



President

REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

February 12, 2024

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair, Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murray:

Thank you for initially including the legislation to enable the defense relationship between our nations, and the similar U.S. associations with Micronesia and Palau, established under President Reagan, endure for at least 20 more years in the supplemental appropriations bill. As you know, it has been cleared by all Senate and House committees with jurisdiction.

I am writing now to respectfully request that you do all possible to have the Senate pass the amendment for this purpose sponsored by Ranking Members Risch, Barrasso, and Wicker and Chairmen Manchin, Cardin, and Reed as well as and 14 other senators – 10 from each party.

Our three nations give the U.S. strategic control of an expanse of the sea and air larger than the 48 contiguous States – including shipping lanes the PRC covets – effectively extending the U.S. border for military purposes from Hawaii to Asia. A U.S. military expert testified that it would cost \$100 billion to replace this. In the Marshall Islands, we also host what the Joint Chiefs of Staff say is “the world’s premiere range” for ICBM testing and military space operations support.

There have been ‘carrot and stick’ efforts from the PRC to shift our alliances – including discontinuing support of Taiwan. A proposal to develop one of our atoll municipalities – if it were granted autonomy from our national government – that I opposed generated an effort to topple my government in our parliament. Later, people from the PRC were convicted by a U.S. court of bribing proposal supporters in our parliament who voted against me.

The amendment would approve agreements developed through a process personally initiated by President Trump in a meeting with me and the presidents of the other two nations. These agreements have an effective date of 2023. The U.S. governed the Marshall Islands for more than four decades before we attained nationhood. During this time, our people grew to identify with the U.S. and admire its values. Further delay in the approval of the agreements threatens to undermine confidence in the U.S. and to encourage some to agree to PRC enticements.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hilda C. Heine".

Hilda C. Heine
President