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Aquino cabinet turns in resignation letters

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — The Cabinet resigned Wednesday under pressure from pro-business members seeking reorganization and stronger leadership after the coup attempt last month.

President Corazon Aquino was grim-faced after an emergency Cabinet meeting.

She gave no indication of which resignations would be accepted or when she would announce a new government, and she snapped at reporters: "You will know!" Presidential spokesman Teodoro Benigno said the 25 Cabinet members and three officials of the Commission on Good Government handed in hurriedly written letters of resignation during the 15-minute emergency meeting.

Among those resigning was Joker Arroyo, Aquino's executive secretary and closest adviser.

Senior military officers, congressmen, prominent businessmen and church groups had sought his dismissal since the coup attempt by mutinous soldiers Aug. 28.

Officials said the pressure for resignations began after Arroyo alleged Tuesday in testimony before the House of Representatives that business leaders were undermining the government.

In Washington, presidential spokesman Marlin Fitzwater told reporters: "We support Cory Aquino personally in her attempt to strengthen that government and to establish a rule of law and as much normalcy as possible in the existing circumstances."

It was the second mass resignation since Aquino came to power when former President Ferdinand E. Marcos fled the country Feb. 26, 1986.

Most ministers were retained in that reorganization, after a coup attempt Nov. 23 by followers of Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile, but Enrile was fired. He now is a senator and leads the political opposition.

Arroyo's remarks Tuesday also included accusations of disloyalty by the military. His three-hour speech brought into the open bitter Cabinet divisions and distrust between civilian authorities and the military.

Conflicts have increased since the Aug. 28 uprising because of the gov-

ernment's apparent inability to detect the plot in advance and the large number of military units that either joined the revolt or refused to help put it down.

Word of the resignations came first from Trade Secretary Jose Concepcion. His twin brother Raul was

one of three prominent businessmen Arroyo accused.

Concepcion told reporters after a luncheon meeting with Aquino that he and several other Cabinet members had decided to quit. The presidential palace then said 11 ministers planned to resign and Aquino was calling an emergency meeting.

Expert: Too soon to tell if higher speed limit has increased deaths

By Doug Driskell
Staff Writer

Although there has been an increase in fatalities on rural interstates in Texas, it is still too early to tell if this increase is attributed to the new 65 mph speed limit, research specialist Dr. Quinn Brackett said Tuesday.

"It is really too soon to tell if the speed limit increase is causing more fatalities, because we are trying to detect a minor change in the total number of fatalities on rural interstates," Brackett said. "It will probably be two years before a conclusion can be made."

The total number of fatalities on rural interstates in Texas from Jan. 1st to Sept. 4th is 128, Texas Department Public Safety spokesman David Wells said. This is an increase of 17 compared to statistics taken in the same period in 1986.

"We have seen this increase even before the speed limit was increased on May 9th," Wells said. "Until we get a considerable difference in the number of deaths it will be difficult to draw any conclusions. Even when fatalities increase there are other contributing factors. It must be determined if speed, alcohol or any other factor was a contributing cause."

The current statistics are from rural interstates, but the 65 mph limit doesn't apply to all rural interstates, Wells said. There is a certain dis-

crepancy from each non-rural area where the speed limit changes to 65 mph. At this time, there isn't a universal measurement method to tell if the fatalities were on a rural interstate where the 65 mph limit didn't apply.

"We are working with the Texas Highway Department to determine which mile markers the speed limit increases and where it ends," Wells explained.

A rural interstate is an interstate highway, such as I-10 near Houston and I-45 outside Dallas, in areas of a population of 55,000 people or less.

Quinn predicts there will be 11 more fatalities a year due to the speed limit increase. He bases this prediction on estimated figures with the increase in speed and the non-compliance rate that was present with the 55 mph speed limit.

"Statewide, we usually have 3,800 fatal accidents each year," Brackett said. "Of these 3,800, 210 to 211 are on rural interstates. Eleven more a year is not that many in comparison to the overall number, but it is all relative. If it is a family member, it makes it worse."

According to Wells, overall deaths on Texas highways are down 11 percent from this time last year, based on accident reports received at the DPS in Austin.

"This is very encouraging," he said. "I think this can be attributed to the new safety belt law and the open-container law."



A different drummer

An alternate member for the Aggie Band stands on the sidelines ready to take the field during

Wednesday's practice. The band has eight to nine alternates who are all freshmen.

Surgeon General cites moral dilemmas of AIDS

WASHINGTON (AP) — The moral and ethical issues confronting the nation in dealing with AIDS are as difficult as the scientific and medical ones, Surgeon General C. Everett Koop told a presidential commission Wednesday.

One of those problems, he told the opening session of President Reagan's AIDS commission, is the growing minority of doc-

tors and dentists refusing to treat patients who have AIDS.

He contended that "such conduct threatens the very fabric of health care in this country."

"What shall we do to prevent that from happening?" he asked. "We need some answers before this deadly virus further weakens the ethics of medical practice in the United States."

Perhaps the most potentially serious social problem, he said, is related to the fact that AIDS "is becoming the particular scourge of people who are young, black and Hispanic."

