

CONTACT

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KNOWING TRUTH IS NOT ENOUGH,
SUCCESSFUL CHANGE REQUIRES ACTION



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Honor, Integrity, Truth BEGIN AT HOME

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GCH—RE: Philippine News

MANILA, PHILIPPINES

MONDAY IN MANILA

Please remember the Alamo and *Blazing Saddles* if you want to understand current activities in a convoluted world of insane minds creating outrageously “crackpot” dramas.

What was gained at the Alamo, San Antonio, Texas? Was it simply depopulation? This is as good as any answer you can offer. Or, perhaps, it was staged so that TODAY you can have a money-making State Park? Life is like that isn't it? You just keep right on doing the same outrageous activities ad nauseam.

Now, *Blazing Saddles?* A spoof presented by Mel Brooks of an equally insane tale of Western lore. The

interesting thing is that all players, unknown to one another, were absurdly tracking to the same point to have an equally absurd encounter of hilarious antics.

Next try relating anything to everything ELSE! It works wonders on the psychic confusion. The conclusion MUST BE reached that everything is actually absurdity in action as perpetrated by “others” upon you, the self. This is stated because you so often lie to “self” as to make the other tales unworthy of much attention. LIES NEVER BECOME TRUTH BUT TRUTH IS CONSTANTLY TWISTED TO REPRESENT LIES EVEN THOUGH IT CANNOT BE HONEST OR FACTUAL.

Is it not painfully terrible to have to protect SELF from thine own brother's or partner's lies and indiscretions? Moreover, lies spread into the ethers protected by the network of perpetrators pushing them forward, and instead of factual presentation of TRUTH, simply gossip, guess, rumor and destroy—ALL OTHERS THAT WILL LISTEN OR WITNESS.

A WORLD OF LIVING ON LIES IS TOPPLING, READERS—AS WE WRITE OR SPEAK.

to SAVE something or another? Whatever you see and wish to input—no more or less. We are but a voice in a wilderness of information, good or bad, and YOU must determine that which you consider worthy. We are happy and extremely pleased to note that—as we have presented over the years with the most interesting information—it has ALL come to pass and that through guidance, with offered SOLUTIONS, to the problems presenting.

As we experience, you in your way, me in mine, we realize that all we do is present “history” and memories in whatever the moment in actions and thoughts, intents and purposes, presents for consideration “tomorrow” or even within the next minute or two.

I am asking that Mark arrange as time and space permits, several articles which relate to “Courts and Justice” and some IMF material along with the more recent and interesting presentation on the destruction and “DEMOLITION” (as planned) of the World Trade Center buildings. True or false? YOU decide

What input do we offer

(Continued on page 2)

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after facts are presented, for that is the only way you ever get Truth or ability to so much as sort possibilities. We offer what we can and realize that Manila, Philippines is NOT the only focus on the globe—but rather, just a tiny pinpoint of activities which can make major impact everywhere else.

In that process we no longer hold any perception that it will be a walk through the park on a sunny day in Spring. Every involved negative energy and grabber will continue to try to scam, con and steal, discredit and actually physically make an effort to debilitate the “agents and messengers”.

You must meet EVERY encounter because you can KNOW that your enemies will search, seek and try to destroy on the basis of the most mundane possibilities. Moreover, if you simply sit back doing nothing in FEAR of retaliation of some kind by the very culprits—shame on you. In that instant of weakness you will have destroyed Truth and ability to CHANGE A ROTTEN SYSTEM. Again I remark: “Painful?” Of course, if your only intention is to go through life allowing the lies to bury you, destroy you and become malignant cancers on your very beings.

If a man steals from you, my students, you have many ways to go and among the biggest lies of all is “forgiveness”.

It is as with the child who does something and Mother demands that he say he is sorry. So what? He is neither sorry nor respectful—except of the POWER of the Mother who might just swat him soundly for his failure to obey HER.

When a man steals from you, returns the thieved property and THEN asks for some kind of genuine “forgiveness”, the deed is rectified and you can become “forgiving” friends or remain enemies but with clarification of the acts themselves. Less than restitution merits NO FORGIVENESS—for none is asked NOR CAN IT BE ASSUMED.

I, for one, am weary of the assumption stated that “God has forgiven” everything, including you for murder, theft, actual crucifixion, etc. Who said God has forgiven? Oh, I see, some man in a robe who wields power through a “Church” of some kind wherein he is set forth as your “broker”. As long as you keep BROKERS you will LOSE your shirts—and your money.

We will never represent “brokerage” facilities or concepts. We will present NOTHING, purposely, that offers simple arrangements for gambling and subterfuge by game-playing. We will NOT have stocks and options—we share openly and gratefully with anyone who honorably helps and assists. It is clean, clear and the return or reward is direct and open. It must be this way in everything we do or attempt—for the manipulators will ply their trade in graft and corruption at every opportunity.

By the way, readers, NOBODY IS “THE” ONLY TRUTH nor holds “the only truth”—TRUTH IS! Everyone has “truth” even if it be lies. It is as singularly present as the sovereign individual YOU ARE.

Let us use the IMF as a focus for a moment.

The tales are in good, sound, possible help to those who need funds, etc. That is the concept offered, but study everything about said IMF and you will conclude graft, corruption, theft, genocide,

and total manipulation in actuality. Will what “I” say make a difference? Perhaps, if you stop, listen and study what TRUTH awaits the inquisitive minds.

Here in the Philippines we can see several of the major players backing off and distancing themselves, because of their criminal actions, from the very UNLAWFUL-UNCONSTITUTIONAL HEAD OF STATE. The unfolding dramas are worthy of note but would usurp the whole of our available space when you must also attend other foci here and there around the globe. YOU WILL, HOWEVER, FIND THE IDENTICAL PLAYERS INVOLVED EVERYWHERE YOU TURN—A VITAL FACT IN AND OF ITSELF.

Payoffs and kickbacks are the tune of the Season over here in the third-most corrupt nation on the globe and working its way to number uno as quickly as cover-ass can be accomplished.

It is all entangled with the largest brokerage firms in the world as well.

Morgan Stanley is now being proven to have laundered massive sums of money by the spouse of the false President right here in Manila and in the U.S.—major scale.

So, Morgan Stanley hits the defensive trail and downgrades the entire Philippine economy right along with assistance, NOW, of the IMF and International Banking Cartel (IBC).

Meanwhile back at the home office, U.S.A., that IMF is rumoring a COLLAPSE OF THE DOLLAR—right in “Homeland” central headquarters.

Meanwhile to get OUR task accomplished we have to meet head-on the gamesmen who likewise play games. The newest in OUR OWN FOCUS—a failure to get the Foundation mandated set forth lawfully and legally, named properly. There is arguing, power plays and absurd nonsense while the calendar ticks off the days of wine and roses as the whole thing falls “splatt” in the face of the gaping mouths waiting for “a few dollars more”.

NO, WE DO NOT PLAY THAT GAME—WE MET EVERY OBLIGATION TIMELY AND THE “SITTERS” CAN DO WHATEVER THEY LIKE FOR A FEW DAYS MORE—OVERALL IT MATTERS NOT TO THE ULTIMATE OUTCOME.

The adversaries and would-be Sultans have come against the Tallano Clan. How interesting that they have no concept of their own holdings or LEGAL COURT RULINGS for generations passing. However, when one stands in contempt of court for failure to “do his job” it is almost certain that someone, sometime, will rectify the situation and yes indeed, we do have the facts and documents to back TRUTH and Circumstances. Moreover, we will keep right on publishing all those timely updates of our agreements and notices—every time questioned or simply “timely appropriate”.

I would suggest that “Ekkers”, themselves, look at the advantage of simply telling TRUTH in notice form. They make public that which is, by law, demanded and that very “notice” can be circulated and picked up by any publication, newspaper, Website, radio or TV medium and/or simply run in appropriate local papers. When you have the Truth and backup PROOF of the important items—the rest is offered as circumstantial evidence with backup by the documents held.

As with the Cross S Corporation—the documents have been held in secrecy by the usurpers and yet, ultimately the law will cause them to present the looted records or the recognition of the criminal actions will be disclosed.

Should it require three years or more to bring this to a court of law when the facts establish standing? No, but it does and therein lays the crux of the incredible matter where all assets are lost through delays, expenses and outright theft continuing to this moment.

Then, readers, when the snake turns and to cover assets there is a “blame” the innocent for “allowing” and “abetting” such as major insurance fraud—the RIGHT thing to do is splash it across the globe for consideration—when and where you CAN. And, mind you, WE CAN!

Here is a good example of Life Happening while you make OTHER PLANS. Life has to be attended as it happens. But, again readers, **honor, integrity and Truth BEGIN AT HOME.** If the least of these lie, cheat and steal—how can you change a world? You must start at the bottom and move up, for otherwise you accomplish nothing on a weak and hopeless foundation.

You do not hide integrity by burying the Truth. When you publish Truth to the winds you negate the LIE in its ability to flourish. If your “truth” is not able to stand the light shone upon it—then you had best REconsider YOUR TRUTH.

UPHEAVAL OPPORTUNITIES

The usual perception is to WAIT “until things settle a bit”. Why? Why would you let time lapse in which shoring up of new/old game rules are established?

In the case of entering things into the banks for collection—HIT THEM WHILE THE CONFUSION IS RAMPANT AND THE MICE SCURRYING ALONG WITH THE BANKERS—FOR, MOSTLY, SHELTER IN THE U.S.A. The migration is under way. We offer a whole new concept to pick up the shattered pieces without need of the old incredibly criminal system.

Martial law is underway here in the Philippines and is, as in the U.S., called by new names, labels and nonsense. And, friends, here is where you are going to hope the “force” is on your side because the criminals can shut down a nation unless the “forces” of the so-called “law” are with you—instead of enforcing the law or “rule” of the enforcer power brokers. Authority reaches a point of inability to function when the POWER THROUGH FORCE takes highest place.

When we have more backup funding we will get our own teams of lawyers, students, and go to bat against the “ball holders”. It is that simple—get things in order, prove your holdings, document your claims—and get some LEGAL POWER behind you. “Trying” for a day or a year or a decade or generation, makes no difference. Only “doing something” is the ultimate goal. “Trying” is just “lying” to self and those around you.

Amusing “today” incident: A man called this morning and identified himself. Then he launched off into a series of text messages which started with having a BUNCH of gold with currency that had fallen out of a plane, or was in a plane crash or something as spectacular.

His proof of “truth” was that the box(s) were found and recovered by Seaweeds growers and the bills even tasted salty. Besides, the Seaweed growers couldn’t read or write so it could not be a scam.

EJ said to simply bring gold to Tom T. and that is all that is necessary, for we don’t play other types of games. The text came back that “I am not a liar”, and “this is the truth” with a repeat of the “salt” tale.

Fine, was the answer, we like salt—bring it on up here and Philtec will process.

Then the text was that when confronted the Seaweeds farmers got so dizzy that they thought they were poisoned and—————!

So, then came the next edition of the sales pitch about the gold in the hills and it is really real. Fine, bring it in—and if it’s gold, it is sold.

You see, you don’t have to go to war—JUST ATTEND THINGS RIGHTEOUSLY AND YOU REMAIN SECURE AND SAFE. You don’t even have to bend a friendship—if you consider con-people capable of being friends.

Is there really gold in the Philippines? Of course, it is simply NOT with the con people who inhabit the stations and malls of scam and rip-off, especially foreigners, in the MacDonald’s food court.

IRAQ

Are you not weary of the killing fields of YOUR OWN CHILDREN in Iraq?

Ah, but what can you do—somebody has to protect and contain and restructure Iraq? Has anyone suggested or given follow-through to bring your soldiers HOME, stop the killing and give the country back to the owners thereof, the Iraqis?

Oh, I see, they are incapable of holding the oil and mineral fields for the U.S. and Britain. Oh golly-gee. You really gave “freedom” and “liberation” to those poor suckers, didn’t you?

GEORGE BUSH—EITHER ONE

Don’t we find it amusing that you can’t even have a “recall” vote of California’s Governor because the “chad” system of punch cards is so inept as to have allowed the election of the WRONG PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE?

Are Bush and buddies “bad kids”? Of course, who in government isn’t a bad kid?

Do we “hate” the Bush bunch? Gosh no. We don’t have any input into the nasty things they do or contemplate. It is too big and out of our tiny hands.

Ah but, we do appreciate greatly the things George H.W. Bush Sr. and his colleagues did with his “Superfund” and validating of a certain Bonus Certificate now recognized as Bonus 3392-181. WE DIDN’T DO THAT, READERS; MR. BUSH ACCOMPLISHED THAT FEAT. We, therefore, can be gracious even about Jr. and his antics. It doesn’t make a thing they do—RIGHT, it simply notes that GOOD can come out of the most horrendous circumstances.

Moreover, even the Bush Boys can prosper from this particular circumstance if they will but come down off their ivory thrones and golden podiums. They have, however, used it incredibly and criminally, so recovery is hardly feasible or acceptable as is or in “their” hands. It might, however, used correctly and honorably, cause an easier way to meet Truth.

Those, however, who have perpetuated the LIES and caused murders and outright genocide will meet their own rewards—gold or not. And no, GOD won’t strike them dead or zap them on their tweaked noses.

Is GOD “real”? Indeed. He/She/It is SO REAL that there is no need for zapping or rapturing of anything or anyone. The point is to bring about HUMAN PHYSICAL CHANGE to bring balance and goodness to the Earth experience.

Was there ever “perfect good” on this particular globe of a planet? No, certainly not, for in that Perfection there would be no need of a physical globe or play.

