



ONE MAN'S VIEW

Nonoy Mendoza

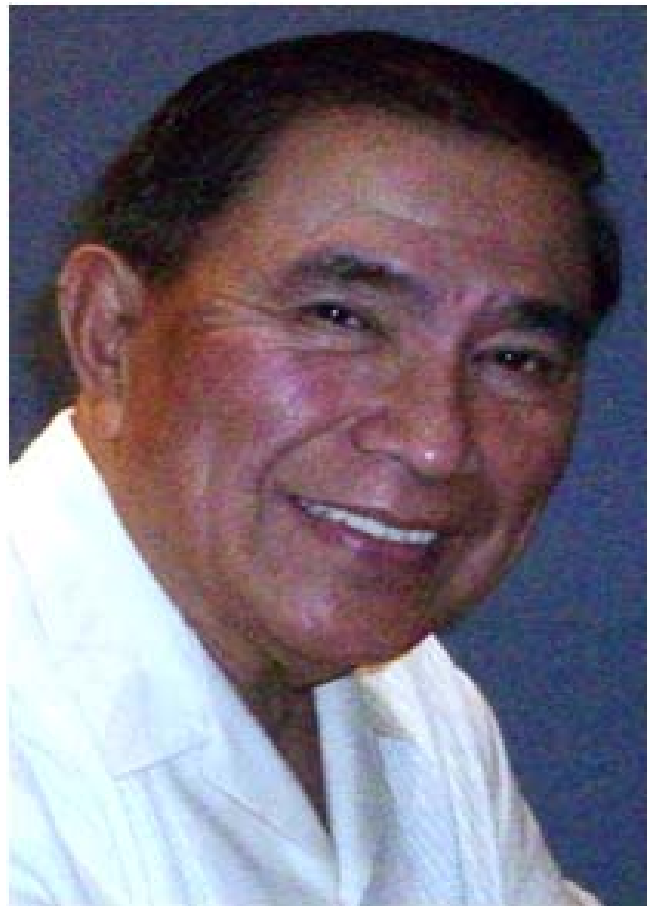
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Henry Balagtas Welcomed President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to the United States !

WASHINGTON, D.C., AUGUST 01 (PinoyGlobal) - On the occasion of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as the first leader from Southeast Asia invited to visit the United States under the Barack Obama Administration, Henry Balagtas, a prominent entrepreneur in Maryland and a TOFA (Twenty Outstanding Filipinos Abroad) Past Awardee, delivered the Welcome Address on behalf of the guests held at the Willard Intercontinental Hotel, a stone throw from the White House last Thursday evening. The welcoming party was attended by almost 400 Filipino guests arranged by group calling itself, *FILUSA*, which stands for *Filipinos International USA*.

Following is the remarks of Henry Balagtas:

"On behalf of *FILUSA* or the Filipinos International USA, allow me to welcome Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and members of her official delegation, particularly the members of the Cabinet and leaders of the Senate and the House of Representatives for joining us this evening as we launch our



Henry Balagtas
Outstanding Filipino Community Leader

Proudly Filipino campaign here in Washington, D.C.

Allow me also to welcome *FILUSA* members from as near as Maryland,

Virginia, the District of Columbia and New York, New Jersey and as far as California and Nevada as well as our guests, and other Filipino community leaders who traveled this evening in support of this undertaking.

Dear friends: we at *FILUSA* greatly appreciate President Arroyo's presence here with us tonight despite arriving just an hour ago from a long and tiring journey from Manila.

We hope that the activities here in the United States would augur well for her meeting tomorrow with President Barack Obama. As Filipino, it makes all of us proud to know that President Arroyo has been given the distinction of being the first Southeast Asian head of state to be invited to the White House.

Mga Kababayan, a strong Philippine-U.S. partnership is one of the care pillars of *FILUSA*. As a grassroots movement of Filipinos and Filipino Americans, *FILUSA* is strongly committed to helping enhance the ties that bind the Philippines and the United States. *FILUSA* therefore throws its full support to President Arroyo and

President Obama and hope that the first meeting between the two leaders would succeed in further strengthening the Filipino alliance. We hope that at the end of their meeting, President Arroyo would have succeeded in ensuring that the Philippines remain on the radar screen of President Obama and the rest of Washington, D.C.

Mga Kasama: Bringing pride back to the Filipinos is another care pillar of *FILUSA*. We intend to achieve this by becoming the bearer of good tidings by helping disseminate positive developments in the Philippines to the wider Filipino American community here in the United States. It is a sad reality that we here in the United States know little about the good things that are taking place back home. This is why we are quite fortunate tonight to have with us President Arroyo so we could hear straight from her many reasons why we should be proud as Filipinos.

Let us close a gain by thanking all of you for your presence here tonight. Mabuhay ang Pilipinas! Mabuhay ang Filipino!

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