

## Developer announces plan to build casino gambling resort in Palau

Contributed by LAMAR BENNINGTON  
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KOROR, Palau -- If a Korean developer can cover all of the required bribes to Palau's corrupt politicians and greedy local chiefs, the pristine island of Peleliu will soon take its place as yet another ugly and overdeveloped Caribbean-style tourist trap littered with the flotsam of modern tourism including a huge casino, golf courses and high-rise hotels.

Interpacific Connection Inc. announced it will seek approval from Palau's Foreign Investment Board (FIB) for the project. With approval from the FIB, foreign developers are entitled to 100 percent ownership of hotels and golf courses.

Interpacific Connection Inc. is owned by Jae-Kook Chang, a Korean business tycoon who also owns Newsis News Agency and an 18-hole golf course in South Korea.

After visiting Peleliu in August 2006, Chang concluded the pristine, undeveloped island could become a popular direct-flight holiday destination, especially for high-end Korean, Chinese and Japanese tourists.

Chang's US\$150 million development scheme would include an international airport, casino, two 18-hole golf courses and hotel facilities totaling 300 rooms.

Attorneys representing Chang have written letters to Palau President Tommy Remengesau, Senate President Johnny Reklai, House Speaker Augustine Mesebeluu and other politicians to solicit support for the project.

According to unconfirmed reports, Chang's attorneys have floated a proposal involving "financial incentives" for politicians willing to support legislation to legalize gambling in Palau.

To date, attempts to push through a casino bill that would establish a gaming industry in Palau have failed.

Opponents of the bill cite concerns about Asian organized crime syndicates that are heavily involved in casinos as well as tourism developments and golf courses.

In August 2006 after a US\$1 million bribes scandal involving ousted Peleliu State Governor Jackson Ngiraingas, UK Investments Holdings of Malaysia shelved its Nautilus City Project, which aims to develop Peleliu into an international casino gambling and resort destination.