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Ople sworn in as Foreign Affairs Secretary



Blas F. Ople was appointed Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo on 23 July 2002. He took his oath of office a week later, on 30 July 2002. Secretary

Ople is an old hand in foreign affairs, having chaired the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations from 1992 to 2002. He sponsored the resolution on the ratification of the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement which served to buttress the security partnership of the Philippines and the United States. With then Senator Macapagal-Arroyo, he also sponsored the ratification of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade Uruguay Round, which gave birth to the World Trade Organization.

Senator Ople authored one version of the Overseas Voting Bill, a provision he sponsored in the 1987 Constitution, and is the forerunner of a bill reforming the Philippine foreign service and the Department of Foreign Affairs.

He was elected to the Philippine Senate in May 1992 and re-elected for a second six-year term in May 1998. In the Senate, he served as President Pro Tempore and was a member of the Commission on Appointments and the Senate Electoral Tribunal. In addition to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, he also chaired the Committee on Civil Service and Government Reorganization, and the Committee on Education, Culture and the Arts. He assumed the Senate Presidency in the middle of 1999.

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Special Announcement Tourism Secretary on Roadshow in China

Department of Tourism Secretary Richard H. Gordon is scheduled to visit China on 8-17 September 2002. He will be visiting Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou and Hong Kong to invite more Chinese tourists to visit the Philippines.

In all the four cities, Secretary Gordon will be making tourism presentations before an audience of travel and tour operators, government officials and players in the tourism industry. He is scheduled to have press and TV interviews and will also hold a press conference.

PGMA's Goal: A Strong Republic

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, in her State of the Nation Address on 22 July 2002, called on all sectors of society to help her build a strong republic.

She explained that good policies and strong institutions make a strong republic, and emphasized that a strong republic is the foundation upon which government could win in its ten-year war against poverty.

President Arroyo identified tangible results in the delivery of government services after a year and a half in office:

1. 250,000 hectares of land devoted to land reform;
2. P24 billion for agricultural modernization;
3. 180,000 urban poor families assured of the land they till;
4. 150,000 poor families provided with housing;
5. 1,500 rolling stores selling rice at P14 per kilo;
6. prices of medicine commonly bought by the poor lowered in half in the pharmacies of 72 government hospitals and at Unilab outlets;
7. four million poor Filipinos now under health insurance.
8. 1,005 schools near completion, in addition to the 285 school buildings worth P100 million from the allocation of Senate President Franklin Drilon;
9. 34 million books for 16 million students;
10. additional hours for the teaching of Math-

- ematics under the new curriculum;
11. 15,000 new teachers;
12. 30,000 out-of-school youth given immediate employment.

Moreover, she said that her administration was able to preserve and defend the Republic "against forces that seek to destroy its unity and tear the fabric of its society". She cited the peaceful passage of May 1, the rescue of Gracia Burnham, the transformation of Camp Abubakar into a community protected by Philippine soldiers, and the sealing of peace agreements with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front as solid achievements. She also said that her government was able to restore macroeconomic stability and win back investor confidence. She noted that the international credit rating of the Philippines was turned from risky to stable. She also pointed out that the Philippines is the third best performing economy in Asia and the best in Southeast Asia.

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H.E. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is shown during her State of the Nation Address on 22 July 2002 with Mr. Franklin Drilon, Senate President (above left) and Speaker of the House, Mr. Jose De Venecia (above right).

PHILIPPINES-CHINA COOPERATION

Philippines-China Joint Committee on Agriculture Meeting

The Second Meeting of the Philippines-China Joint Committee on Agriculture was held from July 29 to August 2, 2002 in Quezon City, Philippines.

The Philippine Delegation was headed by Dr. Segfredo R. Serrano, Assistant Secretary of the Philippine Department of Agriculture and the Chinese Delegation was headed by Mr. Li Zhendong, Deputy Director-General of the Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture of China.

With regard to the US\$100 million agriculture loan facility extended by the China Construction and Agricultural Machinery Import and Export Cooperation (CAMC), the Philippine side informed their Chinese counterpart of the utilization framework of the facility as well as the

implementation status of the projects.

Construction of the Philippine-Sino Center for Agricultural Technology (PhilSCAT) in Munoz, Nueva Ecija is going full steam.

