

# LIBERATION

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**I** T WAS A VERY TELLING FREUDIAN SLIP.

When US Ambassador to the Philippines Francis Ricciardone was asked during a recent forum of the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines (FOCAP) on President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's plan to run in 2004, he said: "As far as I know, President Arroyo is a first class citizen of the Unite...of the Philippines." Flustered, he added, "I think we admire her so much we might make her an honorary citizen."

**US President  
George W.  
Bush's Visit  
to the  
Philippines**

## AMASTER SURVEYING HIS VASSALS



A Freudian slip is a psychologically significant lapse, where a speaker inadvertently uses a wrong word and betrays his subconscious ideas and preoccupations.

Indeed, Arroyo has been such a reliable puppet for US imperialism that Ricciardone only spoke the truth when he called Arroyo "a first class citizen" of the US. She is all-America and all-Bush not just in words but in body, mind and soul.

In fact, for the coming visit of US President George W. Bush, Arroyo and her entire cabinet have been engaged in such frenzied preparations.

The Arroyo regime has already spent Php50 million beautifying Malacañang and strengthening security measures in all areas that Bush's eight-hour visit will cover. For the renovation alone of a lounge in the Batasang Pambansa complex, to be used by

US Secret Service men, at least Php3 million has been spent. The Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) has also purchased Php10 million pesos worth of plants, which have been planted along the streets where Bush will pass.

Meanwhile, urban poor shanties near Congress have been demolished while those deemed presentable enough were given fresh coats of paint, courtesy again of the MMDA. It brings to mind Imelda Marcos' similar efforts to hide what she termed as "eyesores" by putting up walls to hide the squatters from visitors.

In the meantime, rallies against Bush and Arroyo have virtually been banned since the government has refused to give permits to mass actions. The Philippine National Police is also preparing to use rubber bullets against persistent demonstrators, mobilizing more than 10,000 policemen, not to mention the elite military units deployed to secure Bush and company.

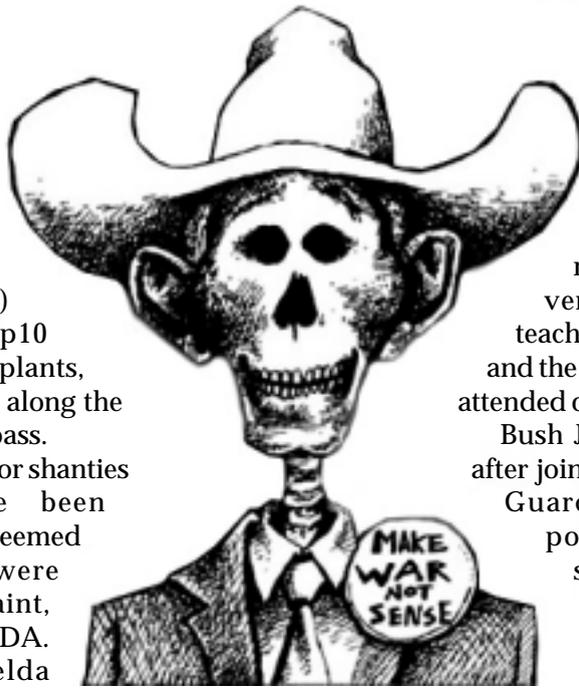
Also part of the Arroyo regime's preparations is a multi-million PR blitz to counter critics and the protests being planned by militant groups.

Gloria herself has prepared special clothes for each activity during the visit – with several choices mind you, not just one – prepared by her very own designer.

A red carpet welcome for the world's number one terrorist is being readied by the country's own leading terrorist. What could possibly be more apt?

## Who is Bush

George W. Bush Jr., America's 43<sup>rd</sup> president, is the son of former US President George Herbert Walker Bush, also known for launching the devastating first Gulf War and for his Texas oil connections. Using his wealth, he entered the US government and became president.



Bush Jr. was therefore born with not just a silver spoon in his mouth but a gold one. Not a very good learner, his own teachers testified he got into Yale and the other prestigious schools he attended only because of his surname. Bush Jr. became a 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant after joining the Texas Air National Guard, again because of the power attached to his surname. After being given the rank, Bush Jr. went AWOL for more than a year. He later put up his own company which went

bankrupt.

With the backing of his father, Bush Jr. was elected governor of Texas twice, bankrolled of course by oil monopolies.

His inadequacies, which include intellectual limitations and lack of political acumen and experience, were offset by the powerful name and his father's vast and moneyed network. Thus, Bush Jr. came to be the Republican standard bearer. He proved to be a great candidate, pliable to the wishes of American corporate interests and backed by giant oil and energy monopolies whose economic interest he shared. It showed even in his choice of running mate: Dick Cheney, a former CEO of energy monopoly Halliburton and a major defense contractor of the US government.

Bush became even more beholden after he received from them a record \$190 million in campaign contributions. Indeed, the way to the White House was made slick and easy for Bush by the oil giants. His biggest campaign contributor was Enron, the company later found to have committed the biggest stock market fraud in American history.