In your experiencing you are but testing your knowledge, strength, realization, belief systems and in general “growing”. Where YOU might be on the scale used for determining “graduation” accreditation could be only at the beginning or actually, as to insight, very near the diploma marching tune. If you never bother to get out of pre-school, how can you expect to develop and evolve into that which is acceptable as soul into and within PERFECTION? You ultimately demand “your way” and in silly concepts you “wish” upon stars and other nonsense to achieve that ultimate and wondrous “ascension” (as you call it). Any state of being is OK with “God”, my friends. Accountability becomes a most important point when you consider your own worthiness and that is not measured by higher-invisible energies—but by your contribution in your human aspect of presentation. THERE ARE “INFINITE” POSSIBILITIES. How you choose your preferred “possibilities” is solely up to you and you can only measure your choices by that which you BOTHER TO LEARN.

Would you have me classify certain ones as psychics and fortune-tellers or have them go forth as Joan of Arc and finally get burned at the stake in the town square for YOUR indiscretions and lack of thought and much the less, wisdom? No thank you. Stand responsible for SELF—for no other will or CAN do it FOR YOU.

You are offered goodly guidelines by which you can grow and in growing, learn. They are substantial and broad. Be careful that you choose not the ones inserted BY MAN for his own power, position and/or gain. Live by those guidelines in honor and integrity and you shall prevail. It is purely and simply the way of it. I am amused by the “little white lie” concept of “sometimes it is ok”. Why not live life in such a way that LIES are unnecessary? A “white lie” to make someone “feel better” is still a LIE. “Feel better” is only at best a perception depending on your perspective. Walk in Light and you never have need to FEAR darkness. And by the way, Truth is that which you can recall, the lie is fabrication and will be caught in its own lack of continuity of fact.

Experiences can easily be misunderstood, misinterpreted even when “understanding” is assumed. The very worst “witness” to any event is usually an “eyewitness” unless there is something outstanding about the incident or the involved entities to CAUSE a particular registering on the BRAIN itself. Everything experienced or witnessed is registered on the subconscious—to the last little detail—if indeed it was seen or heard. Meanwhile, however, the subconscious mind will believe anything it is told to accept, so discernment is mandatory. To be more explicit about the reconsideration of anything is the

consideration that even in the “recopy” of a written word—it must be accurately “copied” to be a “quote”. An interpretation of the original word is unacceptable—except as in paraphrased—which, in itself, is inaccurate by its own definition. By this very fact you can KNOW that “Bibles” of any doctrine are erroneous and filled with errors—for not only is the original MAN receiving fallible but so too are all the others in the line of interpretation, translation and identifiable “spin” doctoring.

One of the most misreported items is an interchange of such as, in example: “Christ wept!” That is usually transformed into “Jesus wept”. Perhaps Jesus also wept—but Christ being a descriptive term does not mean the same thing as naming a person who might have wept.

“Well, it’s close enough,” you might retort. No, if it is not accurate, it is not “close enough”, for if “I” use the term “Jesus” and/or “Christ”—I do NOT mean the same thing unless I tell you that I have used it interchangeably. In that respect you will know my meaning and not an assumed meaning you foist upon me.

In most instances this has little impact—unless you are considering an infinite soul on its way to truth and honesty. Soul KNOWS, it does not “assume” or “presume”—those are the things of man’s own manifestation. Subconscious mind records and reprocesses data and when you realize that there is legitimately no UNCONSCIOUS, except in anesthesia perchance, you will better recognize the possibilities of brain, subconscious mind, and higher-intelligence often recognized as soul or “super- or supra-consciousness”. Frankly speaking, even in deep anesthesia the mind never gets beyond the subconscious level of consciousness. By the way, you do not “go under” anything in hypnosis—you move into a state of subconscious realization in expression where the lie or truth is present but without critical impact. Truth will ultimately produce the overriding conclusion if mandated to do so, however, because the critical conscious mind/brain is set aside as an “observer” which may or may not be able to recall the experienced details of a particular “sitting”. If the “subconscious” is in belief of the lie—it will continue to defend the lie until otherwise required to present the TRUTH. A person who truly believes a lie can pass any lie-detector test with ease. Convince the subconscious of something and the same holds true. Lie-detector tests are worse than worthless and only offer exploitation. This is especially true if a biased operative officiates at the test. Truth, as with beauty, is in the eye of the beholder—and more literally “in the mind” of the beholder.

The subconscious mind DOES have the ability to process, include and discard ideas but these must actually be confronted at the LEVEL of the input first giving belief to ideas and conclusions. THIS IS WHY MOST “CHURCHES” DO NOT ABIDE HYPNOSIS, FOR IN THAT STATE OF RELAXATION THE MIND IS HONEST AND CAN CHANGE ITS PERCEPTIONS QUITE NICELY. In this you need a “partner” but know that a quack therapist will simply make inroads into your already available mindset. With quackery you can either heal, cure or do incalculable damage. Mostly it does nothing but offer a bit of insight and entertainment of the experience itself. You go into and out of trance a thousand

or more times a day which is interesting in itself.

If you wish to play at “trance-formation”, then go for the fun of it and have a good time experiencing whatever your mind most wishes to experience as in a “virtual” setting. But note something: If you wish to visualize a spaceship or cadet—be careful, for you will conjure the very images now implanted into your subconscious by the play-writers. All visions now seem to present as insects with bug-eyes. **BE CAREFUL.** You don’t have to be “abducted” beyond the next chair, my friends.

I would offer that it is far more important to consider the FACTS being presented as to the events of the World Trade Center than to conjure the shape and depth of a space alien come to haunt you or thief your eggs and hybridize you. These make for good tales but have no basis in fact except as the mind conjures imagined wonders and possibilities.

I would leave this now because I want the latest bits of news arriving by fax in the past few minutes from “insiders”, as you call them, make their reports. One is specifically regarding what we have already written about the U.S. offering “exile” for the Presidential couple in the U.S.—somewhere—and possibilities of this week’s events expected to transpire. [QUOTING:]

ARROYOS OFFERED U.S. EXILE

U.S. emissaries not here for Bush visit but to tell Arroyos to cut and cut clean

A SPECTER is haunting Malacañang, and it has something to do with exile of the President no less, possibly to some hideaway in Montana or Wyoming, where Mike Arroyo can engage in his poultry business, and the President can write her memoirs of a putative presidency.

Palace sources have told *'PINAS* that two American emissaries came over to talk to President Arroyo in earnest that the U.S. government is not averse to any regime change in the Philippines.

The only catch is that this kind of regime must ascend to power through constitutional means, which indicates that the Bush government is not at all threatened by Vice President Teofisto Guingona’s takeover of the Palace or any other kind of peaceful transition.

Ironically, Guingona was one of the first victims of Ms. Arroyo. He was stumped when the Palace announced that he had resigned his Foreign Affairs portfolio, but the Arroyo aides insisted he did, leading to an embarrassing situation for the regime.

The same Palace sources told *'PINAS* that the emissaries offered the President exile to save her from the continuing barrage of attacks from the political opposition, the enlightened elements of the middle class, the Estrada force and even the revolutionary underground.

Based on the account of these sources, Arroyo was told that her government was no longer tenable, and the longer the Senate investigations last, the more political losses she would sustain, thus damaging her ability to make a real bid for the presidency in 2004.

Arroyo nearly fell off her chair when told by her U.S. overlords that, officially, they were concerned not with her complete puppetry to the U.S. but to her capacity to govern under a situation where she has lost all moral, ethical and political ascendancy.

Palace aides are now cushioning the big blow, and the line that is coming out is that the exercise of her stateswomanship would yield. That would be a Pyrrhic victory for a woman who had no basis to lead this country.

This would deter a bloodbath that the Palace fears would happen should there be a stalemate between the pro-Arroyo forces and those who would want to pry her out of her perch.

Out in the streets, thousands of people are marching and denouncing not only the Pidal caper but also the very foundations of the regime, from its illegitimacy, its incompetence, its failure to address the basic problems that beset the country.

Jose Pidal exposé is last straw

This offer came just as three Senate committees started investigating the Jose Pidal account, which to American observers conclusively proved the corruption in the Arroyo government, with some trenchant circles even asserting that the real President is not Ms. Gloria Arroyo but the husband, Jose Miguel T. Arroyo.

It is not unknown to the Americans that Mr. Arroyo has been behind the most significant appointments made, by the estranged wife, and they, too, know about her alleged special relations with Vicky Toh.

The Jose Pidal exposé by Senator Panfilo Lacson, the U.S. emissaries found out, has so damaged the President that it would be futile for her to try to make a political rebound.

U.S. federal investigators, in fact, have been feeding the political opposition with the data about the hundreds of millions of dollars in investments made by Mr. Arroyo since 2001, and most of these funds came to the U.S. through scores of accounts in Hong Kong, the Philippines and the United States.

Giving a decent name to corruption

The funds so far being linked to the Arroyo clique are not only P260 million, as related by Lacson. The figure is mind-boggling, and this Lacson will surely find out.

Consider the fact that the \$7 million from IMPSA ended in some hidden accounts.

Consider as well the payments made by alleged 13 cronies of the past administration, all of whom have been spared from criminal investigation and prosecution by the Department of Justice. These payments were made in Hong Kong, where top-level meetings were held.

Consider the renegotiations of the Piatco deal that called for huge retainers for Anthony Liongson and the payment of slush funds that eventually ended in the hidden accounts.

Consider the large amounts paid to the new political mandarins by elements associated with previous administrations that wanted to be assured that they could keep their loot.

Consider the deals hatched with large corporations for refunds of their corporate income taxes, the reduction of their rebates for consumers like Meralco and you see the larger picture.

Announced on December 30, 2002, the non-participation of Ms. Arroyo caused tempers to flare in Baguio City, with Palace sources saying that the couple fought over the issue that she would not run and lose in the presidential race next year.

Coups d’etat in a straw republic

Moreover, the rumblings of a coup d’etat had not been hidden from the emissaries, and at least five generals—discontented with the way Ms. Arroyo had been treating them—have planned to make a surgical operation to pry her out of the Palace, take her to a waiting plane and bring her to the U.S. refuge the Bush government has been preparing for her.

These generals hold the weapons that could blast the Arroyos to kingdom come, and they have been uneasy over the government’s alleged mismanagement of the economy and the military establishment.

The July 27, 2003 caper, which was actually a defensive move by a threatened cadre of young officers, was an ill omen for the Arroyo regime.

It let loose not only a torrent of sharp criticisms against a willy-nilly commander-in-chief.

These officers were the first group of military officers to demand that Mrs. Arroyo resign not only for corruption but for condoning the graft-ridden operations of former Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes, the psywar tactics of former intelligence chief Brig. Gen. Victor “Ka Eming” Corpus, and the large-scale selling of scarce weapons to the Moro secessionists and even the New People’s Army (NPA).

Their attack on their own commander-in-chief served notice to each and every one that the President has little support within the armed services, and that she has been ridiculed for far too long, and had been treated with contempt by professional soldiery.

All of these had a ring of truth.

Ms. Arroyo had failed miserably to secure the loyalty of the military for the simple reason that her regime is illegitimate—and it was ensconced into power through treachery.

—COMPLIMENT OF DR. LUCIO DE GALA
NATIONALIST MOVEMENT
TO FREE PHILIPPINES
September 22, 2003

[END QUOTING]

We realize that only our e-mail receivers will be “on top” of it but you can share or wait or whatever—for NO, we will NOT open a Website and be further exploited and open for discredit and further hounding. We have too many important things TO YET DO to allow ourselves the luxury of simply telling tales and prayer-wishing. No, it is NOT everyone’s right to know our business; it is a privilege that we opt to SHARE.

I conclude with recognition that we run behind as to dates and timelines but know that we are, in fact, right on top of events unfolding but press delays are unavoidable in our limited circumstances.

Thank you for your patience, for we are still “building Rome” from the ashes of its burning, to use a parable worthy of description of the events evolved into current “the way it is”. We are, quite literally, the Phoenix hatching in the ashes. It takes a while for the chick to crack its way to freedom from the shell both protecting and imprisoning its being.

With respect and honor to each of you, Salu (I salute you).—GCH

dharmā 

When Court Decisions Become MERE SCRAPS OF PAPER

[Part I of this 2-part book was published in the 10/1/03 CONTACT on page 6.] [QUOTING:]

POWER WITHOUT AUTHORITY CRISIS AND CONFLICT IN THE PRESIDENCY

BY FRANCISCO S. TATAD

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PART II

RESTORING THE CONSTITUTION AND THE RULE OF LAW

The constitutional order and the rule of law must be restored. Nothing else will provide the necessary closure. Wrongful acts must be renounced, their harmful effects undone, necessary reforms put in place. This is a challenge to all. But Mrs. Arroyo should lead. She should take the first step.

ARROYO'S MISTAKE

She could begin by recognizing that her seizure of presidential powers was not just a crime—it was a mistake.¹¹ She and Estrada had been elected to serve together for six years. Although they belonged to opposing parties, Estrada had named her to the Cabinet, something no President before him had done. Yet she started talking to the generals to help her remove him while she was still in the Cabinet. She publicly demanded Estrada's resignation instead of supporting the completion of the impeachment trial. Had she supported the latter, she would have succeeded Estrada in case of conviction, without any reproach; in case of acquittal, her staunch defense of due process would have made her a not unworthy successor to the single-term president. She would have gained the support of the masses, and the nation would have been one. But she allowed herself to be swayed by illicit ambition and bad advice. So the nation is divided. She should see that now. The error could still be rectified, the damage repaired, if she has the will to do so. It could even help her standing in the polls.

