



Razor's Edge

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Government Positions are Only Benches Covered with Leather

NEW YORK, NY July 07(PinoyGlobal) - I wonder how many political appointees realize that official trappings are just benches covered with colored leather – it is no reason for anybody to lose his dignity fighting like a starving piranha for it. To overstay even when you are detested by the community of career employees as an intruder is ignominious. Take a bow, Mr. Alberto Romulo.

According to the Union of Foreign Service Officers (Unifors), “Romulo had been an incompetent foreign secretary and did not meet the criteria for being included among the best and the brightest of the President’s official family” - and that he “unabashedly lobbied” to retain his job. That’s how despicably low he has gone, which defies common decency.

Sometimes I wonder what it would take to plow him out of that infernal enclave in Padre Faura that he arbitrarily took as his kingdom. Doesn’t he understand that the very salt of our foreign service, the career diplomats, loathe and despise him “kilig” to the bones? By bossing around the knowledgeable in their turf (foreign affairs) he virtually became a certifiable intruder whom everybody dislikes.

Unifors president, Ambassador Victoria Bataclan, tersely said in a white paper to “P-Aquino” that Romulo must not be reappointed for the reason mentioned above and many others. Quite frankly, his continued stay at the foreign affairs has become thoroughly untenable.

This brings us to his insistence to retain the 21 political ambassadors (stragglers of an evanescent venal regime)

until September. In his defense, and the Palace as well rallied behind him, he said removing them will disrupt our diplomatic ties with the accrediting countries. “No government will trust them.” Nonsense! That is a hackneyed rationalization, if I ever heard one. He might even say they could end up being treated as lame duck envoys, which is really what these 21 political ambassadors are.

May I remind the appointing power (Pres. Aquino) of Napoleon’s sagacious wit: “A new-born government must shine and astonish – the moment it loses its *éclat* it falls.” How can Noy’s nascent governance coruscate with reforms if he has the same cold turkeys weighing him down?

That fool in Padre Faura is seeing goblins in daylight. What disruption is he talking about when all those ambassadors do is socialize and imbibe the nectar of Baccus in revelries and social functions nowadays? Can they come up with concrete results? The most they could show perhaps is an empty ledger of ineptitudes.

For instance, how effective are those assigned in Middle East countries in protecting our compatriots who are in duchess with the law there? What is the average of their success in saving those sentenced to public beating or even death for some trumped-up charges based on ambiguous laws, customs and traditions to total strangers like Filipinos?

For praying privately in your house you can be locked up in jail indefinitely in Saudi Arabia for instance. Holding the hand of a sweetheart in public, you could be arrested. For not

stopping five times a day when the minarets are blaring prayers to Allah, you could be thrown to prison, and this goes on add infinitum. Have Romulo and his pampered minions in the foreign affairs done their diplomatic chores well for our overseas workers in those countries?

These so-called political ambassadors, which by the nomenclature alone of their designations should tell they are wall flowers abroad, have no business clinging even just for three more months when it will not improve their careers nor gloss the relations between our country and the host governments.

In my honest opinion, his motive is in question. It could be more of ego than reason prevailing in his advocacy to extend them in their foreign assignments.

So if it is ego, then P-Aquino should assert himself and ask that overstaying foreign secretary to join the 21 political ambassadors in bowing out of the government. If these controversial appointees have a little sense of decency they should have stepped down with Pres. Arroyo since they were tied to her political fate as Romulo's was intertwined to hers.

For the foreign secretary to hug on the stupid claim that recalling them will disrupt what they are doing shows he is a complete moron because even a president who runs the country has to step down when the time has come. But the government continues to function, and sometimes surprisingly smoothly. Career bureaucrats conduct the business of government as holdovers.

Pres. Aquino took the reins of government without messing up things. In fact, he was a total novice to the presidency yet he did so with flying colors making landmark decisions on the day he took his oath.

Sure, some of his directives are not exactly without flaws. Nevertheless he took a stand and proceeded to do so with unwavering conviction. Right or wrong he did it. Let history judge him later. But Bert Romulo has to damn himself with inane decisions, which seems to be the hallmark of his official tour of office. His scintillating quality really is as a lapdog to the appointing power: before it was Cory, then Gloria and now to the young Aquino. Doesn't he have a bit of delicadeza, this man Romulo?

If there is anything I detest it is a public official who clings to his position amid manifest public opprobrium. If I may repeat myself a government job is just a bench covered with colored leather or velvet.

Pacman himself deserted Sen. Manny Villar Jr. at the last hour by joining the Liberal Party, forcing someone to comment he betrayed Manny. Bert did the same to Ms Arroyo. Even when he developed corns gluing his butt at the Foreign Affairs, he also betrayed his benefactor, Madam Arroyo, by publicly declaring his so-called support for Noynoy's candidacy, which by and large was opportunism, per se.

Someone said "Do you know what is more hard to bear than the reverses of fortune? It is the baseness, the hideous ingratitude, of man." Take another bow, Mr. Romulo.

Gloria's term was ending in a few months, and he needed a shelter just in case. He took a chance with Noy and he got it right – Aquino won. True to form, as it was his late mother's weakness, Noy also takes "utang na loob" as a religion and cuddles cronies to life in his dispensation, as if it is an obligation he cannot avoid. The rest is history.

Romulo is retained to enjoy his first love – to be in a job that gives him the unfettered liberty to gallivant around the globe on people's money (first class to boot) because the high position he holds calls for it. Excuse, me! Will somebody please, show me a cuspidor, ASAP!