



# Razor's Edge

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## *Reconcile With The Nation Not Individuals, Madam President*

***"... President Gloria Arroyo publicly announced her desire to reconcile with former presidents Cory Aquino and Joseph "Erap" Estrada. The 64-dollar question is - what for? ...."***

**NEW YORK, N.Y., (PinoyGlobal) -** Last week, President Gloria Arroyo publicly announced her desire to reconcile with former presidents Cory Aquino and Joseph "Erap" Estrada. The 64-dollar question is - what for? Unless the public is unaware that she is smarting with some degree of guilt for having hurt them, then there is absolutely no reason for her to sue for peace with the two. Estrada perhaps may be feeling aggrieved because she usurped his presidency and he was impeached and subsequently convicted under her government. But even that is untenable for what better display of remorse can match the full pardon she gave him? If Estrada has allegedly "forgiven" Chavit Singson who became his worst nightmare and whose betrayal sealed the plunder case against him, what more for Gloria who gave him back his untrammelled freedom? This clearly makes Gloria's attempt at reconciling with her predecessors obscene drama - a hallucination of an enmity that if it existed at all, may be forgotten by now. Cory is sick with cancer and is preoccupied with trying to survive the deadly ordeal.

In the first place, her offer of reconciliation is already a broken record - it's a cacophony. At the drop of a hat she harps on this monotone subject over and over again to ad nauseam. Secondly, she is directing it to the wrong people when it is to the nation that she must apologize. If the nation is reeling under relentless adversities and gnawing hunger today it is due to the doings of her ruthless regime, not the animosity with Erap and Cory that she imagines.

In fact she should not only pacify the people by offering them the olive branch but also beg forgiveness. Ranting about this right now is putting the cart before the horse. Suffice it to say that she should go to church to atone for her sins of commission and omission instead of doing this mea culpa in public. If I may reiterate my favorite adage, the church is a hospital for sinners not a museum for saints.

Since she elbowed Estrada out of the high office in 2001, thereafter at the drop of a hat Gloria Arroyo would make overtures to reconcile with the opposition. A case in point is when she defeated the late Fernando Poe Jr. in 2006. Immediately after winning by a dubious "margin of over one million votes" she offered to reconcile with the opposition when she sensed the seething mood of the people infuriated by blatant cheating that caused their idol's defeat.

Now she is back with the same rhapsody-in-blues reconciliation. This time her motive is obvious, she fears the anniversary celebration of Edsa 1, which is just around the corner, and that it will give vent to the people's volatile mood, which could explode on the slightest provocation. That is not improbable, with GMA's trigger-happy military and police not learning from the past that abusing the citizenry is taunting a sleeping hungry tiger. They want her in power to continue enjoying the fringe benefits they get from her for their callousness to perpetrate abuses to keep her in power.

The Filipino people condemn her excessive abuse

of state powers, the First Gentleman and her cronies' insatiable penchant to amass unexplained wealth with impunity. These are legitimate gripes, not hallucinations. Gloria's olive branch offer may be noble except that it is to for her own protection. It is a brazen attempt to defuse the people's ire against her misrule for in the final analysis she is the problem.

Ostensibly, she believes that EDSA's message can be doused from igniting savage reprisals against those responsible for their miserable plight and sense of persecution by the intemperate military and police who get ballistic on seeing the congress of the streets. For her to believe that the message of EDSA 1 could be neutralized by platitudes, then she was indeed proceeding from a guilt complex because nothing untoward took place in the 4-day anniversary celebration of the fall of Marcos, except for the unrestrained elation of a liberated people that they are entitled to.

The gall of Palace deputy spokesperson Lorelei Fajardo, that the president gave the 4-day anniversary celebration of EDSA 1 and suspended classes on Monday because "We are really giving importance, to the EDSA anniversary celebration." Pres. Arroyo began the anniversary rites on Sunday saying, "The world embraced EDSA in 1986. The world tolerated EDSA II in 2001. The world will not forgive an EDSA III, but it will instead condemn the Philippines as a country whose political system is hopelessly unstable." This is the epitome of insult to our intelligence. Who does not know that she had no choice but to allow the festive celebration for otherwise, if she disavowed it, there would be no telling what consequences would have happened. Besides her sanction was only a formality - the EDSA-goers would have still proceeded regardless of her stop order.

To say that the world will condemn us for overthrowing her in a déjà vu of EDSA III is an aberration of the ego. The world knows how corrupt her government is so it will certainly welcome a change of dispensation in our country, in the same manner as it extolled the abolition of Apartheid and Mandela's election to the presidency in South Africa on April 1, 1994.

Isn't she knocking on the wrong doors, giving importance to individuals who are themselves in no position to decide for the nation that is infinitely offended by the wrongdoings of the Arroyo government? Estrada and Aquino

are economically secure to bother about reconciliation, which should be addressed to the poverty-stricken masses instead. She publicly called on the past leaders to reconcile just when the EDSA 1 bloodless revolution was in the threshold of its anniversary last February 23. It's the nation she wronged and it should be with the nation that she should not only reconcile but also beg forgiveness. The military abuses, human rights violations, corruption, electoral frauds and killings of media men will not simmer down. Not after they (public officials) are bloated with ill-gotten wealth, and the poverty of the people marches on with no sign of ending.

To achieve reconciliation with a crestfallen nation is to solemnly comply with her promise to step down after her term expires a year hence. The Charter change should and must never be revived for as long as she is the incumbent president. She must immediately curtail the spiraling rise of corruption in all branches of government and this can be attained by setting the example of handing over corrupt officials to the proper authorities and ordering the Justice Department to prosecute venal officials post haste. Contracts for infrastructure should be gained by public bidding and if possible viewed on television with the people present during the proceedings to avert a recurrence of the ZTE (NBN) scandal, the Diosdado Macapagal highway fiasco and numerous other anomalous transactions that took place under the table. And the elections should be kept inviolate, away from the possible machinations of selfish, ruthless and greedy politicians.

Pres. Arroyo has already had 10 years in power. That should be enough. If she could not solve the problems of the nation in those years, more years with her in power is no assurance that she could change the trend of corruption and killings of critics. Nor could she guarantee good government after succeeding herself.

Madam Arroyo could still acquit herself by stepping down shortly before the elections, relinquishing the scepter of authority to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court on an interim basis to avoid doubts as to her motives. GMA should heed the people's will and discard any desire to amend the Constitution during her incumbency, because she could be suspected of preparing a tailor-made fountain of all laws that would authorize her to run for the highest office of the land again. Only then might the nation be at peace again. #