

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

12 federal agencies consider . . .

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agencies have the same message that these will not prohibit their employees from traveling to or conducting official business in specific US cities, particularly Las Vegas and Reno .

Prior to sending out communication to federal agencies last August, the NV senator had communicated with White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel urging the Obama administration to reject or reverse any agency policy regarding official travel that discriminates against specific US cities, particularly Las Vegas and Reno.

During the Bush administration, several federal agencies have adopted guidelines that identify cities also known as resort or vacation destinations as inappropriate venues for official agency travel and meetings.

Last July, Sen. Reid also filed a bill to prohibit federal government agencies from discriminating against resort destinations when developing travel and meeting guidelines.

The Protecting Resort Cities from Discrimination Act of 2009, introduced in Senate last July 29, cited

Nevada cities Las Vegas , Reno and Lake Tahoe as resort destinations.

"While President Obama did the right thing by reversing restrictions that were created under the Bush administration, my hope is that this bill will prevent future administrations from following Bush's lead," Sen. Reid said in a previous statement.

Sen. Reid expects the bill, and federal agencies' support to prevent further decline of tourism activity in Nevada and the resulting increase in unemployment in the state.

Convention attendance in Las Vegas fell 26% to only 2.9 million attendees as of July this year, records from the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA) showed. Similarly, visitor volume dropped by 6% during the same period.

Lackluster tourism in Las Vegas has forced major hotels and casinos to impose massive layoffs since the start of the year. At 12.5%, Nevada's unemployment rate as of July is the third highest in the nation. It also puts the state's jobless rate to 3.1% higher than the nation's 9.4% for the same period. ■

Lucky no. 7 for Pacquiao

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the Philippines proud."

For the first time in his career, Pacquiao will be fighting in a welterweight match at 145 pounds. Cotto is naturally a bigger man and it was evident when the two stood next to each other during photo ops.

Cotto, already three weeks into his training camp, said he and his trainers are planning to study Pacquiao and capitalize from the Filipino mistakes.

Pacquiao has a tendency to be reckless at times and often, the Filipinos speed and power cover the mistakes inside the ring.

"I'm going to be the man that beats Manny Pacquiao," said Cotto. "I'm going to train hard for this fight and Manny's camp knows what Miguel Cotto is ca-

pable to do inside the ring.

There had been doubts about whether the 28-year-old Cotto is the same fighter he was before the brutal defeat against Antonio Margarito. Prior to being knocked out by Margarito, Cotto seemed an unflappable boxer with a mixture of strength and resilience.

"I'm here to prove my doubters my wrong," added Cotto. "I know I'm better than Manny."

The main issue Cotto has heading into this bout is whether he will be able to make the 145-pound weight limit. However, he sees no difficulty in making the weight. He said the last match against Joshua Clottey he weighed in at 146 pounds and still had a day to lose an extra pound if needed.

Pacquiao said he knows he's going to be the smaller man again in this bout with Cotto. It was the same story when he faced David Diaz, Oscar De La Hoya and Ricky Hatton. But in all those matches, the small Filipino won.

"Yes, he is a bit bigger but I'm just focused on my training," said Pacquiao. "I'm going to use my speed to beat him."

Pacquiao left for the Philippines on September 15. For the next five weeks, he and trainer Freddie Roach will train in Baguio City before heading back to the Wildcard Boxing Club to conclude the eight-week training camp.

When asked about the upcoming bout between Juan Manuel Marquez and Floyd Mayweather Jr., Pacquiao did not want to look ahead.

With the Marquez vs. Mayweather Jr. bout happening this weekend, many boxing pundits and fans expect the winner of that match to face the winner between Pacquiao and Cotto.

Pacquiao said he expects Mayweather to beat Marquez be-

cause "he has the speed and size to do it."

Marquez vs. Mayweather
Monday was a busy day for boxing writers. Prior to the Cotto-Pacquiao press conference, Juan Manuel Marquez and Floyd Mayweather Jr. held one of their final public workouts in front of the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood before heading into their match this Saturday, Sept. 19 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

Marquez knows that in order to get what he wants he has to beat the man standing in his way.

He won't admit it for the record but Marquez wants desperately to face Manny Pacquiao But in order to do that the Mexican Numero Uno needs to beat the former pound-4-pound king Floyd Mayweather Jr.

"My mind is only on this fight," said Marquez. "My mind is only on Mayweather. I'm not thinking of Pacquiao right now, I'm not thinking of my next fight."

Marquez said that this is the biggest fight of his career.

