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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

December 19, 1985

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PUBLIC LANDS
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TERRITORIAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Donald R. Fortier
Deputy Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Fortier:

We recently completed the Compact of Free Association for Micronesia. While this will resolve an important concern of the United States, much remains to be done in the Pacific.

I have enclosed a study, "Correcting United States Underrepresentation in the 'New Pacific'." As the title implies, there is inadequate U.S. presence among the independent Pacific island countries.

I do not believe the U.S. has overtly neglected the region. Rather, a number of changes and forces at work have now made the lack of U.S. presence apparent. These include:

- A two-decade political evolution with the establishment of 11 independent island countries (or 14 including the prospective Freely Associated States of Micronesia)
- The unprecedented assertion of Soviet and Cuban influence.
- The nuclear-free fervor sweeping the South Pacific.
- Multi-lateral regional aid with low U.S. recognition, funding, and no direct aid programs.

I believe we must exercise foresight and take proactive rather than reactive steps to protect United States strategic, economic and political interests in the Pacific.

Your comments on the study and its recommendations would be appreciated.

Sincerely,

ROBERT J. LAGOMARSINO
Member of Congress

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CORRECTING UNITED STATES UNDERREPRESENTATION
IN THE "NEW PACIFIC"

A Study of the Evolving Political Relationships
in the Pacific Island Community, with
Recommendations of Actions Necessary to Maintain
United States' National Security Interests
in the South Pacific

Prepared for

THE HONORABLE ROBERT J. LAGOMARSINO
MEMBER OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE,
INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS COMMITTEE,
AND MINORITY REPRESENTATIVE FOR TERRITORIAL AFFAIRS

By
Manase Mansur
Committee Staff Consultant

December 1985

CORRECTING U.S. UNDERREPRESENTATION IN THE "NEW PACIFIC"

The "New Pacific" is here. Eleven island countries have become independent states since 1962. In addition, the sovereignty of the three Freely Associated States of Micronesia become effective with the termination of the United Nation's trusteeship. It is a region undergoing political change and it is incumbent upon the United States to accommodate that change.

The United States cannot afford to disregard the attention required of this evolving region. It is indisputably vital to the strategic and economic health of the United States. The Soviets have shown an increased interest in the area. They have successfully negotiated a fishing agreement with Kiribati, whose islands are scattered over five million square kilometers of the central Pacific Ocean. Cuba has established diplomatic relations with Vanuatu. The communist sphere of influence has shown itself in Pacific trade unions and in factions in the Philippines and New Caledonia. The dispute with New Zealand over port access has encouraged anti-nuclear activists in the South Pacific to press friendly governments to adopt policies that would effectively ban U.S. warships from the region.

The United States has been slow to adequately respond to the region's political evolution. The U.S. has considered the Pacific islands to be unimportant due to their small landmass and population size. Many are actually gaints, considering their 200 mile extended economic zones within the archipelagic concept (see Appendix A). While this Administration has publicly recognized the importance of the region and applauded island leaders who have supported a U.S. presence in the South Pacific, it has been less successful in giving material substance to its praise in the form of increased assistance. In real terms, U.S. assistance to the region has been declining.

A strong signal needs to be sent to the nations of the Pacific islands that we do care, that they are important. That signal must be in the form of concrete action. The U.S. has started to inch in that direction. In 1978, U.S. embassies were established in two Melanesian island countries, Fiji and Papua-New Guinea, which are the region's most populous countries. A \$1.5 million direct U.S. bilateral aid program with Fiji was formally announced during the visit of Fiji Prime Minister Sir Ratu Mara with President Reagan in November 1984. The bilateral agreement is still being negotiated.

However, the U.S. continues to be underrepresented in the Pacific Islands. It has been extremely difficult to maintain a presence throughout the islands from Fiji, Papua-New Guinea, and New Zealand. This is in part because the island states are spread over thousands of miles of ocean. Transportation and telecommunication difficulties exacerbate the problem. Not only has our presence been low but our accessibility by island countries has been limited. Without adequate accessibility, the island states cannot readily consult the U.S. as issues arise, and before they become major problems.

