

Ready to Defend Guam...from the South?

...while the USA invested in circumcision in Mozambique & alphabet issues in Guatemala, the PRC invested in...



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The Pacific becomes smaller and smaller each day...and the People's Republic of China gets closer and closer.

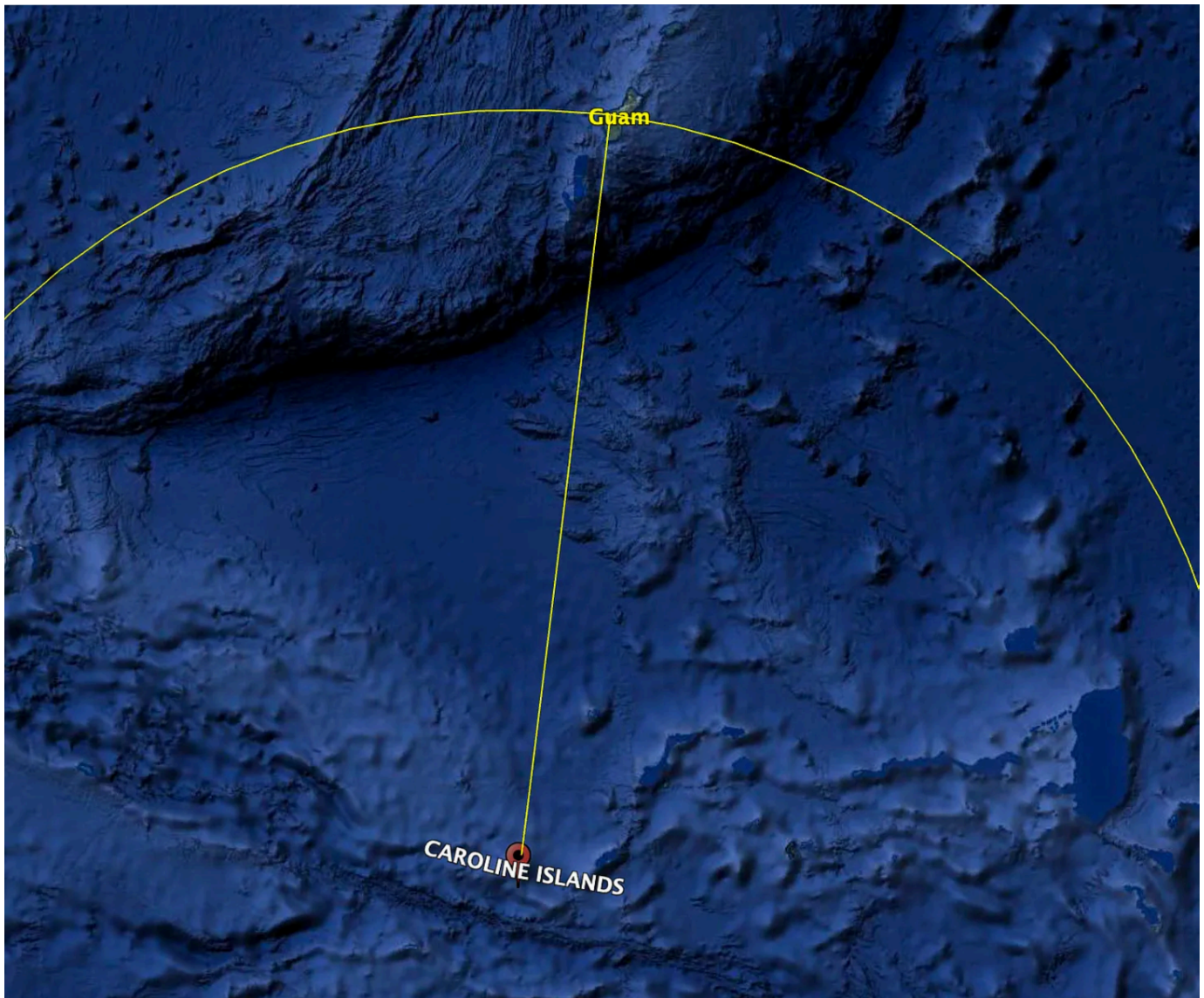
Unless you are a fan of the history of the lost and forgotten Imperial Japanese units bypassed until the end of the war, largely left to starve in the race to Tokyo, you may never have heard of the island of Woleai in the western Caroline Islands, part of the Yap state in the Federated States of Micronesia.

Just to catch everyone up:

The ([Federated States of Micronesia](#)) is a sovereign, self-governing state in [free association](#) with the [United States of America](#), which is wholly responsible for its defense. The [FSM National Police](#) operates a Maritime Wing Unit. The Compact of Free Association allows [FSM citizens](#) to join the U.S. military without having to obtain U.S. permanent residency or citizenship,^[24] allows for immigration and employment for Micronesians in the U.S., and establishes economic and technical aid programs.

