



Razor's Edge

By

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Egos Will Clash To Save The Queen

NEW YORK, N.Y., Feb. 05 (PinoyGlobal) - Trivia: As an avid fan I taped all the fights of my idol Manny Pacquiao. I have been re-watching his extremely riveting fight of last December 6, in which he bludgeoned Oscar de la Hoya's face into a mash-potato and made his left eye look irresistibly delicious to Arabs who love to eat goat eyes. But what boxing announcer Jim Lampley at one point said, was absolutely politically incorrect - that Manny is going to be our president some day.

We appreciate his going for Pacman in that big way, but the accolade was an error of fact, unless the American announcer was referring to Sen. Manny Villar Jr. who is the most likely to replace Madam Arroyo, barring frauds and massive cheating in the next polls. Then we agree! Otherwise the comment was a joke.

This is assuming that Pres. Arroyo and her "tutas" (lapdogs) in Congress will not conspire to freeze the elections by mantling martial law, euphemized as an emergency government, using the sporadic incidence of pocket-size terrorisms in certain areas of the country as an excuse. The sudden rush of appointments of ex-military generals and colonels in civilian government offices is grossly insidious when civilian officials are more competent and conversant with the jobs.

Going back to Pacquiao, there is no Filipino alive today who is not infinitely proud of him. Ludicrous as it may seem, even the NPAs and Muslim rebels call for a truce to watch his fights.

By and large he is a national treasure for his name stands side-by-side those of world legends in the archives of ring icons. But tossing him to the presidency of the Philippines is like conferring on Pacman magna cum

laude degrees in English Literature and Speech.

The presidency is another story. No offense intended to Manny who wanted to study law last year, but we don't entrust the reins of government on a boxer's prowess. To the millions who heard Lampley's forecast of Pacquiao's political life, please, disabuse yourselves: we only elect national leaders for president, end of the story!

Baffling politicians with horse blinders supporting Madam Arroyo is how to protect her from harm's way after she steps down from office. These loyalists are jostling with this dilemma perhaps because of deep-rooted debt, which they feel obligated to repay. Protecting her from possible imprisonment is the best way to settle the score. It is their primordial concern.

The merger, or coalition, of the big parties for Gloria (who are hairsplitting even on the question of whether to call themselves a merger or a coalition) are mulling rallying behind a credible winning candidate willing to pay the price of freeing Gloria and her family from the incubus of political persecution when she is no longer president. Their feeble minds can only scout the surface, picking on *Sen. Francis "Chiz" Escudero* as their dark horse, merely because he topped the senatorial slate in the last elections, without being sure if he will be a competent and honest president.

Accordingly, the three coalescing parties, namely the NPC, Lakas and Kampi are at loggerheads on this problem. They want Escudero but they are feuding on whether to merge or coalesce. And you know why this is a problem - because already the stalwarts of the respective parties are suspicious of each other. It is more a tussle of egos than anything. Right from the start, they are already in a stalemate.

The issue of merging or coalescing is paramount, with the Nationalist People's Coalition that has Sen. Loren Legarda as a presidential aspirant (or in the least a second fiddle vice president) entertaining apprehensions that it will be swallowed by Kampi because its president Rep. Luis Villafuerte is perceived to be the head of the sphinx in the merged giant political party. If body language is any indicator he sure is leaning in that direction, with his loud demands beginning as early as the negotiating stage.

Lakas on the other hand is chaired by that ultra egotist ex-president Fidel V. Ramos who never stops living in the past and dictates on everybody, even scolding President Arroyo when he has the urge of ego-tripping in public. Rep. Pablo Garcia of Cebu, who is also ambitious, does not want to be under Villafuerte or Ramos. And rightly so, because both of them are inclined to monopolize the leadership of the intended troika of political parties for Gloria.

One thing they have in common is Chiz Escudero, whom they want to put in place of the president in 2010. Even Sen. Legarda who is a big name for the presidential derby is feeling this consuming obsession of the traditional leaders of the party, and so she has seemingly resigned to be the spare tire to whomever the merged or coalition parties put up against the Nacionlista Party's presidential bet Sen. Manny Villar.

The Liberal Party headed by Sen. Mar Roxas and Franklin Drilon is toying with the idea of a tandem of Roxas-Escudero. But I doubt if Escudero, who appears to be the favorite nino bonito of all the parties behind GMA, will deflate his ego to run as Roxas' vice president.

Escudero should be extra careful not to fall for the bait because it will be his unmaking as a politician if he allows himself to be the scarecrow of the Villafuerte Kampi. He must not forget that if he is now enjoying tremendous popularity it is because he has been a very articulate opposition leader, demolishing President Arroyo and her corrupt administration. By becoming her "candidate" for president he will be proving early in his

political career that he has no scruples, just like those he criticizes for corruption. Will the public tolerate him running under her banner?

How disgusting can he be? I will give him the benefit of the doubt that he is not aware of this wooing to make him Kampi, Lakas and NPC's common standard-bearer. I am just airing the unlikely possibility that if he accepts, he will then be branded as another trapo who eats dirt to climb the ladder of political heights for his personal and political gain alone, and not that of the people.

Since Malacanang is having the problem of what president after Gloria will not prosecute her, then why not make First Gentleman Mike Arroyo the candidate? After all, the president has all the money to launch his candidacy, and the military and political machinery to commit frauds and doctor the results of the elections. Note that Malacanang's control of the National Printing Office (NPO), that prints the ballots and certificates of canvass and disseminates the election results, would make Mike's winning a foregone conclusion, as it was with GMA in the 2004 elections. But let me hasten to say, beware of what Juan de la Cruz will do in retaliation to such an affront to his sensibilities and sacred right of suffrage. The late Dictator Marcos tasted the public's bitter and pungent retribution in 1986. Don't tax the patience of the people that far.

To all concerned, do the right thing and abide by the norms and conduct of the elections and you will be safe. Madam Arroyo, you were strong enough to fight your enemies this long, you can be as tough to suffer the consequences of being in power. Yours is not the only grim fate in history. Erstwhile leaders of nations have fallen hard on the floor of disgrace and languished in prison for many years. In Taiwan, Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia and Japan top leaders went to jail for the terrible things they did, which are relatively less than the faults you committed in office.

Madam President, you should have taken heed of what Mark Twain said: Live well so that when you die even the undertaker will feel sorry for you. #