

Political Reviews

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

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Reviews of Kiribati and Nauru are not included in this issue.

FEDERATED STATES OF
MICRONESIA

In August 2010, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) President Emanuel “Manny” Mori traveled to Vanuatu to attend the 41st meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum. While in Vanuatu, on 4 August, Mori signed a Partnership for Development Agreement with the Australian government. Through jointly determined technical and financial assistance, the agreement will support FSM efforts to implement development strategies geared toward sustainable economic growth. In exchange for Australian assistance, “the FSM Government will pursue its development through appropriate budgets, laws, policies, strategies and programs; will optimize the use of aid to achieve this development; and will continue to work towards its Millennium Development Goals” (FSMIS Press Release, 13 Aug 2010).

The World Health Organization (WHO) became the most recent international organization to establish a presence in the Federated States when it opened a new Country Liaison Office (CLO) on 16 August 2010. The opening ceremony commenced with the unveiling of a WHO plaque at the entrance of the Department of Health and Social Affairs office building, where the liaison office is located. According to the press release from

the office of the FSM president, this liaison office “is the first one ever established by the organization to cover the North Pacific region” and “the first new CLO created by the WHO in 30 years.” Serving the Federated States, the Marshall Islands, and Palau, the office will assist health officials in such areas as diabetes, heart disease, infectious diseases, injury prevention, health system strengthening, and tobacco control. It will help in detecting and responding to outbreaks of such infectious diseases as multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis and dengue. In addition, it will coordinate and provide training for health professionals in the countries within its regional jurisdiction (FSMIS Press Release, 16 Aug 2010).

Also in August, FSM Vice President Alik L Alik received Ambassador Christian-Ludwig Weber-Lortsch of the Federal Republic of Germany. Weber-Lortsch has been the German resident ambassador in the Philippines since 2008 and is also diplomatically accredited to the Federated States. The ambassador returned to the Federated States to seek support for his country’s ultimately successful candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council. Weber-Lortsch took the opportunity to inform the vice president that his government is providing a grant of \$7,000 to Micronesian Seminar (MicSem) to defray travel expenses for MicSem representatives who wish to

visit selected archives and institutions in Germany in order to make copies of rare Micronesian historical photographs from the German period. The ambassador also expressed his government's desire to establish an Honorary Consul for Germany in the Federated States and also raised the possibility of locating a European Union Regional Office in the country (FSMIS Press Release, 16 Aug 2010).

A month after the German ambassador's visit, a group of French lawmakers, accompanied by the French ambassador to the Philippines, arrived "to observe, listen and learn from their encounters with people of the region." The group represented a French Senate organization called Groupe D'Amitié et D'Études des Pays du Pacifique (Group of Friendship and Study of the Countries of the Pacific), which sends annual goodwill and fact-finding missions to Pacific Island countries. According to the FSM Information Service, the team reports back to the French Senate "to discuss the needs and aspirations voiced by the different spokespeople they meet on such trips" (FSMIS Press Release, 22 Sept 2010).

In October 2010, British Ambassador Stephen Lillie arrived to present his official credentials to President Mori. Lillie is the new UK resident ambassador in the Philippines and is diplomatically accredited to the Federated States of Micronesia. The United Kingdom is a Pacific Islands Forum Dialogue Partner and has sent high-level government officials to attend Forum meetings. The ambassador welcomed the Federated States' role in raising international awareness of climate change through powerful speeches at the UN General Assem-

bly and other venues, as well as the actions taken through the "Green Micronesia Initiative" to ameliorate climate-change impacts. President Mori informed Ambassador Lillie that during the upcoming UN Climate Change Conference in Mexico the FSM Government would "continue to seek the support of the UK Government and the European Union . . . to combat climate change." The president further informed the ambassador that during that conference the Federated States intended to introduce proposals to phase out hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) and to "eliminate one of the six gases listed in the Kyoto Protocol" (FSMIS Press Release, 12 Oct 2010).

The country has made significant political overtures to the Muslim world. On 13 October 2010, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Kingdom of Morocco established formal diplomatic relations when Ambassador Masao Nakayama, the head of the FSM Permanent Mission to the United Nations, and his Moroccan counterpart, Ambassador Mohammed Loulichki, signed a joint communiqué in New York expressing the desires of the two countries to "promote friendly relations and cooperation . . . in political, economic, cultural and other fields" (FSMIS Press Release, 13 Oct 2010). The two countries agreed that the principles and objectives of the United Nations Charter and the 1961 Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic and Consular Relations would guide their new relationship.

