

FRONTS NEWS

SOCE: the other post-election counting

by Gina Villanueva, Associate Editor

June 13, 2016

Now that the dust has settled, the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) has announced the other counting after the elections: Statement of Contributions and Expenditures (SOCE), required before official seating.

COMELEC reports that President-elect Rodrigo Duterte spent over P37.1 million on his campaign for the Palace, largely bankrolled by big businessmen and patrons from Davao City, but was not the biggest campaign spender among the five candidates in the May 9 presidential election.

It was Grace Poe who spent the most with P150.84 million, none of it came from her own pocket -- as she finished third place in the race.

Deadline for the submission of campaign expenditure reports was Wednesday, June 8, 2016. It was extended from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. - but no report was received from Mar Roxas, Administration presidential candidate.

Under the COMELEC Resolution No. 9991, failure to submit the SOCE for the first time is punishable by a fine of P10,000 to P30,000 depending on the position. Second time offenders will be fined P20,000 to P60,000 and they could be perpetually barred from running for public office.

Outgoing Vice-President Jejomar Binay invested P463.45 million in his failed bid for the presidency, while Miriam Defensor Santiago was the most frugal, spending only P74.6 million.

Among the six vice-presidential candidates, Vice-President elect Leni Robredo had the biggest expenditure of P418-odd million.

Her closest rival, Sen. Ferdinand Marcos, Jr., reported that he spent only P140.54 million, and out of this P9.8 million was his own money.

Sen. Francis Escudero spent P320.5, and did not use personal funds.

Sen Alan Peter Cayetano, Duterte's running mate, spent P189.12 million, of which P199,872.48 was his own money.

Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV spent P61.89 million, shelling out P736,569 from his own pocket.

Sen. Gringo Honasan spent the least among the vice-presidential candidates, paying only P26.25 million for his campaign, and spent P296,449.20 out of his pocket.

Among the senatorial candidates, Francis Tolentino, former chair of the Metro Manila Development Authority spent the most amount of P199.07 million, but failed to win a seat in the Senate.

Next were winning senatorial candidates Joel Villanueva (P163.78 million), Sherwin Gatchalian (P157.07 million) and Ralph Recto (P131.87 million).

Losing senatorial candidates Isko Moreno and Sen. Teofisto Guingona III spent over P120 million and P92.30 million, respectively.

READ: Mar, LP fail to file expenses report

<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/789957/mar-lp-fail-to-file-expenses-report>

Duterte's biggest election financier expects nothing in return

By Lilian C. Mellejor

June 13, 2016

DAVAO CITY, June 9 (PNA) -- Elected Davao del Norte first district Representative Antonio "Tonyboy" Florendo brushed aside any speculation of getting favors from President-elect Rodrigo Duterte for contributing P75 million to his election campaign kitty.

"No strings attached," Florendo said, adding that is his own humble contribution first as a "brother and an ardent supporter".

Florendo came out the biggest contributor in the campaign fund Duterte under his Statement of Contribution and Expenditures (SOCE) submitted before the Commission on Elections (Comelec). In a press statement sent Thursday, Florendo admitted he contributed first on April 5 the amount of P50 million, then P25 million.

"Beyond the millions of pesos, it was this brotherly love to President-elect Rodrigo Duterte that prompted me to support his candidacy," Florendo said, further admitting that he withdrew his support to Duterte's presidential opponent, Vice President Jejomar Binay.

Floirendo said he understands why his name was made public. "I would have wanted that my contributions to Duterte's candidacy be incognito but because the law mandates it to be made public for transparency purposes, I submit to the mandate of the law," he said.

Floirendo also emphasized that one of the reasons he supported Duterte is that he is a fellow Mindanaoan and that "President Rody is the man who could make it all happen for Mindanao."

"I believe he will do what he promises. I believe in him. He is a no nonsense person," said Floirendo, adding that he does not expect anything personal from Duterte in return but for the first Mindanaoan president to only make good of his promise for the island and the nation.

