



Razor's Edge

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MILF Enlisted to Protect the Elections Is Ominous

NEW YORK, NY April 26 (PinoyGlobal) -Whoever conceived the idea of forking over to the sworn enemy of the state (the Moro Islamic Liberation Front - MILF) the right to bear arms in the May 10 elections, must either be a dreamer or an idiot. And of all things, they are assigned to protect Commission on Elections officers and their military and police escorts, as well as the voters. The armed rebels will be on this duty for 13 days. In my vocabulary this is surrendering to the enemy. What for are the military and police escorts in the elections when they themselves are escorted by Muslim rebels? This is hilarious. The idea has the makings of halitosis of the intellect.

What about the huge military expense and lives of soldiers when we were at war with the MILF will that go to naught too? What about the civilians killed in the crossfire throughout the 40 years bloody encounters with the Muslims will they be forgotten just because we desperately want peace with the Moro rebels, don't they deserve any consideration? If we don't want to fight anymore, at least the government must not also give the rebels authority to keep peace during our elections because that is an insult to the soldiers and at the same time exposing our electoral process to possible rigging if not violence with the Muslims' inclination to break their commitments.

I am sorry if the president with her "laudable" intention could be branded an idiot for sealing this pact that reposes implicit trust on the most committed enemy of the state—the Muslim rebel secessionists.

How many times have they broken their commitment with the government but still our officials do not learn. Moro treachery dates back to the Tausug rebel leader Kamlon in the 50s and even long before that. The barbaric massacre of Gen. Teodulfo Baustita and his 35 soldiers, who were shot behind their heads during a peace negotiation, is enough to ring the cat's bell for the government never to trust those fanatic rebels. Gen. Bautista was made to believe they would negotiate peace with him if both sides will not carry arms. What followed was bizarre: Gen. Bautista and his men complied but were betrayed. The rebels were fully armed.

Never was the saying truer - that a good Moro is a dead Moro. The moral lesson if you negotiate peace with these barbarians is to shoot them first and then discuss the terms on their mortal remains not while they are kicking and alive. Only then may the government achieve the peace it has sought this long with the Muslims secessionists, having in mind that their promises stink on ice.

The rule of the thumb is never sleep with a hungry tiger unless you have a death wish. But the Philippine government has just enlisted the MILF to "help keep peace and order" in the May elections. Isn't this admitting the Armed Forces' impotence to do its duty in war and peace?

Whatever happened with that much bruted about campaign to dismantle private armies when we even give blanket license to the fierce Muslim enemies to guard the most important process of elections? Authorizing them to carry arms in the most critical areas in Mindanao is akin to pointing

a gun on our heads. In that case why does not the government just give them their independence? But then that would be a faux pa in which the administration succumbs to the menace in Mindanao.

I concede that the government has covered all the probable loopholes in the agreement. But dealing with the enemy like the MILF is like putting one's head in the mouth of a tiger that at any moment it can crash it because the mentality of the secessionists is to make Mindanao a Moro state, free and independent from the central government in Manila.

If my memory serves, the government has been negotiating with this group since 2004 and just because now they are talking softly does not mean they could be trusted. Gen. Bautista would turn in his grave on hearing that we are committing the same blunder of trusting the Moro rebels.

No amount of precaution could guarantee one hundred percent safety when you deal with them. They are insidious as they are wily with an almost pathological penchant to betray or renege on the currency of their commitments.

It has been argued that the presence of the International Monitoring Team (IMT) is unconstitutional. There is a provision that bans "foreign elements from engaging in or assisting in the electoral exercise" of our people. The IMT is a foreign organization. Their presence constitutes an encroachment and impairs our sovereignty. Analogously speaking, we don't want strangers walking into our homes and dictating on us.

In my layman's opinion allowing MILF armed men to bodyguard Comelec officers, their military and police escorts is ominous because as I said a while ago, they have a pathological inclination or obsession, if you will, to backtrack on their commitment/s and resume hostilities when we least expect (betray us). Our soldiers will be at a disadvantage because they could be taken by surprise. In any case, it is unwise to give the enemy any semblance of responsibility in our most sensitive process, i.e. the elections in May 10.

I hope the president aborts this insane strategy and keep our enemies at a safe distance for our peace of mind and safety. Should there be a mishap on or before the elections, I hate to groan, I told you so.

On the other hand I have a sneaky feeling that this ploy could be what our people have been murmuring lately of failed elections. Any incident between the military and the Moro rebels guarding the polls could be a reason to postpone the elections while Pres. Arroyo perpetuates indefinitely or a military Junta is mantled with GMA presiding. Not far-fetched when everybody is desperate for power.

Another scenario would be rigging the elections in favor of Money Villaroyo as he has been anointed by the president as her secret candidate over her party's standard bearer Gilbert "Gibo" Teodoro Jr. That would be a tragedy.

The country will lose the value of our land titles because as president Villar will not have to ask or bribe Register of Deeds officials and employees; he will arbitrarily order them to transfer public domains and land reform areas to his group of real estate companies, given his propensity for land grabbing. His administration will have the stench of cronyism. And that countrymen, is not an option devoutly to be wished.