About three weeks earlier, the Federated States wrote what was referred to as a "significant page in the diplomatic history" of the country. While in

New York to participate in the meeting of the 65th UN General Assembly, FSM Secretary of Foreign Affairs Lorin S Robert and his Egyptian counterpart, Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit, signed a formal agreement establishing non-resident ambassadorial-level diplomatic relations between the Federated States and the Arab Republic of Egypt. In the joint communiqué announcing the formalization of their diplomatic relations, the two countries stated that they “are fully convinced that the establishment of diplomatic relations corresponds to the interests of both States and will strengthen international peace and stability” (FSMIS Press Release, 25 Sept 2010). The establishment of diplomatic relations with Egypt is historic because Egypt was the first Arab country to formally recognize the sovereignty of the Federated States of Micronesia, but the FSM press release indicated other considerations for establishing formal ties with Egypt. For instance, it pointed to Egypt’s place in history, its role as a key player in the Middle East, and its status as the most populated Arab country. It further mentioned the fact that Egypt is “considered comparatively more moderate than its neighboring Arab countries” and that, in November 1977, it “broke ranks with the other Arab states and established friendly relations with the State of Israel” (FSMIS Press Release, 25 Sept 2010).

Vice President Alik, who was also in New York to address the 65th UN General Assembly, took the opportunity to meet with Peter Rosenblatt and other members of the American Jewish Committee (AJC) on 24 September 2010. Mr Rosenblatt’s acquaintance

with the Federated States started when he was the chief US negotiator of the first Compact of Free Association, during President Jimmy Carter’s administration. The American Jewish Committee is a worldwide organization headquartered in New York City, with a key office in Washington DC to liaise with federal agencies and monitor international activities. The committee started in the early 1900s as “a response to bigotry aimed at Russian Jews.” Now it has morphed into “an advocacy organization and a think-tank committed to supporting the State of Israel and combating anti-Semitism by promoting pluralism and democratic values, among others” (FSMIS Press Release, 19 Oct 2010).

With its headquarters located in the same city as the United Nations, the American Jewish Committee has been able to establish and maintain contact with high FSM government officials who arrive to address the world body. As pointed out in a press release, the meeting between FSM officials and AJC members is now a “tradition.” In what has been dubbed “a triangular relationship,” the American Jewish Committee has played a major role “in promoting relations between the FSM and the State of Israel with the US as the base of operation.” This relationship has led to unequivocal FSM support for Israel “in the context of the UN System and other multilateral forums” and, in response, to what Rosenblatt described as “a groundswell of gratitude of the people and leaders of Israel.” The Federated States has benefited from direct AJC humanitarian assistance as well as from the committee’s help in securing the donation of medicines by an

Israeli pharmaceutical company and in arranging for the Israeli government to provide two dialysis machines (FSMIS Press Release, 19 Oct 2010).

The preceding paragraphs reveal the depth of the official FSM relationship with Israel. Whether this commitment is a spinoff of the Federated States' relationship with the United States is not relevant to this review. Suffice it to say that relations with Israel have become the linchpin of the FSM foreign policy toward the Arab countries. The impact of this policy has limited the ability of the Federated States to reach out to Muslim countries for technical and financial assistance in social and economic development.

In August 2010, Vice President Alik led a delegation to the World Expo in Shanghai, China. While at the Expo, Alik, along with Shanghai Vice Mayor Tu Guangshao and other FSM and Chinese dignitaries, celebrated FSM National Day at a flag-raising ceremony, with the FSM national anthem played by a Chinese military band. After the ceremony, Vice President Alik gave his formal speech in the Expo Center's Welcome Hall. Thanking the Chinese government for supporting the Federated States' participation, he said, "We truly appreciate the opportunity to be part of the World Expo, and we continually look forward to working with the Chinese Government for future projects" (FSMIS Press Release, 30 Aug 2010).

The special attention China granted to the Federated States at the Shanghai Expo is a tribute to the long and stable relationship between the two countries, which is based on the "One China" policy. Besides the United

States, the People's Republic of China (PRC) was the first permanent member of the UN Security Council to recognize the Federated States' sovereign independence and to establish an embassy there. At present, the PRC embassy in the Federated States is its only foothold in the Micronesian region.

From 9 to 22 August 2010, President Mori visited the southeastern islands of Chuuk State—the Mortlock Islands—with a large delegation of national officials. According to the press release, the president discussed the importance of Chuuk State's financial reform, sponsored jointly with the national government. This reform, the president reported, has reduced Chuuk's deficit and created positive cash flow during the past two years. The Mortlockese, however, were more concerned about the solvency of the FSM social security program. The president informed the Mortlockese that he would recommend that the FSM Congress fund social security from the tax revenue collected from newly registered corporations. The national government is expected to generate \$10–20 million from this taxing scheme. In addition, Mori said he would ask the congress to "revamp the social security system to be more efficient and responsive to people's immediate needs" (FSMIS Press Release, 6 Sept 2010).

The president also informed the people that his administration is working with the country's development partners to assist with power needs. He explained that he intended "to gradually replace electricity generators with solar and windmill power sources" (FSMIS Press Release, 6 Sept

2010). As a political gesture to the Mortlockese, and perhaps with an eye toward the March 2011 election, the president administered the oath of office to Marion Henry—a local boy—to head the national Department of Resources and Development.