"It is my fervent wish that President Duterte would make good of his promises for Mindanao and the entire nation. That alone is enough for me, for us Mindanaoans who gave it all to produce a President we could all be proud of," Floirendo said.

Based on his SOCE, Duterte reported total expenditures amounting to P371,461,480.23 during the campaign. Duterte reported he received a total of P375,009,474.90 in contributions which represents P298,303,792.00 in cash and P76,705,682.90 in-kind donations.

Aside from spending P200,000 from his personal funds, Duterte's financiers were Floirendo Jr., at P75 million; Dennis A. Uy, P30 million; Samuel C. Uy, P30 million; Lorenzo A. Te, P30 million, all from Davao City; and Bienvenido F. Tan of Makati City, P20 million.

Dennis Uy owns the Phoenix Petroleum; Samuel Uy, a known close friend of Duterte, owns the Davao Farms and Davao Import Distributors Inc. while Te operates Honda Cars in Davao. Duterte's other contributors were Tomas Alcantara (P12 million); Nicasio Alcantara (P16 million), and Feliz Ang of CATS Motors (P10 million).

The candidates and political parties have been required to submit SOCE within 30 days after the Election Day.

Under the law, the winning candidates that failed to submit their SOCEs will be prevented from assuming the public posts they have been elected to.

Their SOCEs will be evaluated by Comelec on whether their contents are truthful and if anyone has overspent.

Candidates for president and vice president are allowed to spend P10 for every registered voter in the country and overseas; while candidates for other positions can spend P3 for every voter currently registered in the constituency where they are running. On the other hand,

independent candidates can spend P5 for every voter currently registered in the area where they are running; while political parties and party-list groups are also allowed to spend P5 for every voter. (PNA)

LAP/LCM/LDP

Duterte slammed for controversial remarks on killing “corrupt journalists”

By: Yashika F. Torib, Manila Bureau Senior Correspondent

June 13, 2016

President elect Rodrigo Duterte received criticisms in and outside the country for his latest slanderous remarks, this time targeting journalists.

In a recent press conference in Davao City, Duterte stated that journalists are not exempted from assassinations.

“Most of you are clean, but do not ever say all journalists are clean,” Duterte addressed the press. “Just because you are a journalist, you are not exempted from assassination if you are a son of a bitch... Most of those killed, to be frank, have done something. You won’t be killed if you don’t do anything wrong,” he continued.

When a female reporter of GMA 7 followed up his statement with a question, he wolf-whistled at her.

Duterte’s conduct and statement earned the ire of Philippine press groups and the international humanitarian community, striking a sensitive nerve caused by extrajudicial killings of Filipino journalists since 1986.

The National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) slammed the country’s incoming president, saying that press freedom and murder are not joking matters.

“It is appalling that president elect Rodrigo Duterte should justify the murder of journalists in the country by playing the corruption card,” Ryan Rosauero, head of NUJP, said.

Meanwhile, Presidential Communications Secretary Herminio Coloma deplored the proposition that “some journalists may have been assaulted or killed in view of their alleged involvement in media corruption.”

As the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines (FCAP) expressed alarm on the disparaging statements of Duterte, the United Nations has likewise condemned the “apparent endorsement” of extrajudicial killings.

U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki Moon said that he is “extremely disturbed” with Duterte’s recent statements.

“I unequivocally condemn his apparent endorsement of extrajudicial killing, which is illegal and a breach of fundamental rights and freedoms. Such comments are of particular concern in light of ongoing impunity for serious cases of violence against journalists in the Philippines,” Ban said during the U.N. Correspondents Association Directory Reception.

While the local and international press groups were incensed with his pronouncements, Duterte defended himself and insisted that such statements were based on the wrong premise.

“I never said that killing journalists is justified because they are involved in corruption,” he clarified, also denying that he said corrupt journalists deserve to die.

