end of the initial 15 year period -- that is for the Marshals and the FSM -- the year 2001. My guess is that it's probably going to be extended. It's working out well for everyone. They have substantial independence, they're getting assistance from the United States, they get multi-year assurances of economic assistance from the U.S. which they couldn't get in any structure other than free association. As things now seem, ten years away from the end of the initial 15 year period, it will probably go on.

*Q: Well, we're just out of tape, so I think it's a good time to quit. Thank you very much.*

*End of interview*