

PRESS RELEASE

AMBASSADOR LAURO L. BAJA VOTED FOR SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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(News Analysis)

WASHINGTON, D.C., Jan. 15 - The vote is in! Staff writers of the *FILIPINO IMAGE Magazine* and the *PINOY GLOBAL ONLINE NEWS* unanimously selected with the departure of the popular Ambassador Lauro L. Baja as Philippine Permanent Representative to the United Nations, to the position of Secretary of the Philippines Foreign Affairs replacing the current Secretary. Stating that Baja is a more seasoned diplomat in the world diplomacy and undoubtedly well-respected by the Members of the United Nations who are mostly Baja's contemporaries.

"In the well-publicized and abrupt announcement of Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, the President clearly paved the way for Ambassador Baja to takeover the helm of leadership from the currently much questioned Department of Foreign Affairs' leadership. Ambassador Baja has the superior caliber of world diplomacy and renowned popularity among world leaders. No one has been appointed for two times as Acting President of the General Assembly in less than four years unless his leadership is superior and is well-respected by his peers," commented an observer speaking on condition of anonymity.

Commented by another observer also speaking on condition of anonymity: "It is very natural that Ambassador Lauro Baja should replace Secretary of Foreign Affairs Alberto Romulo. Ambassador Baja has all the credentials that Romulo lacks: world diplomacy; contacts with world leaders including those of super-power governments on personal basis; and know-how of dealing with foreign governments." Both observers continued: "The main issue is who really is needed for the global tasks of winning friends and influencing governments, Ambassador Baja or Secretary Romulo? The answer is obvious: Ambassador Baja! "

President Arroyo made the announcement of appointing former Chief Justice Hilario Davide, Jr., last Sunday in Cebu, and was sworn-in immediately to the position without confirmation in the bicameral Commission of Appointments. Amidst objections from Senators and other government officials, Malacanang Palace dismissed the charges of illegality and unconstitutionality in the oath taking of Davide, stating the Supreme Court ruling that "the President can appoint anybody to her Cabinet even without the CA confirmation."



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