“I do not condone nor tolerate killing of journalists regardless of the motive or the killers or the reason for their killing. My duty as President is to uphold and enforce the law and I will pursue and prosecute these killers to the hilt in accordance with the law, and I will be – as I have been – protective of the rights of journalists, and for that matter of any citizen of the Republic,” he said.

He also said that the United Nations should not force its “code of conduct” on him, as he “never signed anything which says I have to behave in this manner or that.”

EDITORIAL

PRESIDENT DIGONG AND THE PRESS

June 13, 2016

What could have been a better relationship between the press and President Digong Duterte in his latest press conference turned into a word war coupled with expletive remarks coming from the elected president of our country, is a process in futility.

Local media, Davao City based journalists have been exposed to the style of President Digong. He may have, at times shown his true mitt but at the end he becomes visibly understanding and would usually exchange friendly notes with the local media.

President Duterte must have reached the point of no return when he announced that he has finally decided to distance himself from the Manila-based press people whose tenacity in the questions and answers portion of the presscon have escalated into personalities, such as the medical condition and asking for a medical report of the elected president.

Let us be more circumspect in our own way of showing respect for the office to which President Digong has been elected by the Filipino people. If we, as journalists, would want to elicit the best and most productive source of information out of press conferences, then let us employ some sort of control over our acts.

After all, it is our solemn obligation as members of the fourth estate to inform recipients of our hard day's work, the people whose daily lives are predicated on what they read and what they see.

INNERVIEW

By Gina Villanueva, Associate Editor

(Editor's note: Instead of 'Insights' as Gina Villanueva's blog, we are reviving her original broadsheet newspaper column, 'Innerview.' In deference to the observance of the Holy Ramadan month, Gina shares a 4-part documentary on the accumulated humiliation of Muslims, worldwide.-Ed Libranda)

June 13, 2016

The accumulated humiliation of Muslims, a responsibility of journalism (Part 1 of 4)

Or, how World War One shaped the Middle East.

Joe Lauria, veteran foreign affairs journalist, writes, "When Western media discusses terrorism against the West, the motive is almost always left out, even when the terrorists state they are avenging violence in the Muslim world."

Yet, Western militaries have killed infinitely more innocent civilians in the Middle East than Russia has. Then why won't Western officials and media write retaliation for that Western violence as a cause of terrorist attacks on New York, Paris and Brussels, Lauria notes. (consortiumnews Joe Lauria)

To explain why these attacks happen is not to condone or justify terrorist outrages against innocent civilians.

It is simply a responsibility of journalism, especially when the "why" is no mystery.

In his *Politics Among Nations* (1968), Hans Morgenthau wrote that the urge of empires to expand "will not be satisfied so long as there remains anywhere a possible object of domination--a politically organized group of men which by its very independence challenges the conqueror's lust for power."

Islamaphobes like Donald Trump want to keep all Muslims out of the U.S. until he figures out "what the hell is going on." He says Muslims have a "deep hatred" of Americans. But he won't figure it out because he's ignoring the main cause of their hatred -- the past century of intervention, topped by the recent Western atrocities in Iraq and Libya.

One of the London suicide bombers, Mohammed Sidique Khan fully explained, "Your democratically-elected governments continuously perpetrate atrocities against my people all over the world, just as I am directly responsible for protecting and avenging my Muslim brothers and sisters. Until we feel security you will be our targets and until you stop the bombing, gassing, imprisonment and torture of my people, we will not stop this fight. We are at war and I am a soldier. Now you, too, will taste the reality of this situation."

It becomes an effort to cover up a long and ever more intense history of Western military and political intervention in the Middle East and the violent reactions it provokes, reactions that put innocent lives at risk. Indirect Western culpability in these terrorist acts is routinely suppressed, let alone evidence of direct Western involvement with terrorism.

Some government officials and journalists might delude themselves into believing that Western intervention in the Middle East is an attempt to protect civilians and spread democracy to the region, instead of bringing chaos and death to further the West's strategic and economic aims.

