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SENATE

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 1414 RECEIVED BY 

Introduced by **SENATOR AQUILINO Q. PIMENTEL, JR.**

**RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE
ALLEGED PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF THE PHILIPPINE AMBASSADOR'S
RESIDENCE IN FUJIMI-CHIYODA-KU (KUDAN), TOKYO, JAPAN, CONSIDERED AS
"THE CROWN JEWEL OF OUR FOREIGN SERVICE"**

WHEREAS, there is a piece of real estate property in Fujimi-Chiyoda-ku (Kudan), Tokyo, Japan bought by the Philippine Government through President Jose P. Laurel from Baron Zenjiro Yasuda during the last World War (March 1944);

WHEREAS, this property is presently being used as the official residence of the Philippine Ambassador to Japan, and considered as the most beautiful Philippine Ambassador's residence in the world;

WHEREAS, on March 9, 1952, the Philippine Historical Committee inaugurated this official residence of the Philippine Ambassador to Japan and installed a Historical Marker which reads "This building, dating from the Tokugawa Shogunate, was purchased for the Philippines on 21 March 1944 by President Jose P. Laurel of the Second Philippine Republic."

WHEREAS, in a letter to the Chairman of the National Historical Institute dated April 25, 2008, the Philippine – Japan Society, Inc. through its President, Francis Laurel, reported that "there is a plan to materially alter the original features of the edifice (Ambassador's Residence) by subjecting it to a public bidding regarding land lease development by a Japanese real-estate developer."

WHEREAS, The Philippine – Japan Society Inc. asked the National Historical Institute the following questions: (a) "by placing marker on the said property, has the edifice been effectively declared a national landmark or historic edifice, declared and classified as such by the National Historical Institute?" (b) "If so, has the prior written consent of the NHI Chairman to modify, alter, repair or destroy the original features of the edifice been secured pursuant to Section 5 of PD 260, as amended?"

WHEREAS, Presidential Decree 1505 amended Presidential Decree No. 260, as amended, by prohibiting the unauthorized modification, alteration, repair and destruction of original features of all national shrines, monuments, landmarks and other important historic edifices;

WHEREAS, Section 1 of PD 1505 provides: "*Presidential Decree No. 260 is hereby amended by inserting another section after Section 4 to read as follows: "Sec. 5. It shall be unlawfully for any person to modify, alter, repair or destroy the original features of any national shrine, monument, landmark and other important historic edifices declared and classified by the National Historical Institute as such without the prior written permission from the Chairman of said Institute. Any person who shall violate this Decree shall, upon conviction, be punished by imprisonment of not less than one year nor more than five years or a fine of not less than one thousand pesos nor more than ten thousand pesos or both, at the discretion of the court or tribunal concerned."*

WHEREAS, The Philippine Ambassadors Foundation Inc, through Chairman Alfonso Yuchengco and President Jose Macario Laurel IV, in a letter dated June 6, 2008 addressed to President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo called the attention of the President of the plan to demolish the residence of the Ambassador to Japan and replace it with a 21-storey structure, the penthouse which will serve as the Ambassador's Residence;

WHEREAS, The Philippine Ambassadors Foundation Inc. likewise expressed its "reservation to the proposed demolition of the historic Embassy residence not only because it would be detrimental to the preservation of our culture, heritage and national patrimony but also in contravention of Presidential Decree No. 1505 dated June 11, 1978".

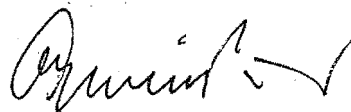
WHEREAS, the Philippine Ambassadors Foundation also raised the issue of propriety if the official residence of the Ambassador to Japan would be located in the penthouse of the proposed 21 storey building. The Foundation believes that questions concerning the availment of diplomatic immunity and provision of security to the premises of the said building would arise, thereby, making the Philippines the only ASEAN country in Tokyo whose Ambassador would not be occupying a free standing structure.

WHEREAS, in a letter dated May 6, 2009 addressed to Ambassador Alfonso T. Yuchengco, Chairman of the Philippine Ambassadors Foundation Inc., Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita informed them that the proposed demolition of the said Embassy Residence has been set on hold by order of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo;

WHEREAS, there is an imperative need to look into this serious matter in order to preserve our culture, heritage and national patrimony.

Now therefore, be it resolved, as it is hereby resolved to direct the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations to conduct an investigation, in aid of legislation, into the alleged proposed demolition of the Philippine Ambassador's residence in Fujimi-Chiyoda-Ku (Kudan), Tokyo, Japan, considered as "the crown jewel of our foreign service".

Adopted,



AQUILINO Q. PIMENTEL, JR.