The president's statement during his visit to the Mortlocks indicates the entrenchment of his administration's involvement in Chuuk affairs. For example, he continues to flaunt the reform of the national government that was instituted jointly with Chuuk. Although this has produced positive results for the administration of the state, some believe it remains a flagrant violation of the federalism enunciated in the national constitution. The president seemed set to continue interfering in states' affairs when he announced his intention to replace electrical generators with sustainable energy sources. The president can only *assist* the states in acquiring solar and windmill energy because the national government does not run power plants in any of the states. Each of the states sets its own power policy and regulations.

The FSM Department of Education was jolted into reality when it received data from the US Department of Education indicating that about 61 percent of the teachers in public and private primary and secondary schools do not meet the certification requirement under FSM law. To meet statutory requirements as well as those of the Compact US-FSM Joint Economic Management Committee (JEMCO), the Mori administration is asking the FSM Congress to appropriate \$3.5 million for a teacher-certification program. The national department of educa-

tion is collecting data from the four states, which it hopes will show how many teachers are enrolled in training programs and how many plan to take the National Standardized Tests for Teachers. Taking these steps may fulfill the teachers' individual development plans and satisfy JEMCO conditions for teacher certification. JEMCO approval will offer a respite of one or two years so that the 1,183 uncertified teachers can acquire their teaching certificates (FSMIS Press Release, 6 Sept 2010).

On 22 September 2010, Beaulen Carl-Worswick became the first woman to serve as an associate justice on the FSM Supreme Court. Carl-Worswick graduated from Hawaii Loa College (now Hawai'i Pacific University) on O'ahu in 1984. She received her legal education at Gonzaga University Law School in Spokane, Washington. She has extensive experience in private practice and has worked with the state and national governments (FSMIS Press Release, 22 Sept 2010). President Mori should be commended for appointing such a well-qualified woman to serve in the national court system.

During the March 2011 national election, four incumbent senators lost their seats—a rare occurrence in FSM national elections. Senators Peter Sitan and Joe Suka of Chuuk and Fredrick Primo of Pohnpei lost to three state legislators. In the Chuuk State at-large seat, President Mori defeated incumbent Sitro Paul and Anna Asauo Wengu, the only female candidate in the election. Vice President Alik ran unopposed for the at-large seat in Kosrae. These victories cleared the way for Manny Mori and Alik Alik to seek reelection.

After the general election, and in the congressional caucus immediately preceding the presidential election, Pohnpei made concerted efforts to get its at-large senator, Peter Christian, elected to the presidency. Despite this, however, on 11 May 2011, the 17th FSM Congress reelected Manny Mori and Alik Alik to the presidency and vice presidency, respectively. FSM Chief Justice Martin Yinug administered the oath of office to the two men in the congressional chamber. A more public swearing-in ceremony took place on 29 July 2011 in the FSM-China Friendship Sports Center at the College of Micronesia-FSM.

President Mori's victory is a tribute to the strong unity of the Chuuk delegation and to the president's ability to broker political compromise with members of the other congressional delegations. His victory in the general election is also a model for future presidents to emulate in order to overcome the first hurdle in their reelection attempts. President Mori spent less money on reelection efforts than his two opponents did. He did not succumb to pressure to pardon the former Chuukese national senators convicted of felonies in the FSM Supreme Court. The president's dogged attention to Chuuk state affairs, regardless of its constitutionality, paid him a fine dividend in the general election.

In his inaugural speech, President Mori reviewed his accomplishments in his first term and laid out his plan and vision for his second. Notably missing from the president's speech was his administration's plan of action regarding Micronesian immigration problems, which the US Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

broached in a letter to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar. The letter raised concerns about the free-migration provisions of the compact and recommended policies to reduce the burden on US states experiencing "compact impact" (PIR 12 May 2011; Johnson 2011).

The president also did not address a political problem in his own backyard: the "on and off" Faichuk secession movement. The Faichuk independence movement is becoming a political comedy on a grand international scale. Acting President Kachutosy Paulus of the so-called Faichuk Republic has declared the existence of Faichuk as a distinct political entity that is independent from the Federated States of Micronesia. The acting president issued the independence declaration in Guam, and subsequently, a self-styled Chinese ambassador to the Faichuk Republic showed up in Pohnpei to inform the PRC resident ambassador of her status. This angered the PRC ambassador and blind-sided and embarrassed national officials, including President Mori (Jaynes 2011).

The election of Manny Mori to the presidency and Alik Alik to the vice presidency rendered the two at-large congressional seats for Chuuk and Kosrae vacant. In the special election to fill the vacancies, the voters in Chuuk elected Governor Wesley Simina to replace Manny Mori, and the Kosraean voters chose Yosiwo George, ambassador to the United States, to fill Vice President Alik's former seat. Prior to winning the Chuuk at-large seat, Governor Simina's political experience had been confined to state politics. Ambassador George has had extensive

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