

Micronesia independence day

Partnership built on shared values, interests

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AMBASSADOR OF THE FEDERATED STATES
OF MICRONESIA

I am grateful to The Japan Times for enabling me through these columns to convey the warm greetings of my government and people to its readers, and our many friends in Japan and throughout Asia, on the 23rd anniversary of the independence of the Federated States of Micronesia. While we are celebrating an important event in the young life of the FSM, this celebration is also our way of thanking our friends and supporters for their invaluable support and assistance in promoting good relations, and mutual understanding between our people.



In joining my fellow citizens in commemorating our independence, it is only fitting that I do so by conveying President Emanuel Mori's heartfelt felicitations to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, and members of the Imperial family. I would like also to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt congratulations to the Emperor and Empress on their 50th wedding anniversary, and the 20th anniversary of the Emperor's enthronement. We extend best wishes for continued good health and prosperity.

The FSM is a grouping of 607 small islands in the Western Pacific lying just above the equator. While the country's total land area amounts to only 700 sq. km, it occupies more than 2.6 million sq. km of the Pacific Ocean. The FSM has full ownership of tuna stocks capable of a sustainable yield of well over 100,000 tons each year.

The islands are blessed with many indigenous, and introduced birds and species.

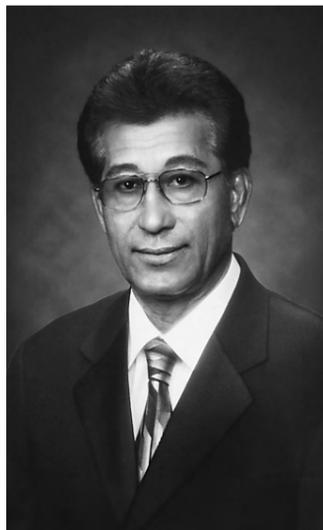
The surrounding coral reefs abound with tropical fish of every description and color, as well as marine turtles and manta rays. The surrounding oceans are home to several large species of game fish such as marlin, mahi-mahi, tuna, barracuda, sailfish and assorted bottom fish.

There is no denying that my country has come a long way. On the diplomatic front, it has managed to accomplish a great deal in a relatively short period of time. Today, the FSM has diplomatic relations with over 60 countries. Indeed the FSM continues to seek to establish relations with other independent nations in Asia and beyond. In so doing, we are always guided and premised by the basic principles embodied in the preamble of our national constitution: "We extend to all nations what we seek from each — Peace, Cooperation and Love in our common humanity."

People of the FSM take great pride in their special traditional link with the people of Japan, which goes back over a century. This presence has naturally left a Japanese heritage in the form of blood relations, language and culture. However, this traditional link is threatened, and certainly fading with the older generations of Japanese and Micronesians. We must revive and nurture this special link since we might be losing an element that has brought us together, and enriched us for so long.

Gaining its independence in 1986, the FSM has developed steadily. Our people enjoy a stable and peaceful life. The FSM's foreign policy is based on the solid foundation of promoting world peace and stability. This is an objective we share with our friends in Japan.

The bilateral relationship between the FSM and Japan marks its 21st anniversary this year, and it is distinctive-



President Emanuel Mori

ly built on common values and shared interests. It has proven to be a model for bridging the gap between our peoples and cultures. This relationship has witnessed important developments since establishment in 1988.

Our relations, once confined to fisheries, have strengthened and expanded to diversified ties over an extensive range of technological cooperation, human resource development, cultural exchanges, sports, and so forth. The last 21 years are full of events of mutual assistance, cooperation and exchanges between our two countries. The relationship has dynamically developed during this short period and there is much that we have achieved together, therefore we have reason to be proud of and celebrate our achievements.

My country is grateful to Japan for its assistance, which has contributed positively to the FSM's economic development efforts. In the course of the past years, we have seen increasing exchange visits by respective high-ranking officials and political leaders. I am pleased to acknowledge that relations between our two govern-

ments have grown and expanded with greater cooperation and good will. We also have seen growing interactions at local and grass-root levels, including youth and student exchange programs between our two countries.

With these past and on-going interactions, we strongly believe these activities demonstrate that the historic partnership of the FSM and Japan continues to be vibrant and extremely beneficial. Japan is one of the major donor countries to the FSM. We sincerely appreciate and welcome Japan's support in providing much-needed grant aid and technical assistance. These assistance schemes make it possible for my government to acquire road construction equipment, fishing boats, ports and refrigeration facilities, and other supplies and equipment critical and crucial to our economic development efforts.

We also appreciate the government of Japan's assistance, through its ODA program, for the extension of the international airport in the state of Pohnpei, where the National Capitol is seated, which is expected to be completed in 2011. This is an important project because it will open up the window of opportunities for foreign investors, and enhance the transportation network between the FSM and Japan, and the rest of the world.

The FSM always considers

Japan and its people among its close friends and strong supporters. It has consistently backed Japan's candidacy for important posts at the United Nations, including the Security Council, and other international organizations. Both our countries have collaborated closely on issues of importance to the region through the Pacific Island Forum and the Pacific Island Leaders Meeting (PALM), an important partnership to regional cooperation and assistance.

In addition, our public and private sectors continue to explore together new ways to take optimal advantage of the FSM's unique set of resources. We encourage and welcome additional investments in the FSM by Japanese firms to complement the commendable efforts by the Japanese government.

Foreign investors, including Japanese, are welcome partners, be it a shore-side processing facility, operation of fishing vessels or construction of cottages for leisure travelers. Our hopes toward Japan are high with strong encouragement that the strengthening of a solid foundation for our expanded future relations is only a matter of course.

The FSM is opening its door for tourists with our traditional hospitality so that discerning visitors can enjoy the beautiful, safe and comfortable haven for rest, recreation and relaxation. We encourage visitors who seek and appreciate the beauty of the islands while keeping intact the unique cultures, and natural beauty of the land and seas.



Island paradise: Micronesia offers visitors a beautiful, safe and comfortable haven for rest, recreation and relaxation. FSM VISITORS BOARD

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In closing, I would like to reiterate on behalf of the people of the FSM our heartfelt respect for the Imperial family, the government and friendly people of Japan.

Let me also recognize all

the FSM residents of Japan, who contribute so much with their work to the knowledge and images of the FSM. I thank you all sincerely and wish you a very pleasant Independence Day.

Congratulations on the 23rd Anniversary of Independence Day of the Federated States of Micronesia



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We sincerely appreciate your good relationship over the last 120 years and hope for the same in the future.



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