

OPINION & FEATURES

Jetsetters

FINALLY, (it seems) we're getting through to the government. After being pummeled with never ending criticism and contention over the controversial \$20,000 New York Le Cirque dinner that the first couple and their 65 cohorts partook during their US trip, and the disclosure of yet another lavish \$15,000 dinner in Bobby Van's Steakhouse in Washington DC, Pres. Arroyo's request for a brand new presidential jet is perhaps, the most preposterous proposition she's ever made as president of a poverty-stricken country.

Press Secretary Cerge Remonde has announced Pres. Arroyo's retraction from the said purchase. The P1.2 Billion that was previously earmarked for Pres. Arroyo's new ride will be utilized, instead, to fund the expansion of the government's anti-hunger and poverty alleviation programs, Malacañang stated on August 17. (And thank heavens for that!)

Remonde said that Pres. Arroyo "doesn't want people to say that she was putting her needs ahead, although come to think of it, it's her successor who would benefit from it." Should Filipinos even be compelled to thank Pres. Arroyo for such a wise and magnanimous act?

Isn't it enough that Pres. Arroyo's declared net worth (based on her SALNs) has doubled, from P66.8 Million in 2001 to P143.54 Million in 2008? A \$20,000 wedding anniversary dinner, though seemingly excessive, would hardly make a dent on

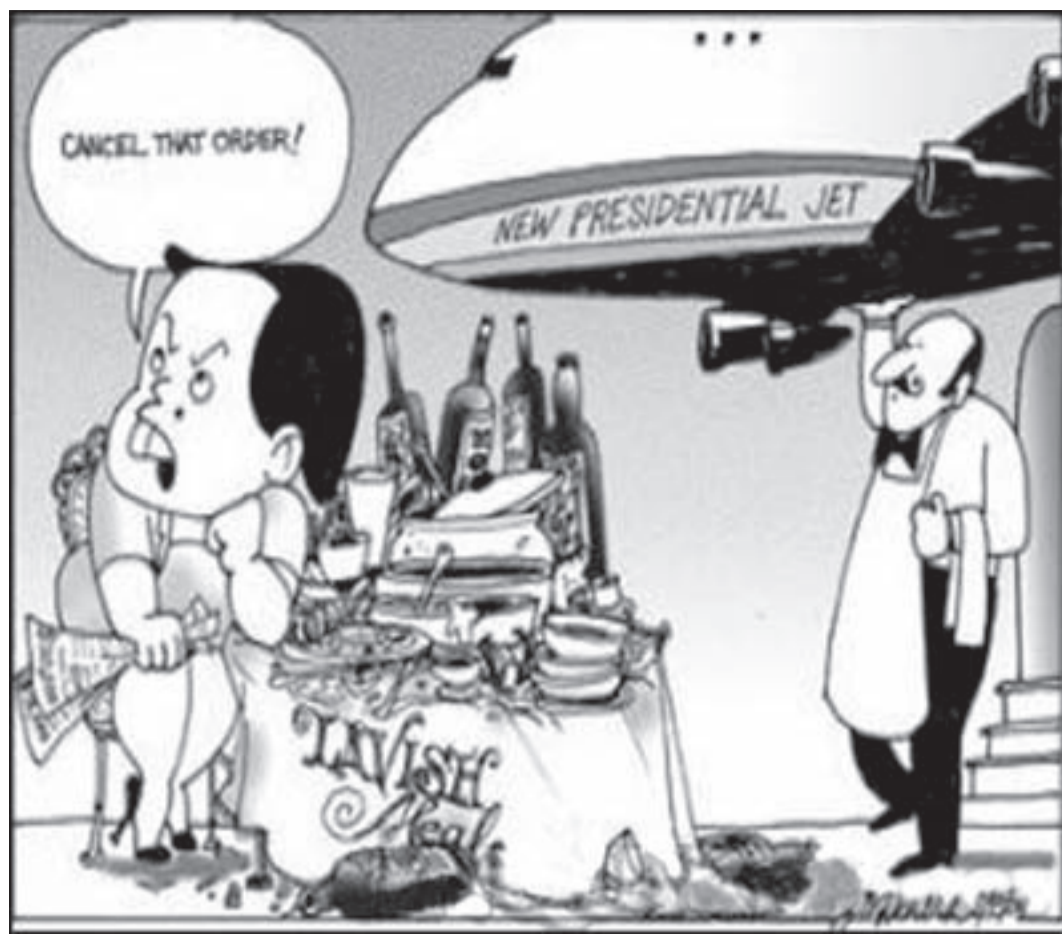
the Arroyos' wealth, that's for sure.

