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Betrayal of Edsa

SACRAMENTO, CALIF., June 10 (PinoyGlobal) - In 1986, twenty three years ago, a new republic was born from the womb of Edsa, fathered by the spirit of People Power. A new generation of Filipinos sprang that she hoped would lead the nation out of the morass of corruption and poverty bred during the dictatorial reign of Ferdinand Marcos. Finally, the people were free once again.

Edsa became the symbol of a nation that aspired to be great. A shrine was built for her to remind the people that freedom lost could take a lifetime to regain. Year after year, the people would gather in front of her shrine to renew their pledge to protect her and her ideals. They promised to fight for the freedom that they regained. They vowed that never again would a dictator emerge.

For the 12 years following the People Power revolution, corruption slowed down under the administrations of Presidents Cory Aquino and Fidel V. Ramos. The country began to recover from the rubbles of the Marcos dictatorship.

In 1998, Joseph Estrada came to power in a landslide election and corruption made a comeback. The grafters, fixers, and influence peddlers were singing "Happy days are here again!"

In 2001, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo came to power by way of a sham People Power revolution which deposed Estrada. Edsa unwillingly relented hoping that Gloria would turn the country around. But within a few days after she took over the presidency, a major corruption scandal occurred involving Gloria's Secretary of Justice. Evidently, corruption was seeded into her administration the day she took over the

presidency. Edsa was betrayed. They used her to gain power for themselves.

Year after year, corruption scandals were exposed involving the First Family and high government officials. Corruption became the rule rather than the exception. Indeed, corruption is so good that those in administration want to stay longer in their positions of power. As Lord Acton once said, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

With one year left in her term of office, many people are convinced that Gloria would do whatever it takes to remain in power beyond 2010. Two years ago she almost succeeded in getting a Charter change approved through a people's initiative. However, the Supreme Court rejected the legality of the people's initiative.

Last May 28, Gloria merged the Lakas-CMD and Kampi parties into one under her leadership. Right after the ceremonies merging the two largest political parties, the word was that Gloria talked to the congressmen behind closed doors. According to leaks from insiders, her marching orders to them were to pass House Resolution 1109 as soon as possible. HR 1109 would convene the House as a Constituent Assembly (Con-Ass) for the purpose of amending the 1987 constitution . . . without the Senate. According to news reports, Gloria supposedly promised each congressman P20 million for his or her "yes" vote on HR 1109.

On June 2, the House of Representatives passed -- nay, railroaded -- HR 1109 by voice vote. The debate was cut short denying the few oppositionists an opportunity to speak out against HR 1109. But what could the handful of

oppositionists have done? Tyranny of the majority prevailed. Once again, Edsa was betrayed.

In my opinion, by passing a resolution to amend the 1987 constitution without the participation of the Senate is a blatant disregard for the rule of law. Any way you look at it, the Senate is an integral part of Congress. No law can pass Congress without the approval of both the Senate and the House of Representatives, voting separately. It has always been that way and HR 1109 shouldn't be an exception.

It is common knowledge that once Gloria steps down, plunder charges would be filed against her just like what happened to Estrada. And it is also common knowledge that Gloria was the prime mover in the prosecution and conviction of Estrada for plunder. And if the opposition wins in the presidential elections in 2010, Gloria could be brought to justice. As the saying goes, "What goes around comes around."

The day after HR 1109 was passed by the House, the Senate reaffirmed its stand against the Senate and the House voting jointly in a Constituent Assembly. Many people believe that the ulterior motive behind HR 1109 was to create a constitutional issue; hence, the need for the Supreme Court to interpret the constitution vis-à-vis HR 1109. With 12 of the 15 Supreme Court justices appointed by Gloria, I would not be surprised if the High Court would overwhelmingly rule in favor HR 1109. But who knows? There are a few good men and women in the High Court who might be able to prevail upon their colleagues to look at the issue judiciously and conscientiously.

If the Supreme Court agrees with HR 1109, it will pave the way for Charter change. If the Supreme Court rejects HR 1109, Con-Ass will die and Gloria would have to step down from the presidency in June 2010, a prospect many people believe would horrify Gloria.

But there was one good thing that came out of the passage of HR 1109. It was another wake-up call for mass

action. Indeed, protests and demonstrations in various cities in the country were held yesterday, June 10, and more would be coming. They were organized by the religious sector and civil society. The people are now beginning to see what those in power are trying to do, which is to perpetuate themselves in power. And when power comes into play, the only way to stop it is counter-power. Sir Isaac Newton's third law -- "For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction" -- has been proven time and time again without exception. This law applies to science as well as with people. History tells us that. And history always has a way of repeating itself. Recent developments seem to manifest that history might just be repeating itself as a result of the passage HR 1109.

In the end, the children of Edsa would come to her defense and avenge the humiliation she suffered from those who betrayed her. That would be poetic justice.