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MR. F. J. CRAWFORD

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# Micronesia-U.S. status negotiations delayed

Formal discussions between the United States and Micronesia over the future political status of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands will be postponed until late summer, it has been announced.

The seventh round in a series of talks which are designed to bring an end to the U.S. trusteeship were scheduled originally for late May.

During the interim, both sides will study the important question of return of public trust lands in Micronesia. The United States controls large parcels of land which originally were taken from the Micronesians by the Japanese during World War II.

There also will be a series of informal meetings between the heads of the Micronesian and U.S. delega-

tions aimed at finishing a draft Compact of Free Association between the two.

IF THE DRAFT proposal can be finished, it will be offered at the next formal round of status talks, probably in September.

Free association would grant the Micronesians internal control of their lands and laws while giving the United States the authority to oversee international

matters. The United States also would be responsible for Micronesia's military defense.

The announcement that formal talks will be postponed was made jointly by Ambassador Franklin Hayden Williams for the U.S. side and Sen. Lazarus Sali of Palau for the Micronesians.

While they will continue to work informally on the drafting of a Compact of

Free Association, separate talks will begin later this month between the United States and the Mariana Islands district aimed at creating a closer relationship. Even if a free-association agreement can be worked out, it will not be binding on either side. There is considerable feeling among some Micronesians, for instance, that full independence is a better alternative.