

HON. ALBERT F. DEL ROSARIO
Secretary of Foreign Affairs

**REMARKS FOR THE SPECIAL MEMORIAL CEREMONY IN HONOR OF
U.S. AMBASSADOR STEPHEN W. BOSWORTH**

28 February 2016
Church of the Holy Trinity, 48 McKinley Road, Forbes Park, Makati City

The Brilliant Life of U.S. Ambassador Steve Bosworth

A Diplomat and a Statesman

His Excellency, President Benigno S. Aquino III;
Former President Fidel V. Ramos;
Honorable Members of the Cabinet;
Ambassador Philip S. Goldberg;
Distinguished Speakers at this Memorial; and
Mr. Cesar Buenaventura,
Mrs. Maribel Ongpin,
and Bobby Romulo,
Friends of Ambassador Stephen Bosworth.

Three days ago, we celebrated EDSA I, those historic days when the Filipino People held the world in awe with their moral courage and heroism. Our Peoples Power Revolution was a great moment, not just for the Philippines, but for all nations.

Such moments are occasions for reflection and never more so than when we remember those who took part in them.

So today, we are gathered here to remember our dear friend, Ambassador Stephen Bosworth, to celebrate his life and to honor the days we shared with him. It is my privilege to participate in this second memorial for Steve, as my initial one was at Harvard in Boston a week ago when others also rendered him homage.

Please let me briefly share with you my remarks about my good friend Steve at that Memorial in Boston.

There, I recalled for the gathering that, many years ago, we stood with Steve at a very significant crossroad, following the famed Snap Elections of February 1986.

Dismayed by a statement from the late President Reagan's White House that both sides had cheated during that election, in protest, I was asked by the late Jimmy Ongpin, a renowned patriot, to help organize a march by Filipino alumni of U.S. schools and was appointed to personally deliver a manifesto to the U.S. Embassy in Manila.

On 21st February 1986, a Friday, I remember calling Steve to advise him that we were going to his Embassy. Steve did not try to discourage us. On the contrary, he asked what cold soft drinks we would like to have since about 150 of us would be marching in the heat of the sun.

Our march, however, did not materialize. Our planned demonstration was overtaken by events, because the First EDSA People Power Revolution burst into the open the very next day, February 22nd. Instead, we, the would-be demonstrators, and our families, rushed to the gates of Camp Aguinaldo to join so many others in protecting the anti-Marcos military rebels who had taken refuge there, surrounded by the dictator's military.

With Jimmy Ongpin in the lead, our small group which initially included Tong Payumo, Tony Cumagun, Ben Santos and Bob Garcia, were among the first to join the military rebels inside their Camp. Because of my close friendship with Steve, I was then asked to engage the American Ambassador for assistance in facilitating communications between Camp Aguinaldo and other military camps around the country.

The following evening, our group was asked if we could undertake a surveillance task by trying to locate the whereabouts of the Marcos military. We acceded by driving near the Camps. As we rode along the pitch-dark Libis road, our vehicles had to halt – my wife wanted me to change the words a little bit here, but I didn't – so that several of us could respond to the call of nature. Suddenly, out of the blackness of the night emerged countless heavily armed troops who were resting on the side of the roads with rifles pointed at us. So there they were.

Filipino People Power astonished everyone, appearing in television and news reports everywhere. We called for an end to corrupt dictatorial rule and for the restoration of our nation's freedom. Our call was heard beyond our shores and propelled a democratic wave that swept the world.

That was 30 years ago.

A Close Friendship

But this was not the end of the story. Our lives intersected again, when I joined Government service twice; first in 2001, and then in 2011. In those positions my friendship with Steve deepened even further.

On several occasions, we celebrated our friendship. In 2003, my wife Gretchen and I had the privilege of hosting an annual Alumni meeting of the Fletcher School of Diplomacy at the Philippine Ambassador's official residence in Washington, D.C.

As recently as last year, we had an opportunity to visit Steve and Chris in Boston for a wonderful get-together. We did not think at that time that it would be the last time we would see Steve.

Months later, we were deeply saddened by his loss. I was then given the honor of being invited to speak at the memorial of Steve at Harvard, where we also intently listened and contemplated on the following message of my U.S. counterpart, Secretary of State John Kerry.

AND I QUOTE: "Steph was an American original who always knew what direction he wanted to go. I first met Steph when he was Ambassador to the Philippines in 1986 on one of my first overseas trip as a freshman Senator intrigued by reports I've heard of abuses under President Ferdinand Marcos' dictatorship and U.S. complicity. After five hours' one-on-one with Marcos, I came away convinced we had to change our policy.

Thus began a collaboration with Steph that included a critical moment when our delegation sent to monitor the election between Marcos and Cory Aquino uncovered massive fraud. It was one of those classic times when our values are balanced against our long-term interests.

