

Sixth-generation Dutch seedsman wins World Food Prize



Simon N. Groot speaking before Class of 2019 at UP-Los Banos.

World Food Prize -2019

Simon – N. Groot



Simon N. Groot of the Netherlands has been named the 2019 World Food Prize Laureate for his transformative role in empowering millions of smallholder farmers in more than 60 countries to earn greater incomes through enhanced vegetable production, benefitting hundreds of millions of consumers with greater access to nutritious vegetables for healthy diets.

The announcement was made during a ceremony in the US Department of State hosted and presided over by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Acting Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment Manisha Singh gave remarks, and Ambassador Kenneth M. Quinn, president of the World Food Prize Foundation, made Mr. Groot's award public.

"Like Dr. Norman Borlaug before him, Simon N. Groot has dedicated his life to improving the livelihoods of millions around the world," said Ambassador Quinn. "With his partner in the Philippines, he began developing vegetable varieties with enhanced disease resistance and significantly higher yields. As the use of his seeds spread throughout the Philippines and to Thailand, Indonesia and across Southeast Asia, farmers' daily lives were uplifted and consumers benefited from greater access to nutritious vegetables. Mr. Groot in effect developed a stunningly impactful global network of seed producers who are transforming the lives of 20 million farmers every year. For this extraordinary accomplishment, he truly deserves to be named

the 2019 World Food Prize Laureate." **Unparalleled achievements** Awarded by the World Food Prize Foundation, this \$250,000 prize honors Mr. Groot's unparalleled achievements as the founder and leader of East-West Seed. His initiative over the past four decades has developed a dynamic, smallholder-centric tropical vegetable seed industry, starting in Southeast Asia and spreading through Asia, Africa and Latin America. Today East-West Seed serves over 20 million smallholder farmers in more than 60 tropical countries. Mr. Groot has led the transition of millions of subsistence farmers, many of them women, to horticulture entrepreneurs, thereby greatly enhancing their livelihoods and income. (Embassy of Holland)

IMMIGRATION UPDATE



HOSTED BY AWE E ABAYARI



50 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN U.S. IMMIGRATION LAW

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS MEDIA NETWORK



An Exclusive Interview by AWE E ABAYARI with RETIRED FBI SUPERVISORY SPECIAL AGENT CESAR C. OLEGARIO, JR.

For more of the interview: www.youtube.com/AweeAbayari

(FIRST OF A SERIES)

MUELLER TESTIMONY



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AWE E ABAYARI: Knowing Mueller as the former FBI Director who has testified many times in the past, what can you say about his recent appearance and his testimony before the House Judiciary and Intelligence Committees?

Retired FBI Supervisory Special Agent Cesar C. Olegario, Jr.: Honestly, I was disappointed because I have vivid memories of the former FBI Director from when he visited the Newark Division of the FBI soon after the tragic events of September 11, 2001. He had a strong command presence back in the day, and I fully expected him to display the same swagger when he faced the politicians on Capitol Hill. Director Mueller commanded with authority and was well respected within the organization back when I was just five years into my career with the FBI. The reality of how he fairly recently projected himself during the committee hearings hit me like a ton of bricks, as I watched a much older man, who seemed to have lost that sense of "command presence" he once touted in the past. It is inevitable we are all going to grow old as the years pass. Director Mueller reached the pinnacle of his career when I met him and I consider myself fortunate to have witnessed such a strong leader. He once led the premier law enforcement organization of the world into the fires of 9/11, and tempered the foundation of a national agency to adapt to the modern threats of international terrorism.

AWE E ABAYARI: Was he clear on stating that he did not exonerate President Donald Trump on the question of obstruction of justice and that Russia interfered in the 2016 election thinking it would benefit from a Trump win? Why?

Retired FBI Supervisory Special Agent Cesar C. Olegario, Jr.: The former Director of the FBI answered questions by staying within parameters as outlined by the United States Attorney General (USAG). The FBI is renowned for the way it methodically gathers information during the course of an investigation and then painstakingly generates reports based on facts. The reality of the situation is that former Director Mueller was not at liberty to "interpret" facts based on gathered evidence. I realize the American public expected stronger statements as to whether or not President Trump was guilty of allegations you mentioned as they relate to the 2016 election. Nonetheless, former Director Mueller was not in a position to provide such opinions and was further directed by the USAG to remain within the guidelines of his investigative position. I have served a combined total of almost 30 years in federal government service and one skill I have mastered is to "never say anything that will later bite you in the ass." His words were truthful and chosen wisely, but not decisive in rendering a verdict because that was not his purpose.

