

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 15-51

RE: C.R. NO. 15-58/EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: CONFIRMING THE NOMINATION OF MR. SABINO S. ASOR TO SERVE AS
AMBASSADOR OF THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA TO THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

NOVEMBER 21, 2007

The Honorable Isaac V. Figir
Speaker, Fifteenth Congress
Federated States of Micronesia
Third Special Session, 2007

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Your committee on External Affairs, to which was referred C.R. No. 15-58, entitled:

"CONFIRMING THE NOMINATION OF MR. SABINO S. ASOR TO SERVE AS
AMBASSADOR OF THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA TO THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.",

begs leave to report as follows:

Your Committee on External Affairs to which was submitted the matter of the nomination of Sabino S. Asor as Ambassador of the Federated States of Micronesia to the United States of America in Washington DC begs leave to report as follows:

At the outset your committee notes the extreme importance of this position. No overseas diplomatic post is as important in light of the special relationship between the FSM and the US. Your committee is also mindful of recent mishaps involving FSM passports at the embassy in Washington that may have caused some strain in that relationship, which is of the utmost importance for the new ambassador to attend to.

The committee is not unfamiliar with the nominee. As a member of the 13th Congress and Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, he as a senior leader of the national government, worked closely with many of the members of this committee. Recently as Chief of Staff he has been a key person in the new administration.

Your committee held a confirmation hearing with the nominee on November 17, 2007. Present were Chairman Welly, Vice-Chairman Aritos, Speaker Figir, Vice Speaker Moses, Floor Leader Suka, Senators Neth, Senator Urusemal, Senator Phillip, Senator Sitan, Senator Nelson, and Senator Paul. Witnesses included the nominee, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs Mr. Lorin S. Robert and the Director of SBOC, Mr. Fabian Nimea.

Your committee notes the lack of foreign affairs experience of the nominee. The nominee admits that, but in his opening statement cited examples of where non-diplomats have excelled in diplomatic posts, like Georges C. Marshall of the US, of the Marshall Plan fame.

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The nominee also addressed up front the issue of his family relationship with the President, citing again examples like Robert Kennedy or Sargent Shriver during the Kennedy administration in the US, in which a close relationship to the chief executive was a definite asset. The nominee feels that his access to the President will be an asset by raising the profile of the Washington embassy.

The nominee has good academic credentials, holding a the JD from Jefferson School of Law in San Diego and a BA from the University of Hawaii. He believes that that background and his residence in San Diego are a good preparation for the challenges at the embassy, including repairing bilateral problems with the US, dealing with US law enforcement and increasing outreach to the Micronesian expatriate community.

Asked how he was approached for this position, the nominee testified that he had suggested the ambassadorship to the President at the time he was contacted to come back to the FSM as Chief of Staff.

The nominee in his testimony showed vast knowledge of world affairs. In particular he wishes to establish friendly relations with Arab countries (but without prejudice to the FSM's historical friendship with Israel). He reiterated that "strategic denial" remains the strategic imperative behind the US-FSM relationship and should be emphasized as part of the five-year review of the Compact. In that respect however, the nominee feels that it is up to the FSM to present its case to the US persuasively.

The nominee submitted to the committee a number of testimonials, including those from the New York mission and the Washington embassy, as well as from the staff of the President's Office, endorsing his nomination.

The Secretary of Foreign Affairs testified that he was consulted by the President on this nomination at the time of his own confirmation by Congress. Asked whether as Secretary he himself would have recommended the nominee for the position, the Secretary stated that had he not known about the nominee, and as a professional diplomat, he of course would probably have recommended someone with a diplomatic background. The Secretary, however, is ready to cooperate with the nominee if confirmed.

Your committee is satisfied with the explanation and testimony of the witnesses. It feels that the nominee's background, intelligence and skill can overcome any lacuna in professional background, and views his closeness to the President as an asset.

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Your committee supports the confirmation of Sabino S. Asor as
Ambassador of the FSM in Washington and urges Congress to approve his
nomination expeditiously.

Your Committee on External Affairs is in accord with the intent and
purpose of C.R. No. 15-58 and recommends its adoption.

Respectfully submitted,

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

/s/ Tiwiter Aritos
Tiwiter Aritos, vice chairman

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

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

Dion G. Neth, member

Resio S. Moses, member

/s/ Setiro Paul
Setiro Paul, member