

## Political Reviews

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*Micronesia in Review: Issues and Events, 1 July 2010  
to 30 June 2011*

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experience in FSM and Kosrae politics and has served the country in various capacities as a department head, a diplomat, and head of the national health insurance program. For Kosrae state, George has served as governor and chief justice and has now joined the exclusive political club of four at-large national senators who are eligible to become FSM president or vice president.

During the March 2011 congressional election, voters defeated two proposed amendments to the national constitution. One would have allowed FSM citizens to acquire another citizenship. This amendment garnered more than 60 percent of the votes in each of the states, but it failed to receive the constitutionally required 75 percent. The other amendment proposed to extend the term of the ten two-year members of the legislature to four years. In Pohnpei state, the amendment received only 46 percent of the votes, and in all four states it received a lower percentage than that garnered by the proposed dual citizenship amendment.

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### GUAM

Dominating the news during the year under review were the same three issues that captured the most attention in the previous year: the upcoming US military buildup, the 2010 gubernatorial election, and ongoing fiscal difficulties for the Government of Guam (GovGuam).

As 2011 began, the proposed transfer of 8,600 US Marines and their dependents from Okinawa to Guam was still proceeding. However, in response to public opposition to the buildup plans, the pace of the buildup was slowed. Initially, the buildup was expected to bring about 79,000 people to Guam by 2014, with about half as imported labor for military construction projects and other preparatory activities. As noted last year, the US Department of Defense (DOD) issued a draft environmental impact statement in late 2009 outlining the different plans for how the buildup would transform the island. The document, over 11,000 pages long (*Saipan Tribune*, 8 Jan 2010), received over 10,000 submissions from the public, elected leaders, and government agencies during the public comment period (DOD 2010). The new plan in the final impact statement purportedly would only shift marines to Guam after the island's infrastructure

is ready to handle the sizeable influx in population. Under the suggested timeline, about 41,000 new residents would come to Guam in 2016. This would be half the number initially proposed and would occur two years later than originally projected. But even federal officials expressed doubts that the buildup would move that quickly. Still unresolved were two controversial military construction projects: the planned live firing range near the ancient Indigenous Chamorro village site of Pâgat and the dredging of Apra Harbor to build an aircraft carrier harbor (*PDN*, 29 June 2010, 1 Jan 2011).

With respect to the live firing range plan, community opposition centered on concerns about increased traffic, loss of land associated with recreational activities, and denial of access to a sacred Indigenous Chamorro site existing on GovGuam-owned land (Guam Bureau of Statistics and Plans 2010). The site has been listed on both the Guam Register of Historic Places and the US National Register of Historic Places since 1974 (Guam Preservation Trust 2011). The proposed dredging of Apra Harbor drew fire not only from island residents but also from the US Environmental Protection Agency, which cited the “unacceptable” impact of dredging on seventy-one acres of coral reef (Harden 2010). Even with these open questions, the Department of Defense issued a Record of Decision that formalized the plan to relocate the marines to Guam (*PDN*, 1 Jan 2011).

In November, the Guam Preservation Trust, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the We Are Guahan activist group filed suit

in federal court to block the live firing range. According to the suit, the Department of Defense violated the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and the Coastal Zone Management Act when it picked Pâgat as the firing-range site (*MV*, 16 Feb 2011). The court case continued through the first half of 2011. In the briefs, DOD attorneys stated that no final decision had been made on Pâgat and no appropriation had been provided in the current fiscal year’s budget, or the next, to fund the firing range (*PNC*, 1 July 2011). In March, however, the administration of Guam Governor Eddie Baza Calvo signed a “programmatic agreement” with the Department of Defense that gave approval for the controversial US military plan to build Marine Corps training ranges in that area. Governor Calvo explained that GovGuam dropped its opposition to live firing ranges after the US Navy guaranteed unimpeded public access to several sites, including the ancient Chamorro Pâgat Village site. In response, representatives for We Are Guahan said that their group still opposes the training ranges and any military construction in Pâgat. They further stated that the group would continue their lawsuit, claiming that “the DOD broke the law because it did not consider alternate sites for the ranges” (*Stars and Stripes*, 9 March 2011). The case is scheduled to be heard in court by September (*MV*, 18 Feb 2011).

