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May 21, 2010

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The Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and the Global Environment

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**PRESIDENT OF PALAU REQUESTS MEETING WITH
FALEOMAVAEGA ON COMPACT**

The Chairman of the Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and the Global Environment, Rep. Eni F.H. Faleomavaega, will meet with the President of Palau, Johnson Toribiong, in Guam May 30, 2010, to discuss negotiations over the future of the relationship.

“The United States took Palau from Japan during World War II and administered the islands as a territory on behalf of the United Nations until 1994, when a Compact of Free Association between the United States and Palau went into effect. The Compact specified U.S. assistance to the islands for 15 years and required talks between representatives of both nations regarding assistance needed after the 15th anniversary of the relationship, which occurred on October 1, 2009. Because of U.S. delays in the talks related to the change in administrations, additional temporary assistance was provided by Congress for a period ending September 30, 2010,” Faleomavaega said.

“The Compact permits the United States to maintain military control over the islands, which cover a strategic expanse of the Pacific the size of Texas between Guam, the Philippines and Indonesia. Palau votes with the United States on key issues in the United Nations more than any other country. Many Palauans serve in the U.S. military, and some have lost their lives in service to the United States. And recently, Palau stepped up to the plate for us again by giving refuge to six Chinese Uighurs wrongfully detained at Guantanamo,” Faleomavaega added.

“Talks on assisting Palau through 2024 have been ongoing, but I am concerned about the level, pace and limited vision of U.S. representation, which has been conducted by relatively junior career employees rather than by Obama Administration appointees. I am also concerned that some U.S. Department of State bureaucrats do not fully appreciate U.S. obligations to Palau under the Compact.”

“Congress needs to see proposed legislation from the Obama Administration on future assistance that meets Palau’s needs and is commensurate with U.S. responsibilities incurred over the half century we administered the islands. We must remember that we intentionally encouraged Palauan dependence upon the United States in order to secure continuing military control. Given that history and given Palau’s continued contributions to the United States, I hope that the Administration will submit proposed legislation to Congress in time to avert the need for further temporary assistance,” Faleomavaega said.

“In addition to President Toribiong, I will be meeting in Guam with Palau Compact Review Ambassador Joshua Koshiba, who served for many years as the President of Palau’s Senate. Guam’s U.S. House Delegate and Chair of the Natural Resources Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife Subcommittee, Rep. Madeleine Z. Bordallo, will also participate in the meetings.”

“The Compact talks of this past January were supposed to have resolved questions about the overall amount of U.S. assistance to Palau. But the negotiations stalled over allocations of aid, the terms and even the form of the agreement. Based on my meetings in Guam, I plan to hold discussions with senior Obama Administration officials and take other steps as Chairman of a Subcommittee of jurisdiction,” Faleomavaega concluded.

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