

Front news

Duterte opts for quick, frugal and solo inauguration at Malacañang

By: Yashika F. Torib, Manila Bureau Senior Correspondent

June 20, 2016

The incoming Philippine president is dispensing with the traditional pomp and glamour of the inauguration ceremonies for taking the oath of office.

President-elect Rodrigo Duterte's unpredictability further gave an aura of distinction to his upcoming inauguration on June 30 as he opted for quick ceremonies, limited guests, modest food, and a five-minute speech.

He even decided to have the inauguration rites sans Vice President-elect Leni Robredo.

Duterte announced last month that his inauguration as president will be a frugal and quick affair at the Malacañang Palace to be followed by a speech on national television to spell out his administration's plans and policies.

In a press conference, he promised for a five-minute inauguration speech and that he would follow protocol and be well prepared.

"I'll just follow protocol. Maybe I need to read it, it has to be well prepared," he said.

A simple "finger food" will also be served during the reception; a likely combination of maruya, banana-cue and an ordinary juice drink.

The guests, encouraged to wear Filipiniana attire, are limited. Not even their family members and friends are allowed to join in the ceremonies.

Incoming Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO) chief Martin Andanar said Duterte only wanted 500 people inside the Rizal Hall, hence the limited number of guests and Robredo most likely to hold a separate inauguration rites.

Accordingly, Duterte implied that having a joint inauguration will be unlikely because of space constraints.

President-elect to ditch checkered polo for inauguration

As announced and promised, Duterte will adhere to protocol for his inauguration day and wear a barong tagalog.

Though not a fan of formal wear, the incoming president will be obliged to don formal attires upon his assumption of the country's highest post.

In a separate report by GMA News TV, it was disclosed that Duterte's favorite tailors, Chard Pulatche and Bonnie Adaza have already prepared a design for the barong tagalog that he will wear on his inauguration.

Pulatche and Adaza revealed that the design would be similar to the ones he wore during the Pilipinas Debates 2016 in Cebu; a Mindanao-inspired design made from pina jusi.

His daughter, Davao City Mayor Sarah Duterte and her mother Elizabeth Zimmerman have already had their gowns made by Silverio Anglache. Sarah opted for a simple royal blue gown while Zimmerman, a blush-pink. The dresses lacked the lavish trimmings of lace and beads, and were instead designed according to the Duterte clan's personality – simple and no fuss.

READ: Duterte's tailors start preparing Digong's barong for June 39

(• <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/567607/news/nation/duterte-s-tailors-start-preparing-digong-s-barong-for-june-30#sthash.16fheGN6.dpuf>)

READ: Duterte, Robredo to hold separate inaugurations

(<http://cnnphilippines.com/news/2016/06/15/rodrigo-duterte-leni-robredo-separate-inaugurations.html>)

Philippines in Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) June 30-August 4

By Gina Villanueva, Associate Editor

June 20, 2016

The Philippines is one of the 27 nations participating in the world's largest maritime exercise dubbed Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) on June 30 through August 4, in and around the Hawaiian Islands and southern California.

Defense Department Press Operations Director Navy Capt Jeff Davis told Pentagon reporters Tuesday that 2016 is the 25th iteration in 45 years, since its 1971 inception.

Aside from participation from 27 nations, it boasts of 25,000 service members, 45 ships, five submarines and more than 200 aircraft --it is aimed at providing unique training opportunity that helps participants foster and sustain cooperative relationships critical to ensuring the safety of sea lanes and security in the world's oceans.

Themed as "Capable, Adaptive, Partners," the participating nations and forces will exercise a wide range of capabilities and demonstrate the inherent flexibility of maritime forces, including disaster relief and maritime security operations to sea control and complex warfighting with relevant, realistic training in amphibious operations, gunnery, missile, anti-submarine and air defense exercises, counter-piracy operations, mine clearance operations, explosive ordnance disposal, diving and salvage operations.