And yet, even after it has been decided that the solons who went with Pres. Arroyo will have to pay for expenses incurred during their US trip, the audacious of them are only willing to foot the bill if they pay with taxpayers' money.

Pres. Arroyo and her cohorts from the government should realize that governance is a social responsibility, not a privilege. After all, they are elected public servants, not monarchs to be afforded such a life of opulence.

Being the chief executive of a republic, "a state in which the supreme power rests in the body of citizens entitled to vote and is exercised by representatives chosen directly or indirectly by them," Pres. Arroyo is not entitled to luxuries, and especially not, since more than half of the population she governs continue to live in meagerness. (AJ-Press)

EDITORIAL



May araw din kayo

TATAGALUGIN ko na nang makuha n'yo. Kahit na lingwaheng kanto lang ang alam kong Tagalog.

Tatal Buwan ng Wika naman ang Agosto. Baka sakali 'yung paboritong wika ni Balagtas ay makatulong sa pag-unawa n'yo dahil mukhang 'yung paboritong wika ni Shakespeare ay lampas sa IQ n'yo. Kung sa bagay, ang pinakamahirap gisingin ay 'yung nagtutulug-tulugan. Ang pinakamahirap padinggin ay 'yung nagbibingi-bingihan. Ang pinakamahirap paintindihin ay 'yung nagmamaangmaangan. Bueno, mahirap din paintindihin 'yung likas na tanga. Pero bahala na.

Sabi mo, Cerge Remonde, alangan naman pakanin ng hotdog ang amo mo. Bakit alangan? Hindi naman vegetarian 'yon. At public service nga 'yon, makakatulong dagdagan ng cholesterol at salitre ang dugong dumadaloy papuntang puso n'ya. Kung meron man s'yang dugo, kung meron man s'yang puso.

Bakit alangan? Malamang di ka nagbabasa ng balita, o di lang talaga nagbabasa, kung hindi ay nalaman mo 'yung ginawa ni Barack Obama at Joe Biden nitong nakaraang Mayo. Galing silang White House patungong Virginia nang magtakam sila pareho ng hamburger. Pina detour nila ang motorcade at tumuloy sa unang hamburgerang nakita nila. Ito ang Ray's Hell Burger, isang maliit at independienteng hamburger joint.

Tumungo ang dalawa sa counter at sila mismo ang nag-order, hindi mga aides. Nagbayad sila ng cash na galing sa sariling bulsa at kagaya ng



THERES THE RUB
Conrado de Quiros

ibang customers ay pumila para sa turno nila.

Ito ay presidente at bise presidente ng pinakamakapangyarihang bansa sa buong mundo. Kung sa bagay, 'yung amo n'yo ay hindi naman talaga presidente. Di lang makita ang pagkakaiba ni Garci kay God kaya nasabing "God put me here." Pekeng presidente, pekeng asal presidente.

Sabi mo, Anthony Golez, maliit lang ang P1 million dinner kumpara sa bilyon-bilyong pisong dinala ng amo mo sa bansa.

Ay kayo lang naman ang nagsasabing may inambag ang amo n'yo na bilyong-bilyong piso sa kaban ng bayan. Ni anino noon wala kaming nakita. Ang nakita lang namin ay yung bilyon-bilyong piso - o borjer, ayon nga sa inyong dating kakosa na si Benjamin Abalos - na inaswang ng amo n'yo sa kaban ng bayan. Executive privilege daw ang hindi n'ya sagutin ito. Kailan pa naging pribilehiyo ng isang opisyal ang di managot sa taumbayan? Kailan pa naging pribilehiyo ng isang opisyal ang magnakaw?

