

STATE DEPARTMENT APPOINTMENTS OF ANTONY BLINKEN AND SUNG KIM

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We welcome the appointment of Secretary of State Antony Blinken whom we had worked with when he was Deputy Secretary of State. Before stepping down as Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, I recall that Ambassador Joey Cuisia and I engaged the then Deputy Secretary in DC to arrive at a decision to undertake joint patrols in the West Philippine Sea.

We also welcome the appointment of Ambassador Sung Kim as Acting Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs as it is often at that level where foreign policy is formulated and made to happen.

Acting Assistant Secretary Sung Kim will oversee foreign affairs policies involving East Asia and the Pacific, including China, Japan, South Korea and the 10-nation ASEAN, of which the Philippines is a member.

Acting Assistant Secretary Sung Kim is an effective and tested diplomat. We have had the good fortune of benefiting from his experience and skills. To manage the prevailing challenges in our side of the world, he will be instrumental for the US and its policy in the Indo-Pacific.

In the midst of the emerging challenges in Asia, this is an opportunity for us to proffer our congratulations to Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Acting Assistant Secretary Sung Kim who represent our country's sole treaty ally and longtime defense partner. With several others, both US senior officials are expected to comprise the foreign policy team dominated by former Obama executives. END