Playing a major role in the wargames, the US Department of the Navy's Great Green Fleet highlights global operations using energy conservation measures and alternative fuel blends to demonstrate ways of optimizing energy use to increase resiliency and operational readiness.

Hosted by the US Pacific Fleet, it will be led by US Vice Adm. Nora Tyson, commander of the US 3rd Fleet (C3F), serving as the Combined Task Force (CTF) Commander.

Other participants include forces from Australia, Brazil, Brunei, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the People's Republic of China, Peru, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Tonga, the United Kingdom, and the United States. (Source: US Navy News)

READ: RIMPAC 2016 international maritime exercise to begin on 30 June

<http://www.naval-technology.com/news/newsrimpac-2016-international-maritime-exercise-to-begin-on-30-june-4924719>

Lim is set to resign on Monday as head of the Comelec-CFO

By Ferdinand G. Patinio

June 20, 2016

MANILA, June 17 (PNA) -- Commission on Elections (Comelec) Commissioner Christian Robert Lim is set to resign as head of the poll body's Campaign Finance Office (CFO) next week.

In a text message, the poll body official said he will be tendering his resignation to the Commission en banc on Monday.

Asked about the reason why he is giving up his position as CFO head, Lim said: "Di acceptable ang policy shift." He did not elaborate.

His statement came a day after the Comelec en banc issued a decision granting the request of the Liberal Party and its presidential candidate Mar Roxas to extend the deadline for the filing of the Statements of Contributions and Expenditures (SOCEs) of candidates in the May 9, 2016 polls.

Voting 4-3, the poll body extended the deadline, which was originally set last June 8, to June 30.

Those who voted for the extension were Commissioners Arthur Lim, Al Parreno, Sheriff Abas and Rowena Guanzon.

Aside from Commissioner Christian Robert Lim, those who voted against the extension were Commissioner Luie Guia and Comelec Chairman Juan Andres Bautista.

A day before the Commission en banc allowed the extension, the CFO chief recommended to deny the request of the LP and Roxas.

"After careful deliberation on the said request, the Campaign Finance Office respectfully recommends the denial of the request for extension of the time," according to his Memorandum issued on June 15.

Lim noted that granting the request would be unfair to other candidates and parties who complied within the prescribed period and would be a reversal of their own Resolution on the matter.

He added that the June 8 deadline or the "30-day period reckoned from the day of the election is hard deadline set by law in Section 14 of Republic Act No. 7166." (PNA)

SCS/FGP/RSM

INNERVIEW

The accumulated humiliation of Muslims, a responsibility of journalism (Part 2 of 4)

June 20, 2016

That WWI shaped the Middle East, secretly, in the Sykes-Picot accord, is a historical fact, perhaps concealed from most, to erase the Arab's long accumulated humiliation.

1960-2003: Interventions Post Colonial

The 1954-1962 Algerian rebellion against French colonialism, which Paris brutally tried to suppress, included Algerian acts of terrorism. Exhibiting the same cluelessness displayed by State Department spokesman Mark Tower, the French attitude towards the uprising was expressed by an exasperated French officer in film, 'The Battle of Algiers' when he exclaimed, "What do you people want?"

From the 1960s, U.S. intervention in the region was mostly restricted to military support for Israel in the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli wars. From an Arab perspective that represented a major U.S. commitment to protect Israeli colonialism.

The Soviet Union also intervened directly in the 1967-70 War of Attrition between Egypt and Israel when Nasser went to Moscow to say he'd resign and have a pro-Western leader take over if the Russians didn't come to his aid, in backing Nasser. The Soviets lost 50 men.

The Soviets were also involved in the region to varying degrees and times throughout the Cold War, giving aid to Palestinians, Nasser's Egypt, Saddam's Iraq and Muammar Gaddafi's Libya -- all countries and leaders charting an independent course from the West.

During the 1970 Black September conflict between Jordan and Palestinian guerrillas, the U.S. had Marines poised to embark in Haifa ready to secure Amman airport when Jordan repelled a Syrian invasion in support of the Palestinians.

