



Razor's Edge

By
Joe Mari Mercader
Executive Editor
FILIPINO TIMES
New York-New Jersey

Joe Mari Mercader . . .

Well Done Is Better Than Well Said

"One way for our people to trust Pres. Arroyo is for her to make the proper preparations for a smooth turn over before June of 2010 when she surrenders the scepter of power to the incoming Chief Executive. Also, she should publicly renounce any ambition on her part to grab the presidency or be prime minister in case the Charter change takes place. The clincher is to openly endorse as early as now whomever she has in mind to succeed her as president. "

NEW YORK, NY June 20 (PinoyGlobal) - I believe it is time to demand that those holding cabinet positions or sensitive offices in the government should resign if they intend to run for public office, especially presidential aspirants. This gross unfairness to candidates without the resources and funds of the government available to public officials turned candidates make the elections lopsided in favor of the latter group.

The "Hello, Garci" scandal still rings a bell and it is just the tip of the iceberg of the myriad abuses wherein incumbent officials running for office use this edge to win without qualms.

Political dynasties, is another case in point. Family members belonging to the reigning local political dynasty could just trifle with the elections with impunity. Unless therefore, the prohibition is imposed on incumbents becoming candidates, nobody outside the government will have a Chinaman's chance to get elected. Against this backdrop, men of integrity and competence are already endangered specie before they could even contemplate on running for public office.

Since we are on the subject, let me alert our countrymen that not only is the political arena star-studded with silver screen icons, athletes, boxers and comedians but military men have also invaded politics, which used to be a civilian domain. According to my informer, many officers are running for elective positions on 2010. Note that quite a large number of police and military officers are already in civil government offices appointed by the president.

This is alarming because soldiers are trained as killings machines, metaphorically speaking. Officers are used to giving barbaric orders or follow their generals blindly without objecting regardless if the order is cruel or moral. Thus, there

will be havoc in the country if just anybody without elementary knowledge of the law leapfrogs into civilian offices of the government through the electoral process.

Flipping the page on current events, Palace spokesman Remonde said that those who say the president is going to declare martial law do not know the law. He qualified this by saying that Pres. Arroyo cannot declare martial law without the prior approval of both Houses of Congress. Furthermore, suspending the writ could not exceed one month after it is so ordered. This is like saying - so what is the problem?

The problem Mr. Remonde is that Madam Arroyo's body language echoes the late dictator Marcos' lust for power. Apparently, she will circumvent declaring martial law by urging her mercenaries in Congress to push for a constituent assembly within the next few weeks. This will forego the motions of calling for a constitutional convention, which is cumbersome, tedious and time consuming. That is precisely what she cannot afford...time.

In hindsight, the 1987 Constitution was promulgated purposely to prevent a repetition of what Marcos did of exploiting the ambiguity of the 1935 constitutional provision regarding the power of the president to declare martial law in time of crisis. Thus one-man rule was born becoming a 20-year nightmare for all of those boxed in the country with that "Dagger of Damocles" over their heads.

This novel precedent fascinated Fidel V. Ramos who went overboard on the guise of revising the Constitution to make himself permanent president. His wicked intention was vigorously repudiated right in the bud. Whatever crowded the brain of Joseph "Erap" Estrada it was timely aborted by the

mishap that overtook his presidential term at Edsa. God knows what plans he had afoot to remain indefinitely within the confines of the people's Palace.

Quite clearly, Pres. Arroyo does not have the qualms to deterring her from mangling the Constitution to succeed herself through the Charter change (Cha cha). She is going about it with the resolve of a female spider in its menopause. Even up to this late hour when the next election is away by the skin of her teeth GMA is still greasing the palms of House members to subvert the Constitution by converting Congress into a constituent assembly (Con Ass).

I understand House Resolution 1109, which is about Con Ass, has already been approved and only needs the magic numbers before the august chamber formalizes the law. This is why the Supreme Court threw out of the window the case filed by two lawyers asking it to make a final decision on the constitutionality of Con Ass.

The "Term Limits" was deliberately engraved in the Constitution to safeguard the people against being subjugated by a dictator. From all indications however, Madam Arroyo has no intention of abiding by the mandate. She will try hard as in fact she is trying hard to jettison the bedrock of our democracy (Constitution) for a parliamentary system that will jerk to life her ebbing tenure, hence this frenzy for a constituent assembly.

Seemingly, she wishes to make us heirs to a one-woman rule or better yet, plunder-fraught leadership reminiscent of the nuggets of incidents of presidents going awry coming out of the revolving door of history. There is nothing in what she says or does that indicate respect for her term limit. So how can we believe Remonde's disclaimer that GMA will abide by the Constitution when she is trying to outwit the very essence of the law she swore to uphold and protect?

One way for our people to trust Pres. Arroyo is for her to make the proper preparations for a smooth turn over before June of 2010 when she surrenders the scepter of power to the incoming Chief Executive. Also, she should publicly renounce any ambition on her part to grab the presidency or be prime minister in case the Charter change takes place. The clincher is to openly endorse as early as now whomever she has in mind to succeed her as president.

Only in so doing will the nasty speculations about her real intent for Con Ass could be quelled forever. All that will be put to rest as mere figment of her enemies' envious minds. Madam President, for your peace of mind and that of the people, go for it!

Madam, live on the glory that "Well done is better than well said." Isn't that how you want your administration remembered for its performance not its lip service to the people? Indeed, after you step down people will evaluate if you really did well more than just spit out a blizzard of empty promises throughout your 10 year rule.