

The Filampoon News Service (FNS) just sent this scoop of a plan to push a charter change (Cha-Cha) starting July 1, 2007. Newly-elected and re-elected members of the Philippine Congress and local officials will take their oath of office on June 30, 2007. Proponents of the Cha-Cha said that they are extremely confident the proposed Filipino "Perfect Constitution" will merit not only massive public support but also would solve nearly all the problems of the Philippines.

New Push for Filipino "Perfect Constitution" Begins July 1, 2007

By Tom Seyer

(Editor's Note: The FNS top foreign correspondent, Tom Seyer, conducted exclusive interviews by phone conferences and online with several policy makers and decision makers of the present Dispensation. Due to the very-sensitive topics discussed during the interviews and because the main issues talked about are very controversial, the top Philippine national officials interviewed requested that their identities be withheld temporarily.)

The interviews began with several Philippine Outspoken Government Officials (hereinafter referred to as "POGOs") making it clear that it is the intention of the present Dispensation to emulate Walt Disney by "making dreams, especially of Overseas Filipinos, come true." The objective, therefore, of enacting a new "Perfect Constitution (P-Con)" is to make the Philippines the happiest republic in the entire world, in the style of the

Disneyworld.

The POGOs (AKA whiz kids) said that the P-Con would copy the best features of the government systems and constitutions of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Malaysia and France. Yes, like the British system, the proposed Philippine Perfect Parliament (P3) will have two chambers: An Upper Chamber called also the "House of Lords" and a Second Chamber to be dubbed the "House of the Common Tao."

The House of Lords

The P3 will surely attract the support of almost all sectors and segments of Philippine society. The House of Lords will automatically include the present members of the Philippine Senate, the Sultan of Sulu (thereby making the Filipino Muslims happy), the head of "Jesus Is Lord" movement, the princes (AKA cardinals) of the Catholic Church of the Philippines (CCP), the war lords, the jueteng and gambling lords, the landlords (like the president of the Hacienda Luisita and/or CEOs of other estates in the country) and the heads of other Philippine churches.

I said that including all the Filipino senators in the House of Lords may probably appease the distinguished members of the Senate, although they may probably object to the inclusion of the jueteng lords.

The POGOs claimed that they have obtained already the support of the CCP prelates, as parishes also conduct bingo games, which are akin to jueteng. Why, they informed me that even the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) cadres support tacitly the jueteng lords. After all, the gambling lords share with all sectors the income from their operations and, therefore, the communist rebels may also support this P-Con feature. Besides, the CPP's military wing can have also a seat in the House of Lords, as truly its New People's Army has also legitimate war lords.

No More Pork Barrel

The inclusion of the gambling lords in the House of Lords is essential, the POGOs said. Because the so-called pork barrel as we know it today (AKA the Countryside Development Funds) will be also be given to the members of the P3. The pork will, however, come from tongs (percentages) that shall be paid by the jueteng lords and even those who do mahjong sessions. The president of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR), which runs the country's casinos, will have an automatic seat in the House of Lords. Why? The casino profits will likewise go to the replacement of the pork barrel and this will make it morally defensible before the people. Because at least for the first time in the country's history, the pork will not come from the public treasury.

Aha, what a brilliant maneuver to call the P3 members as MPs (Members of Parliament), instead of congressman or senator. Otherwise, wags and pundits would be calling them "tongressman" or "senatong."

Constitutional Monarchy

Since the UK system is actually a constitutional monarchy, I asked the POGOs if they would emulate the British and declare also a Filipino queen or king, even a ceremonial one like Queen Elizabeth II. The POGOs said that the P-Con will have that provision although they intend to copy the Malaysian system of rotating the monarch among different individuals (among the sultans of the different states in the case of the Malaysian federation).

The POGOs said that the P-Con will establish the equivalent of the British monarch by letting former Philippine Presidents or their scions or spouse (if the Presidents are no longer living) to act as the ceremonial head of state. The rotation will be better than Malaysia's since it will be done on a monthly basis, on a lottery system. The POGOs say that they expect the all-out support of the Marcos and Estrada camps and of course the scions of the former Philippine

Presidents for the P-Con. Madame Imelda Marcos would be queen at least for a month every 13 months or so. Former President Joseph Ejercito Estrada would also be a king for four weeks in the same period of time. "Why, Erap never displaced Ronnie Poe as the king of Philippine movies but now he would have the chance to be a king also," one of the POGOs said.

