



## Razor's Edge

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

*Joe Mari Mercader . . .*

### *Villar: Secret Card of GMA*

**NEWYORK, NY Oct. 12 (PinoyGlobal)** - In the welter of the confused state of the nation caused by typhoon Ondoy that wreaked untold havoc in the country, I heard from friends who just came back from the Philippines that Sen. Manny Villar Jr. has arrived at a secret arrangement with the lame-duck president making him her ace card in next year's elections. On hearing this I could not help visualizing a scenario of Madam Arroyo's emissaries and those of Sen. Villar, engrossed in plotting to make the scheme come out with positive results for them after the polls.

Villar's people pushed for total support for him while her negotiators endeavored to get the assurance of no corruption charges against GMA when the senator becomes president, which would be a freak eventuality, in my distilled opinion anyway.

Meantime, throughout this drama, both leaders were completely transfixed to the prospect of victory that our people's wretched situation took a backseat in their priority of battle plan. They were oblivious to the sufferings of the dislocated thousands who were rendered homeless by the cascading floods and erosion from our denuded forests in the Sierra Madre Mountains. Yet the best they could do was to grandstand on TV.

Then I snapped out of the frontiers of that scenario back to reality. In the midst of the obtaining chaos there has been a corresponding deluge of press releases (more of praise releases) in the media, ours included, from Villar's camp. It narrates that he forked over P5,000 to a mother whom he heard on radio asking for help. On the air, he took the occasion to indulge in the rhetoric of remembering his

mother whom he said still cares for him (and whose mother does not?).

I would advise him to read the gospel to cauterize or prune his arrogance a bit: "Don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing" - i.e., if you are really sincere. Genuine love for the poor must not be advertised for it rubs off the virtue of one's magnanimity or benevolence.

Besides, one swallow does not make a summer, helping a poor mother does not make a hero of a desperate candidate for president. A show-off perhaps, but not president. Hell no! There are thousands of homeless victims who need food, clothes, medicine and simple shelters to live in, not flashy condominiums. If Villar truly cares, he could house them in his sprawling subdivisions. He can, but will he?

Political pundits back home are alarmed of what this secret commitment or horse-trading between him and the president is all about. It appears he is madam Arroyo's secret card come 2010 just in case the ruling party standard-bearer, Defense Sec. Gilbert "Gibo" Teodoro, does not make it.

With Villar taking over the presidency Gloria could step down unscathed to a peaceful retirement, despite her glaring guilt of corruption. What's more, she could swim in wealth earned through dubious means, compliments of the C-5 artist. By the way, Manny is under investigation in the Senate for illegally inserting funds in the budget, notoriously catalogued as the C-5 scandal, when he was Senate President. With that in mind should it be surprising if they have arrived at a secret entente?

Sure she will exhaust the full extent of her powers to give

Villar the presidency at the polls while he strikes a posture of nonchalance, which as a chameleon is a piece of cake for him. The idea is to spare his candidacy sudden death if GMA openly supports him. In return he only had to play deaf, mute, blind and dumb to her corruption, a role that dovetails his natural talent. It's his turf.

If Manny becomes president with the secret help of GMA it will stand to reason that corruption in the high office does pay and she is the living proof.

It is also bruited about that he wooed members of Lakas-Kampi and other parties with his money. Typically, these politicians are the proverbial rats jumping from a sinking ship whose existence is irrelevant to the electorate. In fact street-savvy onlookers maintain that this sordid scheme could boomerang smack on Villar's face because voters no longer follow political barkers like the unthinking dopes or lame-brain donkeys they used to be.

Gloria's father, the late Pres. Diosdado "Dadong" Macapagal, did nothing during his four-year term except to swear turncoat Nacionalistas into the Liberal Party he headed, thinking that in so doing his re-election was in the bag. The outcome was a catastrophe: Ferdinand Marcos won by a landslide over him in 1965, proving that auctioned loyalties of mercenaries are unreliable alliances as the insincerity of the one who buys them. Villar should take the cue that he cannot win by buying loyalties. People may accept his bribes but still they would vote for their "guy."

People who are averse to anybody associated with Pres. Arroyo, like the denizens from the ruling party somersaulting to the Nacionalista Party of Manny, will impact the plague of hate on him too, causing his predictable defeat. The same political observers say that buying politicians from other parties has become too obvious with the electorate. Anyone undermining the legitimacy of elections through methods frowned upon by decency will suffer the same fate of the late Pres. Diosdado Macapagal who was repudiated, in spite of the trophy of opportunists registered in the thousands for him.

On the other hand, it would be unwise to underestimate a lady focused on a goal. GMA's mandate still has months to go, anything can happen yet. She can still extend her tour of duty by "postponing the elections," after which she could amend the Constitution and run again for the highest office. This speculation is not as absurd as it seems, not with a woman in love with power. Note that she and ex-Speaker Joe De Venecia have schemed the Charter change (Chacha) for a long time. She is bound to make it possible.

Then again, she could also be in earnest for her party's candidate Teodoro and use her resources as president to make his victory a reality. Gibo is definitely loyal to her, more than Villar who is apparently a party in the "scheme of horse-trading," and has no sympathy for GMA. Between them there is no love lost.

Gibo will truly keep Mrs. Arroyo out of harms-way once he is president. He cannot fold his arms while she is prosecuted for graft and corruption because of his sense of gratitude, which is more than I can say of Sec. Romulo. Incidentally, Gloria is palpably guilty of enriching in office as=20shown in the discrepancies of her assets that shot sky high after becoming president. Unless the principle that the accused is "innocent until proven guilty" has been revised to mean one is guilty until proven influential.

If riding on two canoes has merit then supporting Manny behind the scenes is congruent with the rumor that they are the Siamese twins of corruption. It is for the electorate to decide if they will allow themselves to be hoodwinked by people without qualms.

Against this backdrop, it is quite clear to the nation that the authentic opposition in this presidential race and sure winner to boot, who will fight the evil of corruption institutionalized by Pres. Arroyo and which Villar seems to subscribe to, is none other than the son of two national heroes - Ninoy and Cory - Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino Jr. This can be gleaned from the concentrated attacks of the Palace and the ruling party against him. They have practically thrown at him the kitchen sink and read him the riot act accusing the young Aquino of not helping the flood victims. Hogwash!

For the information of his detractors, not only has Noynoy given financial aid for the hungry victims of typhoons "Ondoy" and "Pepeng," but he also did his chore as a leader, helping floods without the fanfare of hypocrites like the other presidential wannabes who appear to help flood victims with the TV cameras glued to them. If that is love for our distressed kabayans then what is HYPOCRISY?

My choice for president is still Noynoy Aquino against all contenders. This decision is not a grandstand like Bert Romulo did when he announced his preference for Noynoy over his benefactor's candidate, shaming her no end to impress Noynoy of his total commitment. But he has not deceived the public who saw where his motive was anchored - on the selfish desire to be remembered once the good senator sits as president.

Knowing Gloria's days are numbered, Romulo's treachery

fits the cliché that power intoxicates, as he tried to secure his place in the next administration ahead of time. He cannot survive without a government sinecure. If accepting his grandstand of facing probable ostracism in the administration he serves is decent, then betraying a benefactor is a virtue, and I am on the wrong planet!