Boxing Notes
Pinay boxer Ana "Hurricane" Julaton captured her first championship last September 12 at the HP Pavilion in San Jose.

The Hurricane out-pointed Kelsey Jeffries for the IBA super bantamweight title. The three judges scored it 98-92, 96-94 for Julaton and 95-95.

In Puerto Rico, the fourth time was not the charm. Super Flyweight Rodel Mayol lost another opportunity for a title belt when Ivan Calderon defeated him last September 12.

Another clash of heads disrupted the match, but this time the judges had Calderon ahead, giving the Puerto Rican the victory.

In other boxing notes, Z Gorres and Donnie Nietes won their matches, respectively, in Mexico this past weekend. (*Joseph Pimentel/AJPress*)

Let's stop the politics . . .

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Philippine Center in New York on Sept. 11, to meet with the community and report on his meetings in Washington, DC with his counterpart, United States Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki.

They discussed, among others, further improvement in the RP-US security cooperation and support for Filipino forces and the faster facilitation of the benefits of Filipino World War II veterans.

Teodoro also reported that the security arrangement between the US and the Philippines involves heightened US support for the local military against local and foreign terrorists as well as against rogue elements of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

"We have to put a stop to the politics of vengeance. It is one of the biggest obstacles in national unity, growth and political instability," Teodoro

said as the discussion veered towards politics. He was game as he answered questions from the local media.

He said that if and when he gets elected, he said he would immediately hit the ground running and work on solving some of the country's most basic problems such as peace and order, law enforcement and economy.

But before he can do that, he needs to go through his party's nomination process.

The three-way fight to become Lakas-Kampi-CMD's official standard-bearer also includes Vice President Noli de Castro and Chairman Bayani Fernando of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA).

"The Filipino should look at himself now as needing a lot of improvement in all facets of life," Teodoro said .

When asked on what his priorities would be if he wins in

2010, he replied that he will convene a Constitutional Convention immediately to erase any doubts about its motives.

This constitutional convention will overhaul the 1987 Charter, and will pave the way for a unicameral system led by a directly elected president. Term limits will be lifted for all except the president.

"I am the only one talking about structural change. We really have to restructure our society," Teodoro said.

"Good governance is not only a function of putting good men in government. The structures must be attuned to the needs of the country. That is the most pressing need today," he explained.

Should he win, Teodoro said that he is also training his sight on the possibility of opening up the economy for more foreign investments to come in.

Recent surveys suggest that Teodoro has been lagging and

in some, he's dead last.

Asked for his comments regarding this matter, he paused and said, "Champion *ako sa kulelat*."

Turning serious, Teodoro said that surveys "are a matter of concern."

"Probably I have to take several faster steps. I admit that it's an uphill climb in this big fight because ratings sometimes do count. I haven't yet, gone on full steam," he explained.

Noynoy
Teodoro also welcomed the news that his cousin, Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, has announced his intention to run as president next year.

"It's great. It gives people more choices," he said.

Both Aquino and Teodoro are natives of Tarlac province where they both started and nurtured their political careers.

"*Ang amin kay Noynoy* [Aquino's nickname] ...we remain cousins and we remain good friends. That will not change and we will not allow this contest to ruin it." ■

US to facilitate release . . .

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veterans of the Pacific War.

Teodoro conveyed the Philippine government's appreciation for continuing US support for the veterans' war claims to Shinseki, who reaffirmed Washington's commitment to facilitate record verification procedures and the payment of claims.

Making up
The US grant of benefits and recognition of Filipino war veterans have been long overdue, Inouye told Teodoro. "I have long felt that the US has shortchanged the Philippines. We're going to make up for that," the US lawmaker said.

Teodoro assured Inouye that the senator has done more than enough in championing the cause of Filipino war veterans. "What should be done now is to work together to implement the law," he said.

As of Sept. 1, the Department of Veterans Affairs said it has processed 8,900 applications of the total of 31,876 claims it has received so far. Out of the total number of applications processed, over \$77 million have been awarded to eligible Filipino veterans. A total of 3,138 Filipino veterans with US citizenship received \$15,000 each, while 3,414 non-US citizen Filipino veterans received \$ 9,000 each.

During the meeting, Teodoro thanked Shinseki for the DVA's grant-in-aid to the Veterans Memorial Medical Center (VMMC) amounting to \$5.5 million since 2003 inclusive of the MRI equipment valued at \$1M the delivery of which Shinseki assured next year. (*Inquirer.net*)

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