REYES' MUTINY

Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes, Estrada's Armed Forces Chief of Staff, will have to do the same. Reyes is now preparing to run for elective office. He should have the courage to admit that in 2001 he led a mutiny against the President and Commander-in-Chief, in violation of the Constitution and the Revised Penal Code.

The Constitution provides:

1) Civilian authority is, at all times, supreme over the military. The Armed Forces of the Philippines is the protector of the people and the State. Its goal is to secure the sovereignty of the State and the integrity of the national territory. (Article II, Section 3)

2) All members of the armed forces shall take an oath or affirmation to uphold and defend the Constitution. (Article XVI, Section 5)

3)...The armed forces shall be insulated from partisan politics. No member of the military shall engage in any partisan activity, except to vote. (Article XVI, Section 3)

Republic Act 6968 has also added to the Revised Penal Code the crime of coup d'etat, which penalizes anyone who tries to overthrow or actually overthrows a duly constituted government.

Reyes' "withdrawal of support" from Estrada, using the name of the Armed Forces, violated all the above-cited provisions. Estrada became President because the Filipino people elected him, not because Reyes or the military supported him. Reyes on the other hand became Chief of Staff because Estrada appointed him. If for any reason Reyes could no longer support his Commander-in-Chief, he was free to resign, and he should have resigned. It was the only honorable and legal thing to do. The act of withdrawing support is not a right or prerogative of the appointee but that of the appointing power, not of the subordinate but of the chief. The President and Commander-in-Chief may withdraw his support from his Chief of Staff or any military commander, not the other way round. Indeed, it was U.S. President Harry Truman who fired General Douglas MacArthur at the height of his popularity during the Korean War.

Reyes' action tried to raise the crime of mutiny to the level of a constitutional principle. It destroyed the constitutional order and the rule of law. It cannot be allowed to remain part of military tradition. The success of the 2001 coup did not destroy the criminal liability of its perpetrators, and it cannot be wiped away by the mere holding of new elections. It could have been extinguished had Arroyo and Reyes chosen to establish a revolutionary government with its own constitution. But they opted to invoke the Constitution they had rebelled against. They must, therefore, be dealt with, according to the same Constitution.

Nevertheless the offense could be mitigated, and the injury repaired if Reyes could find the courage to own his mistake and make amends.

At this writing, a "Citizens' Committee for the National Crisis" has called on the military organization to disown any participation in the 2001 coup and restore Estrada to power. For Reyes, this presents an opportunity and a challenge.

LACSON'S WITHDRAWAL

Senator Panfilo Lacson, Estrada's chief of the Philippine National Police, has to come forward too. Very few believe the PNP could have withstood the military forces ranged against Estrada, even if they tried, or that Lacson's withdrawal turned the tide against Estrada. But he did withdraw, and that violated his constitutional oath. He must explain it now. The public has been told vaguely that a group of PNP officers had threatened to shoot Lacson inside his own office if he did not support the mutiny.¹² But the details of this reported incident have never been revealed fully and authoritatively. Lacson

owes it to the nation and to himself to make a full disclosure now, especially since he has declared his interest in the presidency. If he has not done so by the time his paper is out, he should do so very quickly.

DAVIDE'S SCRAP OF PAPER

Now, the justices. In his Ramon Magsaysay lecture on September 3, 2002, Davide said: "The effectiveness of the courts is firmly rooted in their credibility in the public eye. *Without the people's belief in the justice system, court decisions become mere scraps of paper; and society is brought closer to chaos, as citizens become tempted to take the law into their hands.*"¹³ One could not have put it better. Indeed, so many Filipinos have come to regard the justices' ruling in *Estrada v. Arroyo* as a mere scrap of paper, especially in light of Panganiban's revelations. Thanks to Estrada and his counsel, the people now see very clearly that the acts of the public office (the court) and those of the public officer (the justices) are not always one and the same. When the justices act in accordance with law, they act in the name of the court; but when they act contrary to law, their act is theirs alone and not binding upon the court; they cannot use the court as a shield for their error or offense.

RES JUDICATA?

The usual run of lawyers and judges will say the justices had spoken with finality and that nothing more could be done. They quote the *res judicata* rule that says "a final judgment on the merits is conclusive as to the rights of the parties and their privies and, as to them, constitutes an absolute bar to subsequent action involving the same claim, demand or cause of action."¹⁴ Under this rule, there can be no remedy for error, once it has been interred in a final ruling. The justices then would always be right even when they are wrong.

NO LEGAL EXISTENCE

But in the Estrada case, the justices did not only err. They participated in the coup,¹⁵ and they admitted it. In their ruling, they said, "There is no ground to inhibit the 12 members of the Court who merely accepted the invitation of the respondent Arroyo to attend her oath-taking. As *mere spectators* of a historic event, said members of the Court *did not prejudge* the legal basis of the claim of respondent Arroyo to the presidency at the time she took her oath." They were not at all innocent spectators. What they did was a prohibited act, and the Panganiban book spells out the details of their crime. By operation of law, they ousted themselves from the case, *latae sententiae*,¹⁶ as it were—without further need of being told about their disqualification. By their crime, and under the maxim, "no man ought to be a judge in his own cause"¹⁷, they had no more authority to rule on the case than any stranger to the court would have authority to do so. The law simply took away from them the authority to hear and decide Estrada's case. Despite this, they stayed on the case and ruled against Estrada. The public impression of *prejudgment* arising from their prohibited act cannot be erased; their ruling cannot possibly bind. The court, which cannot act outside the law, cannot be bound by the act of its members that is against the law. In the eyes of the law, that ruling does not exist: it is deemed to have no legal existence. There is, therefore, no court ruling to which the *res judicata* rule may apply.

The justices owe it to the nation and to themselves to own their mistake and make amends. They could begin by recognizing the patent nullity of their ruling in *Estrada v. Arroyo* and by resigning *en masse*, not "constructively", but in written form.

LET'S BEGIN AGAIN

None of this will come easy. The various parties may have to be assured of absolute amnesty for coming clean. They should be so assured. We cannot have a further settling of scores. As a nation, we had lost so much time already: We have no time left for getting even; we have time only for getting on. We must close the widening political divide, stop acting as partisans and start being patriots for a change. We must bury the policy of hate and vindictiveness that has ruled our politics since 1986, learn to talk to each other again, and begin again. The Marcoses should be able to sit down with the Aquinos and *vice versa*; Fidel Ramos should be able to sit down with Estrada; Estrada, with Arroyo, Aquino, Ramos and Jaime Cardinal Sin; and the rest of us, with everybody else. We must now leave to history the issues we cannot resolve today. We must resolve to survive as one, lest we perish separately. Divided, there is no crisis we can overcome; united, there is none we cannot.

In this spirit, we must now work for peace in the country. We must exert every effort to end all internal conflicts, and prevent outsiders from playing us one against the other. There must be serious reform. As a minimum, government should aim to provide effective and efficient governance, make the economy grow, empower the poor, strengthen the moral foundation of the nation, and re-launch the Philippines as an important country in the region and the world.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

In *Nation on Fire*, I list 12 points which I believe should help us relaunch the country.¹⁸ I reproduce them here, with some revisions of the original text.

*** First, we must learn to admit our own mistakes and stop blaming everyone else.**

This is the starting point. We must be responsible for everything we do. We should be able to say we are wrong when we are, and stop blaming others for our mistakes. Once and for all, we must stop blaming foreigners for interfering in our affairs and imposing onerous agreements on us. We must fight for our interests, not expect others to fight for them. To ward off foreign intervention, we should stop choosing leaders who are the first ones to ask foreigners to interfere in our domestic affairs. We do not like talking about Mrs. Arroyo. But she has done everything to portray herself as President George W. Bush's little poodle in this neck of the woods. She did not, however, get it all from her father's genes. It is a common presidential disease.

As Stanley Kamow records it,¹⁹ both Manuel Luis Quezon and Sergio Osmena owed their careers to American mentors. As President of the Commonwealth, Quezon entrusted the formation of the Philippine Army to General Douglas MacArthur. After the war, MacArthur restored the old Filipino oligarchy and engineered the election of Manuel Roxas as first president of the newly restored Republic. Ramon Magsaysay was virtually invented by Colonel Edward Geary Lansdale, an American Central Intelligence Agency operative who had since been celebrated as Colonel Hillensdale in the *Ugly American* by William Lederer and Eugene Burdick and caricatured as Pyle in *The Quiet American* by Graham Greene. Frank Wisner, Lansdale's boss, offered Magsaysay political support in exchange for his acting as America's surrogate. The State Department promised President Quirino increased military assistance if he named Magsaysay secretary of national defense. Quirino took the bait, and that was the beginning of the end.

The CIA also financed Diosdado Macapagal, Mrs. Arroyo's father. As Garcia's vice president, he got \$50,000 from the Americans. In 1961, the CIA partly bankrolled his presidential campaign and provided political advice. This is documented by Joseph Burkholder Smith, who was in charge of the operation and who later wrote about it in his book *Portrait of a Cold Warrior*.

Even Ninoy Aquino, who died a martyr's death, worked with the CIA to set up training camps for anti-Sukarno rebels in eastern Indonesia in 1958. Aquino is cited for making his wife's family's Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac a training camp for the Indonesian rebels; bringing arms sourced from Taiwan to Sulawesi; setting up a secret radio transmitter in Manado; and acting as a channel of American funds to the rebels.²⁰ Although Marcos's ouster in 1986 has been trumpeted as the triumph of "People Power", the truth can now be told after 17 years, that it was largely the result of U.S. intervention.²¹ This was largely confirmed by the U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines, Francis Ricciardone, in a TV interview during the run-up to the March 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq.

Our next leaders should be able to maintain our strong historic ties with all our friends and allies without confusing our national interests with theirs. And we should be able to distinguish our duties as citizens from those of government. In a free society the most important office is that of the citizen. We cannot leave everything to government, or blame every mistake or misfortune on government. Following Ninoy's assassination we blamed everything on Marcos until we got Mrs. Aquino. In Estrada's time, we blamed everything on Estrada until we got Arroyo. Now, there is a tendency to blame everything on Arroyo. This must stop. Arroyo is indisputably part of the problem, but it all begins with us. We did not choose her to be president, but we have allowed her to exercise presidential powers without legitimate authority. For that, we must assume direct responsibility.

*** We have become a corrupt society. The society is corrupt not because the government is corrupt. Rather the government is corrupt because the society is corrupt. The war on corruption will not be waged or won by the corrupt going after the corrupt, just as the war on dangerous drugs will not be won by those who may in fact be protecting their own drug lords. Those who fight corruption (and illegal drugs) must first have clean hands.**

The government embodies the culture of society. The society is the spring, and government the river, which may not rise higher than its source. We delude ourselves when we denounce our public officials for corruption but spare the corruptors in business and everybody else, including ourselves.

We cannot fight corruption if we ignore what is happening in business, in the media, in our courts, in the NGOs, in the various groups that had been organized to fight the evil itself. Nor can we hope to fight it if we limit the meaning of corruption to stealing money from the public till or using public office to make money illegally. Corruption of public office begins when a candidate buys votes or cheats during an election, when she steals an office she has not won, when he seeks or occupies an office for which he is not qualified. And corruption of morals goes hand-in-hand with corruption of the intellect. The politician who exploits the ignorance of the ignorant, and tells the public what it wants to hear rather than what it needs to know is as corrupt as the one who robs the poor.

Congress and media thrive on exposés on corruption. But, as one writer once said, they only like to expose "the corruption of others".²² Nearly every exposé hits the headlines, but nobody is ever jailed or charged in court, unless one is an ousted President on whose presumed guilt rests the purported authority of his illegitimate successor. In recent years the Senate has become notorious for these exposés and their investigations. But it has not sent anyone to jail, nor has it proposed a cure, even an anodyne, for corruption. In South Korea, President Kim Dae Jung prosecuted and punished his own son for corruption, just like any other offender.

*** There are no quick fixes, no overnight solutions. We must plan long-term. Like Rizal's Tasio, we must be willing to plant the tree under whose shade we shall not sit. But whatever we can do we must do now.**

Most of our problems are as old as the hills. The most notable include poverty, injustice, corruption, crime, housing, education, health, infrastructure, public debt, insurgency, separatism. To these urbanization has added traffic and pollution, and President Bush has added international terrorism. None of these will be solved by propaganda or spin; only honest effort to address the root of every problem will. Our leaders must be prepared to tell the nation the harsh truth and demand sacrifice and hard work from everyone, beginning with themselves. Leader and led must be prepared to do things that do not make headlines or offer immediate gratification. Just as we plant trees that do not give instant fruit or shade, we should build institutions and programs whose real value is long term. We must seize the day not just for the moment but for the future.

*** Education is the key. But if we are to establish a truly responsive theory and system of education, we must first know who we are and what we want to become.**

We must have a clear idea of the world and the age in which we live, the society we want to become, and the kind of life we want to live for as long as the nation lives. This demands knowing the truth of our history, through our own eyes as Filipinos, rather than from a borrowed alien perspective. The founding of the nation, its colonial experience under Spain, its revolution against Spain, its proclamation of independence, its war against the United States, its colonial experience under the U.S., the emergence of the oligarchy and the new political class, the martial-law years, the cycle of corruption that has destroyed many leaders who had tried to make the Philippines a strong nation-state, the making and unmaking of our constitutional processes—all these must be reexamined as thoroughly and as honestly as possible, for the nation's true deliverance and development.