Timeline

1920-1950 A Century of Intervention Begins

The mostly hidden (only to most Westerners) history of duplicitous and often reckless Western actions in the Middle East is an unbroken string of interventions from the end of WWI until today. It began after the war when Britain and France double-crossed the Arabs on promised independence for aiding them in victory over the Ottoman empire.

The Secret 1916 Sykes-Picot Accord

The secret 1916 Sykes-Picot accord divided the region between the European powers behind the Arab's backs. London and Paris created artificial nations from Ottoman provinces to be controlled by their installed kings and rulers with direct intervention when necessary.

What has followed for 100 years has been continuous efforts by Britain and France superseded by the United States after WWII, to manage Western dominance over a rebellious region.

The new Soviet government exposed the Sykes-Picot terms in November 1917 in Izvestia newspaper. When the war was over, the Arabs revolted against British and French duplicity. London and Paris then ruthlessly crushed the uprising for independence.

France defeated a proclaimed Syrian government in a single day, July 24, 1920, at the Battle of Maysalun Pass, or, the Battle of Khan Maysalun (a battle fought between the forces of the Arab Kingdom of Syria and the French Army of Levant in the Anti-Lebanon Mountains, about 25 kilometers (16 mi) west of Damascus).

Five years later there was a second Syrian revolt, replete with assassinations and sabotage, which took two years to suppress. The bullet holes from French war planes that massacred the civilians is still evident in the souk (marketplace) in Old Damascus' corrugated iron roof revealing tiny specks of daylight seeping through.

Britain put down a series of independence revolts between 1920 and 1922, first with 100,000 British and Indian troops and then mostly with the first use of air power in counter-insurgency. Thousands of Arabs were killed. Britain also helped its installed King Abdullah put down rebellions in Jordan in 1921 and 1923.

British Ousted by Israeli Terrorists

London then faced an Arab revolt in Palestine lasting from 1936 to 1939, which it brutally crushed, killing about 4,000 Arabs. The next decade Israeli terrorists drove the British out of Palestine in 1947, one of the rare instances when terrorists attained their political goals.

Germany and Italy late to the empire game were next to invade North Africa and the Middle East at the start of WWII. They were driven out by British imperial forces (mostly Indian) with U.S. help. Britain nominally defeated independent Iraq, which had sided with the axis. With the Soviet Union, Britain also invaded and occupied Iran.

After the war, the U.S. assumed dominance in the region, under the guise of fending off Soviet regional influence. Just three years after Syrian independence from France, the two-year-old Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) engineered a Syrian coup in 1949 against a democratic secular government.

Why?

Because it had balked at approving a Saudi pipeline plan that the U.S. favored.

Washington installed Husni Al-Za'im (Syrian Army chief of staff in November 1948), a military dictator who approved the plan.

1950s: Syria Then and Now

Before the major invasion and air wars in Iraq and Libya of the past 15 years, the 1950s was the era of America's most frequent and most covert involvement in the Middle East. The Eisenhower administration wanted to contain both Soviet influence and Arab nationalism, which revived the quest for an independent Arab nation. After a series of coups and counter-coups, Syria returned to democracy in 1955, leaning towards the Soviets.

A 1957 Eisenhower administration coup attempt in Syria, in which Jordan and Iraq were to invade the country after manufacturing a pretext, went horribly wrong, provoking a crisis that spun out of Washington's control and brought the U.S. and the Soviets to the brink of war.

Turkey put 50,000 troops on the Syrian border, threatening to invade. Soviet Premier Nikita Krushchev threatened Turkey with an implied nuclear attack and the U.S. got Ankara to back off. This sounds eerily familiar to what happened a few months back when Turkey again threatened to invade Syria and the U.S. put on the brakes. The main difference is that Saudi Arabia in 1957 was opposed to the invasion of Syria, while it was ready to join it months ago.

