

## The People Asia Magazine

### A Message from Ambassador John D. Negroponte

Co-Chair of the US-Philippines Society

### Philippines-United States 75<sup>th</sup> Year of Diplomatic Relations



I was honored to have served as ambassador to the Philippines during the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary period of the “Leyte Landing” and MacArthur’s return, liberation, and the end of World War II. What really made an impression were the moving personal stories from veterans and chroniclers of history about the bonds between our two countries that were forged in that wartime struggle for peace, freedom, democracy and independence. It was a time when Filipino and American soldiers fought side by side for four long years as defenders, guerillas, and ultimately liberators to realize a post-war vision of partnership between two sovereign countries.

Turning that vision into reality was the product of steady determination and commitment by Filipino and American leaders. What these men represented was a shared belief, with an eye on a shared goal, that relations between the two countries would work best if grounded on mutual independence. Through war and peace, the goal was achieved. Bonds that endure today were forged by building a relationship, unique for both our countries, with shared institutional values, commerce, trade and technology, strategic alignment, educational exchanges, development, people-to-people ties, and more.

We salute the role of early U.S. and Philippine political and diplomatic leaders 75 years ago. And, we recognize the equally consequential the work of those on both sides who followed to sustain an alliance that has and continues to meet challenges into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Drawing lessons from my years of government service, including work in the Philippines during the 1990’s when, for example, international terrorists were thwarted in an attempt to use the Philippines as a base to target civilian airliners, and when territorial claims in the South China Sea expanded to take on new worrisome dimensions, the unmistakable conclusion is that U.S.-Philippine cooperation was, and remains, vital in meeting these and other challenges.

For the past nine years I have been honored to serve as co-chair of the US-Philippines Society with Manny Pangilinan. The Society continues to bring together Filipinos and Americans in an effort to keep our shared history alive through programs and initiatives, including support for the return of the Bells of Balangiga, hold cultural events centered on the Philippine Independence Day celebration and benefit concerts featuring Filipino and Fil-American artists including Lea Salonga, Cecil Licad, the Philippine Madrigal Singers, and designer Patis Tesoro, and to raise awareness of new opportunities for exchanges across the many fields of endeavor shared by our two peoples.

*Mabuhay!*