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The Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and the Global Environment

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**FALEOMAVAEGA LAUDS CLINTON PLEDGE TO
SEEK SENATE RATIFICATION OF PROTOCOLS TO
SOUTH PACIFIC NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE ZONE**

The Chairman of the Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and the Global Environment, Rep. Eni F.H. Falcomavaega, voiced his strong support for Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's announcement that the Administration intends to seek the U.S. Senate's advice and consent to ratify the protocols to the South Pacific Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Rarotonga). The protocols include a pledge not to test nuclear weapons within the zone and legally-binding assurances not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against the treaty Parties, which include Australia, the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

"Secretary Clinton's announcement to seek Senate ratification of protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga is a major step forward for the region and will provide impetus to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference currently taking place in New York. I have long called for U.S. ratification, and I reaffirmed my views with the Secretary shortly after she took office in a letter I sent her on May 4, 2009 requesting that the Obama Administration 'reassess the U.S. position on the

South Pacific Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Rarotonga), an issue of longstanding importance to the leaders and people of the region,” Faleomavaega said.

“The Secretary’s pledge comes in the wake of a series of important steps that the Obama Administration has taken to curb the proliferation of nuclear weapons and diminish the threat of nuclear terrorism, which present grave dangers to the United States and to peace and stability around the world. In April last year in Prague, President Obama succinctly described those dangers. With the end of the Cold War, he said, ‘the threat of global nuclear war has gone down, but the risk of nuclear attack has gone up. More nations have acquired these weapons. Testing has continued. Black market trade in nuclear secrets and nuclear materials abound. The technology to build a bomb has spread.’”

“In his speech in the Czech Republic, the President also laid out a bold vision for reducing the nuclear threat in calling for a recommitment by the United States and global community to a world without nuclear weapons. To move toward that goal, he outlined steps to reduce U.S. and Russian nuclear warheads and stockpiles, to strengthen the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and to enhance efforts to secure vulnerable nuclear materials around the world.”

“The vision of a nuclear-weapons free world is far from a utopian dream. Indeed, it is a goal embedded in the NPT, the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. It is also a goal that was embraced by President Dwight Eisenhower in his 1953 ‘Atoms for Peace’ address and sought aggressively by President Ronald Reagan in his 1986 summit with Mikhail Gorbachev in Reykjavik. Reagan called for the abolishment of ‘all nuclear weapons’ because he considered them, ‘totally irrational, totally inhumane, good for nothing but killing, possibly destructive of life on earth and civilization,’” Faleomavaega noted.

“More recently, a bipartisan group of statesmen led by George Shultz, William Perry, Henry Kissinger and Sam Nunn laid out the case for a world free of nuclear weapons. As they argued in a prominent article in *The Wall Street Journal* in 2007, unless that is the objective, the United States ‘soon will be compelled to enter a new nuclear era that will be more precarious, psychologically disorienting and economically even more costly than was Cold War deterrence.’”

“In the twelve short months since he outlined his approach in Prague, President Obama has made remarkable strides. On April 6, 2010 the Administration released its Nuclear Posture Review, which rules out a U.S. nuclear attack against non-nuclear-weapon states complying with the NPT. It also renounces the development of new nuclear weapons and details how deterrence can be strengthened through the effective use of intelligence and the greater precision of conventional weapons rather than an over-reliance on nuclear warheads.”

“Later in April, building on previous treaties negotiated by Presidents Reagan and George H.W. Bush, President Obama signed a new START agreement with Russian President Medvedev, committing both countries to reducing their deployments of strategic warheads by nearly one-third and their launchers by one-half.”

“Just as significant, the President’s Nuclear Security Summit – the largest international gathering convened by a U.S. President since the founding of the United Nations in 1945 – resulted in a pact among the 47 participating states to ‘lock down’ insecure nuclear materials that could otherwise be diverted for use in weapons of mass destruction. The Administration’s new pledge on the Treaty of Rarotonga is another crucial element in President Obama’s ‘nuclear spring,’ and further increases the chance that we will fulfill the promise of Prague. The Secretary and the President have done a superb job in laying the groundwork for this month’s crucial NPT review conference, which is aimed at strengthening the treaty ratified by more countries than any other arms agreement. Gaining consensus to strengthen the NPT will not be easy. But President Obama’s comprehensive and sustained diplomacy has already resulted in tangible, positive steps toward reducing the terrible threat posed by loose nuclear materials and nuclear weapons,” Faleomavaega concluded.

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