The following projects and activities will also be undertaken:

1. Construction of the Banaoang Pump Irrigation Project to be completed in 2003;
2. the General Santos Fishport Complex Expansion/Improvement project;
3. the project on enhancing agricultural mechanization through the establishment of farmers service center; and,
4. the Small Scale Irrigation Development Project.

Both sides agreed to hold the 3rd session of the Joint Committee in China in July 2004.

DIPLOMATIC NOTES

Chinese Parliamentarians attend ASEP II in Manila

A nine-member delegation from China, headed by Mr. Cai Fangbai, the Vice Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National People's Congress, were in Manila from August 26-28 to participate in the Second Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership Meeting (ASEP II).

ASEP II is an initiative of the Philippine Congress which aims to revitalize the vision of incorporating a parliamentary dimension to the process of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). It provides the opportunity for parliamentarians from Asia and Europe to assess legislation being undertaken or adopted to achieve the goals of the Asia-Europe Cooperation Framework (AECF 2000). It likewise provides the occasion for strengthened inter-parliamentary dialogue on timely issues such as terrorism, the environment, and human rights. Resolutions on terrorism, environment, and human rights and a Joint Communiqué were adopted at the end of the Meeting.

DSWD Officials visit China

A delegation from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) visited Beijing and other key cities in China from 8 to 12 July 2002 at the invitation of the All-China Women's Federation (ACWF). Headed by DSWD Director Ester Verzosa, the visit was undertaken to reciprocate the November 2001 visit to the Philippines of a delegation from the ACWF.

The two sides exchanged information on China's policies and legislation, programs and services for the welfare and protection of women and children and disabled persons.

Hybrid Rice Delegation from Jiangsu Province, China

A Hybrid Rice Delegation headed by Mr. Fu Bing, Deputy Director of the Office of Foreign Affairs and Economic Cooperation, Department of Agriculture and Forestry of Jiangsu Province, China visited the Philippines on 9 - 16 July 2002. The Department of Agriculture and PhilRice hosted the delegation.

The Mission aimed to study the adaptation of hybrid rice to local agronomic conditions and the policies supporting the hybrid rice propagation, among others.

The delegation visited PhilRice, BPRE, BFAR (Muñoz), Philippine Carabao Center, IRR1, PCARRD, and the Agricultural Machinery Testing and Evaluation Center. The respective agencies briefed the delegation on its study areas. The delegation also paid courtesy calls on Assistant Secretary Segfredo Serrano and Secretary Leonardo Montemayor.

Philippines hands over ACB chairmanship to Singapore

Ambassador Josue L. Villa handed over the Chairmanship of the ASEAN Committee, Beijing (ACB) to Singapore Ambassador Chin Siat Yoon.

Among the major activities held during his four-month term as ACB chairman (May-August 2002) were:

1. a meeting with H.E. Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Senior Official in charge of ASEAN-China relations;
2. exchange of views with MOFTEC Director General Mr. Yi Zhaozhun, head of the Chinese Panel in the on-going negotiations on the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area;
3. briefing by Mr. Colin Mitchell, head of the UN office for Refugees in China; and,
4. discussion forum with Mr. Jaime FlorCruz, CNN Beijing Bureau Chief, and Ms. Susan Lawrence, correspondent of the *Far Eastern Economic Review*.

During Ambassador Villa's term, the ACB also held its Annual Spring Family outing in Miyun County in May 2002.



Shown above in a recent photo are members of the ASEAN Committee Beijing (ACB) with the Mayor of Beijing. Front row from left to right: Amb. U Sein Win Aung (Myanmar), Amb. Josue Villa (Philippines), Amb. Bui Hong Phuc (Vietnam), Mayor Liu Qi (Beijing), Amb. Chin Siat Yoon (Singapore), Amb. Aa Kustia (Indonesia); Back row from left to right: Mr. U Siang Lian, First Secretary (Myanmar), Amb. Thonsay Bodhisane (Laos), CDA Che Khasnah Binti Che Man (Malaysia), Amb. Khek Lerang (Cambodia), CDA Rakhia H. A. Lamit (Brunei), CDA Surapit Kirtiputra (Thailand), and Mr. Zhou Yanyun, Vice Director, FAO Beijing.

PGMA's Goal, from page 1

She vowed to work even harder to achieve what she aimed for. Her working agenda for 2003, she announced, would comprise her campaigns to stamp out corruption, lower power rates, and improve the peace and order situation in the country. She stated that this working agenda would help improve the country's investment climate, which in turn, would create and improve job opportunities for the country's citizens.

