



**REPUBLIC OF PALAU**  
**OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT**

**SURANGEL WHIPPS, JR.**

*President*

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The Honorable Mike Johnson  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker,

A U.S. military commander told me that Palau “is part of the homeland” because of a relationship closer than the U.S. has with any other nation: We let the U.S. control sea and air borders over a Texas-size area next to the Philippines and Indonesia and give it the land needed for defense.

The commander also said “Palau has never been more vital strategically” because of shipping lanes the PRC covets and the location of the U.S.’ earliest Asia warning radars and missiles here.

The U.S. won military control of Palau through some of World War II’s bloodiest battles. It had that for 50 years while it governed our islands as a territory with a promise the U.N. to make us self-governing. Since then, however, U.S. military rights come from a Compact of Free Association that President Reagan urged us to accept, saying that we “would always be family.”

The Compact approved by U.S. law requires our governments to reconsider the relationship on its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. A Review initiated by President Trump produced an Agreement last May for amendments to take effect last October. Under the bipartisan leadership of Chairmen Westerman and McCaul and their Senate counterparts, legislation reflecting the Agreement – and similar agreements with the two other parts of the territory that became sovereign – has been cleared by all congressional committees with jurisdiction. Together, our nations effectively expand the U.S.’ borders strategically over an area larger than the 48 contiguous States beginning just west of Hawaii. A U.S. military expert testified that it would cost \$100 billion to replace this.

The CCP is trying to shift Palau’s alliances. It ramped up tourist visits in our largest industry to capture two-thirds of the market, crowding out other nations, and then took us ‘off the map’ when we would not renounce Taiwan. With Covid, this shrank our economy 30%.



It has offered to “fill every hotel room and more if” we “build more” and a 10,000-job call center with \$20 million a year, adding that “the sky’s the limit” if we agree to switch sides. Each additional day that the legislation is late gives the PRC and those here influenced by it or who want to accept its offers more of a chance to convince voters – with an election in November.

The legislation is crucial for both of our democracies and a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Surangel S. Whipps, Jr.".

Surangel S. Whipps, Jr.  
President of the Republic of Palau

cc: Chairman Bruce Westerman  
Chairman Michael McCaul  
Chairman Mike Rogers  
Chairman Mike Gallagher