



Razor's Edge

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GMA's Game Plan: Deal Or No Deal

NEW YORK, NY, Nov. 13 (PinoyGlobal) - From all indications Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is going to abide by the constitutional mandate of one term. She will step down after her term expires in time for the next election. That much is certifiably clear unless she opts for a bloody confrontation to remain in power. But even the possibility of her capitulating is a problem because it would be on her terms. Having the edge of exercising the right to step down or fight all the way through a messy coup staged by supporters with military involvement on her side, that probability too is obscure. Most certainly Gloria will impose conditions prior to giving up the presidency or there will be no deal!

Quite obviously therefore, GMA has to be in the saddle of power until the last minute to hammer a bargain that would shield her from the murky fate of basking in jail indefinitely after being prosecuted for plunder (massive corruption). It would not be amiss to anticipate the opposition will persecute her once she is out of power as they thrive on intimidating the enemy by telegraphing their puny punches even when they themselves are hopelessly divided and need disciplining.

The presidential candidate she chooses must solemnly commit to grant her, the First Gentleman and her siblings in Congress immunity from prosecution, otherwise she will throw her hat in the ring as a candidate. On this she only needs feather-touch provocation to do just that. If there is someone deliriously enamored with the presidency, that person is Madam Arroyo. As a lady she is susceptible to flatteries and adulation of her minions, hence it takes very little cajoling or encouragement to make her run again.



President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

She can still amend the Constitution via the Charter change (Chacha) and have it ratified in a referendum, which is a piece of cake to her. This option is not unlikely considering that the stakes are extremely high for the outgoing Gloria.

In the least, she has to have someone to shield her from being criminally charged for corruption after she

relinquishes the presidency to her successor and that man or woman has to be a puppet of sorts.

Onlookers may say she is just brandishing a wild card. Maybe so, but wild card or not still it is within the realm of probability. Will they take the chance? Remember, with GMA anything can happen. For one thing she can always constitute Congress into a constituent assembly through her minions in both Houses and thereafter buy every single vote to win the referendum that will open the gate for her candidacy. That scenario was schemed by then House Speaker Joe De Venecia and her. With their convoluted logic they thought of crafting a new Constitution that will guarantee their perpetual status as the only leaders in the government.

The Charter change (notoriously called Cha cha) could have a provision allowing her to seek re-election; that is to say, in the conspicuous absence of a term limit for president in the Constitution there will be no hindrance for the incumbent to run again. This means no more impediments to block her from freely gliding into the queue of those anxious to succeed her, which she could easily orchestrate as she has done in the previous polls in connivance with the Commission on Elections.

Her grave indiscretion is in demanding that she, the First Gentleman, and their siblings in Congress should be out of harms-way when she steps down. In plain language they should not going to be brought to court for plunder, which is an anomaly per se since no man is above the law. In reality this uncanny arrangement is the crux of the issue that puts her in a quandary of giving up the presidency or not. To be exact, the war room in Malacanang is a veritable beehive of activities in search of that persona who will agree to her bidding in exchange of her unqualified support with guaranteed victory. The resources of the government will be heaped on whoever gets her nod. Moreover she will shower him with unlimited campaign funds from her own war chest.

These are irresistible enticements for any scalawag who just wants to enrich himself in the high office as most presidents do. Thus the brouhaha about a Charter change (Cha cha) is just a ruse or gambit to throw off track bloodhounds in human forms out to destroy her - at the same time to make candidates for president enter into a compromise to exculpate her and her family of any wrongdoing.

The frantic search for a benign successor has percolated into high-pitch among Malacanang's think tank boys. They should now be looking for a formidable politician who could be a viable presidential candidate willing to do her bidding, however unpatriotic. The price for cooperating is immeasurable as stated above.

To reiterate the rumor that she was going to revive the Charter change (Cha cha) was just a diversionary ploy. Expectedly, the threats of the opposition are getting bolder as election time closes in. Well, now she has taken the bull by the horns because the gambit she offers is so inviting that there will be more takers than cynics. Imagine she will hand over to the lucky candidate of her choice the presidency gratis et amore in a silver platter - all expenses paid?

The whole convoluted scheme was for those interested to yield to her demands even if it tended to sabotage the coming election just so she and her family are spared the painful and humiliating fate of being jailed for life without another Gloria giving her full pardon. On that note I am for giving her the benefit of the doubt, if our conjecture is correct, that she will surrender the presidency on the condition/s as we cogently stipulated, could be her game plan.

Nobody should begrudge Gloria for trying to protect herself given the politics of vindictiveness practiced in our country, especially so because her political enemies minced no words on what they will do to her and the First Gentleman. Also because the people have to make a statement to future presidents and other public officials not to indulge in acquiring ill-gotten wealth with impunity while they are in power.

Gloria has to have her own choice of successor she can trust and for whom she will fight tooth and nail, hammer and tong to make him/her win thereby relieving the First Family of the nightmare of going to jail for a host of crimes when she is no longer president.

Among her choices are Vice Pres. Noli de Castro, Metro Manila Development Authority Chairman Bayani Fernando and Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro Jr. This three are frontrunners in her short list of successors. But according to Presidential Management Staff head Cerge Remonde - Teodoro has the upper hand of her choice, or so it appears at the moment. Noli was banking on Madam Arroyo's support. Presumably, he assured her that she could retire undisturbed, if he is president.

Meanwhile, the opposition is hopelessly disunited despite facing the grueling task of dismounting GMA from the saddle of power. Unless they bury the hatchet and face a formidable common enemy their fond anticipation of days of wine and roses could fade before their very eyes. I just hope the members of the opposition sober up soon and be equal to the challenge. If truly they want to wrest control of the government from Pres. Arroyo, they should desist from engaging in vicious recriminations, never ending feuds, ego-tripping and telegraphing their

punches. These venomous quarrels and rivalry have gravely marginalized their effectiveness to win in the coming elections.

Now is the time to mend their differences for the sole objective of winning, it maybe their only chance! It would be an atrocious oversight to under-staminate the president with detrimental complacency because precisely she is so enamored with the seat of power that she will do anything to hold it forever. In fact she already froze in it.

So, what should it be boys, DEAL OR NO DEAL?#

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