The President likewise endorsed important bills to Congress. These include the anti-terrorism bill, the absentee voting bill (which would empower millions of overseas Filipinos by giving them the right to vote), and the dual citizenship bill (which would recognize the contribution of overseas Filipinos to nation-building).

She stressed that a strong republic is "an edifice towards the building of which each must give the finest stone," and "a project undertaken by an entire society for its progress and preservation."

Ople sworn in, from page 1

From 1967 to 1971, and then from 1972 to early 1986, he served as Minister of Labor and Employment. As Labor Minister, he crafted the Labor Code of the Philippines and instituted the manpower development program through the National Manpower and Youth Council (now the Technical Skills Development Authority).

Secretary Ople is a native of Hagonoy, Bulacan. He is the author of ten books, including *Philippines and the World*, *ASEAN and the Miracle of Southeast Asia*, and *Windows to a Changing World*, as well as numerous monographs. He is a former journalist, and continues to write columns for the Manila Bulletin and other dailies.

Prior to Secretary Ople's assumption as Secretary of Foreign Affairs, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo took over the functions of the foreign affairs portfolio from Vice President and Secretary of Foreign Affairs Teofisto T. Guingona, Jr. who resigned as Foreign Secretary on 12 July 2002.

22nd Joint Trade Committee Meeting

The 22nd Meeting of China - Philippines Joint Trade Committee (JTC) was held in Manila on 18 July 2002. Vice Minister An Min of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation (MOFTEC) of China and Dr. Thomas G. Aquino, Undersecretary of the Department of Trade and Industry of the Philippines co-chaired the Meeting. Both sides underscored the importance of the Joint Trade Committee as vehicle to further strengthen existing economic engagement between the Philippines and China. Both expressed eagerness to have productive discussions and to work together with the view of achieving real progress in resolving outstanding issues and developing a strong trade and investment relationship.

Undersecretary Aquino was pleased to report on the significant strides made by the Arroyo Administration pointing to a positive GDP growth of 3.8% for the first quarter of this year, decline in

inflation and interest rates and stabilization of the foreign exchange rate. The economy is also on track to meet this year's growth forecasts of 4-4.5% in real GDP and 4.5%-5% in real GNP.

Vice Minister An Min informed the Meeting that China's economy achieved high growth in 2001 and the first five months of 2002. With a view to further develop the bilateral trade and economic cooperation between China and the Philippines, Vice Minister An Min also put forward several proposals including enhancement of cooperation in the field of information, communication and telecommunication (ICT); the creation of a better environment for sustained development of bilateral trade; and the encouragement of two-way investment. Undersecretary Aquino agreed with the proposals and assured his full support.

Total bilateral trade in 2001 reached \$3,565,536, an increase of 13% over the previous year, with a favorable balance of \$324 million for the Philippines.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

One-day processing and release of visas

The Embassy has shortened the processing and release of visaed passports to a single working day effective 15 August 2002. This measure was adopted to attract more tourists to visit the Philippines. The visa fee remains at RMB250.00. For those wishing to secure their visas on the same day they submit their visa applications, an overtime fee of RMB250.00 will be charged by the Embassy.

Private disputes among *kababayans*

The Embassy is encouraging all *kababayans* in China to enter into amicable settlement with their fellow *kababayans* whenever a dispute concerning personal or financial matters arises. Chinese authorities would normally not involve themselves in disputes where all the parties are foreigners. However, police authorities may take foreigners into custody whenever the dispute causes public disturbance. In order to avoid detention in local jails, Filipinos are advised not to cause physical harm to fellow *kababayans* whenever a dispute arises. It is always better to talk things over with the other person and settle the problem without involving the local police authorities.

Registration with local neighborhood committee

Kababayans wishing to reside in apartments reserved for Chinese citizens are strongly advised to register with the local neighborhood committee and secure the appropriate registration certificates. The assistance of the apartment landlord should be requested on this matter. Non-registration is a violation of local regulations, and can subject the *kababayan* to arrest by the local police.

On-going registration program of *kababayans*

The Embassy is constantly updating its database of Filipinos in northern China. The database is the only reference used whenever invitations to social activities are sent by the Embassy. It is also crucial in providing assistance to Filipinos during emergencies. *Kababayans* who have not registered with the Embassy or whose registration cards have expired are encouraged to visit the Consular Section of the Embassy for registration or renewal of the registration cards. Please look for Ronel or Doris.

