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Talks End Here on Trust Islands

Two days of negotiations on the future status of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands ended yesterday at the Makalapa guest house of Adm. Noel Gayler, commander-in-chief, Pacific.

Discussions centered on proposed changes in the draft compact of "free association" of Micronesia with the United States when the U.N. trusteeship is ended.

Tentative agreement on the draft compact was reached at an earlier meeting.

An informed source said the subjects covered included citizenship, nationality, passports, travel and assurances that the United States will not enter into treaties affecting Micronesia without obtaining Micronesian consent.

PROGRESS was made on these points despite earlier Micronesian insistence that the problem of return of public lands be cleared up first.

This position was taken after a bill passed by the Congress of Micronesia providing for the return of the lands was vetoed by High Commissioner Edward E. Johnston.

At the meeting here, the source said, the Micronesian side did not rule out transfer of the land by executive rather than legislative action—in contrast to an earlier position.

This could bypass the conflict over the veto, which was issued because of technical problems with the bill.

THE CHIEF job remaining for the negotiators is to complete the agreement on U.S. land requirements in Palau, where Washington seeks options for possible future use for military purposes.

The options proposal has already been accepted in principle by the Micronesian panel.

Last week the American group, led by Ambassador Franklin Haydn Williams, met with representatives of the Marianas district to continue work on a Marianas commonwealth agreement.

The meeting reached agreement on formation of a joint transition commission that would handle such tasks as a constitutional convention and referendum and economic studies on development goals and capital improvement programs.

THE MARIANAS district is part of the Trust Territory but is seeking a status separate from the other districts when the trusteeship ends.

The American and Marianas negotiators agreed to hold a formal round of talks on Saipan starting Dec. 2.

The source said they hope to complete their work at that session.

The negotiators also set a target date of July 1976 for the inauguration of the Marianas commonwealth after the holding of the constitutional convention and referendum, the source added.

The Marianas were represented in the talks by Sen. Edward Pangalanan and Ben Santos, president of the district legislature.

The Congress of Micronesia negotiators were Sen. Lazarus Salii and Rep. Ekpap Silk.