Education must expand our people's horizon and rekindle their faith in themselves. For years Filipinos used to describe the Philippines as the third-largest English-speaking country in the world. In Asia, their proficiency in English as the language of international diplomacy, the media, and commerce went unchallenged. Mindless language policies, however, have made that advantage a thing of the past. And Filipino has not flourished with the downgrading and decline of English. It has only been bastardized. The result is *Taglish*—an awkward and artless combination of street Filipino (which is Tagalog-based) and street English, unworthy to sit in the company of other national languages.

Filipino children are not inferior to those of other races. But the official language policy assumes they are. Where European children are encouraged to learn several languages at once, our politicians and educators assume Filipino children can only learn one language and very badly at that. They also assume that for students to become top-grade computer programmers, they must first give up any interest in philosophy, music, literature and the arts. These policies must be turned upside down.

We must invest more—much more—in education. And we must make sure that every peso intended for education goes to education. Although the Constitution provides the highest priority for education in the allocation of resources, in reality the biggest slice goes to employees' salaries and debt service. We must exert every effort to comply with the constitutional mandate. We must also cleanse the Department of Education of all corruption, particularly in the purchase of books, learning aids and materials.

For reasons of poverty, not every child of school age is able to go to school. Many who do, drop out after a short while. To keep them in school, they should be paid a small sum as a token compensation for the time they take out of the farm or their house chores, if the government can afford it. They should be given free notebooks, textbooks and pencils at least. In Indonesia, the government has a school feeding program.

Since the state cannot build enough classrooms and supply all the requirements for a progressively expanding student population, we must now try to make every home a classroom for those who are unable to enter the classroom. We must promote home schooling and distance education wherever possible. The efficacy of this alternative educational system is now being tried in many parts of the country, with highly satisfactory results. We must encourage the private sector to support it.

*** The media—notably television—have become as powerful as government. They threaten to co-opt government. With no constitutional accountability whatsoever, they can be used to foment or spread anarchy and disorder. They must reform or be reformed.**

Under the Bill of Rights, “no law shall be passed abridging the freedom of the press, of expression, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and petition the government for redress of grievances.” This puts the media above any other commercial establishment. Untouched by any kind of regulation, the industry is additionally protected from foreign competition. The Constitution prohibits alien participation; only Filipinos may own and manage the mass media. We must reexamine these provisions.

In Estrada's case, the media did not merely chronicle or comment on his destabilization and ouster. Some of them performed stellar roles. Then they metamorphosed into Arroyo's propaganda organs, promoting her cult, and suppressing or slanting stories unfavorable to her and her regime. While they reported every small detail of the 300,000 crowd at EDSA 2, they dismissed as a total nonevent the close-to-2-million people massed against Arroyo at EDSA 3. And while they screamed in big headlines every alleged act of indiscretion and petty corruption under Estrada, they now buried in the deepest forest all allegations of wrongdoing against the Arroyo regime.

Lack of meaningful competition has arrested the professional growth of the Philippine media. While foreign media products—films, videos, TV programs and publications, etc.—are free to enter the local market, foreign capital or expertise is not. Neither CNN nor Rupert Murdoch's press empire may relocate in Manila. This shuts out so much capital and expertise that could otherwise boost the economy and upgrade the profession.

From being the leaders in Asia until the seventies, Philippine newspapers have become the least admired in the region. Even the biggest broadsheets have become political propaganda sheets and scandalmongers, while radio and television report every minor breaking news like a major forest fire. Corruption, irresponsibility and arrogance have combined to make the media sometimes more frightening than a runaway train. They have to reform or be reformed.

*** Politics has become the nation's biggest business. This is a serious disorder, a major cause of underdevelopment.**

We are suffering from a surfeit of politics. Politicians have become the bane of the nation, but we seem not to be learning any lesson at all. While the rest of the world is focused on economic and moral survival, our politicians are riveted on their cheap publicity stunts. Almost every business firm has been forced to retrench, but government continues to grow in the opposite direction—without any corresponding growth in the quality of its service or personnel. The state remains the nation's biggest employer, claiming more than 60 percent of the national budget for salaries alone. But it is also the biggest non-producer. Even Microsoft would have long gone under if it spent this much on personnel.

Confronted with a rapidly expanding market, the state must not disappear but rather reassert its role in making sure that the disadvantaged get their just share of the gross national wellbeing. But we need a smaller, leaner, yet more efficient and effective government whose standards of performance and pay are comparable with those of the private sector. Government must not try to do what the private sector can do at lower costs and better. We must privatize every office or function that can be privatized, and professionalize every office or activity that government chooses to retain. Government must not employ more people or spend more money or time than the private sector would otherwise hire or spend on a particular office, project, or program. The bureaucracy must be isolated from politics to ensure the continuity of programs, while maintaining the highest levels of professionalism and patriotism.

Every president is free to appoint his Cabinet and key political advisers. But the bureaucracy as such should not be treated as a political plum by every incoming administration. It should be answerable only to civil service laws and not to the caprices of every new set of power-holders. This is the only way to build a strong bureaucracy and a highly competitive private sector.

*** Our presidential system has not worked. We must replace it now. We must reform the Constitution.**

There is probably no other country in the world where a presidential candidate must spend more than five billion pesos to land a job that pays 600,000 pesos a year or a total of 3.6 million pesos for a six-year term. Whether he spends his own money or not, it is not unreasonable to expect him to try and recover what

he has spent. Since there is no legal way of doing so, he will have to do so by extralegal means. This is no recipe for good and honest government.

Because of the high stakes involved, everyone tries to outmaneuver everyone else from start to finish. Many try to claim victory, even after losing the vote. The result, almost always, is far from clean. The mere difficulty of holding a credible presidential election, particularly in an archipelagic setting, argues in favor of a different system. In a parliamentary system, no one is elected nationwide. Each legislative district elects a Member of Parliament (MP), and the MPs elect the Prime Minister. He in turn forms his government. The elections therefore are less expensive and easier to supervise.

CHOOSING BETTER LEADERS

The parliamentary system also allows greater opportunity to choose better leaders. The MPs usually choose the best qualified among their peers to head the government. Under the presidential system, the most “popular” TV star has the best chance of being elected president, even though he may be absolutely incompetent, and his “popularity” built on pure myth. This risk is compounded when there is no mature or responsible political party system.

For Bagehot, presidential government is “government by an *unknown quantity*”.²³ The voters choose someone of unknown smallness to confront a crisis of unknown greatness, on the basis of his or her media mileage. The voters do not really know the candidate, apart from what the media say of him or her; if they truly knew, they would have chosen someone else. Of course from time to time the electorate gets lucky and turns up an Abraham Lincoln. But this is like winning the lottery, and success in a lottery is no argument for lotteries. The presidential system has no mechanism that allows the voters to throw out the scoundrel at midterm and replace him with a bigger scoundrel or a smaller one. Elected to a fixed term, the president has the right and duty to serve out his full term, even if he proves to be incompetent and his policies turn out to be injurious to the nation. He may be removed only by impeachment on grounds specified by the Constitution. Of course, as the Estrada case has shown, a powerful minority could oust the duly elected President, simply by having a few military commanders and Supreme Court justices install the Vice President. A parliamentary system, on the other hand, allows parliament to turn out a government that is not doing well, merely on the basis of a no-confidence vote, without the generals having to withdraw their support from the head of government.

After two coups in 15 years, there is more than enough reason to consider a system that allows a change of leaders in midstream without harming the Constitution. Precisely because of the conduct of the military and the justices on January 19-20, 2001, our Constitution is a wreck. The President now serves at the pleasure of the generals and the justices. This must end.

We need to strengthen the constitutional foundations of government. This must go hand in hand with a total overhaul of the electoral system and a no-nonsense program of political education for the voters.

*** The Church has an indispensable and irreplaceable role to play in society. It must be preserved and protected from intervention by the State and from those who would misuse it for worldly ends.**

Some churchmen played key roles in Estrada's ouster. But it is wrong to say the Church was involved. These churchmen belong to the Church but the Church does not belong to them. They invoked the name of the Church but they acted as political partisans rather than as pastors; they did not represent the Church at all. The same distinction between public office and public officer, between Supreme Court and its justices, applies here. When churchmen act according to the teachings of the Church, they act in the Church's name. But when they act contrary to the teachings of the Church, they are on their own and may not invoke the Church's name at all. This applies to the highest prelate as it does to the merest pastor.

* Origins of Separation

Under Article II, Section 6 of the Constitution, "the separation of Church and State shall be inviolable." This tends to mislead many pastors and politicians. Some priests tend to see themselves as political leaders, and some politicians tend to believe priests have no business talking of morality in the political sphere. Both are clearly mistaken. We shall understand the principle of "separation" better if we go back a little to its origin. The early Christians were persecuted by the Roman emperors, from Nero (AD 54-68) to Diocletian (284-305). In AD 313, the persecution ended with the Edict of Milan. But the Christian Emperor Constantine the Great also assumed certain papal powers. Thus began Caesaropapism, which quickly spread to the Greek Orient.

In AD 494, Pope Gelasius I, writing from Rome to Emperor Anastasius in Constantinople, made the distinction between the sacred powers of the Popes and the royal powers of kings. This merely restated the original, "Give to God what is God's and to Caesar what is Caesar's." But it laid a new foundation for the principle. In *Gaudium et Spes*, Vatican II says, "The Church and the political community in their own fields are independent and autonomous of each other." The Code of Canon Law bans the clergy and religious from partisan politics, public office and business enterprise. Pope John Paul II has repeatedly emphasized that priests are priests, not politicians or social workers, and that they should leave partisan politics to laymen.

CLERICAL INTERVENTION

But they have not only a right but above all a duty to propose moral principles, guidelines and criteria in all human activities. They have a right and a duty to pass moral judgment on all matters related to the common good and to fundamental human rights and freedoms. In the anti-Estrada campaign, however, some misguided clerics imprudently lent their moral authority to support the act of disrupting a legitimate constitutional process for highly partisan ends. This has no moral or legal justification. The moral duty of churchmen, like everybody else, is to support just laws and just processes, not to inveigh or lead mass action against them. The Constitution is not an unjust law, and the processes under it are not unjust either. The clerics' disruptive intervention in the Senate trial wreaked havoc on the constitutional order and the harmonious communion of the faithful. Smarting from this regrettable behavior, some politicians have since tried to espouse morally repugnant proposals, in the mistaken hope of "punishing the clerics" or "getting even". Much of the more fatuous and irresponsible statements on human life, family, and population issues coming out of Congress and the media is an offshoot of this. Regrettably, almost every aspirant for national office seems to be parroting these statements.

*** Injustice, not poverty, is the gravest social evil. Too many laws but not enough justice. Too many justices, but not enough just men. We have become a lawless people.**

If a country cannot enforce its traffic laws, its tax laws, its property laws, its environmental laws, to name just a few, what laws can it possibly enforce? If a nonelected Supreme Court can deprive an elected President of his office even without a case being brought against him in court, and without his being asked or told anything about it, is there anything else such a court cannot do? If total lack of regard for the law reigns in the highest court, what can possibly reign in the lowest court? And what will reign in the alleys or the streets away from the courts? The rule of law does not require more laws. It only requires more justice. We cannot have laws without justice, and we cannot have justice unless we follow the law. No man is above the law. Yet the justices will not submit. We cannot have men and women in black robes wearing the title of Justice but who mirror injustice and lawlessness.

*** We are poor, not because we have not been killing unborn children, but because we have, among other things, failed to educate and train our people well, tap into relevant technology, make use of idle capital, much of which is in the hands of the poor. We must release it into the economy now.**

We are poor because we are poor. So goes the law of circulation causation. But this does not teach us anything. Rather, we are poor because we do not have enough capital. And the little we have is so inequitably distributed. We consume much more than we produce, spend much more than we earn, and do not have the necessary training, skills or work ethic to produce the goods and services which others produce much cheaper and better. We do not have the infrastructure or policy environment needed to develop our agriculture, industry or services faster. We do not have enough access to technology, which remains in the hands of rich foreigners. Corruption is unbridled, and many among the rich stash away their money abroad, instead of using it productively at home. The neo-Malthusians would say we are poor because our population keeps on growing, and we refuse to sterilize all our women and kill unborn children.

THE REAL SCORE

The following data will tell us the real score.

*** Average GDP growth, 1976-2000**—According to the *Economist Intelligence Unit*, the Philippines averaged a GDP growth of 3.1 percent over this period of 25 years. The best it ever did was 8 percent in 1976, under Marcos. From time to time it hit 5 percent, but could not sustain it. This growth rate doubles the economy every 23 years.

Over the same period, Malaysia did 6.8 percent; Thailand, 6.5 percent; Korea, 7.6 percent; Indonesia averaged 5.4 percent. Korea was doubling its economy every nine-and-a-half years; Thailand every 11 years.

*** Savings rate**—In 1998, according to the World Bank, Filipinos saved 15 percent of GDP. By comparison, Indonesians saved 24 percent; Thais, 42 percent; Malaysians, 48 percent; and Koreans, 34 percent.

*** Tax effort**—From 16.3 percent of GNP in 1998, this declined to only 12.7 percent in 2001—the lowest level since 1998 and the lowest in Southeast Asia. Structural causes: steady reduction in tariffs in line with WTO and AFTA; failure to index excise taxes to inflation; and tax incentives given to more vigorous sectors of the economy.

