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PRESS RELEASE: November Status Talks

On November 14, the seventh round of negotiations to determine Micronesia's future political status will open in Washington, D.C.

The U.S. Delegation will be headed by Ambassador F. Haydn Williams, The President's Personal Representative for Micronesian Status Negotiations. Senator Lazarus Salii, Chairman of the Congress of Micronesia's Joint Committee on Future Status, will lead the Micronesian Delegation. Also included in the U.S. Delegation will be Mr. James M. Wilson, Jr., Captain Richard Y. Scott, USN, and other representatives of the Departments of State, Defense, Justice and Interior. On the Micronesian side, Chairman Salii will be joined by his Co-Chairman, Representative Ekpap Silk, and ten other members of the Congress of Micronesia.

Micronesia, consisting of some 2,100 islands located in the Western Pacific, of which about 100 are inhabited, was the scene of heavy fighting during World War II. As the result of a 1947 agreement between the United Nations and the U.S. Government, the islands became a strategic trust--the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands--under U.S. administration.

For about the past two years negotiations have been in progress between Micronesia and the U.S. toward a compact of free association providing for termination of the trusteeship on terms which will grant self-government to the Micronesian people and assign to the United States responsibility for Micronesia's defense and foreign affairs. They have

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previously achieved mutually agreed draft language for the compact's preamble and for its titles relating to internal affairs and defense and foreign affairs.

The session of talks just getting underway is expected to begin with a brief discussion of the U.S. Government's recent decision to return to local control in Micronesia the substantial amount of public land which the U.S. has been holding in trust for the people of Micronesia since 1945. The talks will then turn to work on those titles of the compact of free association which have not yet been addressed. Most important of the remaining titles are those relating to continued economic and financial ties between Micronesia and the United States, provisions for amendment and termination of the compact, and the transitional steps by which Micronesia will attain self-government. It is anticipated that under the terms of the final negotiated agreement the United States will continue to provide the islands economic support as they work toward self-sufficiency.