

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 19-94

RE: C.R. NO 19-165/EX AFF

SUBJECT: TO CONFIRM THE NOMINATION OF MR. LORIN
ROBERT TO SERVE AS THE FSM AMBASSADOR
PLENIPOTENTIARY TO THE UNITED STATES OF
AMERICA IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

FEBRUARY 03, 2016

The Honorable Wesley W. Simina
Speaker, Nineteenth Congress
Federated States of Micronesia
Third Regular Session, 2016

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Your Committee on External Affairs, to which was referred
C.R. No. 19-165, entitled:

"A RESOLUTION TO CONFIRM THE NOMINATION OF MR.
LORIN ROBERT TO SERVE AS THE FSM AMBSASSOR
PLENIPOTENIARY TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN
WASHINGTON, D.C.",

begs leave to report as follows:

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

On January 18, 2016, the President transmitted the said
resolution to Congress through Presidential Communication
No. 19-241. Attached with the communication is the
nominee's resume.

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The communication summarized Mr. Robert's extensive experience and his proven foreign relations and diplomatic skills, his in depth historical knowledge of our Nation's relations with the United States, and that the nominee will effectively represent our Nation's interest to the United States.

Your Committee conducted a public hearing on the said resolution on January 28, 2016. Chairman Paliknoa K. Welly chaired the hearing. He welcome the nominee and also the relevant witnesses. He then asked the nominee how does he feel about his nomination and why he is being nominated now. The nominee before answering the questions greeted the Chairman and members of the Committee on External Affairs. He informed your Committee that the President, before nominating him to serve as the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs in which he was confirmed by Congress, discussed with him some plans especially in regards to the U.S. and the FSM relationship. According to the nominee, the President gave him two choices; either go to Washington, D.C. or to Beijing, China.

According to the nominee, he prefers Washington, D.C. because of his long involvement with the Compact and Amended Compact issues. With his interest to go, the nominee informed your Committee that he served as an intern at the Embassy in 1981, and that was his first experience working in the Foreign Service. On February 27, 1984 he arrived in Pohnpei and work as a Foreign Service Officer at the Department of Foreign Affairs. So moving on to Washington, D.C. is a continuation of his service, and he appreciated very much his time serving the Nation. The nominee commented by saying "Thank the good Lord for taking him to Washington where it all began."

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Your Committee asked the nominee for some convincing evidence that he will do better at Washington, D.C. than as the Secretary. The nominee commented that because of the issues with JEMCO and the OIA, the President entrusted him, that as Ambassador, he will evolve himself with the relevant authorities of the United States to at least soften some of the ongoing debates between the OIA staffers and the FSM, especially in regards to the awarding of sectoral grants under the Amended Compact.

Your Committee also asked which posting is best, as Ambassador or as the Secretary. The nominee commented that an Ambassador represents the President of the Nation, but the Secretary outranked the Ambassador. In terms of coordination of government relations, the Ambassador takes the lead over the Secretary.

Your Committee further inquired of the nominee why his nomination to serve as the Ambassador comes now, why not before. The Chief of Staff explained that there is nothing to hide regarding the nomination, and commented that because of the importance of continuity, the President although wanted to place the Secretary elsewhere, nominated him to the Secretary's position. And, it is the President's decision now to submit his choice. Your Committee commented that it is the judgment of nominating the nominee that matters.

Your Committee also inquired of the nominee how often he was consulted by the staff at the overseas offices on issues currently happening in the U.S. or other foreign countries that the FSM has diplomatic relations. The nominee generally commented on the question, but indicated that it is the current goal of this nation to bring in more funding from our foreign donors, and if he is confirmed he

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will have to rebalance and restrategize our relationship with U.S. or other foreign countries.

Furthermore, your Committee inquired of the nominee how would other countries perceive the rotation of staff from the Home Office to overseas missions and whether this is a good practice. The nominee commented that he would think that U.S. will take it well, as his background speaks for his placement and that he was with the government for a longer period of time. But, it is up to the receiving country to make its own judgment. The nominee also commented that there is no doubt of our unique relationship with the U.S. and it will be up to other countries to assess such placement.

Finally, your Committee raised a concern, especially the placement of individuals to the overseas missions. In particular, it appears that too many individuals from one state have been selected or nominated. So the concern is to balance the selection of individuals from each of the states to overseas missions. Your Committee was informed that because of the need to fill in the positions and the interest of moving this nation forward, the President chose those that are qualified to fill in those positions in overseas missions.

Absent any contrary indication, your Committee believes that the nominee should be confirmed, and so recommends Mr. Lorin Robert be confirmed to serve as the Ambassador Plenipotentiary to the U.S. in Washington, D.C.

Your Committee on External Affairs is in accord with the intent and purpose of C.R. No. 19-165, and recommends its adoption in the form attached hereto.

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Respectfully submitted,

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

/s/ Robson U. Romolow
Robson U. Romolow, vice chairman

/s/ Isaac V. Figir
Isaac V. Figir, member

/s/ Victor V. Gouland
Victor V. Gouland, member

/s/ Berney Martin
Berney Martin, member

/s/ Bonsiano F. Nethon
Bonsiano F. Nethon, member

/s/ David W. Panuelo
David W. Panuelo, member