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Gloria's 'Undivided' Government

SACRAMENTO, CALIF., Nov. 19 (PinoyGlobal) -

Once again, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo is in the hot seat. No president in Philippine history -- or perhaps the world -- has experienced the ignominy of impeachment four times. But to Gloria, that is just another occupational hazard. Otherwise, it's business as usual.

As in the first three impeachment petitions, she is expected to survive this fourth and, perhaps, last attempt to remove her before her term ends in 2010. With only six -- including former Speaker Jose de Venecia -- of the 29 opposition congressmen endorsing the impeachment petition filed by De Venecia's son, Jose "Joey" de Venecia III, there is not an iota of chance -- or luck -- that the House of Representatives would impeach Gloria. With her deep pockets and political patronage, there is just no way Congress would impeach her. That is like killing the goose that lays the golden eggs.

So, what the hell is Congress trying to do? It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out what's going to happen next, which is: vindication of Gloria. And once vindicated, she could then boldly make her next move which is to stay in power beyond 2010. And if you look at what's going on right now, the parameters to prolong her kleptocratic reign are pretty much in place. Her political machine is ready to go rolling... and roll over anyone who stands in her way.



Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

The only thing that would stop Gloria is world public opinion which could cause the international financial cartel to react convulsively and tighten -- or stop -- credit to Gloria's government. And without international credit, Gloria's "Enchanted Kingdom" would crumble like a sand castle.

One of the Philippines' biggest creditors is Japan. With Japan officially in recession last week, it will predictably tighten the flow of money to a drip. With China going through financial crisis of its own and the United States already in deep shit, the Philippines' economic outlook is dim. And with the peso plummeting against the US dollar, Gloria's ambitious economic programs -- which is predicated on the continuous flow of OFW remittances -- are in big trouble.

In July 2008, the unemployment rate was 7.4% and underemployment rate was 21%. With the global economy melting down, the increasing number of unemployed OFWs are going home.

What is strange is that a lot of Philippine economic "experts" were saying that the Philippines will not go into recession despite the global economic meltdown. These experts should remember that what fueled the "economic boom" in the past few years were three factors: (1) Increased OFW remittances; (2) Weakened US dollar; and (3) Increased Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs). Now, let's look at each of these factors today. With OFW losing their jobs and going home, remittances will decrease. The US dollar vis-à-vis the Philippine peso is no longer weakening; it's the peso that is now weakening. At the beginning of the year, the peso was very robust at P41 to US\$1. Today, it is P51 to US\$1... and continues to weaken. In regard to FDIs, during the first five months of 2008, FDIs totaled a net inflow of US\$725 million. A year ago, the net inflow was US\$2.3 billion -- a 25% drop in FDIs. That's triple whammy!

Last November 17, 2008, in a blitzkrieg-like assault in the Upper Chamber, Senate President Manuel Villar was ousted and Senator Juan Ponce Enrile -- a close ally of Gloria -- was swiftly installed. But what is odd is that the coup was supported by several opposition senators including Panfilo Lacson, Jamby Madrigal, Mar Roxas, Loren Legarda, Jinggoy Estrada, and Francis Escudero. What made them do it? Well, they can all say, "The Devil made me do it." Interestingly, Lacson, Roxas, and Legarda are presidential wannabes. And with Villar, who is the front-runner in the presidential derby, their move appears to be motivated

by their personal ambition. And by removing Villar as the Senate head honcho, it would enhance their chances in the presidential race. That's wishful thinking. What they didn't realize is that the ouster of Villar will only consolidate the powers of Gloria in the three branches of government. For the first time the country has now an undivided government. Next year, Gloria's grip on the Supreme Court will further tighten when nine justices will retire and, of course, Gloria will replace them with her loyalists.

Gloria had been trying very hard to impress the international community with untruthful and hyperbolic pronouncements. She tried very hard -- and failed -- to connect with US President-elect Barack Obama before and after his election. The word "snubbed" has been used in the media to describe her failed attempt to contact Obama right after the election. She then went to Chicago on her way to the United Nations in New York to meet with the local Fil-Ams. The Fil-Am community, however, was abuzz with words that Gloria's real purpose in going to Chicago was to seek a meeting with Obama. But it seemed that Obama's cordon sanitaire was impenetrable and Gloria high-tailed it to New York without seeing him. However, on November 17, Obama returned Gloria's November 4th call and two others. A generic statement from Obama's office said that he "expressed his appreciation for their congratulations on his election."

While Gloria tried very hard to gain international recognition with her globe trotting junkets, her satisfactory rating back home is 6.6% and her unsatisfactory rating is 82.2%. Her net satisfaction rating is -75.6, the lowest since 2004. Unfazed by these negative polls, Gloria is taking off again for Peru to attend the APEC meeting. It was reported that 42 congressmen will be joining her. The last time Congress tried to impeach her, she took off on a European junket with more than 70 congressmen and their spouses in her entourage. When they returned, Congress rejected the impeachment petition.

Amidst the economic turmoil that is besieging the country, the Filipino people continue to suffer in hunger and unemployment. But to those in power, it's business as usual -- to hell with public opinion! #

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