*** Tax privileges**—In 2001, according to the Department of Finance, import-duty exemptions and income tax holidays for priority investment projects cost the government 187.2-billion pesos in foregone revenues. The tax incentives are administered by the Philippine Economic Zone Authority, Board of Investments, and other agencies managing industrial zones.

*** Debt to GDP ratio**—In 2002, the total public debt stood at P3 trillion, split evenly between foreign and domestic. From 2000 to 2002, public debt grew faster than GDP. In the P750 billion 2002 budget, P204 billion went to interest payments, P250 billion to personal services, P144 billion to local governments, and only P59 billion (7 percent) to capital outlay. As of 2001, the debt to GDP ratio stood at 81 percent—the highest in Southeast Asia. The comparative figure is 12 percent for Thailand, 28 percent for Indonesia, and 16 percent for Malaysia. The public-sector debt in foreign currency stood at more than 73 percent of GDP, for which the country needed an estimated \$2 billion in annual financing. About 88 percent is medium- to long-term debt, 11.6 percent short term. For Thailand, the short-term debt is 45 percent; for Malaysia, 25 percent; for Indonesia, 10 percent.

*** Competitiveness**—According to the 2002 rankings of the Institute for Management Development (Laussane, Switzerland), the Philippines ranks 40th among 49 countries; dead last in infrastructure and productivity; 37th in government efficiency; and 44th in business efficiency. According to an ADB study, Philippine infrastructure is at least 10 to 15 years behind those of Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia.

*** Foreign Direct Investments**—From 1992 to 1997, a period of relative growth, the Philippines took an average of less than 6 percent of the total FDI that went into the ASEAN states.

*** Concentration of corporate ownership**—According to a 2000 World Bank report, the top 15 Filipino families own 55.1 percent of all corporations in the Philippines. In Japan, the top 15 families own only 2.8 percent; in Taiwan, only 20.1 percent; and in Korea, 38.4 percent. In Thailand, the comparative figure is 61.7 percent. Thirty-nine family-owned corporate groups own 216 of the 1,000 top corporations—representing about one-third of the sales of these largest corporations. Like the Korean and Japanese *zaibatsus*, the Filipino conglomerates have diversified interests, including banks; and receive preferential treatment from Government.

*** Agriculture**—Filipinos pay the equivalent of 30 U.S. cents for a kilogram of rice. Thais pay only \$0.15; Vietnamese, Indonesians and Chinese pay \$0.16. Filipino farmers spend double to triple what Thai or Vietnamese farmers do to grow the crop. Philippine rice production has been growing at an average of 1.9 percent over the last 10 years; Thailand's by 3 percent and Vietnam's by 5.4 percent. The Philippine Rice Research Institute says the Philippines produces only a quarter of its potential in rice yields: actual yield of 2.9 tons a hectare, against potential of 12 tons. One reason: Only some 29 percent of all potentially irrigable land (1.3 million hectares out of a total of 4.66 million hectares) is irrigated. Some 80 percent of Filipino households devote at least half of all their expenses to food. The poorest spend at least two-thirds (66 percent) of all household income on food.

*** Employment**—Against a total of 2 million new entrants to the labor force, job creation rate is among the lowest in the region. Most workers, both skilled

and unskilled, increasingly look to foreign jobs market, lacking opportunities at home. This is exacerbated by some big companies shutting down. Out of a labor force of 30 million, unemployment stands at 11-12 percent, underemployment at 24 percent.

* **Poverty incidence**—From 1970 to 1990, according to the World Bank, incidence of absolute poverty in Malaysia declined from 18 percent to 2 percent; in Thailand, from 26 percent to 16 percent; in Indonesia, from 60 (1970) to 11 percent (1996). In the Philippines, despite the relatively strong growth between 1994 and 1997, 33 percent of all households remain below the poverty line.

The data is clear. Infrastructure is weak. Agriculture is inefficient. Most of the top corporations are owned by only a few families. Debt is growing faster than GDP, and debt to GDP ratio is the highest in the region. People do not save. Unemployment is rising. The government cannot collect taxes but is throwing away billions in tax exemption privileges. Foreign investors are going elsewhere. A full one-third of the population live in absolute poverty. GDP growth is very slow. The economy cannot compete.

While our Asian neighbors are building massive infrastructure in agriculture, energy, water, transportation, telecommunications, health and education, we seem caught in a trance. At the heart of Asia, epic developments are taking place, starting with the Three Gorges Dam in China, the Mekong development project spanning Tibet, Yunnan, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand, the road and rail network linking Europe to Asia, the Kru Canal project that will connect the Andaman Sea to the Gulf of Thailand, the Bakun Dam in Malaysia, some major water development projects in India, the Trans-Korea Railway, and the Trans-rapid magnetic levitation train in Shanghai. In our case, every major project has sailed into financial scandal, and we seem to spend more on billboards publicizing our politicians' roles in some insignificant projects than on the projects themselves.

SOLVING POVERTY WITH THE POOR

For many decades, governments have tried to solve the problem of poverty *for the poor*. None of the policies worked. It is time to solve the problem of poverty *with the poor*. The poor have to get involved, they have to be at the center of the monumental effort to make them real owners of the economy and real engines of the capitalist system.

Under Estrada, a group of professionals organized by Hernando de Soto's *Instituto Libertad y Democracia* (IW) began an in-depth study of all the idle assets held by the Filipino poor. Estrada was ousted before the study could be completed, but even then the initial findings showed the extent of idle wealth in the hands of the poor.²⁴ In real estate alone (using figures and values before 30 June 1998), the poor have accumulated assets worth more than \$132 billion, in 40 years. Of this, \$72 billion is urban land and \$60 billion, rural.

These accumulated assets represent the informal settlements spread throughout blighted areas, alongside railroads, *esteros*, riverbanks, under bridges; in properties with defective titles; in areas for priority development; in mortgage community programs; in fishpond areas and fishermen's villages; in indigenous communities, etc. Not included is the value of the underground businesses of the poor; their clothing and manufacturing industries, jeepneys and trucks, repair shops, utility distribution services, shopping centers, and street vending facilities.

This figure is nine times greater than the value of all foreign investments in the country at the time (\$15 billion); nine times greater than the capital of the country's largest state-owned enterprises (\$14 billion); seven times greater than the total savings and time deposits in commercial banks (\$19 billion); four times greater than the market value of the 216 domestic corporations listed on the Philippine Stock Exchange at the time (\$31 billion). This, however, is "dead capital" without any role in the creation of new wealth for the nation. The poor may not leverage it as capital, because the system has not allowed them to acquire legal title.

For instance, if an urban poor family should wish to gain legal access to land for a home, there is no way it could do so. Since it cannot afford the price of urban land, the next best thing that family can do is to acquire agricultural land on the city fringe and have it declared for urban use. But that would involve 216 bureaucratic steps in 57 public and private agencies, and could take between 14 and 28 years to complete.

If those who are already settled on city land should want to legalize their occupancy, the process would involve 168 bureaucratic steps in 53 public and private agencies, which could take between 13 and 25 years to complete. If they should happen to live on agricultural land, which they want to convert to urban land, legalization of their occupancy would entail another 213 bureaucratic steps in 66 public and private agencies, which would take 15 to 27 years to complete.

Given such a hostile legal environment, 60 percent of Filipinos choose to hold assets without any legal formalities. The lack of opportunities outside the cities, the lack of a national zoning law to govern the geography of development and the lack of competent authority to enforce and protect public and private property rights merely compound the problem.

But this vast idle capital can be mobilized, and must be mobilized. First, there must be sufficiently strong political will. Then there must be corresponding competence. And the government could begin by creating expedient, low-cost, and legally acceptable alternatives to access and use property as capital. All processes required for capital formation and property definition must be consolidated into one law or code. *The objective should be to help the poor mobilize, combine, divide, and liquefy their assets for productive purposes. Legal and administrative reform should also make the cost of doing business legally infinitely cheaper than doing business informally.*

With the cooperation and support of Congress and the rest of the nation, there is no reason why this great mobilization of capital could not be done. Many will say it is unattainable. We must now attempt the apparently impossible.

ORGANIZING THE POPULATION

One persistent idea that has crept into political and economic briefings is solving poverty through population control. The idea is alien, but the thrust is simple: We are poor because we are too many; the state must then prevent the poor from breeding. Yet the data shows no direct cause-and-effect relationship between population density and poverty. For example, Congo, with only 24 human beings per square kilometer, has a per capita income of \$600, while Monaco, with the world's highest population density of 15,993 per square kilometer, has a per capita income of \$27,000. Hong Kong, with 6,682 per square km., has a per capita income of \$25,400; Singapore, with 7,136 per square km., has

\$26,500. Productivity, rather than sheer number, provides a better clue to the poverty or wealth of populations. If the nation's wealth were more evenly distributed, the poor would be fewer. But if the state really wanted to play God, it could oblige those who espouse population control to help bring down the population by jumping off the tallest building. That might work even better than state-sponsored contraception or abortion. It would also give those who swear by population control a chance to give witness to their convictions. But this is a serious matter.

POPULATION AS POWER

The Philippines, one is told, has today a standing population of 80 million. That, again one is told, would double in 25 years. Granted the theory is sound—though we shall not know until 25 years later—is it something to look forward to or fear? If Mahathir Mohamed were told that Malaysia would soon be as numerous, would he call in a plague of abortionists, or would he praise Allah for putting his country on the road to becoming a great power? Population is a requirement and attribute of power. But the word is invariably used today to scare us with cookbook Malthusian horrors. Those did not work before, but human memory habitually fails. In 1798, Thomas Robert Malthus in his *Essay on the Principle of Population* said population grows geometrically while subsistence grows only arithmetically; therefore many will die as population exceeds food supply. In 1968 Paul Erlich, in *Population Bomb*, said that by the 1970s hundreds of millions of people, including 6.5 million Americans, would starve, because of "overpopulation". The oil crisis of the 70s and the famine in the Sahel in the 80s proved that other factors could cut food supplies more quickly than rising population.

NSSM 200

In 1974 the Malthusian theory took a new twist. U.S. National Security Study Memorandum (NSSM) 200, a document prepared by a team led by Dr. Henry Kissinger, concluded that continued population growth in the developing countries—the study focused on 13 countries including the Philippines—constituted a *real threat* to America's overall economic interests, and must be controlled. This study was kept a tightly guarded national security secret until about 1989, when it first leaked out. It held that if the poor countries continued to grow, they would end up consuming their own natural resources, thereby depriving the industrial countries of those resources. Secondly, if these countries should finally acquire the technology of the rich countries, today's masters could be tomorrow's slaves. Finally, every generation brings its own values that are potentially destabilizing to the status quo; these must be minimized, if not totally averted.

NSSM 200 provided the basis for the global population control program that sought to limit the size of every family to two children by the year 2000. The U.S. government, which had by then legalized abortion in *Roe v. Wade*, led this campaign, using all its departments and agencies to pursue its objective. The global assault began at the first international population conference in Bucharest (1974), then continued in Mexico (1984), Cairo (1994), Beijing (1995), Copenhagen, Istanbul, and the United Nations headquarters, New York. After 2001, however, the U.S. position radically changed under President George W. Bush. At the Fifth Asian and Pacific Population Conference in Bangkok on December 16, 2002, the U.S.

found itself ranged against the countries it used to lead in past conferences. Europe, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Japan have remained as focused as ever on their programs to “depopulate” the developing world. Invoking their position as donor countries, they have intensified the pressure on poor countries to adopt the population policies that have caused the irreversible “birth dearth” in the First World.

ORIGINS OF POPULATION CONTROL

Population control is not to be confused with responsible parenthood, which both Church and State must encourage and promote. The earliest origins of population control take us back to Moloch, the god to whom the Canaanites and Phoenicians sacrificed children; to the Pharaoh who ordered all Israelite newly born males thrown into the Nile; to Herod who ordered the slaughter of the innocents in hopes of averting a future challenge to his rule. In our time, aside from Malthus, it got its inspiration from Darwin’s “survival of the fittest”, Francis Dalton’s preferential option for “superior genes”, Mary Stoppes’ and Margaret Sanger’s war against “the socially unfit”, Adolf Hitler’s belief in a *superior* Aryan race, and Rockefeller’s eagerness to fund this social engineering to *improve* the human race. It is not an economic solution to an economic problem. It is an ideological construct, with no small tinge of racism, to prevent the poor from overtaking the rich.

POPULATION AS HUMAN CAPITAL

A long tradition of economists, however, has shown that every significant economic advance in history has been accompanied by strong population growth, and that economic development is better explained by such issues as terms of trade, debt service, cost of intermediate goods, and political stability, than by a decrease in population growth. Gary Becker, a Nobel Prize winner for economics, cites “human capital” as a primary source of economic development. Because man is creative, resources are not necessarily fixed, and the rate of return on investments in human capital rises as the stock of human capital increases.

Confirming Becker’s theory, the 1999 Human Development Report, published by the UNDP, says, “Despite rapid development growth, food production per capita increased by nearly 25 percent during 1990-1997.” Likewise, the World Development Report notes dramatic gains in the production of rice, maize and wheat, and concludes that through human ingenuity, food production has stayed ahead of population growth. Julian Simon describes people as “the ultimate resource”.