Maliit lang pala ang P1 million, ay bakit hindi n'yo na lang ibigay sa nagugutom? O doon sa mga sundalo sa Mindanao? Tama si Archbishop Oscar Cruz. Isipin n'yo kung gaano karaming botas man lang ang mabibili ng P1 million at karagdagan P750,000 na nilamon ng amo n'yo at mga taga bitbit ng kanyang maleta sa isa pang restawran sa New York.

Maliit lang pala ang P1 million (at P750,000), bakit hindi n'yo na lang ibigay doon sa pamilya

ng mga sundalong namatay sa Mindanao? Magkano 'yung gusto n'yong ibigay sa bawat isa? P20,000? Sa halagang iyan 50 sundalo na ang maabuluyan n'yo sa \$20,000. Pasalu-saludo pa 'yang amo n'yo sa mga namatay na kala mo ay talagang may malasakit. Bumenta na 'yang dramang 'yan. At pasabi-sabi pa ng "Annihilate the Abus!" Di ba noon pa n'ya 'yan pinangako? Mahilig lang talagang mangako 'yang amo n'yo.

Bukod pa d'yan, saan ba nanggaling 'yung limpak-limpak na salapi ng mga kongresista na pinansindi nila ng tabako? Di ba sa amin din? Tanong n'yo muna kung ayos lang na i-blowout namin ng wine at caviar ang amo n'yo habang kami ay nagdidilidil ng asin - 'yung magaspang na klase ha, 'di yung iodized. Ang tindi n'yo, mga p're.

At ikaw naman, Romulo Macalintal, tapang ng apog mo. Maiisip mo tuloy na sundin na lang ang mungkahi ni Dick the Butcher sa "Henry VI" ni Shakespeare: "First thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers." Pa ethics-ethics ka pa, pasalamat ka di nasunog ang bibig mo sa pagbigkas ng katagang 'yon.

Marami mang sugapa rin sa aming mga taga media, di naman kasing sugapa n'yo. At di naman kami sinewelduhan ng taumbayan. Wala naman kaming problemang sumakay sa PAL at kailangan pang bumili ng P1.2 billion jet. Anong sabi n'yo, kailangan ng amo n'yo sa pabyahe-byahe? E sino naman ang may saging magbabahe s'ya? Ngayon pang paalis na s'ya - malinaw na ayaw n'yang umalis. Bakit hindi na lang s'ya bumili ng Matchbox na eroplano? Kasya naman s'ya ro'n.

Lalo kayong nagpupumiglas, lalo lang kayong lumulubog sa kumunoy. Di n'yo malulusutan ang bulilyasang ginawa n'yo. Para n'yo na ring inagaw ang isinusbong kanin ng isang batang nagugutom. Tama si Obama at Biden: Sa panahon ng recession, kung saan nakalugmok ang mga Amerikano sa hirap, dapat makiramay ang mga pinuno sa taumbayan, di nagpapakapariwara. Sa panahon ng kagutuman, na matagal nang kalagayan ng Pinoy, at lalo pang tumindi sa paghagupit ng Typhoon Gloria, dapat siguro uminom na lang kayo ng insecticide. Gawin n'yo 'yan at mapapawi kaagad ang kagutuman ng bayan.

Sa bandang huli, buti na rin lang at ginawa n'yo 'yung magpasasa sa P1 million dinner habang lupaypay ang bayan sa kagutuman - di lang sa kawalan ng pagkain kundi sa iba pang bagay—at pagdadalamhati sa yumaong Ina ng Bayan. Binigyan n'yo ng mukha ang katakawan. Katakawang walang kabusagan. Mukhang di nakita ng masa sa usaping NBN, mukhang di nakikita ng masa sa usaping SAL. Mukhang nakita lang ng masa dito sa ginawa n'yong ito. Sa pagpapabondat sa New York habang naghihinagpis ang bayan.

At buti na rin lang mayroon tayong sariling wika. Di sapat ang Inggles para iparamdam sa inyo ang suklam na nararamdaman namin sa inyo. Di sapat ang Inggles para ipakita sa inyo ang pagkamuhin na nararamdaman namin sa inyo. Di maarok ng Inggles ang lalim ng poot na nararamdaman namin sa inyo.