In the wake of mounting federal deficits and natural disasters in Japan, new questions arose regarding when, or even if, the buildup would occur. In May, Japanese Minister of Defense

Toshimi Kitazawa suggested that Japan could agree to delay the 2014 date for the relocation of the marines from Okinawa (AFP 2011). Japan also put a hold on the \$3 billion in funding to relocate the marines to Guam. The US Navy said that the hold on funding has suspended buildup-related projects such as the new headquarters for the navy base (ANN 2011).

The US House of Representatives approved the Pentagon's funding request for buildup-related projects in June. In the Senate, however, the relocation of the marines came under mounting criticism. A General Accounting Office report estimated that the move could cost as much as \$23.9 billion over the next decade (*Stars and Stripes*, 28 June 2011). In the Senate Armed Services Committee, Senator Jim Webb proposed altering relocation plans—in effect, reducing the number of forces to be relocated out of Okinawa. He was supported in his efforts by the committee chair, Senator Carl Levin, and Republican ranking member Senator John McCain (PNC, 15 June 2011). Senators on the committee further called for a freeze on buildup projects until the Department of Defense issues a full master plan (PNC, 15 June 2011). Another shadow was cast on buildup plans in late June when the DOD Inspector General issued a report stating that the department “did not provide reliable Guam realignment costs for Congress” and that, as a result, “Congress cannot ensure that Guam realignment costs are properly allocated” and “Congress will not have reliable historical cost data for planning future military realignments” (PNC, 27 June 2011). This report echoed earlier reports by

the General Accounting Office and the Senate Armed Services Committee. By the end of June, the Senate Appropriations Committee had cut \$155 million in buildup-related projects from the Pentagon budget (PDN, 1 July 2011). But even with these developments, Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Energy, Installations and Environment) Jackalyn Pfannenstiel stated that she was “confident” the buildup would happen. This view was echoed by spokesmen for Governor Calvo and by Guam Senator Judith Guthertz, chair of the Guam Legislature's Military Buildup Committee (MV, 17 June 2011). Also in June, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs Takeaki Matsumoto reaffirmed their 2006 agreement to realign forces in Okinawa, which would include relocating the marine contingent to Guam (PDN, 24 June 2011). In spite of the disagreement between the US administration and the Senate, some buildup-related projects, including upgrades to air force facilities, continued in 2011 (Guam Buildup News, 30 June 2011). Also, the Apra Harbor dredging project was still planned, although on hold pending the completion of a marine habitat study (Guam Buildup News, 22 April 2011).

On Guam itself, a pro-military buildup organization called Para Hita Todu was launched in 2011. Its stated goal was to collect 15,000 signatures expressing support for the buildup, purportedly to show Washington leaders that a silent majority on Guam was in favor of the military buildup (PNC, 8 July 2011). The majority leader, Senator Rory J Respicio, pointed out that although Guam residents may be

supportive of the buildup, they are not supportive of it “at any cost.” Para Hita Todu leaders responded that they also did not support the buildup at any cost (Respicio 2011). Respicio and other legislative leaders have expressed support for the buildup but have insisted that the federal government address the buildup’s infrastructural, environmental, and social impacts. They have also sought action on long-standing federal territorial issues such as the island’s unresolved political status, unjust land takings, and World War II war reparations (Guam Legislature Resolution 275). In June, Senator Respicio, Speaker Won Pat, and Senator Chris Duenas secured the endorsement of the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures for Guam’s position (APIL 2011).