From the onset of the Asian financial crisis, seven million global Filipinos have kept the national economy afloat with their dollar remittances. There is no clearer proof of the benefits of a strong population in a time of crisis. At a 1.9 annual growth rate,²⁵ the country’s population is growing at a normal healthy pace. This is no “population explosion”. By contrast, most European countries have negative birth rates. They are rapidly “depopulating” themselves. The UN Fund for Population Activities 1996 report says, in 51 of 185 countries—about 44 percent of total world population—fertility is now below replacement level. There are more deaths than births in 15 of these countries, and the problem is spreading. Without new births, and even with some inward migration, their cities are drying up, threatening their social security systems, in the long

term, with inevitable collapse. Those who outlive their pensions will have to be put permanently to sleep; euthanasia, if not yet there, will have to be legislated.

We cannot follow these countries down the same garden path. We must defend the fundamental right and freedom of couples and parents to plan their families without state intervention. The state must defend and protect its population as a primary resource, and convince others to invest in its development. Indeed, we should invest more in people, not in how to phase them out. We should redefine our priorities, put more money into education, health care, technology acquisition so that development could spread more evenly to the countryside and mindless urban migration could be stanchd. In the end, the depopulated countries will have to rely more on migrant labor and robotics. Our countries alone will be able to supply the global warm bodies needed to run basic services. We must not lose that advantage.

*** After years of neglect, we have made the country look like one big “Smokey Mountain”. Squalor, which should never be synonymous with poverty, has become a national symbol. We must clean up and recast our physical environment as part of a genuine and thoroughgoing reform.**

Development, growth, progress—whichever word we use must have some clear external manifestation. A poor country may look poor, but it should not look dirty at all. A country that cannot collect its garbage; that allows its highways, avenues and thoroughfares to be polluted with vulgar, obscene and just plain ugly billboards; and leaves condemned buildings as eyesores; that allows the greedy rich to build on every open space, while the poor build basketball courts in the middle of busy side streets; that allows roads, bridges, buildings, ports, airports, light-rail transport system and other public infrastructure to be inaugurated before they are finished, only to go to seed soon thereafter without ever being finished; that allows huge malls to rise in the busiest parts of the metropolis without being required to build their own access roads and other amenities—such a country cannot claim to be serious; and its government cannot claim to be in charge.

A poor country may have only poor towns and cities. But these towns and cities should be able to collect their garbage, regulate traffic, plant some trees. They cannot allow everything to decay before their very eyes. If government cannot relocate smokestack industries away from population centers where people need to breathe, it could at least dredge the *esteros* and use a coat of paint to brighten up the place. If it cannot do any of these small things, it should not be embarrassed to call on the private sector—or citizens—for help, in the name of the common good. But—

*** We have no sense of the common good. It is “every man for himself.” The only thing that matters is that we get what we want, no matter at whose expense. This cannot go on.**

We live in an increasingly permissive age. Individualism is on the rise and self-interest sits on top of the common good; an excess of rights talk drowns all talk of civic responsibility; everything seems to revolve around “me”. At best, what is good for me is also good for you, although what is good for you may not be good for me. At worst, everybody is at war with everybody else; or, “everybody is thinking only about himself, nobody is thinking about me”.

Each one of us tends to become a law unto himself. We regard our personal and private lives as nobody else’s business but our own. And we insist on this even after our private lives have entered the public realm, after our private indiscretions have become a public embarrassment. This permissive mentality breeds a spirit of lawlessness.²⁶

A genuine concern for others helps to build a spirit of community, a keen sense of justice and a love for the common good. This may not come spontaneously to the individual, nor can it be legislated. But it can be fostered and developed through education, diligent study and earnest formation of conscience. At the height of the East Asian financial crisis in 1997, South Korean households brought out whatever small quantities of gold they could to help shore up their battered currency and dwindling reserves. Like the widow’s mite in Scripture,²⁷ the total did not amount to very much. But it was an outstanding act of patriotism and love for the common good. It showed a wealth of social capital seldom encountered in developing countries. This is what we must build up.

Social capital is a people’s ability to work together for a common purpose. A high level of social capital permits society to organize with ease its economic and political resources for the common good. It is culture-based. It develops from a spirit of genuine trust. The higher the level of trust between and among individuals, the easier they are able to organize without state intervention or support. The ability to organize—or self-organize—is of paramount value in a democracy. No stable democracy, according to Fukuyama, “can come into being on the basis of a mass of unorganized, isolated individuals, able to make their own views and preferences known only at election time.”²⁸

We need to be able to trust each other and to work together, for our democracy to function and for our economy to hold its own in the globalizing environment. Our ability to obey the law and work with the institutions and processes that facilitate social intercourse is a manifestation of this trust. Where trust is high, we need not know the exact text of the law to get our due; we only have to know the spirit of the law and be guided by it. The high level of litigiousness in our society merely shows a low level of trust among Filipinos.

This can be explained partly by our experience under our colonial masters and under authoritarian rule. The policy of “divide and rule” promoted deep distrust among Filipinos. A number of lesser demagogues also contributed their share. But we cannot allow ourselves to be haunted forever by the ghosts of our colonial and authoritarian past. Nor can we allow every stripe of opportunist to divide the nation.

We cannot allow mistrust to persist and shape our view of the law and our institutions. This, of course, is easier said than done. The successful conduct of Estrada’s trial, whatever its outcome, could have set the stage for a thorough cleanup of government. It would have facilitated subsequent legal processes which otherwise tend to sail against the wind of powerful political forces. But even those who had played key roles in writing the Constitution could not abide by its key provisions and processes—just because they could not get an instant hanging.

The Supreme Court justices, whose only reason for being is to uphold the Constitution and the law, did not hesitate to proclaim anarchy, the very negation of law, as *suprema lex*. No less than the Chief Justice, highly

praised for his role at the impeachment trial by those who knew little of the process, extolled the action on the streets as a just continuation of the process he would neither prevent nor deplore. The President's elective term, which the Constitution did not want reduced to a mere tenure at the pleasure of Congress, became very much less than that in the hands of the justices.

We cannot hope to rebuild trust on the basis of a Constitution that has been wrecked by its guardians and protectors. We can throw out the latter, but that cannot possibly undo all the harm. We must first rebuild the Constitution before we can rebuild our people's trust in it. Claro M. Recto was right, and the Davide court proved it: Unless the Constitution first resides in the hearts of the people (and we include the justices), it will remain a mere scrap of paper. The people must write a new Constitution for themselves. They must choose their delegates on the basis of the things they believe in; they must know and understand what is finally written before they are asked to ratify it; and the plebiscite must be completely honest and clean.

This process will require time and effort. But it must be done now. It will be opposed by those who fear for their positions of power and influence. But for once the people must decide in favor of themselves, rather than in favor of any vested group, or any elected or non-elected leader. Constitution-making is a sovereign act of citizens.

Under the Constitution, any amendment to it may be proposed by:

a) Congress on a vote of three-fourths of all its members, or

b) a constitutional convention, which Congress may call on a vote of two-thirds of all its members, or which the people may call on the recommendation of a majority of all the members of Congress, or the people themselves through initiative, on the petition of at least 12 percent of the total number of registered voters, of which every legislative district must be represented by at least 3 percent of the registered voters therein.²⁹

Other than the people themselves, Congress is the only organ of government empowered to propose amendments or call a convention to propose amendments to the Constitution. The president does not figure in it at all. He can conduct secret maneuvers to pursue his own agenda, but the Constitution does not confer on him any role. We should, therefore, not be disturbed by the powerful few who fear constitutional reform. We should proceed on the basis of our concern for our ravaged Constitution, without allowing ourselves to be distracted from the economic turbulence, which threatens to sink the nation.

Constitutional reform is indispensable. But it is far from everything. We need to do something about the things we do and the way we do things. We need to do something about our "damaged culture". "Cultural revolution" brings back images of Red Guards reading red books and chasing their quarries up to the Yangtze River. It may be too strong a word, so we shall simply use "cultural reform". But whatever term we use, we must do something about our manners as a people. By manners I mean manners, and a little bit more. The English philosopher Thomas Hobbes says: "By manners I mean not here, decency of behavior, as how one man should salute another, or how a man should wash his mouth, or pick his teeth before company, and such other points of the *small morals*; but those qualities of mankind that concern their living together in peace and unity."³⁰

It took martial law to make people queue for their bus rides and cinema tickets; to stop spitting and urinating on the sidewalk and throwing cigarette butts, corncocks, and banana peelings on the streets. But not even martial law could compel them to keep those admirable habits. We have become so inured to disorder that we bring it even to high office and our places of worship. In the Senate—once the temple of parliamentary rectitude—use the name of prayer to deliver sacrilegious and offensive speeches. They use unparliamentary language to express unparliamentary ideas. They smoke in committee hearings, and eat at the plenary hall without their attention being called.

In Malacañang, the temporary occupant uses the name of God to justify her coup and some of her more un-presidential acts. She throws tantrums and things, in closed-door Cabinet meetings and in public. A top military commander tries to even up the score by talking at the top of his voice while she delivers a speech. Inside a crowded church, the charismatic faithful are asked to hold hands in prayer, and then stretch out their unwashed hands to receive communion later. They rush to the front before those on the first pew could rise from their seats, bump each other or jump the line on the way to the priest, then they receive the host, turn around and chew on it as they walk back. This sad behavior is instantly paid back in kind: they find their seats gone, taken by others.

Out in the streets, every driver behaves as though he had a duty to run over pedestrians. He does not read or observe traffic signs. In unlit and unmanned intersections, he picks the best place to create a logjam. Since his way is blocked, he does his best to block others. On the highway, slow-moving cars, which should be using the outer lane, use the inner lane, while fast-moving cars, which should be using the inner lane, use the outer lane. They ignore all road signs, and the highway patrol seems not to mind at all.

In intellectual discourse, whether in the universities or in the media, few friends can disagree on any issue and still remain friends. Rare, if not unheard of, is the so-called pundit who can argue a point without damning the person who takes a contrary position. This behavior afflicts even former Cabinet members and justices who have found a new career as political commentators.

In politics we vote for candidates we do not know on the basis of opinion allegedly expressed in popularity surveys by unknown individuals who do not know the candidates either. We have become so vulnerable to the psychological conditioning by the pollsters and the media, none of which are politically neutral, that we swallow everything they tell us—hook, line and sinker. Thus, some gender feminist groups may choose for their champion one who in real life is an unreconstructed wife beater, and some church-oriented community may end up trumpeting the virtues of one who has hidden her wretchedness behind some politically-driven programs. We get angry and feel betrayed when the officials we choose misbehave or fail to deliver. But we show our displeasure by replacing them with worse ones, or with individuals who are no better.

We need to become a serious people. In the home, in school, in church, at the workplace, in public office, and everywhere else, we must each make sure that the smallest things we do ultimately serve others. We must each keep our own identity, stick to our respective areas of competence. There must be no confusion of roles.

Church and State, government and private sector, clergy and laity, men and women, while joined together by the common good, must each recognize their respective limitations and what they owe one another, as a requirement of justice and order.

As a people we ought not to be blind to our own follies. We know our faults. But until we reach the breaking point, we merely laugh them off. We cannot go on laughing at ourselves and our mistakes. There is a point beyond which nothing should amuse us anymore—a point where we must rebel against our innate character flaws and all the forces that seek to pull us down.

We have reached that point. We must act now.

* * * * *

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Francisco S. Tatad is the author of the critically acclaimed *A Nation on Fire: the Unmaking of Joseph Ejercito Estrada and the Remaking of Democracy in the Philippines*. A Cabinet member at 29 (the youngest in Philippine history), 1969-80, and member of the *Batasang Pambansa* (National legislature), 1978-84, he wrote newspaper columns and published and edited a national daily from 1984 to 1992, before his election to the Senate, where he served from 1992 to 2001, mostly as Majority Leader. His works include *Prospects of the Filipino*, *The Crisis of Our Times*, *Making the System Work*, *Guarding the Public Trust*, and *Hard Facts for Hard Times*. He lives in Manila where he chairs CITIZENS' CAUCUS, a project aimed at fostering responsible citizenship and effective governance.

FOOTNOTES

¹¹ The original phrase is usually attributed to Charles Maurice de Talleyrand.

¹² According to radio broadcasts, January 20, 2001

¹³ Chapter 2, *Reforming the Judiciary*

¹⁴ *Black's Law Dictionary*, Sixth Edition

¹⁵ See notes 7b, 7c

¹⁶ A penalty that is incurred automatically upon commission of the offense, without need of being imposed by a superior or a judge—The *Code of Canon Law*, Collins Liturgical Publications, London, 1983.

¹⁷ This is derived from civil law, *Nema debet esse iudex in propria causa*, *Black's Law Dictionary*.

¹⁸ See also Francisco S. Tatad, *Hard Facts for Hard Times*, Icon Press, Manila, 2002

¹⁹ Stanley Karnow, *In our Image; America's Empire in the Philippines*, Random House, 1989

²⁰ Audrey R. Kahin and George Mc T. Kahin, *Subversion as Foreign Policy: The Secret Eisenhower and Duties Debacle in Indonesia*, New Press, NY, 1995

²¹ Cf. George Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, Charles Scribner's Sons, NY, 1993

²² Kerima Polotan Tuvera, *in conversation*

²³ Walter Bagehot, *The English Constitution*, Sussex Academic Press, 1997

²⁴ *Poor People's Capitalism*, a presidential paper, 1999


²⁵ Philippine population data, *CIA World Fact Book*, 2002

²⁶ Cf. Cormac Burke, *Authority and Freedom in the Church*, Four Courts Press, Dublin, 1988

²⁷ *Mark 12:42*

²⁸ Francis Fukuyama, *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*, Simon & Schuster Inc., New York, 1995

²⁹ Article XVII. Sec. 1-3. Philippine Constitution

³⁰ Cf. Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The De-Moralization of Society*, Vintage Books, NY, 1994 [END QUOTING] 

PHILIPPINE PERSPECTIVE

RETIRED GENERALS PLOT GLORIA OUSTER MOVE

The Daily Tribune, 9/16/03

FVR-IDENTIFIED GROUP FORGES POWER-SHARING SCHEME WITH GUINGONA

A group of retired military generals identified with former President Fidel Ramos reportedly met three weeks ago to generate more support among the retired and active military officers to force President Arroyo to resign through an all-out "resign Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo movement," and simultaneously strengthen Vice President Teofisto Guingona's bid to succeed President Arroyo, military insiders told the Tribune yesterday.