Ininusuka na kayo ng taumbayan, mahirap man sumuka ang gutom.

May araw din kayo. (Inquirer.net)

Why we should not extend school days

PRESIDENT Obama wants to extend school days? Politicians often write bills to extend school

ESSAY

Jesse Koons

days. They do it because they think that, if there is more time spent on education, kids will be more knowledgeable and less likely to drop out. The students will also tend not to forget what they learned before summer. But, students and teachers still get hit by some of the effects of extended school days.

Extended school days will further mess up the payroll system for teachers and staff. The Los Angeles Unified School District is in complete disarray when it comes to budget. They are running out of money faster than parents can say political corruption. Teachers and staff are feeling underappreciated and underpaid (Ruben 2008). With all these problems, it makes no sense in extending school days.

Additional school days will not guarantee that students will learn more. Just because you extend

school days does not mean students will succeed. If students need help, they have teachers, parents, tutors, and peers (Cruz 2009). We need more programs that assist the students in their ability to succeed and not additional school days.

Another problem in extending school days is that students and teachers might not be able to cope with schedule changes. They could get stressed out from more work, less time to relax or socialize, and little sleep. Teachers also will lose time with their families. The real problem is we will have to adapt more to extended school days.

Some politicians say that more school days would help put the United States ahead of other countries in the quality of education (Edu 2009). Just because we add school days does not mean that the US will have a higher quality education system than other countries. Rather than add more hours or days of school why

not improve the schools that are below the standards which the US has set? There should be more tutoring programs for failing students or have summer classes for schools that need improvement. But, the number of school days must be the same for higher quality schools. We also need to reduce the number of students in the classes so that the teachers can concentrate on the students more, if they are not so many.

In conclusion, extending school days would not guarantee a solution to the problem of undereducated schools. It will create a greater risk of having overstressed students and teachers. Instead of extending school days on all schools, try extending school days on failing schools. Because of the economic situation, there is still a budget crisis. Schools are running out of money and need help. School days should definitely not be extended in all the schools.

Jesse Koons, 13, is a transition freshman of Harbor Teacher Prep Academy at LA Harbor College in Wilmington, Ca.

Waiting for the benefits of growth

ECONOMIC growth has been one of the few bright spots in the scandal-ridden administration of President Arroyo. But this achievement is vulnerable to external factors beyond the government's control, such as volatile crude oil prices and the global financial meltdown. Both the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund expect the Philippine economy to contract this year, from its record high 7.3 percent real GDP growth in 2007 and 4.5 percent last year.

Another factor also dampens positive economic news: the benefits of economic growth are not being felt by the poor. Wealth distribution remains hugely inequitable. The failure to make the benefits trickle down to the grassroots was acknowledged by the government's economic team about a year ago. Last week Finance Secretary Margarito Teves made the same observation, pointing out that the booming population meant smaller slices of the economic pie for everyone.

Though Teves was not making a direct pitch for family planning, which his boss the President refuses to promote, several quarters have long pointed out that the country's economic growth cannot keep pace with the population boom. Despite sustained economic growth since 2001, up to 40 percent of Filipinos are estimated to be living below the poverty line.

COMMENTARY

The global economic slowdown will further hamper efforts to alleviate poverty.

Dire scenarios could be averted with the continuing strong remittances from millions of Filipinos working overseas. The Philippines has the third highest rate of remittances in the world, making the local economy vulnerable to economic shocks in other countries. Services account for more than half of the country's gross domestic production. But the news yesterday was encouraging for the government's economic team, with the figures showing that remittances in the first six months of 2009 hit \$8.5 billion, growing by 3.3 percent from the previous year.

The dark side of this story is well known: those millions of Filipinos are working overseas for lack of better opportunities in their own country. People who cannot feel the benefits of economic growth leave their loved ones behind to work abroad, even as servants. While their massive remittances contribute to economic growth, the country's next set of leaders must work to create employment opportunities for Filipinos in their own land. And the next set of leaders must work harder so the benefits of economic growth will make a dent in the battle against poverty. (Philstar.com)

The views expressed by our Op-Ed contributors are solely their own and do not necessarily reflect the predilection of the editorial board and staff of Asian Journal.



