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Immediate Release

~~DRAFT: Press Release on Closing of Talks~~
Micronesian Status Talks Close

The seventh round of Micronesian Status Negotiations ~~ended~~ ^{ended} ~~on~~ ^{ended} ~~November 21~~ ^{November 21} as ~~the~~ United States and Micronesian representatives met in closing plenary session at the Department of the Interior.

The U.S. delegation headed by Ambassador F. Hayden Williams, the President's Personal Representative for Micronesian Status Negotiations and the Congress of Micronesia's Joint Committee on Future Status, ~~chaired by~~ lead by Senator Lazarus Salii have been negotiating the terms of a future compact of free association which would replace the existing strategic trusteeship arrangement administered by the United States.

Opening November 14 on a positive note with agreement on the implementation of an important new U.S. policy transferring Micronesian public lands to local control, the talks then went on to discussion of future U.S. financial assistance to Micronesia under a free association arrangement. A U.S. offer to maintain assistance at approximately the ^{level} current (of funding for the Trust Territory (about \$45 million), ^{as justly for two districts}) for a 15 year period was rejected by the Micronesian delegation which was demanding an amount approximately double that figure. The U.S. ~~pro~~ proposal also included the means for a periodic review of the amount to take into account the ^{economic conditions and exchange changes} changing value of the dollar. The Micronesians declined to go on with discussion of other provisions of the compact in the absence of agreement on assistance levels.

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commenting on the apparent impasse that marked the end of this round of talks, Ambassador Williams pointed out that the U.S. offer was based on careful study of what the Trust Territory's future financial needs are likely to be under free association ~~as well as~~ as well as the nature of the political relationship between the two states itself. Also taken into account by the U.S. was the probable assistance from other nations and international agencies, increases in local revenues and proposed reductions in the cost of government operations following termination of the trusteeship arrangement.

The Ambassador stated that the U.S. would have preferred to continue discussions as he believed that further progress on other provisions of the compact was possible but that the U.S. had yielded to the Micronesian request ^{to adjourn} ~~to adjourn~~ the talks, ~~to adjourn~~. He added that he was hopeful that negotiations could be resumed again as soon as possible so that Micronesia's evolution toward self-government could proceed.

^{no date was} The U.S. and Micronesian delegations ~~did not~~ announced ~~a date~~ for the next round of ~~status~~ negotiations.

Full texts of the closing plenary statements of Ambassador F. Haydn Williams and Chairman Lazarus Salii follow.