PROFILE

Consul General Jesus I. Yabes Philippine Consulate General, Shanghai



(This is the 8th of a series of features on Philippine diplomats in China.)

Jesus I. Yabes is the first Philippine Consul General in Shanghai.

Born in 1948 in Manila, Consul General Yabes is a proud alumnus of the University of the Philippines where he received his Bachelor of Arts (Economics), Bachelor of Laws and Master of Public Administration degrees. He joined the Career Foreign Service in 1979 and passed the Philippine Bar Examinations in 1983.

In his previous diplomatic assignments, Consul General Yabes served as Vice-Consul and later Consul in the Philippine Consulate General in Hong Kong, with concurrent accreditation to Macau from 1984 -1989. He was posted in the Philippine Embassy in Tokyo as Minister Counselor and Consul General from 1989-1994.

From Tokyo, Consul General Yabes was assigned to the Office of American Affairs in the Department of Foreign Affairs where he served as Executive Director from 1994-1995. He then served as Board Secretary of the Board of Foreign Service Administration from 1995-1996. Consul General Yabes was again posted at the Philippine Embassy in Tokyo from 1996-1999 where he served as Deputy Chief of Mission and Minister.

Prior to his assignment to Shanghai, Consul General Yabes was posted at the Philippine Embassy in Singapore where he served as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary from 1999-2002.

Consul General Yabes is married to Josephine M. Celis. He has two children - Maria Lucia and Leopoldo Maria.

Residence permit and entry visas

Some *kababayans* holding temporary residence permits are confused as regards the period of their authorized stay in China. They fear violating immigration rules when their entry visas expire even after their employers have secured temporary residence permits for them. The Embassy wishes to advise our *kababayans* that the period of their authorized stay in China will depend on the period of validity of their temporary residence permits. The entry visa is used only for entering

LEGAL CORNER

Rey and Diana are professional musicians who entered into a three-month contract of employment with the Meiyu Qien Hotel in Beijing. The hotel management proceeded to apply for the appropriate documents, such as their working visas and permit from the local cultural bureau, and were therefore allowed to work legally in Beijing. In the last month prior to the expiration of their contract, the hotel management informed Rey and Diana that the hotel is no longer renewing the contract of the two Filipino nationals.

The temporary work visas of the two entertainers, however, are still valid for three more months. Meanwhile, another company, the Henhao Hotel, offered the duo a three-month contract to perform in its bar and restaurant.

Q. Can Rey and Diana accept the employment offer of Henhao Hotel?

A. Yes. Rey and Diana can enter into an employment contract with Henhao Hotel or any other interested employers after the expiration of their contract with the Meiyu Qien Hotel.

However, as stipulated in their contract with Meiyu Qien Hotel, Rey and Diana are required to exit mainland China and then re-enter Beijing before they can start performing in Henhao Hotel, provided, of course, that the latter obtains the necessary documents for them, i.e., temporary working visas and permit from the local cultural bureau. Meiyu Qien Hotel was the sponsor for the visas of the two performers in the first contract. It is only fair that the new employer assume the responsibility for their new employment in Beijing. Good faith and fair play remain important considerations to be observed by all parties to a contract.

China from another country and its period of validity is superseded by the period of validity of the temporary residence permit. What is important, therefore, is to monitor the validity period of the temporary residence permit and apply for its renewal at least two weeks before its expiration date.

A *kababayan* leaving China for business or vacation, with the intention of returning, should apply for a re-entry visa from the local exit-entry bureau. Otherwise, immigration authorities at the port of exit will automatically cancel the temporary residence permit.

Philippine Consulate General in Shanghai inaugurated

The Philippine Consulate General in Shanghai was formally inaugurated on 10 July 2002 at the Grand Ballroom of the Four Seasons Hotel. First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, Shanghai Vice Mayor Zhou Muyao, Congressman Harry Angping, Undersecretary Franklin M. Ebdalin, Ambassador Josue L. Villa, Consul General Jesus I Yabes, and other Chinese officials took part in unveiling the consulate's coat-of-arms.



