

Congressmen slam RP's coordinator role

PRO-ADMINISTRATION congressmen slammed US President Barack Obama for designating the Philippines as America's chief regional coordinator with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Isabela Rep. Rodolfo Albano III said the designation "would give the Philippines a subordinate status as it is being asked to do a role for another country."

"The Philippines is not a man-Friday of the US, so why should it be assigned a coordinator role? It's not a welcome idea or privilege," he said.

"And would the US be willing to reciprocate this role if we ask them to be our coordinator with Europe or the Middle East?" Albano asked.

He said Obama's assigned task for the Philippines "may also contradict the very essence of creating the ASEAN, which is to insulate it from outside influence."

The US president gave the coordinator role to the country during his talks with President Arroyo at the White House last Friday. Mrs. Arroyo, accompanied by large congressional and Palace delegations, is currently on a weeklong visit the US.

Camiguin Rep. Pedro Romualdo, for his part, said the designation "was unnecessary since the US has ambassadors and other officials who can do coordination work with ASEAN."

"The US should assign its diplomats rather than ask a sovereign country like the Philippines to perform coordination work with other nations," he said.

While Mrs. Arroyo's allies who were left behind here criticized Obama, those who are accompanying her welcomed the US president's decision to designate the Philippines as America's chief coordinator with ASEAN. (Philstar.com)

Comelec to hold poll automation demonstrations nationwide

by MAYEN JAYMALIN
Philstar.com

THE Commission on Elections (Comelec) is mounting a nationwide poll automation demonstration to erase any doubts on the efficiency of the computerized election machines.

Comelec spokesman James Jimenez said they are taking the Precinct Count Optical Scan (PCOS) on a road show to enable a greater number of people to have a first-hand view of the machines.

Jimenez said the poll body is already setting up the necessary mechanisms for the public demonstration of the computerized machines nationwide.

"We will make sure that requests to witness a public demonstration will be properly addressed. It

is really part of our mandate," Jimenez explained.

But at this time, Jimenez admitted that there are only two PCOS machines for demonstration as the bulk of the machines are still being manufactured.

"As of now, we only have two machines available, that's why scheduling the demonstration is very necessary, but when our partners begin their delivery of the machines, we will make up to 20 PCOS machines available for our road show demonstrations," Jimenez explained.

The commission has already organized its Public Demonstration Coordination Unit (PDCU) that will receive and coordinate requests for public demonstrations, he added. ■

'New president should be like Cory, Ninoy'

MANILA—Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales advised the future president of the country to emulate the bravery of former Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr. and former President Corazon Aquino's loyalty to serve God and the Filipino people, so that the citizenry would rally behind the next head of state.

Rosales gave his message after the 8pm Mass for former President Aquino at the Manila Cathedral last August 3.

He said there have been only two individuals able to draw out crowds in such large numbers.

"I have been pondering. Now, every Filipino is going out in groups to honor and respect President Aquino. There was only one person who has been given the same treatment; it was Ninoy. There were a lot of people who joined the procession for Ninoy's burial. And they happen to be married to each other," he said.



An elderly woman writes a message on a tarpaulin photo of former President Cory Aquino in front of the Manila Cathedral in Intramuros. Philstar photo by Edd Gumban

He said the Filipino people are looking for a leader with the characteristics of both Ninoy and Cory.

"So for those who are planning to run for president, may this serve as a warning—the people would be voting for someone with Ninoy and Cory's traits, if you do not possess them you might as well not run at all," said Rosales.

The people want someone who, like the former senator, possesses characteristics that would promote freedom in the country and fight bravely for it. The candidate should also have Mrs. Aquino's attitude of being loyal to God and the people, morally upright and God-fearing, he added. ■

'Question on legality of Erap's 2010 plan premature'

by CHARLIE LAGASCA
Philstar.com

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya—Chief Justice Reynato Puno said the Supreme Court would deliberate over the legality of the plan of former President Joseph Estrada to run again for president only if a case will be filed before the court.

"I will automatically disqualify myself if I make any comments on that matter, for surely, sooner or later it will be brought before the Supreme Court for deliberation. This matter will be disposed of by the court at the proper time," said Puno.

Puno, along with SC officials, conducted a Justice on Wheels caravan here over the week.

Estrada said that he would run again for president if the opposition presidential aspirants failed to unite behind a common candidate for president in the 2010 elections. ■

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