



Online whistleblower Wikileaks uploaded on Aug. 25 a batch of about 1,000 diplomatic cables the United States Embassy in Manila sent to the U.S. State Department in Washington, D.C. and among the more recent is one sent in January last year noting the factors that hinder foreign investment in the Philippines.

According to the U.S. Embassy's "2010 Investment Climate Statement-Philippines," the country's "legal restrictions, regulatory inconsistency, and a lack of transparency hinder foreign investment."

Among the legal restrictions mentioned in the cable posted on Wikileaks are the limitations on foreign ownership in various sectors like retail trade, mining, advertising, mass media, education, and deep sea fishing.

The U.S. Embassy also noted that the local practice of professions is limited to Philippine citizens.

The U.S. Embassy also pointed out that “regulatory authority remains ambiguous and corruption is a significant factor.

In addition, a complex and slow judicial system inhibits the timely and fair resolution of commercial disputes.”

Stated in the diplomatic correspondence are the country’s “noteworthy strengths, such as its free trade zones” and “impressive growth” of some industries particularly those able to “leverage the...well-educated and English-speaking labor pool.”

In another cable sent also in January 2010 , the U.S. Embassy observed how many Filipinos were “slow to recognize” the change in U.S. immigration policy on foreign nurses.

### **A news window**

But the embassy saw a new window open for Filipinos and said, “more than 100 school districts throughout the United States have begun to recruit Filipino teachers.”

“Besides temporary worker (H) non-immigrant visas, teachers have the added flexibility of also qualifying for exchange visitor (J) non-immigrant visas. Between 2000 and 2008, the number of newly hired teachers working overseas grew by an annual rate of 27 percent,” the U.S. Embassy cable said.

The U.S. Government also closely monitors developments in the Philippines transport and tourism sectors, including compliance with global civil aviation standards.

“The most important issue, the shortage of qualified inspectors and technical personnel, remains a major challenge for the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP),” the U.S. Embassy said in a cable sent on Dec. 22, 2009.

“CAAP's prolonged conflict with the Civil Service Commission and the Department of Budget and Management regarding salary increases and qualification standards continues to delay progress,” the embassy noted.

***(Earl Victor Rosero/VS, GMA News)***