

15
7.6

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

OFFICE OF MICRONESIAN STATUS NEGOTIATIONS

Ballow (202) 343-9143

For Release November 14, 1973

MICRONESIAN STATUS TALKS REOPEN NOVEMBER 14

The seventh round of negotiations to determine Micronesia's future political status open in Washington, D.C. today.

The U.S. Delegation is 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, heads 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 and Defense and representatives of the Justice and Interior Departments. Co-Chairman of the Micronesian group is Representative Ekpap Silk of the Congress of Micronesia; and ten other members of the Congress of Micronesia are on the delegation.

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.

Over 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.

In status talks that preceded the ones opening today, mutually agreed upon draft language was achieved for the compact's preamble and for its titles relating to international affairs and defense and foreign affairs.

The session of talks now 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 components of the compact of free association which have not yet been addressed. Most important among those relate 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 by the United States will continue to provide the islands economic support as they work toward self-sufficiency.

###

03- 022505