In the 1950s the U.S. also began its association with Islamic religious extremism to counter Soviet influence and contain secular Arab nationalism. Eisenhower "stressed" the 'holy war' aspect as told to his secretary of State John Foster Dulles. After the Cold War, religious extremists, some still tied to the West, became themselves the excuse for U.S. intervention.

Despite the U.S. regional ascendancy in the 1950s, Britain and France weren't through. In 1953, an MI6-CIA coup in Iran replaced a democracy with a restored monarchy when Mohammed Mossadegh, the elected Prime Minister, was overthrown after seeking to nationalize British-controlled Iranian oil. Britain discovered oil in Iran in 1908, spurring deeper interest in the region.

Three years later Britain and France combined with Israel to attack Egypt in 1956 when President Gamal Abdel Nasser, who had been taken over from the ousted British-backed King Farouk, moved to nationalize the Suez Canal.

The U.S. stopped that operation, too, denying Britain emergency oil supplies and access to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) if the Brits did not back down.

Suez resented the final shift in external power in the Middle East from the U.K. to the U.S. But Washington couldn't stop Britain from trying and failing to assassinate Nasser who had sparked the Arab nationalist movement.

In 1958, the U.S. landed 14,000 Marines in Lebanon to prop up Camille Chamoun after a civil conflict broke out against Chamoun's intention to change the constitution and run for reelection. The rebellion was minimally supported by the United Arab Republic, the 1958-61 union between Egypt and Syria.

It was the first U.S. invasion of an Arab country, excluding the U.S.' WWII intervention in North Africa. (Part 2: Interventions Post-Colonial)

STRAIGHT TALK

By Edward B. Libranda

June 13, 2016

CHANGE FOR THE BETTER

Usual paraphrase, "Change for the Better" among people who believe that there is always hope that things would give us a better life.

The rationale behind this CHANGE is predicated on good governance, less bureaucracy, economic growth, and a response to the clamor of the electorate who placed these government officials in their respective places.

But more importantly, the incoming Duterte administration must show not only a brutal approach to solving the lingering drug problem in this country, but also the ever increasing criminality as well.

The recent tussle between President-elect Digong Duterte and the media, urging the Philippine media to boycott the presidential coverage reverberated throughout the day prior to the Thanksgiving offering in Davao City.

The usual stance of the Davao City Mayor elected to be the next president of the republic was swift and without any other words to say more. "Boycott nyo and I dont care," quipped President Duterte who was quick to order the Presidential Security Group (PSG) to move the Media Plaform to a place away from the main stage of the festivity. Only allowed to be near the main stage during the Thanksgiving Day feast were the two government agencies.

Numerous journalists have put up their own Public Relations (PR) Agency overseeing the total promotion of clients, whether in private or public, as successful, honest, important, exciting or relevant as possible.

It can also be a risky business if the PR man would engage himself in undermining other people's desire to create a positive image in his consitituency resulting in a head-on-collission with the other side of the equation.

President Digong articulated himself clearly that to achieve fairness, and a well-defined purpose of his desire to impart the necessary change to achieve his goals, he personally selected the initial government officials to form his cabinet.

Whether the touch-talking President will succeed in his ant illegal drug and crime program remain to be seen. But we know that change is coming, a drastic one to fulfill his promise to resolve the issue of drugs and criminality in 3 to 6 months.

Until then, everything starts on the first day of his administration, July 1, 2016.
Good luck to my high school chum.

Guiuan: Where the US built its Biggest Naval Base during the Liberation

By Randy V. Urlanda

June 13, 2016

Mention Guiuan (pronounced gheWAN), the name of a historic coastal town at the isthmus of southern Samar to a group of corporate executives in the Business District of Makati City and it won't ring a bell to them. But when historians hear the name, they will yell it was the place where Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan first set foot on March 21, 1521 after an arduous two-year voyage on board a flotilla of five wooden ships that began in Seville, Spain on August 10, 1519.

Magellan, who was in his earnest quest for the Spice Islands (Moluccas), committed a blunder in latitudinal calculations that instead of reaching his target destination, they wound up in an obscure island with a waterfall called Homonhon, about an hour sail south of Guiuan. This technical error though led to the discovery of the Philippines.