War reparations in particular were a source of extreme disappointment in 2010, underscoring Guam residents’ frustration about continuing federal inaction on territorial issues. Hopes were raised that this matter would be addressed when the US House of Representatives approved funding that year, but it was blocked by Senate Republicans at the last minute. This was yet another blow in a three-decade-long struggle by Chamorros seeking compensation for their suffering during World War II. Guam Legislature Minority Leader Frank Blas Jr stated that “a lot of people here are disappointed, frustrated, upset.” He said, “The Senate probably doesn’t understand. Here is an island thousands of miles away, out of sight out of mind.” Fewer than 1,000 Chamorro survivors of World War II are still alive and seeking compensation for “slave labor, internment and

forced marches” (*Stars and Stripes*, 23 Dec 2010).

In the meantime, the political landscape on Guam changed as the administration of Governor Felix Camacho served out its remaining months and island residents went to the polls to pick new leaders. The 2010 election was in full swing as the team of former Governor Carl T C Gutierrez and Senator Frank Aguon Jr secured the Democratic nomination without opposition. The Republican team of Senators Eddie Baza Calvo and Ray Tenorio Jr defeated the team of Lieutenant Governor Mike Cruz and Senator James Espaldon to win their party’s primary election (KUAM, 5 Sept 2010). The subsequent general election campaign proved to be one of the hardest fought and most controversial elections in the island’s history, eventually becoming a matter for the courts. Aside from debates on the military buildup, education, and other concerns, two unexpected issues came to the forefront. One was health insurance. In September, it was revealed that the rates for GovGuam health insurance were going up by as much as 300 percent in some cases. The sole provider of health insurance for government employees and retirees was Calvo Selectcare, which is owned by Eddie Baza Calvo’s family. The Gutierrez/Aguon team sharply criticized the increases. They further called on Calvo Selectcare to hold off on the rate hikes and for the contract with Calvo Selectcare to be renegotiated (MV, 22 Sept 2010). The contract came under further criticism when it was revealed that Calvo Selectcare had been operating as the sole provider for government health insurance with-

out a contract for two years (*MV*, 30 Sept 2010). The Calvo/Tenorio team viewed the Gutierrez/Aguon position as a political attack and responded with its own attacks about the health insurance contract against Senator Frank Aguon Jr, who was chairman of the legislature's health committee (*PNC*, 7 June 2010). The controversy increased in intensity as Gutierrez promised to renegotiate the contract if elected and Calvo said he would not do so because it would compromise health insurance coverage for employees and retirees (*MV*, 28 Oct 2010). Another controversy arose late in the campaign when it was revealed that Ray Tenorio Jr was born as Ray Waddey Jr and did not legally change his name until years after he had identified himself in a number of legal documents as Ray Tenorio Jr. A complaint alleging that Tenorio had committed fraud was filed in November with the legislature's ethics committee, which dismissed the complaint a month later (*MV*, 29 Dec 2011).

After recounts of the 41,000 votes cast, amid reports of missing ballots and possible voter fraud, the Election Commission certified the Calvo/Tenorio team as the winner by 487 votes (*PDN*, 1 Jan 2011). The certification itself quickly became a matter of controversy when it was revealed that half the Election Commission had not been properly appointed—which by law would normally render their actions null and void. The Guam Supreme Court set aside this challenge, but other suits filed by the Gutierrez/Aguon team, seeking to overturn the gubernatorial election, continued in both US and Guam courts (*MV*, 3 Jan 2011).

Results for the other 2010 races for the legislature and the attorney general were uncontroversial. In the nonpartisan race for attorney general, voters picked former US Attorney Lenny Rapadas. The Democrats retained their 9–6 majority in the legislature, with Republican Telo Taitague being the only incumbent not reelected. Replacing Taitague and filling four vacancies were Democrat Dennis Rodriguez Jr and Republicans Aline Yamashita, Chris Duenas, Mana Silva-Taijeron, and Sam Mabine (*PDN*, 1 Jan 2011). Guam's fifteen senators are elected "at-large," meaning the top fifteen vote getters make up the legislature.

