



Razor's Edge

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Nothing Is Fiction About Romulo Being Corrupt

NEWYORK, NY June 29 (PinoyGlobal) - In two days, our newly elected President Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino III will wield the reins of government. More than ever, now is the time he should guard himself against fair weathered friends who come in sheep’s clothes salivating for a share of the spoils. He must be extra circumspect in choosing those who will “help” him carry the burdensome task of solving the multifarious problems buffeting the nation.

The Herculean job of resuscitating an economically prostrate nation is not a trifling matter. Our people have long been visited by misery, class distinction, social disorder and violence that a little mistake on the part of our new hope, Pres. Aquino, could be costly, what with the modern war materiel flooding the country today.

The arsenal of the murderous Ampatuan clan in Maguindanao not to mention those of the bloodthirsty Abusayyafs and deadly NPAs, should send shivers in the spine of our leaders. Add to that the well equipped private armies of political dynasties throughout the country. The collective presence of this menace in the length and breadth of the country will never stabilize the nation unless the new president is true to his ideals and promises of being impartial for the general good.

Our plight as a people is caused by the fatal incompetence of bootlickers who hoodwinked the appointing power to lodge them in juicy cabinet positions and bureaucracies without scrutinizing their background and motives. Aquino should not replicate this tragic error.

Notorious figures should not be made to wangle appointments in the government on the flimsy reason of being family friends. This is not how to run a complex office such as the presidency.

Mr. Aquino must not forget that a leader cannot fly with eagles when he is surrounded by turkeys that have bastardized decency in public service. Many are already positioning to be in his administration. Some of them are still laboring with the hangover of power. These individuals are too liquored with the sweet smell of power and want to continue being perched in their lofty positions on the gullibility of a president who can perpetuate them in his governance.

Many have become numb: you have to use Braille to impact in their thick-skulls that service and love of country do not spell opportunism. Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo is among those fragile minds easily driven beyond the borders of civilized conduct. He is unworthy of our people’s trust. The Philippine College Editors’ Guild knows of his money making schemes in the Foreign Affairs. But this is putting the cart before the horse.

Time was when I thought I was talking to the wall. I kept exposing Romulo for the fraud that he is to no avail: people were just too deaf, mute and blind, by choice. Nobody listened when I said that he is an aberration in the Foreign Affairs with his under developed knowledge of diplomacy, which can be catalogued as mediocre in a field he just intruded as a pampered protégé of Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Plainly therefore, he is miscast in said department. This is compounded by the orientation of clinging to public office via the puking art of sipsip. He is where he is in Gloria's governance using this degrading craft he used on Cory.

Nevertheless, I never lost faith that one day he will be seen for the fraud he has always been. Now, I am no longer alone. Some people agree that Secretary Romulo, who thrives on bootlicking the appointing powers, is corrupt and arrogant, to boot. Call it poetic justice because this time it is not this column or the prestigious Philippine College Editors' Guild that filed corruption charges against him at the Sandiganbayan, but the inner circle of top career diplomats who are screaming to the nation his venalities.

In an open letter to president-elect Aquino, the well respected organization of career diplomats", Union of Foreign Service Officers, acronym Unifors, exposed him in a "White Paper" they presented to Aquino.

Unifors urged him not to reappoint Bert. They say he travels to foreign countries supposedly to attend "important" conferences only to end up enjoying the glitz of the social swirl of the fabulous cities he visits on taxpayers' money: "it is very rare for foreign ministers to be constantly traveling because they have responsibilities to meet at the home office." If he was that frivolous and ambivalent on attending those conferences, then for heaven sake what was he doing abroad?

It further accused him as being guilty of many irregularities in the department. In the litany of charges, they portrayed Romulo as having anomalously manipulated the approval of the now controversial e-Passport project. This was "originally a Neda-approved build-operate-transfer contract before it was cancelled and eventually bid out by Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas."

The validity of the accusations in the "White Paper" cannot be impugned because it was crafted by ranking officials in the Foreign Affairs who have the facts and know what they are talking about.

Don't tell us the infirmity of gallivanting to foreign countries rubbed off on Bert Romulo that badly or was he enjoying in the abroad because the money spent did not come from his pocket that is so deep to stuff in green bucks from e-Passport kickbacks.

How could he have governed his domain at the foreign department if he was away junketing and meeting private business executives, like those who closed the e-Passport project? The kickback must have been phenomenal not to mention what he gets for every passport daily. The Philippine

College Editors' Guild hit the nail in the head when it collated facts to file the charges in the Sandiganbayan that handles corruption cases.

On top of everything, he draws his exorbitant salary and scandalously large allowances without deferring to explain the reason for his chain of travels to Juan de la Cruz. The obvious fact is that he misused government resources every time he went for meetings abroad, which he does not attend anyway, was the White Paper's gist.

The letter was hurriedly presented to the incoming president to avert or preclude the possibility of Romulo's reappointment. Unifors feels Secretary Romulo might try to cash in on his previous relations with the late Cory and for the pitch he made of supporting Noynoy immediately when the latter became standard bearer of the Liberal Party.

Knowing his insidious wiles of getting key positions in the government it would not be amiss to believe he will remind Noy that he put his position in jeopardy by announcing his support for him. Although in essence, it was calculated and selfish and had nothing to do with risking his job. Madam Arroyo had barely a few months left and his appointment is coterminous with her tour of office. So risk was never the issue.

If ever, he merely exhibited his opportunistic propensity to cling to the powers-that-be. This time it was with the incoming Aquino president. If he succeeds to rebound on the Aquino administration with his catch phrase of being caninely loyal to the new commander-in-chief, then it can be said the nation lost to a trapo who will surely be a barnacle in Noy's administration as he was a sore-eye in GMA's.

Unifors sounded this alarm and strongly exposed him for what he is—a corrupt and indolent Foreign Affairs Secretary who gloats about junketing on people's money. Yet he does not relinquish his sinecure in the government, which goes back to 15 years of bootlicking two previous presidents and a third if Noynoy turns sentimental and yields to "utang na loob" or the syndrome of cronyism. That would be catastrophic!

The community of diplomats and employees are against him and hope he resigns without waiting to be reinstated for the zarzuela of backing Noynoy's. That so-called endorsement was nothing less than opportunism.

The president of Unifors, a current ambassador, Victoria Bataclan, spilled out the beans on Romulo on the White Paper. She did not hold punches and she has the unqualified

support of career diplomats who want to put an end to the overstaying Romulo who survives cabinet revamps via the nauseating art of “sipsip.” Promotions and appointments of career diplomats must be on merits, not on the capriciousness of the foreign Secretary, as has been the policy under Bert Romulo.

Our government deserves better than that. And so Unifors urged the next president to appoint a young career diplomat to the post of Romulo for more results and progressive administration of the Foreign Affairs.

They went as far as taunting Noy Aquino to pursue this idea because he too is a young president and should know that there is more dynamism, vision, sincerity and enthusiasm in younger officials.

As clincher, Unifors waxed philosophically in the White Paper saying “There are times when true leaders have to make difficult choices such as putting the interest of the country above personal relationships.” This sent the message that nowadays camaraderie is no longer an accepted fashion because it stymies pushing the government forward. More so when reforms are to be initiated in order to have a clean and honest government.