In the 1980s the U.S.- backed Saddam Hussein in his brutal eight-year war with Iran, supplying him with arms, intelligence, chemical and biological weapons, from no less than U.S. Defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld (in a secret meeting with him) which Saddam didn't hesitate to use against Iranians and Kurds. (For years Middle Eastern countries have accused the U.S. of double-talk over Iraq. They are bitterly critical that the American government helped arm Saddam during the 1980s in a war against Iran, which at that time Washington regarded as its biggest enemy in the region.) President Ronald Reagan also bombed Libya in 1986 after accusing it without conclusive evidence of a Berlin bombing 10 days earlier that killed a US soldier.

The U.S. returned more directly to the region with a vengeance in the 1991 Gulf War, burying alive surrendering Iraqi troops with bulldozers; shooting thousands of soldiers in the back as they retreated on the Highway of Death (6-lane highway between Kuwait and Iraq, or Highway 80), and calling for uprisings in the Shia south and Kurdish north and then leaving them to Saddam's revenge.

Iraq never recovered fully from the devastation being crushed for 12 years under U.N. and U.S. sanctions that then U.N. Ambassador Madeleine Albright admitted contributed to the deaths of half a million Iraqi children. But she said, it was "worth it."

Iraqi's sanctions only ended after the 2003 full-scale U.S. and British invasion of the sovereign Arab nation, an assault justified by bogus claims about Iraq hiding stockpiles of WMD (weapons of mass destruction) that could be shared with Al-Qaeda. The invasion killed hundreds of thousands of people and left Iraq devastated. The invasion also unleashed a civil war and gave rise to the terrorist group, The Islamic State in Iraq, which later merged with terrorists in Syria to become ISIS.

Throughout this century of intervention, Britain, France and the U.S. managed the region through strong alliances with dictators or monarchs who had no regard for democratic rights. But when those autocrats become expendable, such as Haddam Hussein had, they are disposed of. (Part 3 of 4: The Biggest Invasion Yet)

EDITORIAL

AGE DISCRIMINATION

June 20, 2016

The Philippine Congress has finally passed the Age Discrimination Bill and now it is in the hands of President Pinoy and is awaiting his imprimatur.

A long awaited piece of legislature that would protect the working Filipinos from decades of age discrimination. It is an insult to the working class whose desire past their prime subjected them from doing or working what they love best, notwithstanding their age.

With this passage, we can see an acceleration in the number of unemployed Filipinos at first hampered by their age to be employed anew.

If an applicant passed his prime is willing and able to work, coupled with his qualifications to do the job should be afforded the same opportunity as given to the youth.

We hope Classified Ads Section in most major dailies in the Philippines would stop from posting JOB OPPORTUNITIES AD less the age requirements, i.e. MUST BE BETWEEN 23-27 YEARS OLD.

The Cayetano-Diaz bill should be signed by President Pinoy before his term ends at the end of June 2016, and this Aquino administration would be best remembered for acting such an important piece of legislation which is long overdue.

NEWS AT A GLANCE

Abella replaces Panelo as presidential spokesman

June 20, 2016

Unlike the outgoing Aquino administration, incoming President Rodrigo Duterte will not have a press secretary.

Instead, it will be called Presidential Communications Operations Office, headed by Martin Andanar.

In the wake of this development, lawyer Salvador Panelo has been designated as presidential chief legal counsel, following flak from media that Panelo was the defense counsel of Duterte in the infamous Ampatuan massacre.

Ernie Abella replaces him as presidential spokesman.

Amid Duterte's suspension of press briefings and media interviews, Abella met with the press in Davao City and said he serves as conduit between Duterte, the people, and the press -- wishes to start a "conversation based on a cordial relationship."

In an earlier report, Duterte swore never to swear again, as the incoming 18th president of the Republic of the Philippines, "If you are the president of the country, you need to be prim and proper, almost maging holy na ako(I should be holy)."

