

Sat - Nov 17, '73

outlook is hopeful for U.S.-Micronesia talks

WASHINGTON (UPI) — U.S.-Micronesia status talks under way here are expected to continue for several more days with hopes of advancing agreement "very far forward," according to U.S. officials.

The talks are in their seventh round with the U.S. delegation headed by E. Haydn Williams and Sen. Lazarus Saliu, chairman of the Congress of Micronesia's Joint Committee on Future Status.

A U.S. official who preferred not to be identified by name or position said he anticipated "continued work next week, possibly even the following one. We're not newcomers to this; we've worked with each other. We're hopeful we can move it all very far forward during this round."

"I think we're prepared to continue for several days," he said.

The talks have focused on financial relationships between the two sides.

The Micronesians are interested in an annual support figure and possibly additional funds on a matching grant basis.

The islands are not self-sustaining. "They're totally dependent on some outside source," the U.S. official

said. "They don't have much outside resources."

The U.S. has administered the islands since 1945 under a United Nations trusteeship. Support has varied. Several years ago the United States supplied \$60 million, this year the figure may be in a range of \$48 to \$55 million, subject to work on a supplemental bill before Congress.

THE FINANCIAL aspects of the relationship are only a part of what the two sides agree should be a "compact of free association." In these terms, the United States would look out for Micronesia's defense and international relationships, but Micronesians would run their own domestic affairs.

In return, the United States expects some "stability" in the area and also has received assurances of certain options of land use in the area, particularly in the Palau District in the western Carolines.

Describing this, the U.S. official said "our defense people claim it is a contingency against the uncertain future." He said it was not necessarily related to any withdrawal of U.S. forces from other existing bases in the Pacific.