AWE E ABAYARI: You have worked with former FBI Director Mueller, why do you think he sometimes struggled to hear the questions from the lawmakers? There were moments when he could not even recall or remember some aspects of the investigation. Was this surprising? Or was it intentional?

Retired FBI Supervisory Special Agent Cesar C. Olegario, Jr.: It's very difficult to answer questions knowing that political bombshells can be unleashed based on your words, while everyone is waiting for you to trip and fall. I'm sure former Director Mueller was balancing facts in his mind, and was foreshadowing how his answers may be interpreted, while still striving to answer the merits of pointed questions as best he could. Additionally, former Director Mueller is a detailed man and I am sure he wanted to get the facts straight in his head before he engaged his mouth. Unfortunately, his acquired skills were honed throughout a lifetime of dedication and yet subject to fade as the twilight years approach. I've witnessed similar conditions (better or worse) in other individuals, and we should be cognizant of the possibility of such degradations in our own abilities. I am far from diagnosing and providing a professional geriatric medical opinion: re former Director Mueller, but the performance in his ability

to quickly process and present information seemed out of par for the man I remember.

AWE E ABAYARI: In his first public statement in May, Mueller said he would not provide new information to Congress if he was called to testify and he followed that strategy. Do you think that was the best thing to do and why?

Retired FBI Supervisory Special Agent Cesar C. Olegario, Jr.: He "stuck to his guns" because that was his only course of action. The former Director of the FBI knows the political game and more importantly, stayed within his legal lane. The document he generated was based on facts and expectedly subject to interpretation by legal authorities and political party leaders. He was not going to be used as a political mouthpiece to be wielded one way or the other to apply pressure on the Presidency of the United States.

AWE E ABAYARI: Mueller declined to answer some questions because he said they related to ongoing investigations and in other cases, he cited classified information. Were you surprised that he also did not answer any questions about the so-called Steele dossier?

Retired FBI Supervisory Special Agent Cesar C. Olegario, Jr.: It's fair to accept former Director Mueller's inability and unwillingness to address questions tied to ongoing investigative cases and/or classified information. The release of such information may rapidly jeopardize ongoing investigative and intelligence efforts by multiple government agencies. The revelation of seemingly simple facts may potentially jeopardize sources, methods and techniques involved in other multiple domestic and international cases. The Steele dossier is a simple matter in that former Director Mueller did not wish to lend credence to so called "private intelligence." The dossier was largely made up of non-vetted information disseminated outside of the intelligence community. Christopher Steele's title as a former head of the Russia Desk for British Intelligence may indeed lend credibility as to the source of the Steele dossier. Nonetheless, his character to willingly release supposedly "sensitive classified information" quickly diminishes the value of his information. I would not expect obviously selfish behavior from an individual who was sworn to protect such a cache of alleged intelligence. Christopher Steele rather used it as an opportunity for his own gain and fortune. Additionally, answering such questions would only contribute to confirming or denying Christopher Steele's alleged information, and increase value to the unsubstantiated dossier much to the satisfaction of conspiracy theorists.

AWE E ABAYARI: Since Mueller hardly offered any new information, was it a mistake to have called him to testify? Or do you think it encouraged the Democrats to pursue impeachment proceedings against President Donald Trump? Will it succeed?

Retired FBI Supervisory Special Agent Cesar C. Olegario, Jr.: I would not call it a mistake, rather than a waste of time. He knew what was expected of him from the start of the inquiry, and what he was supposed to produce in the course of the investigation. In fact, everyone in the Justice Department who participated in the investigation realized what was expected and they succeeded in fulfilling the needs of the American people. The obvious intent to use former Director Mueller as a pawn, and demonstrated political efforts to extract an "opinion" from the former head of the FBI failed miserably. I'm sure Democrats involved within the party will not feign from their efforts, and will look for other venues in their attempts to impeach President Trump. In my humble opinion, they have played their hand by attempting to manipulate the investigative outcome generated by former Director Mueller. Nonetheless, the Democrats will continue to shuffle the deck looking for something else to discredit President Trump in efforts to support impeachment proceedings in the future. Unless of course, President Trump is successful in winning a second term and the convoluted process can start all over again during his next four years as President of the United States.

(To Be Continued)