



Razor's Edge

By
Joe Mari Mercader
Executive Editor
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JoeMari Mercader on -

Presidentiabiles Gridlock Road To 2010

NEW YORK, NY, Oct. 10 (PinoyGlobal)- In case our readers cannot get a copy of *Filipino Times* hours after we farm them out to our outlets, they can just go to *Pinoy Global* website – www.filamimage.com and they can read this column there. WWW.FILAMIMAGE.COM carries *Razor's Edge* all over the United States and the Philippines. Be abreast with the burning issues in our country at the *Filipino Times* and *Pinoy Global Online News* anytime of the day or night. *Pinoy Global* has earned its prestige and reliability through years of devotion to unvarnished truth, for which reason it is the favorite of readers around the world.

Fasten your seatbelts dear readers because the toxic political climate in our country is getting hotter as the 2010 election closes in. Anyone who doubts that politics is the burning passion of our people and the country's main industry has to be an aborigine in this era of advanced electronics. One look at the colony of aspirants for president and vice president in Philippine mainstream newspapers and you will see clowns ludicrously doing the chicken-chicken war dance in the political battle ground over a year ahead of time. They even appear on TV advertising products (aping US politicians) as if their fat pork barrels are not enough money for them. By and large they are an embarrassment to the nation.

Interestingly, the candidates who appear to be front-runners in the protracted 2010 election is due to the blizzard of paid adds in the newspapers building him or her to absurd

proportions. Needless to say it has nothing to do with fact. There is also the whisper campaign to reckon with, apart from handlers painting their respective aspirants for president and vice president as the unbeatable presidential tandem. This tissue of lies, insults the intelligence of our people who know the competence or incompetence of each candidate and their questionable integrity. The drama of the people feigning to be subdued by their hyped greatness is made possible by that grand persuader known as MONEY!

For example, there is the screaming headline that former Pres. Joseph "Erap" Estrada is on top of the heap in the survey among presidential candidates. How much of that is true is a big question. For one thing there is a legal impediment in his running again to be resolved when he already had his stint as president. Another issue is the condition imposed in his pardon that prohibits him to run, although his lawyers allege that the full pardon given by GMA means total freedom, which means he can run again.

His probable vice presidential teammate is still unknown although speculation is that he will opt for Chit Escudero – a loyal follower of the late Fernando Poe Jr., Erap's soul mate. Escudero enjoys tremendous popularity with the people for his lucid articulation of issues both in English and Pilipino.

Second most bruited about contender for the highest office is Sen. Pres. Manny Villar Jr. He is expected to

be in tandem with Sen. Loren Legarda under the Nacionalista Party, of which Manny is president. Loren however is raring to make a dash for the presidency, according to her fans. Weeks before she and Escudero were the electorates' choice team with Loren as the standard bearer.

Meanwhile, Sen. Ping Lacson is frantically saber-rattling in the floor of the Senate exposing colleagues for an assortment of irregularities, particularly on illegal insertions some of them made in the budget that were not considered during its deliberation. The noise he is causing is because he is seriously jumping into the presidential race too, according to keen observers. His vice presidential candidate is still unclear. It would be nice, people say, if Trillanes and him team up with one or the other as president and vice president or vice versa. Two graduates of the Philippine Military Academy gunning for the top positions in the government would be a formidable team.

Another prospector in the gold mine that politics has amounted to is Mike Velarde of El Shaddai fame. His handicap is being a religious leader. As such he is supposed to show he is not in league with tainted politicians to impress the electorate that he is carrying the banner of reform in the name of God, by selecting a vice presidential candidate without stigma to his name and that, my friends, is a tall order. In fact, Mike's own integrity is under a magnifying glass for wheeling and dealing in real estate.

For her own peace of mind and safety, Pres. Arroyo's candidate is VP Noli de Castro. Noli would be innocuous to her. This speculation however is contingent to her not getting the go signal on a referendum for the Charter change: the means by which she could be in the race and who will surely win, to boot, with the pluses she enjoys of being incumbent president and her unlimited funds.

They say Noli is a formidable contender to replace GMA despite wanting for the acumen to run for the high office of president. Although to avoid hurting his feelings, nobody has yet accused him of being an intellectual pigmy to the grueling task of president. His greatest asset is not having been involved in any scandal of magnitude like other candidates are, except his messy

marriage, which is personal to him and which we respect. Short of that he is doing well by doing nothing, to avoid committing blunders in his turf as Secretary for Housing and Urban development.

Another probable aspirant is Sen. Dick Gordon who is still studying his possibilities, which gives the impression of being lukewarm, against the parade of presidential wannabes. Trailing far behind is Fidel Ramos who is notorious for his convoluted notion that he is God's gift to the Filipino people to lead them to the Promised Land.

The list of aspirants for president and vice president is getting longer by the minute.

Good thing icon comedian Dolphy is not drunk with ego to wade with them in the murky water of Philippine politics as a wave of actors, singers, athletes, etc. caught the mania. Just as well, because those desirous to get into politics are no better either. In the welter of this mad rush to grab Pres. Arroyo's job, is poor Juan de la Cruz whose future is demeaned, by men and women whose only credential to replace GMA is their greed for power and ill-gotten wealth, if they are not brain damaged.

Election time is quite far yet. Much of the time our ambitious lawmakers and the president can still be used for better purposes. Peace and order is critical. Intelligence of the military and police discovered that guns for hire have now become an organized-crime group. For P 5,000 up to P 10,000 (\$15 to \$25) you can hire someone to kill the man you love to hate. Political rivals are their favorite clients.

It is bad enough that kidnapping for ransom is rampant in some parts of the country, which has not been averted because allegedly those involved are the military, policemen and politicians. It is worse that bandits could flaunt with brazen impunity their deadly business, with the law blind to their trade because some if not most of those in the murder incorporated syndicate are members of our uniformed forces.

When will the nation's woes end or have a respite in the least? The citizens cannot go on living in mortal fear and beleaguered by poverty. Enough is enough. Ladies and gentlemen of Congress do your homework. Madam President listen to the cry of our people - step down and save the nation!

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