Intense pressure was placed on the American Embassy in Manila to fudge the truth. But Steph Bosworth managed the tumultuous aftermath of that election with consummate skill. He stood up to Marcos, delivering the new message of the United States that Marcos had to go, and Marcos stepped down. That is when real democracy in the Philippines was born and it helped pave the way for similar democratic transitions in Chile, Central America and across the globe.

Over the last decades, it has proven the model for how the United States can support democracy, even if it means showing an ally to the door, and gain a new all – not just the President, but among a whole population."

"Have no doubt, it didn't happen that way without Steph. He played a heroic role, but in his own mind, he was just doing his job. And it's a job he did with honesty, integrity, and guts. That's what Steph did not just once, but always." END OF QUOTE

Over time, many people have asked me how Steve and I became friends. As the story goes, there was guidance for incoming U.S. Ambassadors to the Philippines which read, "If you want to play tennis, call Albert." I think that's me. And so from the outset, we became not only reliable tennis partners, but also close friends who placed a high value on trust. Through the years, we found ourselves exchanging views on a regular basis.

Among the last to speak at the Harvard Memorial was Steve's son, Andrew Carl Bosworth, who gave an incredible testimony about his father, and the role that he had played in those fateful EDSA Days.

Allow me to quote some of the most beautiful sentiments a son could convey about his father.

AND I QUOTE: "In February 1986, when the Philippine Revolution took root, I just turned 14. At that age, I had some real passions, chief among them were skate boarding, and looking and acting as much as possible like my idol Australian surfer Mark Occhilupo.

The snap elections Marcos called meant school was closed for weeks, that was just fine with me. Life in the Embassy residence was good, hours skateboarding my halfpipe, and even in the depth of crisis, my mother made sure the food was amazing. Plus I had recently regained my TV watching privileges after a navy helicopter pilot

radioed in that the word "Surf" was spray-painted on the roof of the Embassy residence in big fluorescent orange letters."

"For the record, this was not a political statement. I had a community, the bodyguards took me in and when I'd run out of TV time, I'd go down and spend time with Dad.

We ate together and they told me about things that were pretty magical to a 14-year old. Most of which aren't appropriate to talk about in this context."

"Inside the residence, life was good. Outside of the residence, not so much. By late February 1986, 30 years ago almost to the day, the streets of Manila were completely congested. Paralyzed first by troops on both sides of the coup, and later by thousands of Filipinos looking for peaceful change. With the streets overrun, Steph couldn't safely get to and from the Embassy. It was miles away from our home, the residence, and so he worked from home."

"All of this to say that as a 14-year old, I had a very unique view of Steph at work. During the Revolution, the security guys didn't have time to hang out with me. They were busy transforming the house into a fortress, and so when I wasn't skateboarding, I was in the orbit of an extraordinary spectacle."

"To the credit of the Filipino people, I was witness to one of the most inspiring displays of freedom over tyranny in our lifetime. All of the communication with Washington happened on the secure phone usually in the middle of the night. But during the day, both sides of the Revolution just called our house, the maids would announce over the intercom system, President Marcos on line 3, Albert del Rosario line 2, General

Ramos on line 4, and as crazy as it sounds, I would just pick up the phone in my room, unscrew the mouthpiece so I couldn't be heard, and I'd listen in."

"In the dark hours of February 24th, we got a call from General Ramos telling us that the shelling of this position was about to begin. We were all gathered together, Steph made calls, his voice steady and relaxed, he called Malacanang Palace, and with a voice of reassuring ease, you know what I'm talking about, explained to Marcos why violence wasn't a good option."

"My mother, Steph and I waited in our safe room in silence, waiting for the sound of artillery. We'll never know exactly why artillery never rained down on Camp Crame and Camp Aguinaldo that night, but almost certainly, Steph's call saved thousands of lives. I bring up those days because tough times don't define us, they unmask us. In those difficult days, Steph was revealed, his strength, his calm, his moral courage, his deep desire to do good."

"His calm was a gift he knew everyone around him needed, and echoed a deep belief that violence was almost never necessary."

"When I told Steph I've been listening in to his calls, he was furious. But I saw of him in those days, and many many days thereafter, what it was to be a man. Being a man means leaving the world better than you found it. Being a man means being kind. Being a man means always looking for moral high ground. Being a man means doing the right thing even when there is nothing in it for you. It means whenever you have the strength to give the world light, give light. Steph I love you, we love you, my mother so loves you, and we will miss your light." END OF QUOTE

A Champion of Democracy

Dear Friends,

As we take our leave of Steve, I am honored to salute him for what he was, to himself, to his family and friends, to the United States and to our own country.

Steve will stand forever in our pantheon of champions of democracy. His quiet commitment to the Filipinos' quest for freedom and to a vigorous Philippine-American alliance is a legacy he would be proud to leave behind.

For Filipinos and Americans alike, Steve's memory is a testament to the human spirit in its eternal search for liberty.

For me, knowing Steve was a pleasure. Witnessing his profound engagement with the Filipino people was indeed a privilege.

Steve, from a grateful Filipino nation, please accept our most profound gratitude.

In God's eternal embrace, may you now rest in peace, my dear friend.