I said that there could be a problem when it comes to the scions of President Sergio Osmeña, Sr. Everybody knows that the Osmeña scions have individual or personal political ambitions and they quarrel politically among themselves. It might prove difficult in selecting from among them the Osmeña representative to the monarchy when their turn in the rotation comes. The POGOs said that the P-Con will provide (again) a lottery system to select the representative of a dead Philippine President. I asked if Straight People would not object to former Sen. John "Sonny" Osmeña winning the lottery and representing the Osmeña clan in the monarchy? On the contrary, the POGOs said that if John Osmeña would win the lottery, then the Filipino monarch would not only be happy but also gay and that would go a long way to making the Philippines the happiest republic on Earth.

I inquired also from the POGOs if the inclusion of religious leaders in the proposed House of Lords would not violate the principle of the separation between the church and the state. They answered that the P-Con would copy the British tradition of the monarch being the nominal head of the Church of England (AKA Anglican Church). If it was OK to do it in the UK, why can't the Philippines have it?

Ministers, Counts and Countesses

The POGOs said also that the P-Con would rename Departments to Ministries. The renaming should make the cabinet members closer to the prelates, the priests, the ministers (sic), the pastors and the clergy.

"Imagine the support from the religious sector if the present Secretary of Defense would be known as the Minister of Defense?" the POGOs asked. Maybe the Minister of Defense may be able to turn all the swords, the Armalites and the AK47s into plowshares?

The term, Ministry, may become a common denominator in the Filipino public and private sectors.

I asked next what feature in the French system would the P-Con copy? The POGOs answered that the P-Con would maintain a strong and powerful President, just like what the French have. Therefore, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (PGMA) -- and not the prime minister of the P3 -- would be the actual head of state.

Asked if copying the French system would not lead people to think of the French Revolution, the POGOs said that it would only be an evolution (without the R) and, therefore, there would be no need for the guillotine.

The POGOs said that the P-Con would abolish the term, Commission, in the government jargon. Why? Because the P-Con would not want people to continue on equating Commissions with the 10% to 30% commissions (pun intended) being received by salespersons or from contractors. The P-Con would use instead the term, Bureau. Because if the President has the Cabinet, why not use Bureaus?

I asked whether the change of name would extend to the Commission on Elections (COMELEC)? The POGOs said that the new COMELEC would be called the "Election Authority" and its members would be called Counts or Countesses. Because the electoral officials have the task of counting (pun intended again) the votes and it is mandatory to make their authority as important as that of the House of Lords.

Reinventing the PMA

The P-Con will also "reinvent" the Philippine military, so as to prevent its officers from launching coups in the future. The POGO's said that the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) would be renamed the "Philippine Governmental and Military Academy" (PGMA), as cadets would have to study more subjects on accounting, auditing, diplomacy, law and the postal system. Because the P-Con would mandate that retired generals fill up the positions of the Auditor General, Consuls General, Solicitor General and Postmaster General. The rationale is to inculcate in the minds of the military brass that there is more to life than the barracks.

I asked if the public would not associate the military to the incumbent President as both the academy and the Chief Executive would have the same acronym, PGMA. They answered that there would be no confusion, as the President is always addressed as Her Majesty, oops, Her Excellency (HE) and, therefore, her proper acronym is actually HE PGMA.

"Wow," I exclaimed, "The P-Con has thought of almost everything to assure the enthusiastic support of all segments of the Philippine society, including the families of all the former Philippine Presidents -- from Emilio Aguinaldo to Jose Laurel to Joseph Estrada."

Would the P-Con really generate that much support even from the political Opposition and make the Philippines a virtual geopolitical version of Disneyland?

The POGO's said that they have thought of everything, including a slogan to make the P-Con popular. The slogan? "Ang mga pikon lang ang aayaw sa P-Con" (Only the sore losers will reject the P-Con).

This writer contacted the leaders of the Disunited Opposition, oops, United

Opposition, so as to get their comments on the new push for the P-Con starting July 1, 2007. They said that the POGOs sound like the (now-deceased) Filipino comedian, Mariano Contreras (AKA Pogo), whose favorite expression was "

Das a las

(That's a lot) of

nonsense

." One young opposition congressman said that the Administration thinks that it is easy to produce a new constitution, as if it were merely ordering fast food to go. I said, "Togo, Pogo's partner?" The solon did not laugh. He is that young and probably he has never heard of Pogo and Togo, whose comedy acts started during World War II. # # #

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