

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 15-81

RE: C.R. NO. 15-77/EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: CONFIRMING THE NOMINATION OF MR. JOHN FRITZ TO SERVE AS
AMBASSADOR OF THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA TO THE
GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN.

FEBRUARY 13, 2008

The Honorable Isaac V. Figir
Speaker, Fifteenth Congress
Federated States of Micronesia
Third Regular Session, 2008

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Your Committee on External Affairs, to which was referred C.R. No.
15-77, entitled:

"A RESOLUTION CONFIRMING THE NOMINATION OF MR. JOHN FRITZ TO
SERVE AS AMBASSADOR OF THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA TO
THE GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN.",

begs leave to report as follows:

The intent and purpose of the resolution are expressed in its title.

Your Committee on External Affairs to which was submitted the matter
of the nomination of John Fritz as Ambassador of the Federated
States of Micronesia to Japan in Tokyo, begs leave to report as
follows:

After the embassy in the United States, this is arguably the most
important diplomatic overseas mission. Japan has been a substantial
aid donor and a reliable development partner. Any nominee for this
position must be carefully evaluated.

Fortunately, the nominee is neither a stranger to your committee nor
to the embassy. Mr. John Fritz has been First Secretary to the
Embassy and then Deputy Chief of Mission at the Tokyo embassy for
the last ten years. Educated in Japan and the United States, he is
a fluent Japanese speaker and is married to a Japanese. He has
assisted innumerable governmental delegations to Japan, including
those of Congress. His language skills have proved invaluable. It
is impossible to find anyone else in the FSM that would be more
knowledgeable about Japan and the reality of life there.

Your committee held a confirmation hearing with the nominee on
February 5, 2008. Present were Chairman Welly, Vice-Chairman
Aritos, Speaker Figir, Vice Speaker Moses, Floor Leader Suka,
Senators Neth, Urusemal, Sitan, Nelson, and Paul. Witnesses

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included the nominee, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs and various Foreign Affairs staff.

The nominee's knowledge of embassy work and of Japan was beyond questions. The committee's inquiry centered on the nominee's age and the breadth of his background.

There was a concern that maybe the nominee was too specialized. Having lived in Japan for so long, he may not be as familiar with the reality of the FSM as someone, for example, from the home office. There is a concern also that, for lack of a better term, the nominee may have "become too Japanese" to the detriment of his native land.

In response the nominee stated that his specialization in Japan is an asset as far as relations of the embassy is concerned because he has been able to build over time relations of trust and cooperation with a number of people throughout Japanese society including local staff at the embassy- that made running the embassy much easier, in certain instances accomplishing what would have been very hard for an outsider otherwise.

The nominee also emphasized that whatever the circumstances might be, he was first and foremost a Micronesian, with the best interest of the FSM always in mind.

There were questions on the nominee being may be a little young for the position, since his counterparts in the Japanese government would likely be older. Japan is also a culture where age is valued.

In response the nominee stated that he may look young but he is close to fifty. He has years of experience in Japan and works very well with his counterparts. His becoming ambassador would actually strengthen the working relationships with the Japanese government and with the embassy staff.

The Secretary of Foreign Affairs testified that he supported the President's nomination.

Your committee is impressed by the nominee's credentials and his testimony. He committee appreciated the responses at the hearing, which show a thoughtful and knowledgeable person.

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Previously, your committee had conducted hearings in all states on the nominees for the ambassador positions. There was general support everywhere for the nominee. No written comments were submitted.

On the question of age, your committee agrees with the nominee and does not see that as a problem. Your committee is rather concerned as to how to replace the nominee should he be confirmed. As ambassador he will no longer be able to function as a translator. But that should be considered a challenge for the department to groom other staff in foreign languages. It is rather an asset. The nominee can bring immediately valuable experience and knowledge to the embassy.

Your committee supports the confirmation of John Fritz as Ambassador of the FSM in Japan and urges Congress to approve his nomination expeditiously.

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Your Committee on External Affairs is in accord with the intent and
purpose of C.R. No. 15-77 and recommends its adoption.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Paliknoa K. Welly
Paliknoa K. Welly, chairman

/s/ Tiwiter Aritos
Tiwiter Aritos, vice chairman

Isaac V. Figir, member

/s/ Roosevelt D. Kansou
Roosevelt D. Kansou, member

/s/ Dion G. Neth
Dion G. Neth, member

/s/ Resio S. Moses
Resio S. Moses, member

/s/ Setiro Paul
Setiro Paul, member