

**[ EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 239, July 24, 1987 ]**

**REORGANIZING THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND  
FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

WHEREAS, under Article II, Section 1, of the Provisional Constitution, as adopted in Proclamation No. 3. dated March 25, 1986, the President shall give priority to measures to achieve the mandate of the people to completely reorganize the government;

WHEREAS, Article XVIII, Section 16, of the 1987 Constitution recognizes that the reorganization of the government shall be continued even after the ratification of the Constitution;

WHEREAS, under Article XVIII, Section 6, of the 1987 Constitution, the President shall continue to exercise legislative powers until the First Congress is convened;

WHEREAS, Executive Order No. 132 entitled Reorganizing the Department of Foreign Affairs was signed by the President on February 27, 1987;

WHEREAS, the implementation thereof was suspended;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, CORAZON C. AQUINO, President of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by the Constitution, do hereby order:

SECTION 1. *Title.* - This Executive Order shall otherwise be known as the Reorganization Act of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

SEC. 2. *Reorganization.* - The Department of Foreign Affairs, hereinafter referred to as Department, is hereby reorganized, structurally and functionally, in accordance with the provisions of this Executive Order.

SEC. 3. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is the policy of the State to pursue an independent foreign policy in order to more resolutely design and harness its foreign relations in the active pursuit of rapid national recovery and sustained long-term growth of national sovereignty, security, territorial integrity, national interest, right to self-determination and commitment to international peace.

SEC. 4. *Mandate.* The Department shall advise and assist the President in planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, integrating and evaluating the total National effort in the field of foreign relations.

SEC. 5. *Powers and Functions.* To carry out its mandate and accomplish its mission, the Department shall undertake the following functions:

- a. Conduct the country's foreign relations in accordance with the policies laid down by the President;
- b. Maintain and develop the country's representation with foreign governments;
- c. Conduct Philippine representation in the United Nations, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and other international and regional organizations;
- d. Serve as the channel for matters involving foreign relations, including official communications to and from the Republic of the Philippines;
- e. Negotiate treaties and other agreements pursuant to instructions of the President, and in coordination, when necessary, with other government agencies;
- f. In cooperation with other government agencies and the private sector, promote trade, investments, tourism and other economic relations with other countries;
- g. Foster cultural relations with other countries and protect and enhance the Philippines' image abroad;
- h. In cooperation with other government agencies, undertake efforts to inform the international community about the Philippines;
- i. Protect and assist Philippines nationals abroad;
- j. Carry out legal documentation functions as provided for by laws and regulations;
- k. Monitor and analyze events in other countries and report them, as appropriate, to the President and other government agencies;
- l. In cooperation with other government agencies, initiate, formulate, integrate and submit to the President short, medium, and long-range foreign policy plans and programs;
- m. Supervise and direct all official and employees assigned by the Department and other government agencies to Foreign Service establishments abroad in accordance with the pertinent laws, rules and inter-agency agreements;
- n. Recruit, maintain and develop a professional career foreign service based on merit.

SEC. 6. *Secretary Foreign Affairs.* - The authority and responsibility of the Department for the discharge of its powers and functions shall be vested in the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, hereinafter referred to as Secretary, who shall be appointed by the President and shall have supervision and control over the Department and the Foreign Service.

The Secretary may designate as Special Advisers such Chiefs of Mission on home

assignment on specific areas of their agencies of the service. The Secretary may also create such advisory boards and committees as he may deem necessary to assist and provide him with advice in the formulation of substantive policies, and such other bodies required by existing laws, rules and regulations.

SEC. 7. *Functions of Secretary.* - The Secretary shall have the following functions:

- a. Act as the primary and principal adviser of the President in the field of foreign relations;
- b. Advise the President on the promulgation of executive orders, rules and regulations, proclamation and other issuances relative to matters under the jurisdiction of the Department;
- c. Establish policies and standards for the efficient and effective operation of the Department in accordance with the programs and projects;
- d. Supervise all attached agencies in accordance with law;
- e. Exercise supervision and control over all functions and activities of the Department;
- f. Supervise all attached agencies in accordance with law;
- g. Delegate authority for the performance of any function to officers and employees of the Department;
- h. Perform other function as may be provided by law or appropriately assigned by the President.

