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The Second Coming of Gloria

SACRAMENTO, CALIF., Dec. 9 (PinoyGlobal) - Is the Philippines ready for the second coming of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo? After a tumultuous nine-year reign during her first coming, there are signs that bode Gloria's second coming.

The First Coming

Gloria's first coming was on Jan 20, 2001 when she ascended into the presidency when then President Joseph Estrada was deposed during the EDSA 2 people power revolution. During her speech at the inauguration of the Batasan Pambansa Complex Annex Building on February 7, 2001, she said: "Through EDSA People Power 2, we have shown the world that, with the guidance and blessing of Divine Providence, we can unite and shape our country's destiny." Indeed, Gloria shaped the country's "destiny" when it was revealed that the first major corruption case -- involving no less than her newly appointed Secretary of Justice -- was done within four days of her ascension to the presidency.

On her birthday on April 5, 2001, Gloria declared: "I do not plan my life. I leave it up to God." It makes one wonder if Gloria really believed that her actions were guided by Divine Providence. Or was it megalomaniac illusions that guided her?

Midway through her presidency, Gloria told the nation that she decided not to seek the presidency in the 2004 elections. However, in December 2003, she announced that she was running for president because God told her to run. "Divine

Providence put me here. The Lord is a very good Manager of my career," she said.

Conversations with the Almighty

Gloria was elected to a second term in May 2004. On October 27, 2004, a newspaper reported: "ARROYO CLAIMS RECEIVING 'DIVINE' INSPIRATION." It says, "President Gloria Arroyo said yesterday 'her conversations with the Almighty' have provided her with 'the discernment to call for the formation of a Constitutional Convention'. In a breakfast forum with members of the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines (FOCAP), Arroyo said: 'I do what I believe is right. How do I know what is right? I am a person who prays. There is discernment of God's will in my actions. I try to look for the will of God in every situation,' Arroyo explained. She also said that she has asked her Cabinet members to undergo sessions on discernment, adding that she wanted them to be like her, '(who has) a lot of focus by Providence'."

Gloria's second term was enmeshed in corruption scandals. She also tried to amend the constitution to change the form of government to a parliamentary system. She succeeded in gathering enough signatures for a "people's initiative" for Charter change. However, it was rejected by the Supreme Court; thus, thwarting her goal of staying in power. It was a severe setback that forced her to devise other means to achieve her goal.

In my article, "Gloria's Gambit" (May 2009), I wrote, "With

the Cha-cha train derailed, is Gloria going to pursue another elective political office in the 2010 elections? If she does, then we know what she is up to. I doubt, however, that she would admit it at this time. However, many people believe that she is going to run as congresswoman of her Pampanga district which is currently represented by her son, Mikey Arroyo.

“If that would be the case, Gloria would make sure that Lakas-Kampi-CMD will emerge from the 2010 elections with absolute control of the House of Representatives. As a congresswoman, Gloria could easily muster enough support to become the Speaker of the House. She could then maneuver to pass a resolution to convene a Constituent Assembly (Con-ass) or Constitutional Convention (Con-con) to amend the constitution to adopt a parliamentary form of government.”

Martial Law

Indeed, that’s exactly what Gloria did when she decided to run for Congress next year. But there is a twist to her perceived agenda. Instead of taking the circuitous road to changing the constitution and become Prime Minister, recent events seem to indicate that she is pursuing a drastic and less tedious way to retain power.

Seemingly, the Maguindanao massacre provided Gloria with an opportunity to impose martial law in the province of Maguindanao, an act that has been widely criticized by leaders of civil society, the media, the Catholic Church, and the opposition parties. The rationale for opposing martial law is that “state of emergency” -- which Gloria imposed a few days earlier in the provinces of Maguindanao and Sultan Kudarat -- is sufficient to maintain law and order, and prosecute the perpetrators of the mass murders. According to the 1987 constitution, martial law can only be imposed in the event of an invasion or rebellion. Was the Maguindanao massacre an act of invasion or rebellion? Absolutely not!

“Gloria in excelsis Arroyo”

But why then? A wicked scenario has been postulated by several columnists and analysts. With the support of the generals -- particularly the Class of ‘78 -- Gloria can, in six little steps, perpetuate herself in power, to wit: (1) She expands the martial law to cover several other provinces or, better, the entire island of Mindanao; (2) As a result, armed confrontation between clan factions and government forces would ensue (the first clash between Ampatuan loyalists and government forces has already been reported); (3) The elections in the provinces under martial law would be “suspended” due to the breakdown of law and order; (4) Since there would be no elections in these provinces, there would be no proclamation of president, vice president, and 12 senators because of the incomplete election results for candidates running for national office; (5) She would handily win her congressional seat in Pampanga and vies for the speakership of the new Congress, which she could easily achieve because her party, the Lakas-Kampi-CMD, would have absolute control of the House of Representatives; and (6) Since the offices of the President, Vice President, and Senate President would be vacant, Speaker Gloria Arroyo would be next in line to assume the presidency in an acting capacity until national elections for President, Vice President, and 12 Senators are held... at the pleasure of Gloria.

The Second Coming

The second coming of Gloria would signify the beginning of Gloria’s “enchanted kingdom” -- a dream realized through Machiavellian machinations. It makes one wonder if her second coming would bring peace and prosperity. Or would it perpetuate the misery of the people that have long suffered under the reign of Gloria?

Quo vadis, Filipinas?