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MDs act to stave off repatriation

In their meeting with Romulo, Dr. Cunanan noted that in April, 1970, an amendment

A delegation of doctors from the Philippine Medical Association in America (PMAA) met with Foreign Secretary Carlos P. Romulo last Thursday, November 13, to discuss ways by which the Philippine government could help Filipino doctors facing repatriation starting January, next year.

The delegation, composed of Dr. Roberto Cunanan, president; Dr. Divinia Bautista, treasurer and Atty. Reuben Seguritan, the association's legal counsel, met Romulo who has expressed his concern over the plight of Filipino doctors in a letter sent to Dr. Cunanan a month ago.

In his letter, Romulo asked the PMAA to spell out ways by which he could help.

The PMAA, responding to Romulo's letter, proposed two lines of action:

(1) that the so-called "skills list" be revised and amended to do away with some, if not all, medical specializations; and

(2) if any of the specializations are not withdrawn from the list, the Philippine government should issue a policy on the granting of "no-objection" statements to the stay of Filipino doctors here.

The "skills list" is a published list of different skills needed by the Philippine government in response to a US State Department questionnaire passed out to different countries in April, 1972. The medical professions, including doctors and nurses, are in that list.

In connection with the "no-objection" statements being asked by the doctors from the RP government, Dr. Cunanan explained that an affected exchange visitor may apply for a waiver of the foreign residence requirement on the grounds that his nationality or last place of residence does not object.

If such a statement is issued by the Philippine government, he added, repatriation moves against the doctors can be delayed, if not averted.

was passed by the US Congress exempting some categories of exchange visitors, including Filipino doctors, from the foreign residency requirement.

This requirement, however, Dr. Cunanan said, was restored for Filipino doctors on May 25, 1972 when the Philippines was included among the

countries permitted by the Department of State as needing skills.

Meanwhile, a list of proposals is also being prepared by Dr. Cunanan and Seguritan for submission to Rep. Herman Badillo (D-NY) who has, according to the PMAA president, promised to help Filipino doctors.



STRATEGY MOVE—Officers of the Philippine Medical Association in America call on Foreign Secretary Carlos P. Romulo, seated, at the Philippine Center to enlist his help in the efforts to fight the

forced repatriation of Filipino foreign medical graduates. Standing, from left, Dr. Roberto Cunanan, PMAA president; Dr. Divinia Bautista, PMAA treasurer; and Reuben Seguritan, legal counsel.