

SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 17-04

RE: COMMITTEE TO WAIT ON THE PRESIDENT

NOVEMBER 22, 2011

The Honorable Isaac V. Figir
Speaker, Seventeenth Congress
Federated States of Micronesia
Second Special Session, 2011

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Your Committee to Wait on the President, consisting of Yosiwo P. George (chairman), Tiwiter Aritos, Dohsis Halbert, and Joseph J. Urusemal (members), was duly appointed on November 17, 2011.

The Committee met with President Manny Mori and Vice President Alik L. Alik on November 18, 2011. Also in attendance were members of the Cabinet and staff. Chairman George greeted the President and Vice President, members of the cabinet and staff on behalf of Congress, and thanked them for taking the time to meet with the Committee. He reported that Congress had convened and was ready to transact business.

The President restated the issues for which he had called the special session: his nominations, his proposed supplemental budget, and resolutions approving treaties and grants. He stated that he recognized the time constraints facing Congress given the brevity of the session, and that of these issues the supplemental budget was the most important. He explained that the proposed budget restored items that had been cut from the final budget for FY2012. In addition, he stated that the supplemental budget would create a Micronesian Affairs position in the Department of Foreign Affairs. The President also requested funding for a National/State Leadership Conference to address a number of issues including immigration, tax reform, the threshold for constitutional amendments, dual citizenship, and the future of COM-FSM, which could be held back-to-back with the 16th MCES in Kosrae.

The President emphasized that his administration intended to focus on ways of generating revenue to meet the long-term needs

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of the nation. In terms of grants, the President expressed his hope that Congress would approve the second of the two grants from the People's Republic of China that he had submitted. The President stated that he and his staff were ready to provide any additional information that Congress and its committees might require in considering his proposals for the session.

The President reported on recent meetings with FSM communities in Hawaii and Guam. He stated that he had stressed the need for FSM citizens to be good guests, and to respect the culture and laws there. Among the questions raised there was how to better facilitate the issuing of passports, and the President expressed the hope that Congress would fund the passport processing equipment in Hawaii and Guam. The President also stated he hoped Congress would support his proposed survey of FSM citizens living abroad, for which he was hoping to secure funding from OIA.

The President concluded his remarks by reporting on the recent APEC Ministerial Meeting in Honolulu, and stated that Secretary Clinton and other senior US officials had stressed their long-term commitment to the Pacific region, as well as their willingness to increase the funding for their fishing treaty with Pacific island nations.

The members of the Committee each greeted the President. In response to questions from members of the Committee regarding cash flow issues, the President stated that there were agreements with Kosrae and Chuuk for the National government to advance funds for infrastructure projects that had been approved before the funds were received from OIA. He said that although this had not been a problem in the past, the arrangement might have to be revisited given the large scope of current projects.

The President also stated that recent aid from the People's Republic of China had been granted subject to subsequent agreement on what the funds should be used for. He expressed his intention to seek approval from Congress once the use of the funds, probably for three or four projects, had been agreed upon with the Chinese government.

There was some discussion of the proposal for a new power plant in Chuuk, and Senator Halbert pointed out that there were also problems with the power supply in Pohnpei.

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The Secretary of the Department of Health and Social Affairs gave an update on the Dengue Fever outbreak in Yap. She stated that there were 315 known cases, of which 70 had been admitted to hospital, and two deaths. There were 27 cases in Ulithi and one in Fais. She said that the most urgent need currently was for mosquito nets and mosquito repellent, and that some such supplies had been provided by the CDC and WHO. She stated that there was also a need for additional medical personnel.

Chairman George thanked the President and Vice President for their time and stated he would inform Congress of their discussion.

The meeting was brought to a close with mutual expressions of appreciation and good wishes.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Yosiwo P. George
Yosiwo P. George, chairman

/s/ Tiwiter Aritos
Tiwiter Aritos, member

/s/ Dohsis Halbert
Dohsis Halbert, member

/s/ Joseph J. Urusemal
Joseph J. Urusemal, member