



Razor's Edge

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Stepping Down Is Her Only Way Out Now

"Quite clearly therefore she is left no choice but to step down. Perhaps if she was queen of nice the people may have been kinder to her. But with the bread and knife rule she gave them, no way will they bend back on their demand for her to leave. A government that stymies the media and allows the extra judicial killings of journalists and activists has no business to linger in a democratic society."

NEWYORK, NY March 20 (PinoyGlobal) - Before anything, the family of Philippines' famous sports and economic columnist Johnny Redoblado, request our kind readers to pray for him. Johnny's piano virtuoso son, Dennis, said his beloved father has been diagnosed with Pancreatic cancer.

He is a good man, a great father and husband. Johnny is well loved and respected by those who know him for his modesty and engaging personality.

May God Almighty give him more years ahead as a fitting tribute to a man who lived a full life helping others who solicited for his wise advises to guide them in their endeavors. The Filipino Times publisher and staff earnestly pray for your fast recovery Johnny. We have not forgotten how you helped this fledgling paper when it started years ago with your brilliant articles and guidance. Thank you so very much from the bottom of our hearts. We love and look up to you, sir. God bless you, Johnny.

Fourteen months is a tight time constraint for Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (GMA) to pull a rabbit from the top hat. Her own protégés and lapdogs have already sealed the demise of her presidency (part two). Their vying alone against each other for her job puts GMA in estoppels to stage a coup to replace herself. No way can she now rush passage of the unsavory Charter change (Cha cha) that should breathe life into her moribund days in the high seat of President. It seems like only yesterday when her conjugal dictatorship with then Speaker Joe de Venecia (JDV) was in bloom.

JDV was her co-conspirator to amend the Constitution for motives less than sublime. In fact, it was to pave the way for her unwarranted perpetuity, which by and large, was selfish. Fortunately for our beleaguered countrymen, their dark scheme was stillborn despite their tireless stage-managing for its smooth sailing in the Lower House. A fitting fate for a sinister scheme!

The jinx came with their scandalous falling out. Desperate for having lost his closeness with GMA and losing all the clout that goes with being the alter ego of the president as well as Speaker of the House, JDV spilled the beans, brazenly admitting to the many sordid transactions they authored and/or were privy to.

In plain language, her tutas' (puppies) aspiration to succeed her renders whatever desire she had of perpetuating in office melted away, as frozen butter does under intense heat. Now the unwanted Cha cha is completely, totally and absolutely blocked by the candidacies of her own people, whose action tacitly accepts the reality that she has to give way to the electoral process, with her out of the presidential race track. Her mandate under the fundamental law explicitly provides for only one term of six years, nothing more. Beyond that is contrapuntal to said mandate.

Quite clearly therefore she is left no choice but to step down. Perhaps if she was queen of nice the people may have been kinder to her. But with the bread and knife rule she gave them, no way will they bend back on their demand for her to leave. A government that stymies the media and allows the extra judicial killings of journalists and activists has no

business to linger in a democratic society.

Top in the list of candidates is Vice Pres. Noli De Castro, who by virtue of his rank is heir apparent to the forthcoming presidential vacancy. If speculations are correct, he might really be her choice on the condition that his government will not replicate what she did to then Pres. Joseph "Erap" Estrada of sending him to prison. Noli's victory should be a cinch. He must win to perish Gloria's nightmares that she and First Gentleman Mike Arroyo are jail-bound once she relinquishes power.

Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro Jr. is expected to throw his hat in the arena too. His credentials are awesome. Apart from obtaining possible endorsement from the president, which he shamelessly sought in public, he too has a war chest worthy of a powerful candidate coming from the rich Teodoro and Cojuangco families. His enormous campaign fund could sustain the ensuing expensive elections without him feeling the strains of financial difficulties. This is aside from what his billionaire uncle Danding Cojuangco (his mother's brother) might chip in if opposition Sen. Chez Escudero refuses the role of being Danding's toy boy in Malacanang. Chez is his first choice over any aspirant for president. Could it be because the young senator looks easy for Danding to manipulate?

It is safe to surmise that the presumptuous "kingmaker" business tycoon intends to govern behind the scenes with the end in mind of prioritizing his business interests over public welfare. Hence, his choice of Escudero who could be said to be financially strapped vis a vis the administration candidate. You may also toss into those pluses for Gilbert, probable military support essentially on the behest of Madam Arroyo.