Main Office:
1150 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90017-1904
Tel: (213) 250-9797 • Fax: (213) 481-0854
e-mail: info@asianjournalinc.com
http://www.asianjournal.com

Manila Office:
Suite 208, The Manila Bank Corp., Bldg.
6772 Ayala Ave., Makati City 1226
Tel.: (632) 893-1720 • Fax: (632) 813-8746

New York and New Jersey:
5 Penn Plaza, Ste. 1932, New York, NY 10001
Tel.: (212) 655-5426 • Fax: (212) 655-9241

2500 Plaza Five, Harborside Financial Center,
Jersey City, NJ 07311
Tel.: (201) 4 84-7249 • Fax: (201) 484-7201

Las Vegas Sales Office:
3700 W. Desert Inn Road
Las Vegas, NV 89102
Tel.: (702) 792-6678 • Fax: (702) 792-6879

ROGER LAGMAY ORIEL
Publisher & Chairman of the Board

CORA MACABAGDAL-ORIEL
President & Executive Editor

BELLE M. SISON
Executive Vice President
Los Angeles Asian Journal

MONETTE ADEVA MAGLAYA
Senior Vice President
Los Angeles Asian Journal

IVY MANALANG
Vice President - Marketing

MOMAR VISAYA
Editor-in-Chief

JOSEPH PERALTA
Associate Editor

SHARON ANN BATHAN
Features Editor

MARIA LOURDES HALILI
Advertising Editor

DANTE SAMBILAY
Art Director

ANDY TECSON / TED TALAG
BERT JAURIGUE
Photographers

BANDER LAW FIRM, LLP
Legal Counsel

ADVERTISING AND ADVERTORIAL POLICIES

Asian Journal Publications, Inc. ("AJPI") reserves the right to refuse to publish, in its sole and absolute discretion, any advertising and advertorial material submitted for publication by client. ("Client's Material")
Submission of an advertisement or advertorial to an AJPI sales representative does not constitute a commitment by AJPI to publish a Client's Material. AJPI has the option to correctly classify any Client's Material and to delete objectionable words or phrases.
Client represents and warrants that the Client's Material does not and will not contain any language or material which is libelous, slanderous or defamatory or invades any rights of privacy or publicity; does not and will not violate or infringe upon, or give rise to any adverse claim with respect to any common law or other right whatsoever (including, without limitation, any copyright, trademark, service mark or contract right) of any person or entity, or violate any other applicable law; and is not the subject of any litigation or claim that might give rise to any litigation.
Publication of a Client's Material does not constitute an agreement to continue publication.
Client agrees and covenants to indemnify AJPI and its officers against any and all loss, liability, damage, expenses, cost, charges, claims, actions, causes of action, recoveries, judgments, penalties, including outside attorneys' fees (individually and collectively "Claims") which AJPI may suffer by reason of (1) Client's breach of any of the representations, warranties and agreements herein or (2) any Claims by any third party relating in any way to Client's Material.
AJPI will be liable for failure to publish any Client's Material as requested or for more than one incorrect insertion of a Client's Material. In the event of an error, or omission in printing or publication of a Client's Material, AJPI shall be limited to an adjustment for the space occupied by the error, with maximum liability being cancellation of the cost of the first incorrect advertisement or republication of the correct advertisement.
Under no circumstances shall Asian Journal Publications, Inc. be liable for consequential damages of any kind.

ASIAN JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS, INC. publishes the Los Angeles Asian Journal, published twice a week; the Orange County and Inland Empire Asian Journal, Northern California Asian Journal, Las Vegas Asian Journal and the New York / New Jersey Asian Journal which are published once a week and distributed to Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino, Orange Counties, Northern California, Las Vegas and New York and New Jersey respectively.
Articles published in this paper do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the publisher. Letters to the Editor are welcome. Letters must contain complete name and return address. The materials, however, are subject to editing and revisions.
Contributions and advertising deadlines are every Mondays and Thursdays. For advertising rates and other information, please call the L.A. office at (213) 250-9797 or the Las Vegas Sales Office at (702) 792-6678 or send us an email at info@asianjournalinc.com