

Commonwealth Plan Gets First, Broad OK

News Saipan Staff

SAIPAN--The fundamentals of a commonwealth status for the Northern Mariana islands have been

agreed upon, it was announced jointly by U.S. and Marianas representatives yesterday.
Sen. Edward Pangelinan, chairman of the Marianas Status Commission, and President

Nixon's personal representative, Ambassador Franklin Haydn Williams, said "broad preliminary understanding on most aspects of the (Continued on page 13)

PACIFIC DAILY NEWS, Thursday, May 24, 1973--Page 13

U.S., Marianas Cite First Terms

(Continued from page 1)
Marianas-U.S. political relationship envisaged under a commonwealth arrangement" have been reached--although arrangements on land matters, future financing and transition are yet to be discussed.

Key areas of preliminary agreement in the announcement were:

--Sovereignty over the Marianas will be vested in

the United States under a territorial relationship,

--Maximum Marianas control over local affairs will be accomplished through a locally-drafted and approved constitution, including a bill of rights, separation of powers and elected chief executive.

--Foreign affairs and defense responsibilities will be delegated to the United States.

--The U.S. will support Marianas membership in regional or international organizations concerned with economic, cultural or comparable areas of interest.

--The judicial system of the Marianas must be compatible with the U.S. system.

--Marianas representation at the U.S. Congress in Washington will be explored.

--And U.S. citizenship will be offered to the people of the Marianas.

Both delegations agreed more study is needed concerning the applicability of specific U.S. laws in the Marianas, the extent of self-government to be exercised by the Marianas under the U.S.

Constitution, and the status to be accorded to residents of the Marianas who "might not wish to become American citizens."

"Subpanels of lawyers from the two delegations have already begun a useful exploration of these largely technical matters and will continue their deliberations during the course of the present talks and subsequently in Washington," the lengthy statement said.

It was also pointed out that these "preliminary understandings" and agreements from future talks will have to be approved by the Marianas Legislature, the people of the Marianas, and the U.S. Congress.

"The two chairmen believe, nonetheless, that the present considerable degree of understanding on the fundamentals of the political relationship provides an excellent foundation for a subsequent instrument of agreement," the statement said.

Both delegations met again yesterday with future financing as the major topic of discussion.