



## *Razor's Edge*

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*Joe Mari Mercader - more on Gloria :*

# *Golez: GMA Does Not Favor Corrupt Officials*

*NEW YORK, NY, Nov. 20 (PinoyGlobal)* - It's grossly insane to condemn government officials on the misconstrued notion that it is public service oriented. That would be an aberration, which can very well come under the category of calumny, imputing wrong doing to a person who could very well be innocent, just to besmirch his reputation. This is strictly ano-no journalism. Speaking for myself, I try hard to stick by the canons of journalism making fairness and prudence the hallmark of my columns. I only criticize when it is absolutely necessary and when others are anemic of the moral courage to expose public functionaries committing graft and corruption.

Thus, no matter what Madam Arroyo does she deserves the benefit of the doubt that she wants to live up to the people's expectation of being honest to carry out her sworn duties as president with integrity and competence. Discarding this tradition would make our readers assume

that we are just rabid critics with horse blinders, or someone totally obsessed of wrecking the establishment.

Columnists should never deviate from objective writing under pain of losing credibility. Writing half-truths compromises a writer's reliability. This has been the pitfall of many self-anointed "crusaders" bird-dogging public officials.

It is only when government functionaries like Mrs. Arroyo who exploits her power to subvert the will of the electorate during elections to win, commit injustice, graft and corruption that it becomes imperative for the media to reveal these shenanigans to the public. What is annoying about onionskin officials defending the president is that they malign those who denounce anomalies in the government, without showing even a nugget of consideration for the fractured feelings of the people much less respect their intelligence. In fact, they jump into an offensive spitting absurd denials that a drunken barber can easily demolish in a bull session in the streets.

I have in mind GMA's spokesperson Antonio Golez who said that retired comptroller Police General

Eliseo Dela Paz did it alone without the knowledge of his superiors when he acquired the P6.9 million for the national Police delegation to Russia last month. Golez emphatically pointed to Dela Paz' testimony in the Senate "admitting" doing it alone without a superior assisting him. True, he did admit his guilt but the chasm between the truth and the lie is so abysmal only a fool would buy the story. It is on this discrepancy where this column takes issue on his testimony for the sake of truth and the people.

Unfortunately, the president's barkers in Malacanang believe that those outside their clique of corrupt officials are numbskulls who look at simple things as a mosaic of figures hard to decipher and condemn them for the mess. This is not so. People only react on what they see they do not visualize demons they don't see. Is it not a fact that Dela Paz was caught red-handed in the airport in Russia bringing a huge amount of Euro dollars beyond what is allowed? What is so difficult to understand that he was in trouble there? And is it possible that he alone hocused focused the documents when he acquired the P6.9 million from the PNP?

Of course, he lied. What did they expect him to do roar like a cornered lion and spill the beans compromising everybody in the police hierarchy to rot with him in jail? He will not do that even though misery loves company, but this is a case of survival. Exculpating his superiors is his only chance to get out unscathed. All he has to do is display canine loyalty for his comrades who could possibly be involved with him because such a huge amount could not have passed the notice and approval of ranking police generals.

The best example is retired Armed Forces Gen. Carlos Garcia who was also comptroller. He extricated himself from a seemingly "hopeless" predicament last year by not whistle-blowing on the bigger fishes in the military who could be thickly involved in the mess for which he was investigated, prosecuted and eventually cleared. His "esprit de corps" (protecting their-own kind) saved him a long stretch in prison and losing the hundreds of million pesos he amassed through corruption.

Only by replicating the blind loyalty Gen. Garcia displayed under the ordeal of court trials, could Dela Paz weather the storm brewing around him and his wife. Short of that he is doomed.

Ex-general Dela Paz is the best argument that police and military officials avoid being prosecuted for malfeasance by the devotion of subordinates who face the music for them. Dela Paz's "mea culpa" was calculated not to implicate his superiors. What he said in the Senate is a rank lie and a barefaced cover up, for which Senator

Miriam Santiago vigorously deplored. It's just too obvious! If I were in his shoes, I will do the same but not after reminding them that if I sink all of you will drown with me, which is facing a prison term of 20 years. Capi boys?!

The international embarrassment he caused our government is immeasurable when he and his wife were apprehended in Russia, ironically to attend a conference on Police intelligence, with so much Euro dollars beyond what the host government allows visitors to carry and, which he did not declare. Maybe he thought he was still in the Philippines where generals, lawmakers and cabinet members are considered above the law. The authorities in Russia do not spread the red carpet on money launderers that is only done in banana republics that kowtow to Pinoy siga siga police officers and politicians.

He only panic they (he and his) were detained in the international airport of Russia and the delegation burned the wires to the home office for a plausible scenario justifying the unwarranted amount he was carrying with him. But then why did he not declare it?

The Senate has entered into the picture investigating the case only because presumably Malacanang or the Armed Forces were preparing the ground for a full-blown whitewash. Evidently the Senate wants to deodorize the government through its circus like investigations of corruption cases that often end up frustrating the public's expectations with no results or foot-dragging on what they do.

After the smoke and thunder the parties being investigated are back to the old grind to live in luxury with their ill-gotten wealth. Joc Joc Bolante is the central figure in the cause celebre Fertilizer scam scandal investigated by the Senate. Initially he hightailed to the U.S. ridiculously asking for political asylum when his life was not in danger. If he wanted to enjoy his wealth in a fashionable way he could have just remained in the country because the First Couple always takes care of underlings involved in anomalies.

What is puking vaudeville is what Golez said "The Arroyo administration doesn't favor anyone when it comes to cases of graft and corruption"... and "The important thing is that due process is observed." What, Malacanang does not favor anyone when it comes to cases of graft and corruption? Tell that to Marines! And what is this due process about is there such a thing yet in the Arroyo governance? Excuse me, but has not the Philippine the stigma of being the second most corrupt nation in Asia? Is that something to brag about or should we be ashamed of it, err, the president et al should? #