Given the underrepresentation of the U.S. in the Pacific Islands, two questions must be answered:

How can we know what is happening in the island countries?

How can we influence the island States before damaging decisions are made?

The answer to both questions is the establishment of additional embassies.

This answer begs the answer of two more questions:

How many additional embassies?

Where should they be located?

Two embassies, smaller in size to those in Fiji and Papua-New Guinea, would meet our needs. The small size is appealing due to the lower cost; yet it would be sufficient for correcting our underrepresentation.

The locations can be determined by using the following criteria:

1. United Nations Membership
2. Predominate sphere of influence
3. Population base
4. Landmass size
5. Pro-Western stance

The attached chart outlines the above criteria for five high-profile island countries. (see Appendix B).

The criteria clearly points to two countries as sites for new embassies: Western Samoa and the Solomon Islands. Both are highly regarded members of the Pacific island community. Their regional influence is enhanced with the South Pacific Forum countries' headquarters for shipping in Western Samoa and fishing in the Solomon Islands.

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WESTERN SAMOA

Western Samoa would be the first island country of Polynesian influence with a U.S. embassy. Papua-New Guinea and Fiji are primarily Melanesian. The neighboring islands of Tuvalu, the Cook Islands, Tonga, Tokelau, Niue, Nauru and Kiribati consider Western Samoa a leading force among the independent island States. Western Samoa was the first island group to become an independent country on January 1, 1962. Other countries following the lead:

<u>Country</u>	<u>Date of Independence</u>
Cook Islands.....	4/1/65
Republic of Nauru.....	1/31/68
Kingdom of Tonga.....	6/4/70
Fiji.....	10/10/70
Niue.....	10/19/74
Papua-New Guinea.....	9/16/75
Solomon Islands.....	7/7/78
Tuvalu.....	10/1/78
Kiribati.....	7/12/79
Vanuatu.....	7/30/80

Western Samoa leads the region in other areas. The headquarters of the Pacific Forum Line, the regional shipping organization of the South Pacific Forum, is located in Western Samoa. Also located there is the Agriculture College of the University of the South Pacific, which draws students from all of the Pacific islands. Next year, Western Samoa's expanded international airport will be ready to accept jumbo jets, potentially making it one of the Pacific's top tourist destinations.

THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

Although the Solomon Islands ranks third in population size behind Papua-New Guinea and Fiji, it has the second largest landmass area of all the Pacific islands (fifty percent larger than Fiji). Given the Solomon Islands high population growth rate, it will be heavily populated and increasingly influential in the future. The Solomon Islands is a key player in the regional fisheries agreement as it is the headquarters of the South Pacific Fisheries Agency of the South Pacific Forum. The fisheries agreement is the most sensitive economic and political issue among Pacific island countries. United States' influence would be profoundly enhanced with an embassy in the Solomon Islands.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Finalize and initiate President Reagan's bilateral assistance agreement with Fiji.
2. Conclude a regional fisheries agreement and mobilize Congressional support for its implementation.
3. Establish embassies in Western Samoa and the Solomon Islands.
4. Expand aid to the region through bilateral aid programs to include:
 - a. Technical assistance in improving fishing methods ocean resource management.
 - b. The survey, installation and maintenance of aids-to-navigation.
 - c. Military assistance through training programs emphasizing enforcement of drug traffic.
 - d. Historic preservation technical assistance to identify, survey and preserve indigenous historical sites.
 - e. Scholarships for vocational, technical and graduate studies.
 - f. Existing agriculture and foreign aid programs not yet utilized in the Pacific Islands.
 - g. Other projects mutually determined to be needed.
5. Complete a Congressional visit of all independent island states within the next two years.
6. Invite government leaders from the various island governments to visit the Congress.
7. Encourage the Executive Branch to extend presidential invitations to visit to the leaders of Papua-New Guinea, Western Samoa, and Solomon Islands.

The first four recommendations are concrete actions of substantive nature with a tremendous payoff for the United States: strategically, economically, and politically. The last three recommendations would project U.S. concern for the Pacific Islands. It would also provide the Congress with a closer look at the character of the region and its people while enabling those countries to share their needs and views.

