

**“Little President,” defense chief,
one JBC member, four envoys hurdle CA**

“Little President” Executive Secretary **Salvador C. Medialdea** of the Office of the President (OP) and Department of National Defense (DND) Secretary **Delfin N. Lorenzana**, along with JBC member **Toribio E. Ila, Jr.** and four ambassadors from the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), breezed through the Commission on Appointments (CA) yesterday during its plenary session presided by President of the Senate / Chairman of the Commission Aquilino “Koko” L. Pimentel III.

In just one sitting at the committee deliberations and with no questions asked of Medialdea, the Committee on Government Corporations and other Offices, headed by Rep. Rosenda Ann Ocampo, unanimously recommended the confirmation of Medialdea’s *ad interim* appointment to the plenary without any objection from the Commission Members. The motion made by Sen. Juan Miguel F. Zubiri to recommend for the approval of Medialdea’s appointment to the plenary came right after the appointee’s brief opening statement and was approved by Ocampo in no time - making it one of the fastest deliberations in a Commission panel that lasted in less than three minutes.

Medialdea, fondly known as Bingbong to his close colleagues, earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Commerce (Management) from the Colegio de San Juan de Letran in 1972, and his Bachelor of Laws degree from the San Beda College of Law in Manila in 1976. He became a member of the Philippine Bar in 1977 and began his law career at the Angara Abello Concepcion Regala & Cruz (ACCRA) Law Offices. He also joined the Ponce Enrile Cayetano Bautista Picazo & Reyes (PECABAR) Law Offices in 1983, where he was a partner until August 1990. In 2000, he founded the Medialdea, Ata, Bello, Guevarra and Suarez (MABGS) Law Offices. His legal acumen has earned him several recognitions in the field. He was appointed by the Supreme Court as a bar examiner for labor and social legislation in the 2006 Bar examinations and was awarded the Colegio de San Juan de Letran (Colegio) Award for being an outstanding professional in the field of law in 2007 and the 2015 Distinguished Bedan Award.

He also served the government in past administrations. His initial stint in government was being head of the Livelihood Corporation for a year during the Estrada presidency. He also served as undersecretary in the Office of the Presidential Adviser for Political Affairs in 2000. Medialdea first met with then Davao City fiscal Rodrigo Duterte in the 1980s while he was waiting for his case to be called at the fiscal’s office. They became friends. He has gained the trust of President Duterte as he became his personal lawyer when the President was still the mayor of Davao City. Both of their fathers were actually close acquaintances as the late Justice Leo D. Medialdea worked at the Office of the Provincial Fiscal during the time that the father of President Duterte serves as the last governor of the undivided Davao province.

In her sponsorship speech at the plenary session, Ocampo expressed that “if there is a term that best fits the appointee, it is that he is a Renaissance Man in our modern times, meaning a man for all seasons, a man of many talents and accomplishments.” Ocampo also emphasized her appreciation that Medialdea’s “primary qualification dwells in the mind of the President, who sees in him the mirror of his thoughts, his foundational premises in life, his longings and desires for the Filipino people - maybe even his style which is to live simply, modestly and passionately uplift the welfare of the Filipino today and for the generations to come.” The motion of Ocampo was duly seconded by CA Vice Chair Rep. Ronaldo Zamora, Sen. Franklin M. Drilon and Sen. Zubiri with their respective seconding speeches speaking highly of Medialdea’s merit and fitness for the job.

Lorenzana, on the other hand, is an alumnus of the Philippine Military Academy, Batch '73, Maagap Class and earned his Master of Business Administration degree, major in Operations Research, from Ateneo Graduate School of Business. He also took a number of courses and training both in the Philippines and abroad, to include strategic studies at Australia University in Canberra, Senior International Leaders seminar at Harvard University and crisis management course at the US State Department. His colorful military career were highlighted by several awards and distinctions he received which include four (4) Distinguished Service Stars; three (3) Gold Cross Medals; Fifteen (15) Military Merit Medals and seven (7) Military Commendation Medals. He capped his military career as a Defense and Armed Forces Attache in Washington DC in 2002. During such post, he was esteemed for effecting successful military bilateral relations between the Philippines and the U.S. through the Visiting Forces Agreement and the milestone Balikatan Exercises. He served the post up to his retirement as a Major General in 2004.

His accomplishments in the military service were remarkable. At the height of the anti-insurgency campaign in 1987 - 1989, he had worked closely with then newly-elected Davao City mayor Rodrigo Duterte, to weed out the city of insurgents, sparrow units and other criminal elements.

Rep. Roy M. Loyola, chair of the Commission’s defense committee, favorably recommended Lorenzana’s appointment to the plenary without any objection from the Commission Members. “With Secretary Lorenzana at the helm, we are assured that the Department of National Defense will fulfill its mandate entrusted to it by the people. His tactical expertise and diplomatic skills have prepared him for the job in the midst of the recent developments in relation with the military alliance with the US and China’s aggressive posturing in the West Philippine Sea,” Loyola expressed in his sponsorship speech. Sen. Gregorio Honasan in his seconding speech on the motion to favorably recommend Lorenzana’s appointment for confirmation also attested that, “in his watch, the defense establishment will continue to fight and win in the permanent battleground, which is the hearts and minds of our people...”

Meanwhile, the Commission also confirmed the appointment of **Toribio E. Ilaó, Jr.**, as Member, representing the Private Sector, Judicial and Bar Council, Supreme Court of the Philippines, for a term expiring on 09 July 2020, vice Aurora S. Lagman. Committee chairperson Sen. Loren Legarda, and the other members of the justice and judicial and bar council committee, did not find any problem that would obstruct the confirmation of the appointment of Ilaó. Hence, the favorable recommendation of Legarda to confirm his appointment in the plenary.

Likewise, four ambassadors from the DFA were confirmed by the Commission's foreign affairs committee, headed by Sen. Panfilo M. Lacson. Lacson recommended their confirmation to the plenary with no objections raised.

The nominations approved by the Commission were those of:

Charles Cabayan Jose Chief of Mission, Class I, as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Malaysia

Philippe Jones Lhuillier as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Kingdom of Spain, with concurrent jurisdiction over the Principality of Andorra, with the salary and emoluments of a Chief of Mission, Class I

Antonio Manuel Revilla Lagdameo as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, with concurrent jurisdiction over Ireland, Isle of Man, Bailiwick of Guernsey and Bailiwick of Jersey, with the salary and emoluments of a Chief of Mission, Class I

Alan L. Timbayan as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the State of Qatar, with the salary and emoluments of a Chief of Mission, Class I

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