SEC. 8. *Organizational Structure.* - The Department shall have the following organizational units:

a. Department Proper:

1. Office of the Secretary. Under the Office of the Secretary are the following: Office of the Legal Adviser, the Office of the Coordination and Policy Planning, the Office of Data Banking and Communication, the Office of Protocol, State and Official Visits, and the Office of Intelligence and Security. In addition, the following shall be directly under the supervision of the Secretary.

i. Foreign Service Institute

ii. UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines

iii. Technical Assistance Council

2. Offices of the two (2) Undersecretaries;

3. Offices of the Assistant Secretaries;

4. Home Offices:

- a. Office of Asian and Pacific Affairs;
- b. Office of Middle East and African Affairs;
- c. Office of American Affairs;
- d. Office of European Affairs;
- e. Office of ASEAN Affairs;
- f. Office of United Nations and other International Organizations;
- g. Office of International Economic Affairs and Development;
- h. Office of Cultural Affairs and Public Information;
- i. Office of Personnel and Administrative Services;
- j. Office of Financial Management Services;
- k. Office of Consular Services.

b. Foreign Service Establishments: Philippine Embassies, Consulates, Legations and Permanent Missions.

SEC. 9. *Undersecretaries*. - The Secretary shall be assisted in the discharge of his functions by two (2) Undersecretaries, who shall be appointed by the President upon the recommendation of the Secretary. The Secretary shall determine and assign the respective functions and responsibilities of the Undersecretaries. The Secretary shall designate one of the Undersecretaries as Acting Secretary in his behalf.

SEC. 10. *Assistant Secretaries*. - The Secretary shall also be assisted by six (6) Assistant Secretaries who shall be appointed by the President upon recommendation by the Secretary. The Secretary shall delineate the respective areas of responsibility or each Assistant Secretary.

SEC. 11. *Office of the Legal Adviser*. - There is hereby created an Office of the Legal Adviser under the Office of the Secretary. It shall be headed by a Legal Adviser, who shall be a career Chief of Mission. However, the Legal Adviser may be appointed by the President upon the recommendation of the Secretary from outside the career service. In which case, the Legal Adviser shall have the assimilated rank of a Chief of Mission and whose term shall be, unless sooner terminated, co-terminus with the tenure of the Secretary and who is not eligible for foreign assignment. The Legal Adviser shall provide legal advice and services to the Department.

SEC. 12. *Office of Coordination and Policy Planning*. - There is hereby created the Office of Coordination and Policy Planning under the Office of the Secretary. It shall be headed by the Chief of Coordinator. The Office of Coordination and Policy Planning shall provide staff support to the Office of the Secretary and perform coordinating and such other functions as may be prescribed by the Secretary. It

shall initiate, coordinate and integrate the planning of foreign policy.

SEC. 13. *Office of Data Banking and Communication.* - There is hereby created the Office of Data Banking and Communication under the Office of the Secretary. It shall establish and maintain a modern data center in the Department. The Office shall:

- a. Assist the Secretary on all matters regarding data banking and information retrieval;
- b. Establish, develop and maintain a computerized foreign-relations data bank for the Department;
- c. Establish, develop and maintain both domestic and foreign service communications system including efficient flow systems for all correspondence between and among all Department units;
- d. Establish, develop and maintain the records system of the entire Department;
- e. Provide technical assistance to any service, office or attached agency of the Department, on matters within its competence;
- f. Perform other related functions as may be assigned by the Secretary.

SEC. 14. *Office of Protocol, State and Official Visits.* - The Office of Protocol, State and Official Visits shall coordinate preparations for state visits, the reception of Chiefs of States and Heads of Governments, and of the highest foreign dignitaries visiting the Philippines, including official visits of Philippine officials abroad, as may be determined by the President. It shall also be responsible for handling all activities of the Department concerning protocol, ceremonials and socials, the proper observance and enforcement of all formalities, courtesies, facilities, immunities and privileges under the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, and other applicable conventions and agreements.

SEC. 15. *Office of Intelligence and Security.* - The Office of Intelligence and Security shall adopt a system of information gathering and analysis, liaison with the intelligence community and provide security services in the Department. It shall likewise undertake enforcement and monitoring of security procedures in the Department and Foreign Service establishments.

SEC. 16. *Foreign Service Institute.* - The Foreign Service Institute shall continue to operate under its charter, but shall be revitalized as the training, research, and career development arm of the Department, in accordance with such rules as may be prescribed by the Secretary. The Institute shall be an integral participant in the planning review process in the Department.

SEC. 17. *UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines.* - The UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines shall, in coordination with the Office of United Nations and other International Organizations, advise the Philippine delegation to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Conference, and the Philippine Government, on matters relating to eh UNESCO and shall function as a liaison agency in all matters pertaining to the Commission.