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Gloria's Wish Comes True

SACRAMENTO, CALIF., July 21 (PinoyGlobal) - After chasing President Barack Obama all over the United States for more than a year, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's wish has finally come true. She will be meeting the man on July 30, 2009, in the most sacred nook in the White House -- the Oval Office.

It would seem that Gloria's visit would be nothing more than a customary courtesy call to the newly "crowned" leader of the Free World. "The visit to Washington DC is an affirmation of the strong partnership between the two countries that share historical and cultural ties and common democratic values," the Philippines' Department of Foreign Affairs announced.

However, considering all the unusual events that had happened recently in the Philippines, Obama's invitation seemed more of a summon. And, as if to emphasize the urgency, Obama's spy master, CIA Director Leon Panetta paid Gloria a lightning visit on Sunday, July 12, when all government offices were closed and most of the citizens were enjoying their siesta.

Indeed, Gloria must have been tickled pink that, finally, she is going to have that "photo op" with the elusive Obama. Her spin doctors would have a heyday heralding her visit to the Oval Office as a recognition of La Gloria as America's unwavering and indispensable partner in the fight against global terrorism.

Forget that Gloria withdrew the Philippine troops

from Iraq when Iraqi insurgents threatened to behead a captured Filipino worker. Forget that Gloria tried to sell the Spratly islands to China. Forget that Gloria failed to create a Bangsa Moro state. Forget that Gloria has been labeled as the most corrupt President in the history of the Philippines. Forget that Gloria did nothing to stop human rights violations in the country.

But what Uncle Sam did not forget was that Gloria extended the controversial Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) which would have provided the US with key logistical bases to maintain an effective military -- and political -- presence in Southeast Asia.

Given all that, what would be on the agenda when the brand-new American President meets the lame-duck Philippine President? With less than a year left in Gloria's term, what could she do that would enhance US-Philippine relations? Or would it be possible that they are both pursuing their own agenda or "wish list"? If so, what would each of them bring to the table?

Here's a possible scenario: Gloria tells Obama, "Mr. President, thank you for your support and recognition of my government as your partner in fighting international terrorism. As you well know, I've done everything possible to maintain peace and order in Mindanao. I am doing my best to stop the Abu Sayaff bandits, Muslim separatists, Jemaah Islamiyah terrorists, communist insurgents, drug dealers, and everybody else who opposed my grand design to transform

the Philippines into an enchanted kingdom in 20 years.”

Obama’s response is: “Wow! You are a visionary, Madame President, err . . . shall we address each other on a first-name basis from now on . . . Gloria?” “Absolutely! Shall I call you Barack or Barry?” she asks. “Barack would just be fine, Glory,” Obama replies.

At that time, Obama’s top aide at the back of the room is pointing to his watch which means that 10 minutes have transpired and there’s only five minutes left to wrap up the meeting and photo op.

“Well, Gloria,” Obama says. “This is indeed a very productive meeting and I’m glad that we finally met considering that, from what my CIA Director told me, you’ve been chasing me around for more than a year. He he he . . . This just proved that you really have a high regard for me and that you would love to hear my advice and guidance. After all, you and I are partners in not just fighting international terrorism but global recession as well. One of these days, perhaps at the end of your term in June 2010, we can meet again in a less official setting so you can share with me your secret on how you dealt with your economic problems. It would certainly help me a lot because by then I’d be half-way through my first term and I would have to show the American people that I have what it takes to deal with the worst recession since the Great Depression. What do you think, Gloria?”

“Mr. Pre . . . I mean, Barack, hopefully, with your support I’d still be the President or, perhaps, umm . . . Prime Minister after June 2010. By staying in power beyond 2010, I would be in a position to advise you on economic issues. You see, I graduated from Princeton with a degree in economics . . .”

“Fantastic!” Obama interrupts her. “I knew you really are an expert on economics. I never for a moment believed what that Filipino-American columnist in Sacra-

mento was saying about your ‘boo-boo economics.’ Nah!”

Then in a serious tone, Obama says, “Madame President, it’s been a pleasure to finally meet you. I hope that as you finish your term in June, you’ll be remembered for all the things you have done for your beloved country. I hope that you and I would continue our communication, even after you’ve stepped down from power. CIA Director Leon Panetta, whom you have met earlier this month, would serve as our liaison. By the way, lest I forget, I’ll give you a copy of my speech before Ghana’s parliament last July 11, 2009. I highlighted a paragraph near the end of my speech which I hope you’d take it to heart. It would really mean a lot to me and would certainly benefit your people as well.”

After leaving the Oval Office, Gloria reads the highlighted paragraph which says, “As I said in Cairo, each nation gives life to democracy in its own way, and in line with its own traditions. But history offers a clear verdict: governments that respect the will of their own people are more prosperous, more stable, and more successful than governments that do not. This is about more than holding elections - it’s also about what happens between them. Repression takes many forms, and too many nations are plagued by problems that condemn their people to poverty. No country is going to create wealth if its leaders exploit the economy to enrich themselves, or police can be bought off by drug traffickers. No business wants to invest in a place where the government skims 20 percent off the top, or the head of the Port Authority is corrupt. No person wants to live in a society where the rule of law gives way to the rule of brutality and bribery. That is not democracy, that is tyranny, and now is the time for it to end.”

When Gloria arrives in Manila after an unannounced side trip to the Cayman Island, a photo is waiting on her desk. It’s her photo op with Obama. Obama is grinning from ear to ear. But she is not smiling. I wonder why?