

# MARKETPLACE

## JOURNAL

### IMMIGRATION CORNER



ATTY. MICHAEL GURFINKEL

## DHS can track and monitor your whereabouts

a stroke and was hospitalized. So, they applied for an extension in order that she could take care of her husband as he underwent treatment and therapy.

This would seem like a very legitimate and compelling reason justifying an extension. However, after the request for the extension had been filed, the husband was concerned about the mounting medical expenses, and decided it was best to return to the Philippines and receive further treatment

there. His wife remained in the US, awaiting the decision of her extension request.

Imagine her surprise when her extension was denied and the decision noted that although the husband had a stroke in June 2008, "USCIS records show that your husband departed the

the extension (to care for her husband) became moot.

I know that there are many situations where people attempt to back-date or back-stamp their arrival in the Philippines, hoping to hide the actual amount of time that they spent in the US, making it appear that they did

DHS detecting their arrivals or departures. However, please bear in mind that when you check-in at the airport, you are required to give the airline representative your passport. That representative then scans the bar codes on your passport, which is fed into their computer database and creates the passenger manifest. That data is then provided to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which includes the US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers at airports and other ports of entry. So, even if a person tries to back-date, (or no date) their arrivals or departures in the Philippines, DHS can still track and monitor your true travels and whereabouts.

That is why it is so important, especially for people who are in the US but out of status, that they don't play games with themselves or their travel plans, as a departure from the US

could trigger a 3/10 year bar if discovered. And, this woman's denial clearly demonstrates how effective the DHS' systems is in discovering your (or your family's) travels.

Michael J. Gurfinkel is licensed, and an active member of the State Bar of California and New York. All immigration services are provided by, or under the supervision of, an active member of the State Bar of California. Each case is different.

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*“Even if a person tries to back-date, (or no date) their arrivals or departures in the Philippines, DHS can still track and monitor your true travels and whereabouts.”*

United States on September 16, 2008." She had not informed the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) that her husband had departed and yet, the USCIS, on its own, was able to check various data bases, and pin-point the exact date that her husband departed the US. So, the reason for seeking

not overstay. Others, who are in the US, and still have 10 year multiple entry visas try to take "secret vacations" to the Philippines, despite being out of status, thinking their travels could be covered up by the back-stamps, avoiding the 3/10 year bar. These people somehow felt safe that they can travel without

## Consumption still seen growing

### Remittances, BPO expansion to spur spending

by MICHELLE REMO  
Inquirer.net

MANILA—The world may be in the grip of a financial crisis, but Filipinos are not about to cut back on spending.

According to the central bank, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) <http://www.bsp.gov.ph/>, domestic consumption will remain a key growth driver for the economy. Remittances, despite reported job cuts offshore, are seen to remain substantial enough to fuel growth in consumer spending.

"The question is whether global headwinds pose risks to domestic demand. Not alarmingly so, thus far. The continued expansion in consumption will be fueled by income effect of OFW [overseas Filipino workers] remittances and favorable prospects in the outsourcing industry," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said.

Personal consumption has been growing by at least 4 percent every year over the past three decades, except in 1985 when consumption contracted year-on-year. Tetangco said consumption would not likely contract this year, believing that the impact of the global turmoil on the Philippine economy would not be drastic enough to cause a decline in consumer spending.

The government has set a growth target of 3.7-4.4 percent this year for the domestic economy, believing that domestic demand will remain strong. Although the forecast for this year marks a slowdown from last year's 4.6 percent, economic managers said it's a respectable projection considering that the current recession has been crippling other, more advanced economies.

In the January Consumer Expectation Survey of the BSP, more household-respondents are expected to increase spending on basic goods and services in the next quarter.

The consumer confidence index for spending—determined by deducting the number of respondents who expected a decline in spending from the number of those who expected an increase in consumption—was at +40.7 percent. A total of 5,487 households responded to the survey.

The BSP said that while some sectors would be hard pressed in coping with the global crisis this year, the effect on aggregate income would be offset by projected growth of other industries, like business process outsourcing. The BPO sector is seen to continue its expansion this year, contributing to employment and, in turn, helping spur consumption. ■

## Philippines ready to export organic products

by RIZA T. OLCHONDRA  
Inquirer.net

MANILA — A program to convert 400,000 hectares of traditional rice lands into organic farms will produce enough organic rice to meet domestic and international demand, an official of non-profit group La Liga Policy Institute said.

"If a one-hectare rice farm produces 3.5 tons of organic rice, the 400,000 hectares will produce over a million metric tons. The increased supply could also help make organic rice more affordable to more people and not just the middle class

and high-income market," La Liga managing director Roland Cabigas said in an interview.

"The production will be enough to supply current demand for niche markets here and we can also export. In fact, someone from Singapore has expressed interest in direct trade. We want to encourage this," he said.

Cabigas said the Department of Agriculture (DA) <http://www.da.gov.ph/wps/portal>, nongovernmental organizations and farmers had met on the timetable of conversion from 2009 to 2010. ■

### BUSINESS


#### Quote of the Week

*"With or without this crisis, we had already anticipated the annualized growth rate of the industry to scale down as our base increases. We believe that this situation creates an even more urgent push for companies to outsource to the Philippines to take advantage of better costs at high quality."*

—Benedict Hernandez,

Contact Center Association of the Philippines  
President addressing the effect of the global crisis on RP's BPO industry

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