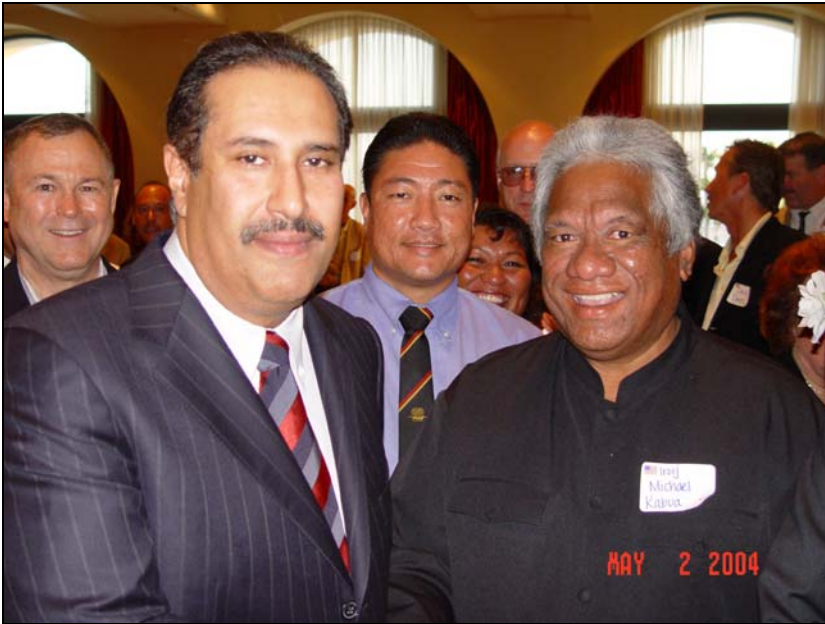


From the Marshall Islands Journal Friday, May 14, 2004



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Mike and the man from Qatar

Iroj Mike Kabua (right), Mayor James Matayoshi and Senator Abacca Anjain Maddison met US Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (far left) and Qatar Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim Al-Thani in California last week. Story Page 24.

Stick dancers stun Costa Mesa crowds

A private delegation from the Marshall Islands took part in the 15th Annual Pacific Islander Festival in the Los Angeles area.

Sponsored by the Pacific Islander Community Council of California, this year's festival honored the people and culture of the Marshall Islands. One of the highlights was the 30 member jobwa stick dance.

In addition to the cultural festival, Iroj Michael Kabua, Rongelap Senator Abacca Anjain-Maddison, and Rongelap Mayor James Matayoshi also attended a gathering hosted by US Rep. Dana Rohrabacher.

The featured speaker was Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassim Al-Thani, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs for Qatar.

The Foreign Minister of Qatar, perhaps the strongest ally of the US in the Arab world, gave a detailed presentation on the state of affairs in the Arab region.

Rohrabacher is a key member of the Asia and Pacific Subcommittee, Committee on International Relations, US House of Representatives.

“The 15th Annual Pacific Islander festival was a big success, and the Marshallese presentation was a highlight of the two-day event,” said Kabua.

“The reception given by Congressman Rohrabacher for the Foreign Minister was also a highlight of the trip.

“Even though we were a private delegation we were shown great kindness, which we took as an expression of respect for the people of the Marshall Islands.”

Kabua continued: “It is good for the Marshall Islands to see the world from a new point of view and see how we fit into the big picture on a global level.

“It should give us confidence that we are an important ally to the US and that we do our part. So it is important that the US also does its part.”

Matayoshi said it was educational to compare the experience as a small nation in strategic partnership with the US to the experience of Qatar, another nation that is a strategic partner of the US.

One of the similarities, he said, is that “Qatar has natural gas reserves that the US economy depends on each day. The RMI has a missile range the US depends on every day.

“That makes our partnership a success so far, but we need to study other strategic partnerships to learn how to sustain our success in the future.”