

The Talks On Today

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Saipan — It will not be an earthshaking event, but the second round of future status negotiations of the Marianas may be crucial — at least for the future American defense posture in the Western Pacific.

This morning on Saipan U.S. Ambassador Franklin Haydn Williams, President Nixon's hand-picked representative to the Micronesian status negotiations, and his delegation sits down with a 15-member Marianas Status Commission, headed by Congress of Micronesia Sen. Edward DLG. Pangelinan, for 10 to 14 days of discussion designed to lead the Northern Marianas into close affiliation with the United States.

The U.S. made known its intentions in December, 1971 to concentrate its future military activities on the island of Tinian, with support facilities located on Saipan, both key air bases during World War II.

No detailed discussions took place during the first round of talks here last December, but after just completing two weeks of closed-door sessions, the Marianas delegation is expected to offer some concrete proposals, including some fundamental principles to the future relationship.

For sure, the United States delegation will insist on a permanent relationship, or, at least, a mutually terminable one. This point caused the most disagreement in talks with the Congress of Micronesia for "free association" and was agreed to in principle only after the Marianas had requested and received permission to conduct separate talks leading to permanent ties with Washington.

On his arrival on Saipan Sunday, Ambassador Williams expressed optimism that rapid progress would be made during the negotiations.

"The members of the American delegation and I are very happy to be back in Saipan to continue with the Marianas Status Commission our work toward the common objective of bringing the Mariana Islands into political union with the United States, as desired by the people of the Marianas and heartily welcomed by the American people. We very much look forward to our forthcoming meeting beginning May 15, are certain that discussion with the Marianas Status Commission in the days ahead will bring speedy progress toward our mutual goal."