Meanwhile Sen. Dick Gordon is not exactly hibernating like a python in labor. Basking on the prestigious Blue Ribbon Committee he chairs, he too believes his undying desire to be president has strong merits. How and why he arrived at this conclusion is beyond me when the investigations he conducts in his committee are all hot air – sound and fury!

Many more are falling in line to be president. Even Pacquiao cannot be ignored. If his sycophants persuade him to run for the highest office he might do so, then that would be the consummate calamity to befall Juan de la Cruz. The presidency is very alluring for a dreamer like Manny "Pacman" Pacquiao, who is not satisfied with being dubbed the "Mexicutioner" for successively putting Mexico's champions to sleep, or leaving them sitting on the canvas, gazing at the tweeting birds circling around their groggy thick skulls.

Candidly though, if fate perverts that Pacquiao usurps the presidency because the people would mistake his fists for brainpower, for sure our country's economy will collide headlong with disaster. The economic tsunami would

be of such magnitude that it would not be amiss to assume the Philippines will submerge under a deluge the likes of which not even Noah saw during the forty days of rain that sank the world underwater. No offense to our ring hero but his economic savvy is no better than my horrible Tagalog. Touché na lang tayo kabayan. O.K.?

Expectedly, the opposition is not wanting of presidential tooth picks for they do not enjoy the luxury of affluence to support a costly campaign much less the assistance of a ruthless government, which advantage candidates of the ruling party have. Notwithstanding this serious shortcoming, still they have the temerity to commit the unspeakable of being united in diversity when such pernicious extravagance should be a caveat for those handicapped of the wherewithal like the minority aspirants. There are so many of them running it would not be improbable that the field will be so crowded with no one being able to inch his way out of the tight squeeze.

The legendary Pinoy crab mentality will work against aspirants from the minority party. They will succeed only if they sober up and solidly support an individual with the charisma to tow behind him the tons of votes.. Sen. Manny Villar Jr. who comes from the ranks of the masses and has his own huge funds to underwrite a costly campaign seems to be that man. Otherwise, they are going nowhere and they'll have to wait for ages before wresting control of the reins of government in their solid grip.

Unless they stop this counterproductive infighting, Gloria will waltz grinning from ear to ear out of the Palace secured in the thought that the probable charges of corruption against her will be swept under the rug. Lamentably, given the notoriety of our people to easily forgive their oppressors, a vestige of our colonial mentality, Ms. Arroyo will be the first president to enjoy unexplained her wealth without mishap in her retirement.

The bright side about Ms. Arroyo stepping down is that minions like Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo and Congen Cecil Rebono are joining her in the asylum for political has-beens who outlived their "usefulness". In their case however, there was never a moment of their being a credit to their respective positions. Not if we go by the yardstick of not being selective whom they should serve! Both of them are bias against the ordinary man. They only cater to so-called community leaders and photopopt maniacs whose obsession to be with public officials titillate their egos no end.

Romulo is vindictive as he is a parasite to Pres. Arroyo. Without her he is a nonentity. Rebono has the morbid penchant of squandering taxpayers' money without compunction or qualms, to gratify her passion to live in style. She amply displayed this when she rented a condominium (a veritable cubicle) at the Trump Towers at the prohibitive cost

of \$10,000 a month or the equivalent of P550, 000 at the time. Where it not for this column that exposed such scandalous extravagance, until now our people would have been shouldering the monthly P550,000 she was paying Donald Trump for the caprice to live in the lifestyle of the rich and famous.

That's what she gets for rubbing elbows with ego-tripping Fil-Am expats and so-called community leaders, who believe they are great mainly because they buy expensive cars and big houses paying costly amortizations. All for status symbol, which in the first place, is utterly incongruous to their looks. Rebong's lavish lifestyle, was with the blanket sanctioned by Sec. Romulo despite being done at the expense of our poverty-stricken people, that's how unconscionable he is!

By the way, all around the world consul generals rented costly residences when they could have practiced austerity in accordance with the government's financial capability taking into consideration our acute money problems. If that is leadership, let me know what is official heartlessness and weak leadership! Bert Romulo take a bow.