Shanghai Acting Mayor Zhou Muyao (third from left), First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo (center), Ambassador Josue Villa (third from right), Undersecretary Franklin Ebdalin (second from right), Consul General Jesus Yabes (extreme right) and other Chinese officials took part in unveiling the consulate's coat-of-arms.

Bayanihan Philippines Dance Company graced the oc-

casation with a performance. A special tourism, trade and services exhibition was also held at the lobby of the Grand Ballroom.

About 250 guests attended the inauguration including Metropolitan Bank and Trust Company Chairman George Ty, Philippine Airlines President Avelino Zapanta, Liwayway Company Chairman Carlos Chan, Filipino Community of Shanghai President Berlin Canoy, members of the Shanghai consular corps, Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry President John Ng, Filipino and Chinese business executives, and members of the Filipino community.

The Shanghai Consulate is the fourth Philippine consulate-general in China. The other consulates-general are in Xiamen, Fujian Province; Guangzhou, Guangdong Province; and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.



Shanghai Acting Mayor Zhou Muyao delivers a message during the inauguration.

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Philippines participates in Travel Exposition

The Philippine Embassy in Beijing, in conjunction with Philippine Airlines, participated in the China International Travel Exposition from 28 to 31 August at the China National Agricultural Exhibition Center in Beijing. The Philippine exhibit showcased the various tourist attractions in the country, distributed brochures and visa-related information.

The Philippine country exhibit, as well as the tourism roadshow mission of Tourism Secretary Richard H. Gordon scheduled for September, are in line with the Philippine government's desire to secure a sizeable portion of China's tourist market. China is expected to be the biggest outbound tourist market in the world by 2010. In 2001, 12 million mainland Chinese traveled overseas for sightseeing.

In a related development, the Chinese government has lifted the travel advisory for its citizens planning to visit the Philippines.



Ambassador Josue Villa (third from right) and DCM and Consul General Elizabeth Buensuceso (second from right) together with Embassy officers and PAL representatives gracing the Philippine booths at the China International Travel Exposition.

New Foreign Affairs Undersecretaries Appointed

Assistant Secretary *Delia Domingo-Albert* was appointed Undersecretary for International Economic Relations by President Macapagal-Arroyo on 16 July. She took her oath before the President on July 23.

Before assuming her new post, Undersecretary Albert, a 35-year veteran in the Philippine foreign service, served as Assistant Secretary for Policy Planning and Coordination of the DFA, upon her return from her previous assignment as Ambassador to Australia. She had earlier served as Assistant Secretary for ASEAN Affairs. She has been tasked by the President to take a lead role in coming up with Philippine initiatives in this year's APEC Economic Leaders Meeting in Mexico in October as Philippine Senior Official for APEC.

Labor Undersecretary *Arturo D. Brion* was sworn into office in August as DFA Undersecretary for Special Concerns. He has served as Deputy Minister of Labor for Legal and Legislative Affairs when Ople was the Labor Minister. He also served as adviser to then Senator Ople on labor-related issues. Secretary Ople said that one of the duties of Undersecretary Brion is to study how the overseas polling system could be implemented systematically and credibly. The Department is currently looking into the methods of conducting overseas elections.

Philippine Mandarin scholars complete studies; new batch arrives

Lt. Cmdr. Sean Anthony Villa and Lt. SG Jerry Garrido, Jr. completed their Chinese Language Program scholarships at the Beijing Language and Culture University (BLCU) in July 2002.

Lt. Cmdr. Villa was the Chief Foreign Liaison Officer of the Philippine Navy. He is now assigned as Assistant Protocol Officer in the Philippine Navy Headquarters. Lt. SG Garrido served as Chief of the Foreign Liaison Unit of the Philippine Navy in 2000. He is now the Special Disbursing Officer of the Navy's Administrative Support Group.

The new Mandarin scholars are Ms. Lolita Bandril, Mr. Edilberto Andres, Jr., and Ms. Melanie Butic who will undertake a full-year Chinese language study program at the BLCU.

Ms. Bandril is an Associate Professor at the Philippine Normal University in Manila and is an expert on Philippine Literature and Rhetorics. Mr. Andres is a Mathematics Instructor at the Philippine Normal University in Alicia, Isabela. Ms. Butic is an Assistant at the North Asia Division of the Office of Asian and Pacific Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs.

The scholarships are undertaken within the framework of the 2000-2001 Executive Program of the Philippines-China Cultural Agreement.