The first action recommended is to expeditiously conclude President Reagan's bilateral assistance agreement with Fiji, which was signed by the respected South Pacific statesman, Fijian Prime Minister Sir Ratu Kamisese Mara in November 1984. A belated fruition of this promised aid program could cause other island countries to be wary and reluctant. The pending Fijian agreement does not upstage what the Pacific Islands view as the region's most important economic and political issue -- a regional fisheries agreement.

The U.S. must quickly conclude a regional fisheries agreement, the second recommendation, and promptly put it in place. Implementing such an agreement would open and strengthen communications. Without such an agreement, the presence of the U.S. flag tuna fleet in the region will continue to undermine our relations and provide the Soviets with an attractive target of opportunity to embarrass the U.S. and infiltrate the South Pacific.

A third action of particular importance to the United States is the establishment of new embassies in Western Samoa and the Solomon Islands, which would do two things immediately. First, our presence would be sufficient to correct the current underrepresentation. Second, our improved accessibility by Pacific island states would enhance local and regional pro-Western policies.

Expanding assistance to the region is the fourth recommendation with a tremendous potential of directly benefiting the U.S. These aid programs extended through mutual agreements, would be welcomed by the resource-limited islands. The new aid programs would give the islands reason to reject Soviet offers of assistance, while raising U.S. prestige, and keeping island ports open to U.S. nuclear-powered and armed ships.

The other recommendations are important in developing strong political relations and goodwill. There needs to be a continuous intertwining of actions of goodwill and substance. While words without deeds are hollow, actions without goodwill are detrimental.

SUMMARY:

The underrepresentation of the United States in the Pacific, a region of recently evolved independent countries can be corrected by taking action. The type of action that would result in the highest strategic, economic and political payoff to the United States is the conclusion of fisheries and aid agreements, the establishment of small but effective embassies in Western Samoa and the Solomon Islands, and the exchange of high-level government visits. It is the combination of actions of substance and political goodwill that would effectively stop and reverse the Soviet penetration in a vital region of the world. The future strategic and economic concerns of the United States would be furthered by the closer bonding of ties with the newly evolved countries of the "New Pacific".

APPENDIX B

NAME	U.N. MEMBER	PREDOMINATE SPHERE OF FLUENCE	POPULATION	LANDMASS (SQUARE KILOMETERS)	PRO WESTERN STANCE	REMARKS
Western Samoa	Yes	Polynesia	159,000	2,842	Yes	Refused assistance offers from Soviets for fisheries & construction of projects.
Solomon Islands	Yes	Melanesia	246,000	28,446	Yes*	In June 84, the Solomon Islands Gov't. seized a U.S. tuna boat. Headquarters of the Forum Fisheries is in Honiari, Solomon Islands.
Vanuatu	Yes	Melanesia	126,000	14,763	No	Diplomatic ties have been established with Cuba. Cuba sponsored Vanuatu as a member of the non-aligned movement. Vanuatu has been hostile to U.S. nuclear policy.
Tonga	No	Polynesia	90,085	272	Yes	Turned down Soviet offer to build an intrnatl. airport.
Kiribati	No	Micronesia	56,452	266	Yes*	In May '85, Kiribati signed a 1-year fishing agreement with Soviets.

* While predominately pro-Western, the incident in "Remarks" strained U.S. relations.

NOTE: The Cook Islands, Tuvalu, Niue and Nauru were not profiled due to their lack of U.N. membership, small landmass size, and population base. New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna, French Polynesia, Tokelau Islands, and American Samoa were not profiled as they are territories of France, New Zealand (Tokelau Islands), and the United States (American Samoa).

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LAGOMARSINO, ROBERT

19 DEC 85

KEYWORDS: PACIFIC ISLANDS

CONGRESSIONAL

PCO (father)

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DOCDATE 19 DEC 85

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LAGOMARSINO, ROBERT

SUBJECT: LTR TO FORTIER FM LAGOMARSINO RE STUDY ON CORRECTING US
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