Guingona last week telegraphed his punches when, in a television interview, the Vice President spoke of the Jose Pidal case "unravelling" within a two month time frame.

He also spoke of another people power revolt or a bloody civil strife occurring and mentioned he was willing to take over, even as he claimed not to be "salivating" for the presidency.

Palace insiders told the Tribune that Guingona has been meeting with the Council of Philippine Affairs (Copa) leaders, who in turn have been holding meetings with retired generals, as well as left-leaning activists such as the Bayan Muna group, Sanlakas and the Akbayan group, in a move to pressure Mrs. Arroyo into resigning.

The meeting among retired military officers was reportedly monitored by the forces loyal to Mrs. Arroyo, who had asked Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Narciso Abaya to "persuade" the military group not to "rock the boat."

The clandestine meeting followed an earlier straw vote that was reportedly taken among some members of the Association of General Flag Officers (Agfo), the result of which was for the Agfo group to demand the resignation of Mrs. Arroyo.

The major issue that was tackled by the participants in the meeting, alleged to have been financed by the former president, was reportedly the importance of the action embracing "broad statements" as a "protective cover" for their activities, and to ensure that they are not seen by the U.S. government as plotting a coup to remove Mrs. Arroyo from the presidential office.

Approved were phrases such as "constitutional disengagement," or "withdrawal of support" to force the resignation of Mrs. Arroyo and at the same time, sway the American officials into supporting the ascension of Guingona to the presidency.

Military insiders also told the Tribune that some sort of an unstructured power sharing with the Ramos group and active generals was being worked out, in the event of a new government replacing Mrs. Arroyo's government.

The same military sources told the Tribune that during the meeting, Ret. Gen. Ernesto Gidaya, who heads Agfo, stressed to the Ramos group that the straw vote was not reflective of the military's sentiments toward the Arroyo leadership, as many active duty military generals and flag officers did not participate in the straw vote, pointing out that these active duty officers were also reluctant to express their sentiments toward the Arroyo government, as reprisals by way of demotion or freezing could occur.

It was reportedly suggested by the Agfo head that another straw vote with an indirect and safe question would ensure a bigger participation from the active and retired military officials and at the same time, provide the Agfo with the right interpretation of the military officers' sentiments.

The question approved by the group was "Are you in favor of Macapagal-Arroyo to stay in office until the end of her term in 2004?"

Gidaya reportedly told the military group that with the innocuous question posed, he believes that the results of a second straw vote would reflect a widespread military sentiment favoring Mrs. Arroyo's resignation.

Also present at the meeting was Ret. Gen. Fortunato Abat, who was also active in getting the retired officers to work on the active generals to withdraw support for then President Joseph Estrada.

Military sources refused to identify the other participants but hinted that both Abaya and the President were aware that a meeting had been held among retired generals and that she had asked her military chief of staff to persuade Ramos, Abat, Gidaya and Ret. Gen. Edgardo Abenina, all of whom participated in the EDSA II coup last Jan. 20, 2001, not to engage in any activity that would place her in an embarrassing situation, in October, during the scheduled visit of US President George W. Bush.

Abat reportedly stated during the meeting that there was a growing feeling among retired officers that they had to come out to express their demand for the President to resign.

Last week, however, the Agfo released a resolution of support for Mrs. Arroyo.

Military sources pointed out that this was yet another ploy by these retired generals to throw Malacañang off the forced resignation scenario, as they do not want their meetings to be branded as "seditious" but would make their stand public once they are ready to move and install Guingona as Mrs. Arroyo's successor.

Malacañang also yesterday admitted it is not completely sure of the loyalty of the some officers of the AFP.

This admission was the Palace's reaction to former AFP chief of staff and now retired general and special envoy to the Middle East Roy Cimatu, who was reported to have said if the grievances of the military soldiers are not addressed by the government, the possibility of another military mutiny was probable.

It was unclear when Cimatu aired this statement, which was publicized by Malacañang itself.

Presidential spokesman Ignacio Bunye doubted that Cimatu was quoted accurately, but nevertheless admitted Malacañang cannot bank on the 100 percent loyalty of the AFP.

When asked if it's safe to say no unrest within the AFP is occurring, Bunye was quoted as saying the Palace cannot "give a one hundred percent assurance" but said the "level of the threats has decreased".

Last Friday, the military was reportedly on red alert, as rumors of another coup being launched by a group in the military were flying fast and thick.

Bunye also admitted there were still complaints from some members of the AFP but that these grievances will not result in another Oakwood incident, since Mrs. Arroyo has been addressing these grievances.

Deputy spokesman Ricardo Saludo said the administration has long been addressing soldiers' concerns over pay, housing and corruption in the AFP.

Saludo said to lay the ground for fighting corruption and ensuring the delivery of equipment and supplies to the field, Mrs. Arroyo is directly addressing these issues.

A military issue, however, cropped up also yesterday, with active and some retired military officials making it known that they are against the appointment of a politician as Defense secretary, claiming that they fear further politicalization in the AFP.

"That's a no-no. We cannot afford to be politicalized further," an Army officer said on condition of anonymity, after he and his group were asked about their views on the possible appointment of a politician as Defense chief.

Mrs. Arroyo has taken on the position in a concurrent capacity after Angelo Reyes resigned as Defense chief last Aug. 29, citing well-funded and well-organized efforts to weaken the country's democracy.

"What we need is someone who understands the military life, what's needed to improve the soldier's plight and professionalize the ranks," another mid-ranking official said.

"Appointing a politician, at this time, is not good for the AFP," he further said, citing recent talks of an impending military coup against the administration. He also mentioned the July 27 siege at Oakwood Hotel by junior officers was another consideration.

A retired general shared the same view even as he said Presidential Adviser on Peace Process Secretary Eduardo Ermita, who is reportedly looming as the next Defense chief, might not be a good choice for the post.

"I doubt if he can isolate the military from politics, Ermita cannot do this because he is a ranking official of the Lakas-NUCD," the official, said, also speaking on condition of anonymity.

"The Armed Forces does not like it (a politicized Defense secretary), their feeling is that they are being used...as a tool to propagate (politics). The military does not want someone politicized," he reiterated, saying "Ermita cannot avoid being identified with Ramos and Lakas-NUCD."

The source also said Ermita lacks field experience for him to earn the respect of commanders. He added Ermita served most of his time as an officer negotiating with various rebel forces.

Also being considered to carry the Defense portfolio are former AFP chiefs Diomedio Villanueva and Roy Cimatu, who seems to enjoy the President's trust as he was tapped to negotiate with the Magdalo faction that occupied Oakwood.

Also yesterday, Mrs. Arroyo visited Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija but Bunye denied that it was a form of loyalty check.

He said Mrs. Arroyo was only doing her job not only as the Commander-in-Chief but also in her capacity as acting Defense chief.

"The visit is part of her duty as secretary of DND (Department of National Defense). She wants to personally know the conditions of our soldiers," Bunye added.

Before this, Mrs. Arroyo had been visiting various military camps—and inviting different batches of Philippine Military Academy (PMA) graduates to Malacañang—allegedly to solicit support for her administration.

Last July 27, some disgruntled junior military officers mutinied against the administration when they occupied the Oakwood hotel and used it as venue to air their grievances.

The junior officers complained of the government's unfair treatment toward their ranks and rampant corruption in the military, the police and the Arroyo government. With NCO, Mario J. Mallari and Sherwin C. Olaes

TREADING DANGEROUS WATERS

By NINEZ CACHO-OLIVARES, *The Daily Tribune*, 9/16/03

What Malacañang wants, Malacañang may not get this time around, even if all its allies in the Senate and its paid hacks in the media, raise their voices in demanding a stop to the Jose Pidal probe, with the continuing Goebbels-like propaganda line of the absence of evidence.

Of course there is evidence, and this has already been presented by Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson to the Senate, whose Malacañang lapdogs all too suddenly are demanding originals where none is needed.

U.S.A.'S CONDITIONAL RECOGNITION OF GMA

By ALAN F. PAGUIA,
The Daily Tribune (Rule Of Law), 9/19/03

After Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. proclaimed Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as President on Jan. 20, 2001, the United States of America reportedly reacted by promptly extending formal recognition to the new administration.

Formal recognition

The U.S. Embassy issued the following statement:

“The United States is pleased that the presidential crisis in the Philippines has been resolved without violence and in accordance with democratic and constitutional procedures.

“President Estrada has resigned and Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has been sworn in as President. We are grateful for President Estrada’s constant efforts on behalf of close U.S.-Philippine relations. We have had an exceptionally strong working relationship with the new President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in the past, and are looking forward to working with her to strengthen U.S.-Philippine relations ever further.

“The United States has a deep multi-faceted relationship with the Philippines, a longtime ally, based on robust political, economic, cultural, and informal ties that are buttressed by the millions of Filipino descent in the U.S.

“We are pleased to join the new president in our common efforts to enhance these ties.”

That was Jan. 21, 2001.

Two conditions

The recognition was premised upon two conditions, namely that: (1) GMA’s proclamation was in accordance with democratic and constitutional procedures; and (2) President Joseph Estrada had resigned.

The U.S. government thought that these conditions were present at the time it issued the recognition. By necessary implication, the recognition would not have been issued if the conditions were not present.

Were the two conditions present at the time the U.S. government extended recognition to the GMA administration? They were not.

First condition

That GMA was proclaimed in accordance with democratic and constitutional procedures.

A democratic procedure means the determination of the will of the majority; or simply, the rule of the majority. It refers to the majority of the Filipino electorate or voters. The undeniable fact, however, is that GMA had never been elected as President of the Philippines. For the present constitutional term, President Estrada is the only duly elected President.

The mammoth crowd at Edsa during GMA’s proclamation had been estimated to be between 300,000 to about 500,000. Assuming for the sake of argument that this was replicated, say, ten times all over the country—the total would be about 5,000,000 people which include voters and non-voters alike. On the other hand, President Estrada was elected into office by almost 11,000,000 duly qualified voters. This is the highest number of votes ever won by a candidate in Philippine history. No one has seriously argued against the overwhelming mandate won—fair and square—by President Estrada.

Consequently, GMA was proclaimed NOT in accordance with democratic procedure. She was proclaimed in accordance with the undemocratic rule of the minority.

A constitutional procedure means compliance with constitutional requirements. Non-compliance is therefore unconstitutional.

When Chief Justice Davide proclaimed GMA upon President Estrada’s alleged “permanent disability”, the Constitution expressly required that there must first be a corresponding “written declaration” by President Estrada or by the majority of his Cabinet. No such “written declaration” has ever been claimed or presented by Chief Justice Davide or GMA or anybody else. Plainly, there was no compliance with the constitutional requirement.

Thus, GMA’s proclamation upon President Estrada’s alleged “permanent disability” was unconstitutional.

When Chief Justice Davide and the other justices ruled in Estrada v. Arroyo that the Office of the President had been vacated by President Estrada’s “constructive resignation”, the Constitution expressly required that due process of law must be respected and observed. Due process of law absolutely requires both the appearance and substance of the cold neutrality of an impartial judge. Under Rule 5.10 of the CODE OF JUDICIAL CONDUCT, Chief Justice Davide and his fellow justices failed to avoid suspicion of political partisanship when they—along with certain civilian and military leaders—participated in Edsa 2 which was patently a partisan political activity. Instead of avoiding that suspicion, they created it—by operation of law. They thereby destroyed the appearance of any neutrality. Worse, they also destroyed the substance of neutrality when they proclaimed GMA as President without demanding compliance with the “written declaration” requirement.

Hence, the ruling against President Estrada was a foregone conclusion. Chief Justice Davide and company had already given the coveted presidency to GMA by way of patent prejudgment. If they had not prejudged the matter, they could—and constitutionally ought to—have asked for that “written declaration” before they proclaimed GMA. But they did not. Clearly then, Chief Justice Davide and his fellow justices violated President Estrada’s constitutional right to due process of law in Estrada v. Arroyo because, at the time, they no longer had the appearance and substance of the cold neutrality of an impartial judge.

Thus, GMA’s proclamation upon President Estrada’s alleged “constructive resignation” was unconstitutional.

It would follow that GMA was proclaimed NOT in accordance with constitutional procedures. She was proclaimed in accordance with the unconstitutional rule of force.

Second condition

Did President Estrada resign?

Chief Justice Davide and the other justices admitted in Estrada v. Arroyo that President Estrada never wrote any resignation letter. However, they ruled that President Estrada had “constructively resigned”. The problem with this ruling is that it appears to be patently violative of President Estrada’s right to due process of law as discussed earlier. It is therefore void or without legal existence in the eyes of the law. It is significant to note that, prior to the decision in Estrada v. Arroyo, GMA herself and all the other participants in Edsa II never claimed any resignation by President Estrada!

Consequently, the undisputed absence of any resignation letter would indicate the fact that President Estrada never resigned. If he had the intention to resign, he could have easily written so as a matter of standard procedure. That he did not—clearly shows no such intention on his part.

