

# Cory monument in Rizal Park final - Palace

MANILA – Despite reservations by the National Historical Institute, President Macapagal-Arroyo's choice of Rizal Park as the site for former President Corazon C. Aquino's monument is final.

"Rizal Park is our main park, the foremost national park. The late Ninoy Aquino is also there, and I think that's the rightful pantheon for our national heroes, or Filipinos that are worthy of emulation for this generation and the generations to come," Press Secretary Cerge Remonde said in a briefing.

Arroyo, however, has given free rein to the NHI to find the best location at the park, and work out the other details, such as design, artist, and date of unveiling, he added.

On the eve of the country's observance of the 26th death anniversary of the late Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr., Pres. Arroyo gave orders to the NHI for the immediate construction of the monument to Mrs. Aquino.

But an NHI official recommended that this should be thoroughly studied lest it overshadow the monument to the national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal.

Contrary to reports, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita had discussed with NHI chair Anacleto Badoy the construction of the monument of Mrs. Aquino, who died Aug. 1 after a long battle with colon cancer and was buried Aug. 5 next to her husband at the Manila Memorial Park.

"This announcement was not a result of the knee-jerk thing. This is something that has been discussed and planned sometime ago," Remonde said.

And since it was put in charge of erecting the monument, the NHI should address concerns that Aquino's monument would overshadow Rizal's, among others, he said.

"It's up to them how to go about it. There were no specific orders to mount it on this part, or build it this big to the extent that it will overshadow Rizal. And the NHI should do it right. There shouldn't be any conflict," he said.

Remonde also said that the Malacañang-commissioned monument was different from the city government's monument to Mrs. Aquino that would be erected next to her husband's on the corner of Roxas Boulevard and Padre Burgos Street.

He said there was "no conflict" between the two even if these would be constructed in close proximity to each other.

"I see no conflict in that. The former President and Ninoy Aquino, as models, as heroes, they deserve all the honors," he said.

Remonde said the monument should be viewed as nothing more than a recognition of Ms Aquino, an icon of democracy.

"It is a recognition of the contribution of the late President Cory Aquino as icon of democracy, not only for our country [but for the rest of the world]," he said. ■



IN REMEMBRANCE. Children, grandchildren and sons-in-law of the late Sen. Benigno 'Ninoy' Aquino Jr. offer prayers at his tomb at the Manila Memorial Park in Parañaque City, where former President Corazon Aquino is also buried, to mark the 26th death anniversary of the opposition leader on August 21. Philstar.com photo by Val Rodriguez

# Ping fails to stop new Dacer probe

by ED PUNAY  
Philstar.com

MANILA – The re-investigation of the Dacer-Corbito murders will proceed after the Court of Appeals (CA) ruled in favor of the Department of Justice and denied the petition of Sen. Panfilo Lacson for a temporary restraining order (TRO) to stop the investigation.

In denying the petition, the CA said the retired Philippine National Police chief failed to prove that he would suffer from irreparable damage if the nine-year-old case were re-opened.

The DOJ's preliminary investigation is "well within due process to determine if there is sufficient evidence to bring a person to trial," the CA added.

The CA said the move of investigating prosecutors led by Senior State Prosecutor Peter Ong to require Lacson to submit his defense was neither unreasonable nor oppressive.

Lacson's petition for a TRO lacked factual and legal basis, the CA added.

However, the CA did not rule on the merits of Lacson's petition alleging "grave abuse of authority" on the part of DOJ officials and prosecutors.

The CA ordered the DOJ to submit a comment within 10

days. Upon DOJ's compliance, Lacson may file a reply after five days.

Justice Secretary Agnes Devanadera said the preliminary investigation into Lacson's alleged involvement in the murder case would proceed as scheduled.

"We anticipated that (move from Lacson) as part of due process," she said. "But we have a very well-grounded case."

Lacson has accused the DOJ of committing "grave abuse of discretion" in summoning him to answer charges that he masterminded the Dacer-Corbito murders based solely on the affidavit of former police senior superintendent Cezar Mancao, one of the main suspects.

Mancao's testimony would not suffice to justify the re-opening of the case since it did not constitute prima facie evidence, according to Gregorio Fernandez, Lacson's counsel.

Lacson accused the DOJ of engaging in a fishing expedition and trial by publicity to persecute him.

"The assailed reinvestigation of the Dacer-Corbito double murder case marks the penultimate act in the grand scheme to persecute petitioner," he said.

"The DOJ, after presentation of its evidence and resting its

case in Criminal Case No. 01-191969, all of a sudden coordinated with Cezar Mancao for the latter to go back to the Philippines and be its state witness to allegedly implicate petitioner in the said case."

Lacson said the DOJ's subpoena ordering him to submit his counter-affidavit against the complaint of the daughters of publicist Salvador "Bubby" Dacer is part of his persecution.

The complaint merely contains hearsay statements based on Mancao's affidavit, which did not allege the elements of murder, he added.

The re-investigation is illegal due to the DOJ's failure to seek permission from the Manila Regional Trial Court, which is already hearing the murder case, Lacson said.

The DOJ reopened the Dacer-Corbito murder case after Dacer's daughters charged Lacson with two counts of murder.

Dacer and his driver Emmanuel Corbito were snatched at the corner of Zobel Roxas Street and Sergio Osmeña Highway at the boundary of Manila and Makati on Nov. 24, 2000.

Their charred remains were later found Indang, Cavite.

The CA decision denying TRO petition was written by Associate Justice Juan Enriquez Jr. ■

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