

A photograph of President George W. Bush and Akinori Iwano, President of PLDT, smiling and shaking hands. They are both wearing dark suits and ties. The background shows a portion of the American flag and a wooden door.

# STATESMAN OF THE BOARD



**A**mbassador Albert del Rosario is far above the proverbial diplomatic box, the same one governing the glossy cocktail circuit. Now an experienced statesman down to his fingertips, he is a veritable treasure of information on diverse geopolitics, particularly in business. Five years as Ambassador to the US was a checkered cornerstone of his career before returning to the ranks of senior management on the board of PLDT.

Who are your favorite heroes of fiction?

**ADR's Answer:** For one – Hagar the Horrible – obviously a natural plugger with a realistic sense of self.

*HotJoe (HJ) : Hagar the Horrible, Viking and lovable pillager of London would probably not be a likely choice for an ambassador's hero. Even Hagar's refusal to take only one bath per year cannot lessen his everyman charm. What we look up to in Hagar: his ability to keep his longboat crew together; his can-do attitude even when his boat is leaking or as he suffers a back shot full of arrows and ultimately, his absolute devotion to his wife Helga and children Honi and Hamlet.*

Who are your favorite characters in history?

**ADR:** Though not yet history, I like former Secretary of State Colin Powell. With a modest background and academic mediocrity, he nevertheless succeeded in reaching positions of great importance in the service of his country.

*HJ: Ambassador del Rosario can probably identify with this dynamic general. ADR himself can lay claim to a multi-faceted career that also impacted the nation, just like General Colin Powell. In fact, ADR has been the recipient of government awards, the highest of which is the Order of Sikatuna with rank of Datu for excellence in promoting foreign relations.*

The quality you most admire in a man?

**ADR:** Courage.

*HJ: Ambassador del Rosario is known to be the sort of person who stands up for his principles no matter the cost – no waffling when it counts. Being courageous is certainly second nature to him. ADR maintains his sang-froid at all times and that has earned him wide respect.*

The quality you most admire in a woman?

**ADR:** On women, I tend to form my impression on the totality of the person.

*HJ: A totally diplomatic response that even the most rabid feminist will not take exception to!*

Your favorite virtue?

**ADR:** Mental honesty.

*HJ: An interesting term. We would equate this to integrity of thought as well as action. If one begins from there, everything else naturally follows. Whether in business, politics or within the confines of the family, mental honesty is the rudder that guides us. In the case of Ambassador del Rosario, he has proven to have this virtue in heaps.*

Your most marked characteristic?

**ADR:** I am told I possess stick-to-itiveness

What do you value most in your friends?

**ADR:** I value friends who remain as they are regardless of weather conditions

What natural gift would you most like to possess?

**ADR:** I need to think a bit more about that.

What type of music do you listen to (artists, genres, etc.)?

**ADR:** I can mostly identify with music in the 60's.

What are your hobbies? What do you like to do for "downtime?"

**ADR:** Tennis and martial arts – but no longer doable due to poorly-done knee surgeries. Downtime – improving my learning curve by reading and talking at great length with my grandchildren.

*HJ: Don't cross ADR! He has a 1st degree Black Belt in Korean martial arts known as Hwa Rang Do. He is also the Chairman of its Martial Arts Association of the Philippines. The doting grandpa also loves to spend time with his four gorgeous grandkids.*

What is your motto?

**ADR:** Hang in there, baby!

What's your homepage?

**ADR:** We maintain one for the insurance brokerage only.

Do you prefer to communicate via SMS or would you rather make phone calls?

**ADR:** SMS with little time; phone calls with more time.

How many e-mail addresses do you have? How often do you check your e-mail?

**ADR:** Not sure how many, but I do check my email a few times daily.





Ambassador with his precious grandchildren

Who do you admire most, Bill Gates or Steve Jobs? And Why?

**ADR:** I perhaps admire them for different reasons: Bill Gates for his philanthropy; and Steve Jobs for innovating the personal computer and the iPod.

**HJ:** The Ambassador is well known for his philanthropic bent, as well. He is Chair of the Philippine Cancer Society National Fund Drive, Free Rural Eye Clinic, and Makati Foundation for Education.

If you chose another career path, what would you be?

**ADR:** Same career – but I would aspire for being an improved me.

What cell phone brand and model do you use?

**ADR:** Jurassic as viewed by others but I am accustomed to its simplicity.

**HJ:** Now that is surprising! For a man who sits on the board of the biggest most advanced telecommunications company in the nation, one would have expected him to have the latest gadget with all the bells and whistles. But

*perhaps, there is a lesson to be learned from the Ambassador's simplicity and winning practicality.*

If you had to conduct an interview with someone applying for a position with you, what specific qualities would you be looking for?

**ADR:** If recruiting for a senior executive position, I will need to make an assessment on his or her potential to look into the future, to be a team player, and to be a change agent among other traits.

How do you measure being well looked after as a customer? What are the markers that tell you the company is looking after its people?

**ADR:** Ability of the service provider to put himself in my place. Markers: manifestations of confidence in himself, his products, and his colleagues.

Are you necessarily a micromanager sometimes?

**ADR:** I tended to, but less of a micromanager now from having to manage comprehensive bilateral relations involving many initiatives and issues as Chief of Mission in the US for five years.





Conferment of the highest civilian award, the Order of Sikatuna with Rank of Datu, for excellence in promoting foreign relations.



At the US State Department with Secretary of State Candoleeza Rice and US Ambassador Kristie Kenney



At a welcome home dinner, hosted by PLDT Chairman Manuel V. Pangilinan



Military ceremony at Arlington with Secretary Anthony Principi and an unidentified US Army General

In your view how has the business atmosphere changed for the Philippines as a whole over the past three years?

**ADR:** The business sector has generally learned to abstract itself from political ongoing. Economic circumstances could have been improved with more focus on good governance.

What do you expect technology to achieve next and what area of your life would you like to be most positively affected?

**ADR:** Technology is constantly being challenged in this era of economic integration and globalization. Given that inequality remains a major challenge in our country, we could use greater application of technology to improve, for example, the cascading of economic benefits to people in the rural areas, especially those in the agricultural sector.

What are your next big personal and business challenges?

**ADR:** In addition to rebuilding my balance sheet after a five year absence, staying healthy so I can be productive in helping my children and

grandchildren and the various firms with which I have the honor of being associated

What are your thoughts on the ICT business solutions and how do you feel it will affect business in the country? Do you feel that breakthroughs we've made in ICT will prove to be substantial nation-builders in the future? How so?

**ADR:** To truly become a global player, we need to put political will in developing and executing our programs on national competitiveness. We need to do this quickly at the risk of being left behind.

ICT is reshaping the world even as we speak. It is impacting business in every industry, sector and market, and every point in the value chain. It is defining how we buy, sell and image products and services. ICT business solutions must be a core concern. 🍷