"We have finally extended to all Americans — regardless of race, creed, color, ethnic origin, religion, sex or age — the birthright to freedom that is theirs," he said. "Will AIDS by itself reverse this trend of

history?" he asked. "I certainly hope and pray that that does not occur, but hopes and prayers may not be enough."

Koop did not offer solutions, only questions for the commission to address. Reagan has instructed the group to make a final report in a year.

Earlier, Otis R. Bowen, secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, defended previous government activ-

ity on AIDS and challenged critics to offer constructive suggestions.

Bowen gave a chronology of government action since the first AIDS cases were reported in 1981 and said, "To criticize this effort is counterproductive and mean-spirited and tends to tarnish what is a solid record of accomplishment in modern medical science and health policy."

Cuts in PUC funds may cause Texans to go elsewhere to solve bill disputes

By Mary-Lynne Rice
Staff Writer

Texas utility users who receive incorrect or unfair bills soon may have to look beyond the usual channels for a resolution to the problem.

Gov. Bill Clements recently cut \$200,000 in funding for the Texas Public Utility Commission's Consumer Affairs Division, which may eliminate aid from that office to rate payers, said Ed Martin, executive director of the Texas Democratic Party, which has taken a strong stance against the governor's cut.

Because the local municipality is not regulated by the PUC, most Bryan-College Station residents will probably not be affected by the reduced funding.

The PUC Consumer Affairs Division's eight-person staff resolves individual disputes about improper billing, poor service or violation of tariffs or rules by the utility companies.

In the past 16 months, Martin said, the division processed approximately 14,500 complaints, recovering \$666,000 for utility rate payers. But the division's existence is endangered, he said, unless the issue can be reopened in a possible special session of the Texas Legislature.

"But unless that happens, some-

body's going to have to try to scramble for money," he said. "Maybe they can find a little and keep it open on a shoestring basis."

Martin said that with the recent appointment of Marta Greytak to the Texas PUC he hopes the Consumer Affairs Division will have a new advocate.

"She doesn't have the special interests of the utility companies in mind," he said.

Jay Rosser, Clements' deputy press secretary, cited duplication of services as the central idea in the governor's veto message. The PUC Office of Public Counsel, he said, performs the same function.

"It doesn't make sense to have two state agencies performing the same service," Rosser said. "And this service can be better coordinated out of the Office of Public Counsel."

Martin said, however, that there was some thought that the governor may have confused the role of the Consumer Affairs department with that of the Office of Public Counsel.

"(The Office of Public Counsel) is the attorneys and economists and expert witnesses and people like that who involve themselves in class action hearings before the commission," Martin said. "That's not what the Consumer Affairs division does at all."

Consumer Affairs, before the budget cut, dealt with the individual customer rather than large rate cases, Martin said.

"This was one division that actually dealt with the individual case and the individual dispute when the utility company broke a rule and the person (rate payer) was not able to get relief," he said.

The funding cut of \$200,000 will no longer reduce state taxes, but is a part of a larger process, Rosser said.

"When you're talking about the whole state budget, \$200,000 is a drop in the bucket," he said. "But it will make government more efficient by eliminating duplication."

Martin said that although a \$200,000 allotment translates to a cost of less than a penny per taxpayer each year, "it returns to the utility rate payers three times as much as the tax dollar cost."

Because the cases of the utility companies are taken into account by the Consumer Affairs Division when it investigates a complaint, they are not always subject to the loss of payment of a bill in question, Martin said. The Division considers all facts.

"We'll make sure the customer gets a fair deal," he said, "but we're not going to provide relief they don't have coming."

"... On the other hand, a city

FBI director nominee: Politics won't interfere with work of agency

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal Judge William S. Sessions said Wednesday he had assurances from Attorney General Edwin Meese III that the FBI would remain free of political interfer-

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ence and declared he would refuse to obey any presidential order that he deemed unethical.

Sessions affirmed his commitment to the law enforcement agency's independence during a one-day Senate hearing on his nomination to succeed William H. Webster as FBI director. Webster left the bureau in May to succeed the late William J. Casey as CIA director.

Democrats and Republicans on the Senate Judiciary Committee took turns praising Sessions as a "tough but fair-minded judge" and former federal prosecutor and Justice Department official who is eminently qualified to become FBI director for a statutory 10-year term.

So lavish was the senators' chorus of praise for Sessions, 57, chief judge of the U.S. District

Court in San Antonio, that Sen. Patrick J. Leahy, D-Vt., said it "sounds more like a canonization than a confirmation hearing."

Several panel members predicted that Sessions would win Senate confirmation by an overwhelming margin.

The committee is expected to approve his nomination next Tuesday, immediately before it plunges into hearings on President Reagan's hotly contested nomination of federal appeals court Judge Robert H. Bork to become a Supreme Court justice.

Sessions, 57, sat at the witness table between his home state senators, Democrat Lloyd Bentsen and Republican Phil Gramm of Texas, as Reagan was commended for nominating a conservative who enjoys broad support in Congress.

Sen. Joseph R. Biden Jr., D-Del., the committee chairman, echoed the concerns of several members when he recited a history of attempts at political manipulation of the FBI and challenged Sessions to commit himself to "resist attempts to politicize the bureau's operations."