

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ACQUISITION OF BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES FOR THE USE OF DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR ESTABLISHMENTS AND OTHER AGENCIES OF THE PHILIPPINE GOV...

REPUBLIC ACT NO. 1566, June 16, 1956

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Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. The Secretary of Foreign Affairs, upon recommendation of a special committee hereby created for the purpose of this Act, to be hereinafter referred to as the special committee, to be composed of the Auditor-General as chairman, and the Governor of the Central Bank, the Commissioner of the Budget, a representative of the Department of Public Works and Communications and a representative of the Department of Foreign Affairs as members, is empowered to acquire by purchase or construction within the limits of appropriations made for the purpose, or by exchange, in whole or in part, under such terms and conditions as in his judgment may best protect the interests of the Republic of the Philippines, of any building or grounds of the Republic of the Philippines in foreign countries and under the jurisdiction and control of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, sites and buildings in foreign capitals and in other foreign cities, and to alter, repair, and furnish such buildings for the use of the diplomatic and consular establishments of the Republic of the Philippines, or for the purpose of consolidating, to the extent deemed advisable by the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, within one or more buildings, the embassies, legations, consulates and other agencies of the Philippine Government there maintained, in which buildings the said Secretary shall assign quarters to such embassies, legations, consulates, and agencies.

SEC. 2. Buildings and grounds acquired under this Act or acquired or leased for the use of the diplomatic and consular establishments in foreign countries prior to the approval of this Act may be used as Government offices or residence of diplomatic and consular officers and employees and of other officers and employees of the Government of the Philippines assigned for duty abroad or as such offices and residence. Said officers and employees residing in such buildings shall be furnished, without cost to them, with living quarters, heat, light and household equipment in said buildings and, accordingly, they shall not be entitled to any living quarters allowance. Except in clearly justified cases, the buildings and grounds acquired or leased as hereinabove provided shall be the offices and residence of the respective diplomatic and consular establishments of the Republic of the Philippines and its diplomatic and consular officials.

SEC. 3. The contracts for all work of construction, alteration, and repair of buildings and grounds mentioned in sections one and two are authorized to be negotiated, the terms of the contracts to be prescribed, and the work to be performed, where necessary, in the judgment of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, without regard to such statutory provisions as relate to the negotiation, making, and performance of contracts and performance of similar work in the Philippines.

In every such contract which requires payments in a foreign currency, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs is authorized to purchase or otherwise acquire upon the recommendation of the special committee herein created such currency at such times and in such amounts (within the total amount of the payments to be made under such

contract) as he may deem necessary, the currency so purchased to be disbursed and accounted for at its coat price.

SEC. 4. The authority granted to acquire sites and buildings by purchase shall, in cases where it is impossible to acquire title, be construed as authority to acquire the property by lease for a term sufficiently long, in the judgment of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, to be practically equivalent to the acquisition of title.

SEC. 5. The Secretary of Foreign Affairs, when he finds it to be in the interest of the Government, upon recommendation of the special committee herein created, with the approval of the President of the Philippines, is authorized to sell or lease buildings and grounds acquired for the use of diplomatic and consular establishments in foreign countries, and notwithstanding the provisions of any other law, the proceeds of sales or rentals may be applied toward the purchase and construction, and furnishing of other like properties, or made a part of the Foreign Service Building Revolving Fund hereinafter created, as in the judgment of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs may best serve the Government's interest.

SEC. 6. The Secretary of Foreign Affairs is charged with the supervision and preservation of the diplomatic and consular properties of the Government of the Philippines in foreign countries and the properties acquired under this Act.

SEC. 7. The Secretary of Foreign Affairs is hereby authorized to negotiate loans with the Government Service Insurance System for a term not exceeding ten years and at an interest of not more than six per centum per annum whose total amount shall not exceed five million pesos to be guaranteed by the Government of the Republic of the Philippines which shall constitute the Foreign Service Building Revolving Fund, which fund, together with the proceeds of the sale of properties that where made a part of the fund, is made available for the acquisition by purchase or otherwise or by construction of sites and buildings and for altering and furnishing such buildings for the use of the diplomatic and consular establishments and other agencies abroad of the Government of the Philippines in accordance with the provisions of section one of this Act. The Secretary of Foreign Affairs shall report annually all such transactions as well as any transaction made pursuant to section five to the Congress with the budget estimates of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

SEC. 8. For the purpose of paying the principal and interest charges on the loans secured from the Government Service Insurance System mentioned in the preceding section, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs is authorized to use the savings from operation of the Department of Foreign Affairs annually beginning with the fiscal year nineteen hundred and fifty-six. To insure the use of the full saving of the Department of Foreign Affairs to the servicing of the loans herein contemplated, the Department shall hereafter be exempted from the forced savings. The corresponding current appropriations of the Department of Foreign Affairs in operating expense items from which savings may later be realized as a result of the acquisition of buildings and grounds under the provisions of this Act, shall, in succeeding Appropriation Acts, be set aside for the purpose of servicing the loans herein contemplated.

SEC. 9. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved, June 16, 1956.

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