It is not surprising then why both father and son targeted Iraq, site of the second largest oil deposit in the world. The wars they waged in the name of democracy and freedom were in reality wars for oil and profit. The "successful" war on Iraq has enabled US oil monopolies to get their hands on Iraqi oil.

To justify the attack, Bush Jr. falsified intelligence reports regarding the presence of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in Iraq. He overturned the decision of the United Nations and arrogantly ignored international law and norms.

Not a single WMD has been found to this day. On the other hand, over 400,000 Iraqis have been rendered homeless, maimed and killed in the military aggression that continues to this day.

Bush may not have been number one when he was a student but now, he holds the record for a lot of things. For example, he has the honor of being the public official most targeted by political protests all over the world. Last February 15 alone, over 15 million citizens in different countries poured to the streets to denounce Bush and the US war on terror.

He also holds the record of amassing the

biggest budget deficits, allocating the biggest parts of the US budget to military, and bringing misery to millions of Americans with his anti-poor policies.

## Old refrain

The Philippines will just be one leg of Bush's seven-day six-country Asian tour, which includes Thailand where he will attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, Singapore, Indonesia, Australia and Japan.

Nothing new is expected from this master-puppet reunion. No doubt Bush will give an effusive thank-you to Arroyo for her quick and unabashed support to the US war on terror. Besides, Arroyo has again granted two of his wishes: she refused to ratify the country's membership to the International Criminal Court (ICC) and has signed an executive agreement that gives US troops immunity from any criminal liability while in the Philippines.

Bush will also no doubt emphasize how generous America has been to the Philippines, its newly designated "non-NATO ally." But as Ka Roger, Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) spokesman said, it is nothing but "a master's flattery to a fawning underling."

Bush is also expected to flaunt the few pieces of military equipment and aid it has thrown to the Philippines. Never mind that they were old and over-used - which must be the reason why the American military calls them "excess defense articles."

The US is also expected to demand more expansive access arrangements for US military forces. Thus, expect more frequent, bigger and extended war exercises in the future, this time, even in areas far far away from Abu Sayyaf. In fact, in the past several months, US military officials and psy-war experts have been cited in areas in Panay, Bicol, Cordillera, Central Luzon and General Santos.



In the economic arena, the US will push for US-RP bilateral trade arrangements, with the collapse of the World Trade Organization (WTO) ministerial conference in Cancun, Mexico.

The Ibon Foundation, an independent research institute, has expressed fears that the coming Bush visit will further weaken the government position in the WTO. Ibon research director Antonio Tujan Jr. said that a bilateral pact would further dismantle import barriers to US goods and investments and will provide special treatment to American businessmen.

Bilateral trade agreements mean increased liberalization of the Philippine economy, particularly in the areas of finance and foreign ownership rights.

Rabid puppet that she is, Arroyo will definitely support a RP-US bilateral deal. Already, Trade and Industry Secretary Mar Roxas has announced that the government is open to one. The regime will most likely package it to the public as manna from heaven, thanking Bush and the Great US of A.

Lastly, what Arroyo and her cabal would be most anxiously waiting for is Bush's declaration of support to Arroyo's 2004 ambitions. (And if Bush for some reason does not formally do so, no doubt the Arroyo clique will find ways to inform the about public about it if not invent a totally fictitious declaration of support.)

Arroyo is like a pitiful dog, wagging her tail and eagerly waiting for the master to throw the bone she so desperately desires – the bone being an outright endorsement for her political plans.

## Unequal

Clearly, the much-awaited Bush arrival is not a statesman's visit to an equal, just as the Philippine-American

relations have never been an equal and fair partnership. Bush is arriving in the Philippines, talking with Arroyo and addressing the Philippine Congress as a master surveying his vassals, pushing them to produce more for him and threatening them with the whip if they fail.

If anything, Bush's visit exposes the subservience and puppetry of the Arroyo regime and the neocolonial status of our country. This is how it has been for more than a century; this is how it still is under Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

To prove, let us look at the farewell editorial of *El Renacimiento* written in 1910 (*El Renacimiento* was the newspaper that earned the ire of American authorities because of an anti-American editorial titled, "Aves de Rapina," and was forced to close down):

"Unasked, the Americans came to these islands, impelled (they say) by the love of humanity, and announcing that they brought with them liberty and prosperity, – all, in short, that an oppressed people dream of. For a moment we believed that the hour of redemption was at hand. When the armed opposition of the people was overcome, and the Americans found themselves undisputed lords of the land, redemption became domination under the guise of 'preparing the Philippine people for self-government.'"

US imperialist domination is a systemic illness that can only be cured by a resolute people's armed revolutionary struggle. Through the years, it has used different ploys and pretexts for its empire-building, the latest of which is the war on terror.

Indeed, nothing much has changed. Same violence, same deception, same tyrant. ▲



The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) is an alliance of revolutionary organizations with roots in the various sectors and regions of the Philippines.

Its goal is to build a society that enjoys national sovereignty, authentic democracy, social justice, progress and peace. It seeks to unite with all forces willing to achieve these goals.

**LIBERATION** is the official publication of the NDFP.