As the island prepared for the change of administration, concerns about GovGuam's fiscal situation came to the forefront. In December, the Calvo/Tenorio transition team estimated that when it took office the government would have a shortfall of nearly \$100 million (*KUAM*, 12 Dec 2010). Soon after the inauguration, the Calvo administration sought a \$36.6 million supplemental appropriation to meet the budget shortfall for the fiscal year and threatened layoffs if it was not approved by June (*MV*, 3 June 2011). At their June session, the legislature cut the administration request and approved a \$28 million supplemental appropriation to address shortfalls. In the process, senators criticized Governor Calvo for raiding the retirement fund in order to fund the budget shortfall resulting from the new health insurance contract. Further battles over government finances are expected when the legislature takes up the fiscal year 2012 budget in August (*MV*, 6 June 2011).

Guam drew attention from the international media in the past year. Spotlighting the island as a tourist destination, BBC.com ran a story titled “Guam: The Best Place You Never Considered Going To,” highlighting the island’s warm climate and island life as attractions (Strasser 2011). In October, the cable news show *Dan Rather Reports* focused on the impact of the planned military buildup on Guam and Chamorro concerns regarding further loss of land to the military (MV, 6 Oct 2010).

There was renewed interest in holding the long-delayed Chamorro self-determination vote after Governor Calvo stated in March that he wanted to hold the vote in 2012 (Caguran-gan 2011). However, by June, Calvo administration officials admitted that the vote would not be held until 2013 at the earliest (KUAM, 20 June 2011). On a positive note, prominent indigenous rights advocate Dr Lisa Natividad was appointed to the Guam Commission on Decolonization. Additionally, the Obama administration made available funding for an educational campaign for the decolonization vote (PNC, 28 April 2011).

Also in June 2011, a controversy erupted regarding University of Guam Professor Ron McNinch, who had participated in a United Nations-sponsored seminar in St Vincent and the Grenadines on decolonization, where he presented a paper dealing with self-determination for Guam. Island leaders such as Senator Ben Pangelinan accused McNinch of attempting to derail the political status issue. Pangelinan as well as Legislative Speaker Judith Won Pat and Ed Benavente of the Colonized

Chamoru Coalition wrote to Francisco Carrion-Mena of Ecuador, chair of the UN Special Committee of the 24 on Decolonization, regarding McNinch’s role at the seminar. They stated that McNinch did not represent the people of Guam and their quest for political self-determination and challenged his standing as an expert on self-determination and decolonization issues (MV, 14 June 2011).

An essential component of the quest for self-determination has been the ongoing struggle for outside recognition of the Chamorro identity and culture. One sign of the level of interest in and sensitivity about the issue was the introduction of Bill 1 in the current session of the Guam Legislature to set new procedures for the treatment of disinterred human remains, in particular those of ancient Chamorros. The legislation includes the finding that the current process for dealing with such issues has resulted in situations where disinterred remains are being handled “in a manner deeply disrespectful to the island’s indigenous Chamoru people” (Guam Legislature Bill 1-31). On the other hand, reflecting interest in harnessing the potential of archaeological study, the website Guampedia unveiled its new Archaeology of the Marianas section with an initial twenty-eight entries (MV, 11 March 2011). These entries expand access to knowledge gathered about ancient Chamorro lifeways encased within technical reports of limited distribution. Near Guam’s major hotels and tourist facilities in Tumon, in 2011, a local developer started building the Lina'la' Chamorro Cultural Park on twenty-five acres of beachfront property. Described as an

“eco-adventure park,” the facility will contain a replica of an ancient Chamorro village (KUAM, 27 May 2011).