The incoming Chief Executive of the country reiterated that press freedom would not be under threat in his administration.

He would also sign the freedom of information bill, and order all government agencies to be transparent to the public.

Malacanang is venue for Duterte inaugural

June 20, 2016

More than 500 guests are invited to President-elect Rodrigo Duterte's inauguration at 11 a.m. June 30, 2016 at the President's Hall.

This was announced by Martin Andanar, incoming head of the Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO).

In a telephone interview with GMA News, Andanar announced that following the turnover ceremony, Duterte will escort President Benigno Aquino III to the Malacanang grounds for his departure, prior to going back inside for an official family photo.

On the possible joint inauguration with Vice President-elect Leni Robredo, Andanar said it would be impossible for all of their combined guests to be accommodated at the same time, adding that Duterte's chosen Cabinet members would also take oath at the same time, without their families, for lack of material space.

Protocol dictates that the Senate President and the House Speaker be present.

Main menu for 'merienda' (snack) will be 'maruya'(fritter) cooked Davao style, with cocktails of 'buko juice' (young coconut juice) - fulfilling Duterte's 'austerity' lifestyle. Entertainers will be those who have helped Duterte in the past.

In an effort to minimized traffic snarls around the Palace, Duterte has asked the public to just monitor the inaugural at their homes, adding there will be widescreens to be mounted in strategic public areas.

Sulu Vice-Governor Tan snubs Aquino visit

June 20, 2016

"Too late to play a hero," quips Sulu vice-governor Abdusakur Tan, on outgoing Philippines President Benigno Aquino III's visit Wednesday to Jolo, Sulu to check on military operations against Abu Sayyaf.

Tan said, "Who do you think will listen to him? Coming down here when he has only 15 days (as President)," adding "Mr. Aquino did not consider (my) earlier recommendation to involve the communities in the campaign against the Abu Sayyaf -- instead, he poured more troops and changed the police officers and replaced officers who were not functioning."

In Manila, Sen. Bam Aquino said, "It is time to take the appropriate action to pulverize the bandit group at the earliest possible time. We support any action of the incoming administration of President-elect Duterte as long as it conforms with the law." (Source: Philippine Inquirer)

STRAIGHT TALK By Ed Libranda

ABU SAYAFF - A Menace to our Society

June 20, 2016

The latest beheading of another Canadian, Robert Hall, bringing in to two victims of this heinous crime, is a slap in the face of our Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). Robert Hall was one of the four foreigners abducted and kidnapped by elements of the militant group Abu Sayaff, the other Canadian is John Ridsdell who suffered the same fate.

This is a behavior that does not justify anything, NOTHING. The ASG has been in existence since the Moro Islamic groups have espoused for their own independence from the Republic of the Philippines.

READ History of the Abu Sayaff (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Sayyaf)

A token group of AFP battalion soldiers are sent just to appease the Filipinos and the Canadian government that the Philippine government is doing something to avert anymore violent act by the ASG in its remaining kidnap victims.

The dangerous militant group is operating in Jolo and Basilan. The martial law imposed by the government in these area will somehow help the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (ISAFF) to determine the various locations of this group which is scattered all over the provinces of Basilan and Jolo.

Presumptive President Rodrigo R Duterte initially tried to negotiate with the ASG through his friends from both the MILF and MNLF and the BIFF, but apparently went into deaf ears.

This will be one precarious area of great concern that this coming administration of President Digong will face and hopefully will address this issue with great dispatch.

Whether we can see a closure, partial or permanent into the existence of the Abu Sayaff remains unclear. ASG can't definitely negotiate to a peace process without facing the arm of the law which I doubt they will do. They will instead remain to be what they are, fundraiser for the ISIS and other militant groups not only in the Philippines but elsewhere.

Whatever deterrent action that may be in place by the Duterte administration, we just have to wait and see for I always believe TO TRY AND NOT TO TRY AT ALL.