

Office of the President

THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

26 August 1986

His Excellency  
Ronald W. Reagan  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 10500

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing this letter to express the grave concern of my government regarding the lack of progress towards termination of the Trusteeship of the Pacific Islands and implementation of the Compact of Free Association between our two nations.

Since October of 1983, when the Marshall Islands approved the Compact, the United States has announced dates for implementation of the Compact that have come and gone without implementation occurring. In good faith reliance upon these assurances, we have embarked upon an ambitious development program to improve the living conditions of our people and to foster greater economic self-reliance. Our program is now in great jeopardy. We are concerned that if the Compact is not implemented by 30 September 1986, we may lose funds appropriated by Congress to implement the Compact in FY 1986. We need these funds to meet financial commitments for our development program. Further delay in implementation of the Compact will also negate the many months of time and effort that we have spent in preparing for implementation of the Compact.

It is our understanding that, if the Compact is not implemented by 30 September 1986, the \$150.0 million appropriated by Congress to settle claims arising from the United States nuclear testing program in the Marshall Islands will lapse and be subject to a lengthy re-appropriation process. For the past three years, those of our citizens who have suffered loss and damage to person and property as a result of the United States nuclear testing program have been denied the settlement they are due. This delay has cost them millions of dollars. Older Marshallese citizens who were subject to radiation exposure and displaced from their homes as a result of the nuclear testing program have died without ever being fairly compensated. Further delay would be inhumane.

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Most importantly, the delay in termination of the Trusteeship and implementation of the Compact has denied my people the full measure of self-government to which they are entitled. The Marshall Islands has an inherent right to be sovereign and self-governing. We cannot tolerate further delay. After being governed for the last 40 years under the United Nations Trusteeship, we feel very strongly that the Trusteeship must be terminated now.

For several years, the United States has enjoyed the benefits of the Compact. My government has provided the United States with use of the Kwajalein Missile Range. This has not been accomplished without great internal debate.

We want, and fully expect, termination of the Trusteeship and implementation of the Compact to occur by 30 September 1986. We respectfully request that you use the full authority of your office to bring about this result. I believe that further delay will diminish the reservoir of good will that the United States has earned in the Marshall Islands since the end of World War II and undermine the already deteriorating relations between the United States and Pacific Basin countries. The Compact agreement will not survive further delay.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

Amata Kabua  
President

xc: Vice President  
Secretary of State  
Secretary of Defense  
Secretary of the Interior  
Ambassador Fred M. Zeder

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send  
in

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Dear Mr. President:

Thank you for your very thoughtful letter of August 26. I am grateful that you have shared with me the concerns and aspirations of the Marshallese people regarding termination of the Trusteeship Agreement, and implementation of the Compact of Free Association.

The United States has deep respect for the sovereign act of self-determination made by the Marshallese people in approving the Compact of Free Association and every confidence in their ability, acting through their constitution, to govern themselves. And we are gratified that the Marshallese people have honored the United States by seeking to maintain close ties with us after the Trusteeship is terminated.

I know that the process of negotiations, and of consideration by our Congress has been a long and difficult one, requiring much patience and understanding by all concerned. However, I am hopeful that in the very near future we will formally begin the new relationship of free association between our two nations. In the meantime I have asked my representatives to meet with you and develop mutually satisfactory arrangements for the earliest possible implementation of the Compact in conjunction with Trusteeship termination and for any necessary special interim arrangements.

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You have my best wishes as you work with my representatives toward these goals and my pledge of cooperation as we embark on our new government-to-government relationship.

Sincerely

The Honorable Amata Kabua  
President of the Marshall Islands  
Majuro, Marshall Islands 96960