

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

# US assumes RP 2010 polls...

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in security and other field cooperation between the two long-time allies.

"Dr. Gates' visit signals another milestone and era of strong cooperation between our countries, particularly the defense and military field to combat traditional and non-traditional threats

to national security, to include international terrorism and opportunities for working together," Teodoro said.

He stressed that the US government has been actively helping the country, from fighting terrorism to saving Filipinos with assistance during natural calamities.

Gates and Teodoro held a closed-door meeting at the Armed Forces of the Philippines Officers' Clubhouse before the US defense chief and his party headed back to Villamor Air Base in Pasay City for their flight back to the US.

US military advisers are currently supporting and providing intelligence information to Filipino troops conducting counter-terrorist operations in the Zamboanga Peninsula, Sulu, Basilan, and Tawi-Tawi.

The Philippines and the US also conduct the yearly RP-US Balikatan joint military exercises.

Gates was originally scheduled to arrive in Manila last Sunday but his military aircraft encountered mechanical problems, the US embassy in Manila reported on Monday.

**Gates vows US support to regional security**

At the Shangri-La Dialogue, Gates outlined a broad set of regional security issues and promised continued support from the US administration.

The annual conference is attended by defense, senior military and other officials from the Asia-Pacific region to discuss mutual security challenges.

Gates said during the security meeting that the US has paid a significant price in blood and treasure to fight aggression, deter potential adversaries, extend freedom, and maintain peace and prosperity in this part of the world, and their commitment to the region is just as strong today as it has ever been, if not stronger.

He said that the challenge now is to formulate a defense policy that adapts to the new realities of the region.

Gates cited the long-standing treaties with Japan and South Korea, both formed in the early years of the Cold War "when both nations were impoverished and virtually destroyed." The two countries are now economic powerhouses with modern, well-trained and well-equipped military forces.

He said the changes represent a shift in the defense strategy in the region, placing more emphasis on building the capacity of its allies and less on solely conventional military deterrence.

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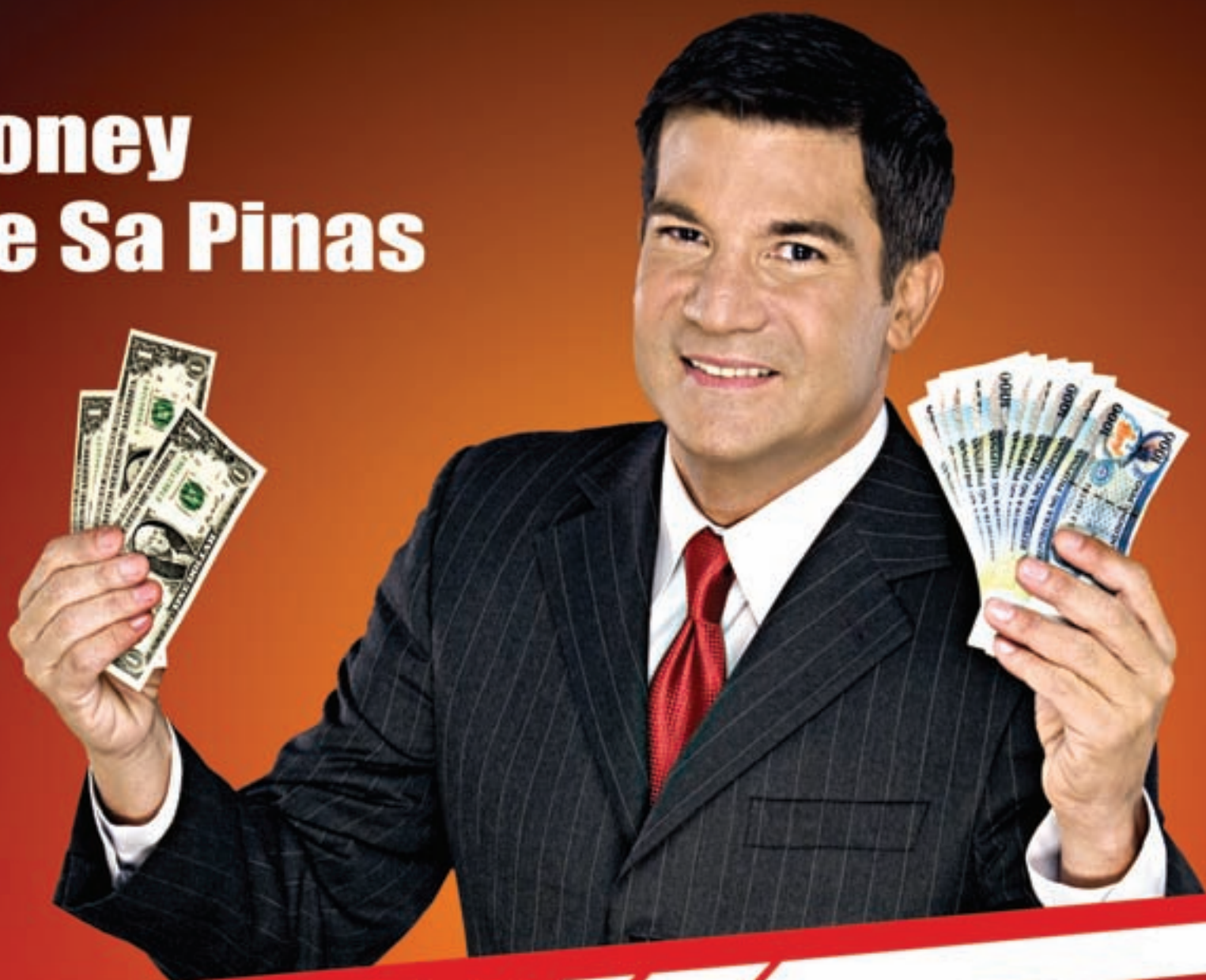
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