

SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 19-10

RE: COMMITTEE TO WAIT ON THE PRESIDENT

JULY 26, 2016

The Honorable Wesley W. Simina
Speaker, Nineteenth Congress
Federated States of Micronesia
Fifth Special Session, 2016

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Your Committee to Wait on the President, consisting of members Alik L. Alik, Isaac V. Figir, Esmond B. Moses, and Robson Romolow was duly appointed on July 25, 2016. Alik L. Alik was designated as the Chairman.

The Committee met with the President and Vice-President on July 25, 2016, at 11:30 a.m. Chairman Alik greeted the President and Vice-President, and key members of the Executive on behalf of Congress, and thanked them for the opportunity to meet. Chairman Alik reported that Congress was in session and was ready to transact business. Your Committee reviewed the President's agenda and stated its priorities were generally in agreement with the Executive Branch for this special session.

The President greeted the Committee, and stated he had a proposed priority list of eight items he would to address with it. The President advised the Committee that some of his cabinet members were off island, but that he would make every effort to have most of the relevant members of each of his departments on Pohnpei and available during the session for hearings.

The President stated that there would be a supplemental budget request transmitted shortly for Congress to take action on this session. Members of your Committee and the President agreed that an understanding needed to be reached regarding the prioritization of the supplemental budget request as the available funding may not accommodate all of the requested items.

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Generally, the President advised your Committee that the supplemental budget request would include additional funding for: 1) hosting the Pacific Islands Forum, 2) retainer for a U.S. law firm to assist in negotiations with the U.S. regarding post 2023 Compact issues, 3) AIP matching appropriation (a separate appropriation request), as well as, some additional smaller matters.

Before discussing the priority items on his agenda the President stressed his desire to have Congress work on the pending nominations so that the Executive Branch could have all its important departments and boards' leadership in place.

The first priority item the President discussed was the PIF/PIDF forums. He stated that it was his intention to make further examination of both organizations and make a determination as to whether it was in the Nation's best interest to belong to both, or if one organization membership was sufficient given the limited resources and time constraints of the National Government.

The next item under discussion was the plan by the Governor of Guam to repatriate citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia who are incarcerated. The President has been working with the Departments of Justice, and Foreign Affairs regarding this issue. Some issues have been identified with the government of Guam's actions, and the President stated this is an ongoing concern. Further clarification regarding the rights of the repatriated individuals, concerns regarding public health and safety in our Nation and the wider political and legal implications regarding the U.S., are among the areas that need investigation.

The President then turned the discussion to the upcoming visit of the U.S. Special Envoy in early August. The primary reason for this visit is the U.S. request that the Federated States of Micronesia take in three individuals who were long time detainees in Guantanamo. This subject is at its initial stages of negotiation and the President called attention to the matter so Congress can be made aware of the issue as it develops.

The President continued on to address another issue regarding his priorities, which was the MiCare Insurance Program. In the past several months issues regarding the Program have been brought to the attention of the Departments of Justice, and Finance and

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Administration. The President would like to have the relevant Congress Committees do a detailed oversight with the Program, and the several relevant departments of the Executive Branch. It is understood by your Committee that some of the off island referral facilities are refusing further patients citing non-payment by MiCare and MiCare now has some issues regarding its internal payroll system.

The next subject addressed by the President was the appropriation to pay student debt to San Diego State University. The President stated he would like to see the language of this appropriation revisited so that it is entirely clear as to the intention of Congress. Your Committee agreed to hold further discussions with the relevant Congress Committees, the College and the President regarding this matter.

The discussion then turned to the ongoing issues regarding the Nepalese and Vietnamese fishermen caught illegally fishing in our Nation's waters. Nine Nepalese fishermen were caught over a year ago in Yap. Claims were made by these fishermen that they were entitled to refugee status, and these claims triggered a lengthy investigation by international bodies, predominately the United Nations Human Rights Commission. It now has been determined that only three of the nine qualifies as refugees under international law. The remaining six will be deported to Nepal. Currently, work is being done to secure the six fishermen transit visas from the U.S. Government to travel through Guam to return to Nepal. The Vietnamese fishermen number 42, and all have been arrested with cases pending in court.

At the conclusion of the meeting the President also noted that the ratification of the Paris Agreement on climate change was before Congress, as is the request for an appropriation for the new Guam Consulate Office.

Both the President and the Committee agree that the President's agenda was extensive for this ten day special session, and further agreed for the President to meet with the members of Congress on Friday to further discuss and prioritize the matters as discussed in this meeting.

The meeting concluded with mutual agreement to move forward on the above issues in a timely and cooperative manner. Your Committee kindly requests the members address any further questions regarding

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the priority issues for this session to the members of the Committee during the discussion of this report at session.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Alik L. Alik
Alik L. Alik, chairman

/s/ Isaac V. Figir
Isaac V. Figir, member

/s/ Esmond B. Moses
Esmond B. Moses, member

/s/ Robson U. Romolow
Robson Romolow, member