

Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Chairman Richard G. Lugar
Opening Statement for
Nominations Hearing
September 10, 2004

Today the Senate Foreign Relations Committee meets to consider nominees to two key ambassadorships. President Bush has nominated Christopher LaFleur to be Ambassador to Malaysia and Lynn Pascoe to be Ambassador to Indonesia. We welcome these accomplished nominees, and we look forward to our discussions with them.

Mr. LaFleur has a long and distinguished record of public service in Japan, where his roles included Deputy Chief of Mission. He also has represented our country in Taiwan and France, and recently he served as Special Envoy for Northeast Asia. Presently, he is serving as a Cyrus Vance Fellow with the Council on Foreign Relations.

As the U.S. Ambassador to Malaysia, Mr. LaFleur would spend considerable time working with Malaysian officials on matters of counter-terror and security cooperation. Malaysia has made important contributions to the war against terror in Asia, including hosting the Southeast Asia Regional Center for Counter-terrorism. Prime Minister Badawi is to be commended for his leadership on a number of fronts, including working to prevent conditions conducive to terrorism along the Malaysia - Thailand border, improving intelligence sharing, and combating piracy in the Straits of Malacca. He is working to further strengthen the bilateral relationship between Malaysia and the United States.

Malaysia is the United States' tenth largest trading partner. The U.S.-Malaysia Trade and Investment Framework Agreement, signed by both countries earlier this year, reflects a mutual commitment to strengthen our trade relationship. I am hopeful that progress will continue to be made toward a free trade agreement between Malaysia and the United States. Mr. LaFleur's experience would be put to excellent use in overseeing our strategic and economic relationship with Malaysia.

Ambassador Lynn Pascoe is one of our country's most senior diplomats, with thirty-seven years as a career member of the Foreign Service. Ten years of his distinguished career were spent in Chinese-speaking posts, including a tour as Deputy Chief of Mission in Beijing and a tour as Director of the American Institute in Taiwan. He was also posted in Hong Kong, Moscow, and Bangkok. More recently, he served as U.S. Ambassador to Malaysia.

Ambassador Pascoe understands that enormous complexities accompany the geographic vastness of Indonesia, the fourth most populous country in the world and the largest Muslim nation. Indonesians are sensitive to portrayals that they are violence-prone extremists. It is important to note that the large majority of Indonesians disavow radical Islamic political activity.

I am certain that Ambassador Pascoe will spend considerable time listening to and learning from the Indonesian people. As I stated in an op-ed published in Indonesian newspapers last year, "Just as Indonesia can benefit from the lessons America has learned regarding the

importance of transparency, a free press, the rule of law and other basic tenets essential in a democracy, America also has much to learn from Indonesia.”

In the area of counter-terrorism, there is a strong record of cooperation between the United States and Indonesia, which will continue and hopefully expand.

Indonesia and its General Election Commission are to be commended for good reports regarding elections held earlier this year, and we are hopeful for similar good news regarding the upcoming Presidential election. Indonesia is making progress towards institutionalizing democracy in its political system. The growing emphasis on rule of law and on combating corruption is essential and will yield enormous benefits for all Indonesians.

Ambassador Pascoe, I trust that you will monitor developments related to the Timika murder investigation, involving the deaths of two American teachers and an Indonesian civilian two years ago. Reports indicate that Indonesian authorities are working with the FBI on this case. This will continue to be an important issue for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

I congratulate both of our distinguished nominees. I ask that you deliver your statements in the order that you were introduced. If you are summarizing a statement, the text of your entire presentation will be included in the hearing record. Also, please introduce family and friends that may have accompanied you on this important occasion.

Before hearing from our witnesses, it is a pleasure to call upon former Speaker of the House Tom Foley, who is with us today for the purpose of introducing Mr. LaFleur.

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