Signaling the continued vibrancy of Chamorro culture, language, and traditional skills, the Chamorro cultural organization Pa'a Taotao Tano' (Way of Life of the People of the Land) celebrated its tenth anniversary. The organization spearheads a number of cultural projects and serves as the umbrella organization for indigenous dance troops throughout the Mariana Islands (KUAM, 24 June 2011). Pa'a Taotao Tano' released the results of a language survey showing that four out of five Chamorros interact daily with a fluent speaker of the indigenous language (KUAM, 21 Sept 2010). Also, Senator Mana Silva-Taijeron introduced legislation that would increase the number of years the Chamorro language is taught in public schools. Currently, students are required to take one year of Chamorro language courses in both middle and high schools, with elementary students required to take six years. Under Silva-Taijeron's bill, students would be required to take Chamorro language in every year of middle school and for an additional year in high school (KUAM, 1 March 2011).

What has also drawn notice in some quarters is Governor Calvo's use of the term “Guamanian” in his public statements (see the Calvo/Tenorio campaign website for examples). To some, this has raised concerns about the sublimation of the Chamorro identity in favor of a broader grouping of “Guamanian.” In contrast was Governor Calvo's written testimony to the United Nations, presented by his sister Clare Calvo. The testimony was

passionate about decolonization and Chamorro self-determination (PNC, 20 June 2011).

2010 was also the year of the Micronesian Games, which were held in Palau. Guam placed third in the country medal count with twenty gold, twenty-five silver, and twenty-one bronze medals. Among the competitive events were island sports such as canoeing, in which Guam won silver in the women's team division, and spearfishing, in which the island won gold in men's individual competition and bronze in team competition (Micronesian Games 2010).

On the environmental front, the practice of catching sharks for their fins and trading in these fins was banned in Guam under a new law enacted in 2011. The practice has been viewed in recent years as a major international environmental concern (PNC, 24 Feb 2011). Students on Guam initiated an advocacy group called Shark Tsunami to secure passage of the bill (Humane Society 2011). Also in 2011, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration began soliciting public comment on plans for the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument. This protected area incorporates approximately 95,216 square miles within three units in the Mariana Archipelago. The national monument was created by President George W Bush in 2009 and contains unique and pristine marine environments (PNC, 12 April 2011).

Among those politicians who passed away over the last year were former Inarajan Mayor Juan Cruz, former Yigo Mayor Jesus Cruz, former

Mongmong-Toto-Maite Mayor Jose Santos, and former Assistant Commissioner of Tamuning Maria Leon Guererro. In the arts, the year saw the passing of Chamorro master weaver Thomas Torres and artist and sculptor Greg Flores. Other prominent residents to pass on were Marian Johnston Taitano, who was active in civic affairs, and the Reverend Daniel Cristobal, the first Chamorro Capuchin priest. All were recognized by condolence resolutions by the Guam Legislature.

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## MARSHALL ISLANDS

Threatened by impending sea-level rise, internal fraud schemes that reached into the highest levels of government, and potentially damag-

ing changes to its relationship with the United States, the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) spent the year under review facing its own mortality. The defining event of the period was the public discussion the country had about its physical and political sustainability as a nation-state, and what to do in the eventuality of its disappearance. It was during this time that the Marshall Islands had to consider not only the real prospect of being an early victim of global climate change, but indeed its very existence within the community of nations; at the same time, it also had to deal with internal strife and external relations that put its governing mechanisms to the test.

In late August, for the first time since 1997, the Marshall Islands made the editorial pages of the *New York Times*, as an unsigned editorial posed the question: "If a country sinks beneath the sea, is it still a country?" (*NYT*, 30 Aug 2010). The editorial considered the potential ramifications of the political and diplomatic status of the Marshalls should its actual landmass become uninhabitable, a situation now considered imminent. In response, RMI Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Marshall Islands to the United Nations Phillip Muller wrote a letter to the editor, seeking to pressure nations in attendance at the 2009 Copenhagen climate change meeting to make good on their promise of US\$30 billion in aid (*NYT*, 5 Sept 2010). In November, Muller again called on the Copenhagen signatories to produce US\$20 million for a three-mile-long seawall on the leeward side of Majuro (Johnson 2010). While both the funding and the seawall have yet to appear, the issue of environmen-