Now that we have that set, as always, let's go to the chart room.

Where is she?



There you go: 360 nautical miles from Guam, almost due south. The same distance, as the cruise missile flies, as from Norfolk to Newport. Probably a good place for an airfield, wouldn't you think?

The Habele Institute has probably [the best history of the airfield on Woleai out there](#).

Late 1942 or early 1943: An airstrip was built by the [Japanese](#) who cleared the entire island to construct a single runway measuring 3,290' x 330' running roughly northeast to southwest. A taxiway 2,050' x 165' ran north to south.

We didn't like that too much, U.S. Navy Task Force 58 paid it a visit on April Fool's Day 1944.



Over the next few decades, there were improvements and maintenance done here and there. In the last decade, a pattern we've seen throughout the island nations of the Pacific started to show up.

The People's Republic of China has maps too. So...

April 30, 2025 (on or about): Chinese workers arrive in Yap, entering through a flight originating in [Palau](#), avoiding US Customs and Immigration on Guam. The workers board a ship bound for Woleai with equipment and materials for the airport.

May 2, 2025: FSM President Simina meets with US Admiral Stephen T. Koehler, Commander of U.S. Naval Forces Pacific in Palikir, [Pohnpei](#). "During their discussions, President Simina reaffirmed the FSM's deep appreciation for the enduring partnership between the FSM and the United States under the Compact of Free Association. The President emphasized that this partnership is not only strategic, but also personal, rooted in shared history, values, and mutual respect."

May 16, 2025: State-media in China reported that "President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) Wesley W. Simina "said on Friday that his country looks

forward to deepening cooperation with China in the years ahead....[thanking] the Chinese government and people for their selfless assistance to the development of the FSM, saying the center 'is more than concrete and steel -- it is a testament to the generosity and support of the government of the People's Republic of China.'" Further, "Simina said the FSM will continue to consolidate and develop friendly relations with China, and looks forward to continuing to deepen cooperation in the future and opening a new chapter in bilateral relations."

May 20, 2025: President Simina departs [Yap](#) for the [Outer Islands](#), with the publicly stated purpose of his trip being attendance at the high school graduations on [Ulithi](#), and then [Woleai](#), Atolls.

May 26, 2025: An elaborate [groundbreaking ceremony](#) was conducted on Falalop, Woleai celebrating the "Reconstruction of Woleai Airport Runway." The project was characterized as a partnership between Shandong Hengyue Municipal Engineering Co., Ltd. of the People's Republic of China and the Department of Transportation, Communications & Infrastructure of the Federated States of Micronesia. The FSM President Wesley W. Simina was among the high level officials participating in the celebration.

Yes, Uncle Sam got played, and played hard. I don't think our State Department nomenclatura in charge of this part of the world could have played this any less poorly.

The only flights into Yap State are to the main island of Yap. To be fair, but the U.S. is putting some effort there...but as is often the case, the U.S. is playing checkers while the PRC is playing [Go](#).

The normal route to FSM is through Guam and Palau. Both, especially Guam, act as a de facto checkpoint because you need a U.S. visa. If the PRC runs flights direct into Woleai, they bypass international check points completely and even bypass oversight from Yap proper.

You have to respect the PRC game. Just plain solid...and serious.

[Bask in it all.](#)





Now, if all your sensors, planning, and defenses were expecting an attack from the west...things get complicated when another threat vector comes from 90-degrees off-axis. Just a bit.

If you squint your eyes just a bit to 18-24 months in the future...all the ideas the USMC and U.S. Army have in the arc from Darwin through The Philippines to Okinawa just might to be put on hold a bit as we have to clean things up in the rear. In peace, the PRC is doing a good job creating problems for the USA west of the International Date Line—the part of the Pacific they see as right fully theirs. To give a greater chance for their success in the opening months of any Great Pacific War, all the PRC needs to do is distract us and delay us for a few months, or even weeks.

The PRC is doing exactly what I would do, but they are doing it better and at lower cost.

The world expects the USA to lead a solution to the Russo-Ukrainian War, so we invest time, money, and national capital.

The world expects the USA to lead a solution to the Red Sea maritime security crisis, so we invest time, money, and national capital.

The world expects the USA to <insert problem here>, so we invest time, money, and national capital.

The world expects absolutely nothing from the PRC, so she pursues her national interest, undermines the USA's national interest, and positions herself to strike at the international order underpinned by the USA when the moment is ripe.

If you concentrate, you can hear each click of the ratchet.



This post is largely generated from an exchange with the irreplaceable Cleo Paskal... and if you want to get angry this high school graduation season, [read to the end of her post on LinkedIn](#).



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Brettbaker 2h



Tropical islands would be a great place for some Guard/Reserve engineering projects. And a couple of corvettes and a tender.