The name Guiuan originated from its geographical location. The first settlers named the coastal community "Guibang," when they discovered a sharp break in the mountain range ("tenigbang"—part chiseled off) that screened the town from the strong winds from the Pacific Ocean in the east. Subsequently, its early inhabitants modified its name to Guiuan.

Because of Guiuan's strategic location and distance from the rest of the archipelago (it's 1,050 km southeast of Manila)—it is bounded on the east by the rough Pacific Ocean, on the

south by the Surigao Strait, and on the west by the placid Leyte Gulf—it became a secret US Naval Base in December 1944, complete with a wide 2,084-meter long and 46-meter wide runway.

The sprawling US facility, where American bombers and fighter planes took off for bombing sorties, was highly classified that it wasn't even mentioned in war history books. During the peak of its operation, 50,000 members of American liberation forces operated from there, moving millions of tons of machineries and shipping out tons of war materiel used in the liberation of the Philippines that lasted for eight months.

The first sign of liberation of the town came on November 27, 1944 when a US navy submarine chaser steamed into harbor for reconnaissance duty. While many parts of the Philippines suffered from the war, Guiuan was spared from its agony. In fact, it was not until June 28, 1943 that several Japanese soldiers stumbled on Guiuan's sandy soil. Not as fearful and brutal as their compatriots in the rest of the country, a cordial relation soon existed between the Japanese military and the local inhabitants. This made Guiuan one of the few places in the Philippines where the Pacific War did not leave so many tragic memories among the populace.

On December 1, 1944, a fleet of American LCT (landing craft, tank), Liberty ships and barges poured into Guiuan Bay to unload machines that would transform the town into one of the biggest US naval bases in the Far East at that time. Guiuan had more US troops than those presently stationed in South Korea or Okinawa in Japan.

The end of the Pacific War in August of 1945 halted the rapid expansion of the huge naval base, complete with a sprawling supply depot and hospital in the adjoining Calicoan Island.

Several months later, Guiuan shot to international headlines once more when one of its scenic islands, Tubabao, was chosen to be the relocation site for 6,000 displaced White Russians from China from 1945-1951. Under the care of the World Council of Churches, the Russian refugees were sent by the International Refugee Organization out of China to escape communist enslavement. It was only the Philippines who accepted to host them while they were processed for resettlement in the West.

Seventy-one years after the liberation, Guiuan has progressed to a bustling third class municipality of 60,000 inhabitants living in its 60 barangays, 14 of which are island villages.

With the completion of the 158-km Tacloban-Guiuan coastal highway in 2003, travel time from the Leyte capital to this emerging tourist destination is a breezy three-hour drive.

Local and foreign tourists go on surfing in the east coast of Calicoan Island nearby or go swimming in the 17-km long fine gold sand beach in its west coast. For divers, Guiuan has a lot of beautiful dive sites, including one with an intact US airplane.

Touted as the “Boracay of the East,” the 21-km long and two-and-a-half kilometer wide Calicoan Island, which is connected to the mainland by a 200-meter causeway, has everything to offer to adventurous visitors—world class surf on its Pacific coast and almost 20 kilometers of fine gold sand to frolic on in the Leyte Gulf side. What’s more, on its southernmost tip is a smaller island called Sulangan, which is the national shrine of St. Anthony of Padua. It is connected to Calicoan by a 100-meter long bridge.

When then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo visited Guiuan on March 21, 2005, she was amazed by its natural beauty and its great potentials as major tourist destination in Eastern Visayas once its still serviceable runway and passenger terminal are fully rehabilitated and upgraded.

Soon, Guiuan, where the first Westerner set foot on Philippine soil in 1521 followed by 50,000 American soldiers and 6,000 Russian refugees 453 years later, will be visited again by hordes of local and foreign travelers alike, this time to enjoy pristine nature at its best.