



Ambassador Jose Cuisia (left picture) and Senator John McCain (right picture) are commemorating the anniversary of Philippine independence.

14 June 2012- "When it comes to fulfilling our obligations and expanding our military cooperation under the Mutual Defense Treaty, America's commitment is unshakable and Republicans and Democrats stand together with the Philippines." These were words uttered by Senator John McCain in the remarks he delivered as the guest of honor during the commemoration of the 114th anniversary of the declaration of Philippine Independence in Washington, D.C last June 12.

Philippine Ambassador to the United States (U.S.) Jose L. Cuisia, Jr. and Mrs. Victoria J. Cuisia hosted the traditional *vin d'honneur* at the Four Seasons Hotel with close to 300 guests in attendance.

Among those present were officials from the U.S. government, congressional staffers, members of the business community, representatives from think tanks, non-governmental organizations and the academe, as well as leaders of the Filipino-American community.

High-level U.S. government officials in attendance included Undersecretary of Commerce for International Trade Francisco Sanchez and Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell.

In his remarks, Ambassador Cuisia underscored the gains that have been achieved under the Aquino administration as a consequence of the President's good governance agenda. He noted the resolve of the Philippine government in rooting out corruption, as reflected in the recent impeachment of the country's Chief Justice.

The Ambassador also cited the flourishing ties between the Philippines and the U.S., which have been further strengthened as a result of President Aquino's constructive and productive meeting with President Barack Obama at the Oval Office last June 8.

"Much of the credit in the renewed vitality (in Philippine-U.S. relations) goes to President Aquino, who I had the pleasure of meeting in my visit to Manila last January and again during the President's successful visit to Washington," said Senator McCain. "When it comes to enhancing the Philippines' defense capabilities from increased maritime domain awareness to additional ships to help patrol the West Philippine Sea, Republicans and Democrats stand together with the Philippines."

Senator McCain, the son and grandson of U.S. Navy admirals, is a Ranking Member of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Representing Arizona, he is one of the most senior Republican Senators and was the Republican presidential nominee in the 2008 U.S. election.

Senator McCain recently signed up as co-sponsor of the SAVE Our Industries Act.

Also during the program, Ambassador Cuisia recognized two Filipino-Americans - Dr. Jorge Garcia and Ms. Josie Natori - for their outstanding achievement in their profession and in the community, which contributed significantly in building the image of Filipinos and the Philippines in the U.S.

Dr. Garcia, a thoracic and cardiovascular surgeon at the Washington Hospital Center, is the Philippines' foremost heart surgeon and is one of the best cardiac surgeons in the world.

In the Philippines, Dr. Garcia was a pioneer in setting up a heart surgery program to transfer skills and technology to talented Filipino doctors. He is also the founding chairman of the world-class Asian Hospital and Medical Center in the Philippines.



Ambassador Cuisia presents Dr. Garcia (left picture) and Ms. Natori (right picture) achievements in their profession.

Ms. Natori, a world renowned fashion designer, is the brains and heart behind the global fashion brand, Natori. Her creations, which appeal to different kinds of women and grace fashion magazines, are known to depict Filipino style and elegance. As consultant and curator for the Manila FAME 2012 design expo, Ms. Natori was instrumental in bringing together Filipino fashion designers to launch the brand, "Manila wear".

Ms. Natori lends her creativity, expertise and business acumen to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to make Manila FAME Asia's design trendsetter.

Providing the evening's entertainment were performances of Philippine dances - *Maglalatik* by students from the University of Maryland College Park Filipino Cultural Association, and *Putritos* by students from George Washington University's Philippine Cultural Society.



Students from University of Maryland (left picture) and George Washington University (right picture)

Earlier in the morning, the officers and staff of the Embassy held a flag-raising ceremony to kick-off the celebration of the country's national day.

Corporate sponsorships from Smart Philippines, Philippine-American Life and General Insurance Company (Philam Life), International Container Terminal Services, Inc. (ICTSI), and Jollibee Foods Corporation made the event possible.

Other activities planned to commemorate this year's Philippine Independence Day anniversary are "Brown Strokes on a White Canvass," an art exhibit featuring works of local Filipino American artists, a cultural program for Filipino-American students to be taught by members of the Association of Filipino Teachers in America-Maryland, and a documentary on Arnel Pineda, lead singer of Journey. Details of these events will be made known to the public as soon as they are available. END