Victim of disinformation

Was the U.S. government a victim of disinformation? Surely, the U.S. government trusted whoever gave it the information that the subject two conditions were factually present. Under the foregoing discussion, it would appear that there was a violation or betrayal of that trust. The consequences that naturally followed were both factual and legal.

Is it not sufficient evidence, at least to continue with the probe by a panel which is a fact-finding body, that checks under the name of Jose Pidal have been brought forth, when the Palace and their crony banks’ claim was that no such account of Jose Pidal exists?

What Lacson has presented is far more weighty evidence than the Honorable Shit, who now heads the blue ribbon committee, presented before the impeachment court when he was the House prosecutor, and no originals either.

But it is obvious the Palace and its allies want a stop to the probe because if this is allowed to continue, more discoveries of the money fronts of Jose Pidal and spouse, and open up the Arroyos’ Pandora’s Box, whose lid they insist on not opening, as this would destroy the presidential couple.

Already, there is incontrovertible evidence that at least P5 million that was supposed to have been deposited to a Gloria foundation, has been deposited instead to the account of Jose Pidal. And yet, the presidential spouse and an alleged bagman, airport chief Edgardo Manda, months ago, claimed that all this was received and turned over to the Lulahati Foundation.

A check from Mark Jimenez shows that his P5 million was deposited to the account of Jose Pidal in Union Bank, Perea Street branch in Makati City.

So how do Malacañang, Manda and their paid hacks in the media, along with the Senate lapdogs, explain this away? This does not constitute evidence again?

Then there are those Arroyo allies who insist that no crime has been committed since these are political contributions and are therefore private funds.

Hello. They seem to forget that Estrada has been incarcerated on charges that the Erap Muslim Youth Foundation, which the prosecutors claim is a front for Estrada’s alleged money-laundering activities, was the recipient of jueteng money, which it should be pointed out, is still private money, not public funds. Besides which, the P200 million is still intact in the bank, a fact that gives lie to the charges that the EMYF is a money laundering front and that Estrada had received the jueteng payoffs. A check with the EMYF’s papers clearly shows that Estrada is not even a trustee, nor has he been involved in the foundation’s activities, outside of it bearing his name. Moreover, the EMYF’s proviso also states that should the foundation be dissolved, all the assets would be turned over to the Philippine government. Does the Lualhati Foundation, and for that matter, all those Arroyo foundations have the same proviso?

In much the same way, the records also show that in the case of the Jose Velarde account, all documents point to Jaime Dichaves being the owner and controller of the Velarde account. In any case, whatever deposits there were, again, these are private contributions funded by private money. So why is Estrada in jail for this when these same Estrada-bashers now claim no crime has been committed in the case of the Jose Pidal account, which not only shows suspicion of money laundering activities but also the illegal deposits meant for a foundation?

Still, as the intent is clearly to protect the presidential couple and their illegal activities, what they and their allies want is a stop to the probe and get this Jose Pidal case out of public focus.

The problem is that the case is not even in the hands of the Senate anymore, as this is now being tried before the court of public opinion, which is an even more powerful court that does not need evidence at all to convict or acquit.

But instead of winning over the public and get the same public to acquit them, they insist on cutting off the probe to protect themselves, which makes the presidential couple look even more guilty than first thought by the Filipino people.

And this spells even bigger trouble for Gloria, her spouse and the entire Arroyo administration, including their allies in the Senate.

Factual consequences

First, the U.S. government appears to have been misled. Instead of maintaining official relations with, and supporting, the constitutional Estrada administration, it was led to extend formal recognition to the unconstitutional Arroyo administration.

Second, the U.S. government now appears to be in a predicament. Considering the best interest of the greatest majority, the question is: How and when, if at all, should it concern itself with the matter?

Legal consequence

There is no doubt that the U.S. government will constantly declare its full support for the Rule of Law anywhere in the universe.

How about the Philippine situation?

Regardless of the answer, the paramount and overriding consideration ought to be that the Philippine Constitution and the Rule of Law would reign effectively supreme throughout the present episode and after.

ANALYSIS, *The Observer*, 9/22/03


The one-worlders have changed their tactic when it comes to choosing political leaders, and this is evident in Latin American countries. While the basic concept of "limited sovereignty" remains enforced by those who run Project Democracy and its implementing army of NGOs under the National Endowment of Democracy (NED), the new crop of leaders are now chosen from the nationalists and/or socialists.

The change, of course, does not mean that the globalists are slackening up. On the contrary, the old shell game is still very much around. And those chosen to become the world's 'new' crop of leaders are still expected to pay the "providers of finance" money lent "at all due dates". No business can operate without finance, and this is the sole occupation of the World Bank/IMF.

Strict implementation of the "ethics rules" applies regardless of the political situation "customers". This is the reason why the *International Herald Tribune's* editorial on 18 September 2003 calls on Manila's political class to do something about their "collective responsibility to confine its squabbling in the ballot box, rather than the courts or the barracks, and start providing Filipinos with solutions rather than plots and rumors".

This new mentality on the part of the "international business community" might prove to be advantageous to Vice President Tito Guingona who is perceived to be the only nationalist among the crop of presidential wannabes in this beleaguered country. Moreover, he has shown his independence from party dictations when he openly went against charter change and other issues. Also, he is one Lakas stalwart respected by the political opposition.

Guingona's edge over his rivals all the more becomes pronounced when the *Herald Tribune* spelled out in bold letters what the whole political game is all about: "Political intrigue isn't just distracting the government from attending the Philippines' problems, it's making those problems worse." In a word, the battle royale between Arroyo and Lacson has made the nation a bigger loser even as the political parties involved move closer to being thrown into the dustbin of history.

All told, we should expect drastic political developments in the near future, with the present dispensation probably coming out on the shorter end of a winner-take-all match, as Transparency International, the globalist anti-corruption crusaders move in for the kill. Being branded as the "third-most corrupt nation in Asia" is nothing short of political "murder by indictment". The death knell has been sounded against PGMA. 

The News Desk

By John & Jean Ray

TRAITORS

"A nation can survive its fools, and even the ambitions. But it cannot survive treason from within. An enemy at the gates is less formidable, for he is known, and he carries his banners openly. But the traitor moves among those within the gates freely, his sly whispers rustling through all the alleys, heard in the very halls of government itself. For the traitor appears no traitor. He speaks in the accents familiar to his victims, and he wears their face and their garments, and he appears to the baseness that lies deep in the hearts of men. He rots the soul of a nation. He works secretly and unknown in the night to undermine the pillars of the city. He infects the body of politic so that it can no longer resist. A murderer is less to be feared."—CICERO, 42 BC.

[JR: I guess Cicero came across the false Jews (today's Zionists) even in his day.]

SICK AND TIRED OF MAKING EXCUSES FOR 'FAILUREMONGERS'

By Molly Ivins, *Creators Syndicate*, 09/11/03

AUSTIN, Texas—Sigh. You write an article advocating what you think would be useful, constructive suggestions about Iraq, and you get an avalanche of right-wing reaction about "failuremongers" and "nattering nabobs of negativism".

Bill Safire is back at the same old stand after all these years, denouncing "merchants of dismay" trying to justify their "decade of appeasement".

Great, anybody who opposed this war in the first place was accused of lack of patriotism, and now anybody who points out that it's not going well is guilty of defeatism. If you raise your hand and ask where are the weapons of mass destruction, you're instructed to just get over it.

Well, I ain't gonna take it anymore. I am not shutting up for *Fox News* anchor-commentator Bill O'Reilly or anyone else. **I opposed our unprovoked invasion of Iraq on the grounds that it would be a short, easy war followed by the peace from hell.** I predicted every terrorist in the Middle East would be drawn to Iraq like a magnet. I was right, and I'm not going to apologize for it.

I also realize the future in Iraq is a lot more important than any petty "I was right" vindication. I don't know if the glass in Iraq is half-empty or half-full, but what is clear is that the situation is deteriorating. That's why the Bush administration has changed course 180 degrees and is now asking for help from the UN.

But naturally, we're not supposed to mention that the administration has reversed itself—no, no. As Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, who now has all the credibility of Enron's Ken Lay, explained, the new UN resolution "didn't sort of emerge out of nowhere a few days ago. It's been on our agenda ever since the fall of Baghdad."

He said the bombing of UN headquarters in Baghdad was "a breakthrough—a sad one. The bombing, I think, changed the atmosphere in New York, and it looks like we can move forward in that area."

Right. The United Nations changed its position, we didn't change ours. How dumb do they think we are? I am tired of being asked to swallow lies by this administration. For 87 billion bucks, the least we deserve is some candor. I want to know who was responsible for the whole weapons of mass destruction fiasco, and I want to see some accountability for it—resignations and firings. ...

I am trying hard to be a responsible citizen here: I don't think the choice is between "staying the course" or "cut and run". I think we need to change course and be honest enough to admit it to ourselves and everybody else. The security situation in Iraq is deteriorating because we had a poorly planned and badly botched postwar strategy. We need help, and we need to ask for it nicely. **[JR: We make demands! We "don't do"—please.]**

The eeriest part about Bush's \$87 billion request is that it may not be enough. It appears \$66 billion will go to the military and intelligence, leaving a relative pittance for actually rebuilding Iraq. According to most experts, getting the lights and water back up, not to mention the oil industry, is critical to the security situation. ... **[JR: It is a ploy by the strategist WOLFowitz when he says that the Pentagon always had a plan to confer with the UN and olde Europe after the fall of Baghdad. The problem for the U.S. now is that the UN and the EU have their own agenda that doesn't include playing a supporting role in ours. Makes one wonder if the strain of losing it in Iraq isn't putting a crimp on those uncompromising Zionist minds at the Pentagon because they can't seem to focus on the reality of what IS.]**

IRAQIS WONDER HOW U.S. CAN BE SO INEPT

By M. Cherif Bassiouni (professor of law and president of the International Human Rights Law Institute at DePaul University), *Perspective*, 09/14/03

On Aug. 19, when the United Nations building in Baghdad was blown up, a little-known Franco-Egyptian UN worker, Jean-Selim Kanaan, was killed. He had volunteered for Iraq duty to help people, and was counting on the protection of the world's mightiest power.

Two weeks after his arrival in June, he wrote letters to friends around the world. "Americans understand only what is American. ... [They] made this war for their interests and surely not to liberate the Iraqi people... the revolt is growing," he said in the letters. ...

How is it possible for the U.S. to make so many mistakes? Does the U.S. want to destroy Iraq or have it plunge into civil war and disintegrate? Is all of this an American conspiracy?

People cannot believe that the U.S., with all its might and capabilities, could not provide basic security after the fall of the Baath regime in April or restore essential services such as electricity and water.

The lawlessness that prevailed after the fall of Baghdad, the looting and destruction of hospitals, museums, public offices and private businesses, while American troops watched, will remain in the minds of many people.

They see what happened as a purposeful dereliction of the occupying power's duty to protect the population. The protection is required of occupying armies by the Geneva Conventions.

To have disbanded the entire Iraqi army and police, leaving the cities and streets undefended, sending home several hundred thousand trained persons without income, is insanity. These and other failures to provide for the people's elementary needs raise questions about U.S. motives.

Many Iraqis see this as a conspiracy to bring about a civil war between Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds, leading to the breakdown of their country so that the U.S. can take over its oil—the world's second-largest oil reserve. **[JR: Sounds like a plausible Zionist plan to me.]**

And as is *de rigueur* in Middle East matters, Israel is added to the mix, though it has nothing to do with that “made in the U.S.” mess. **[JR: Wrong, it has everything to do with that U.S.-made mess.]**

None of this is the American intention, but there is no way to explain these many mistakes. **[JR: I wouldn't recommend calling the Pentagon for an answer.]**

Another astonishing decision recently announced by Paul Bremer, the U.S. administrator in Iraq, is the privatization of Iraq's economy. Because there is no private capital in Iraq and the banking system has collapsed, it means that outside capital will own Iraq's future.

Who is to benefit?

The Ahmad Chalabi crowd supported by Deputy Defense Secretaries Douglas Feith and Paul Wolfowitz? Add a layer to the conspiracy.

Last, but not least, is the U.S. failure to bring the worst Baathist criminals to justice—one of the avowed U.S. purposes in going to war in Iraq. None of the Baath leaders held in U.S. custody, some for months, has been brought to trial, and there are no known plans to prosecute them before a legitimate international or national judicial body. **[JR: The U.S. is a crazy quilt of contradictions.]**

The U.S. even rejects having a United Nations commission gather the evidence, just as one did in Yugoslavia, whose success led to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague, which is now prosecuting Slobodan Milosevic.

Meanwhile in Iraq, mass graves are dug out and bodies removed, documents pilfered from public officials, and on the whole, the evidence is being lost. In Baghdad, the word is that Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld authorized U.S. intelligence to make deals with the infamous deck of cards of most wanted criminals in exchange for information, particularly about the hitherto undiscovered weapons of mass destruction.

In the U.S., the administration's Iraq occupation policies are mostly questioned from narrow perspectives addressing smaller pieces of the puzzle. The administration avoids those parts of the puzzle that do not fit the image it wants to convey. It also makes it possible to blame security problems in Iraq on “outside terrorists”. It does not report the hundreds of Iraqi civilians accidentally killed by American troops. Nor does it account for thousands of civilian detainees. ...

The naive impression we are conveying is that our leaders were surprised by Iraqi nationalistic reactions because Iraqis were expected to greet invading American troops as Parisian troops did in 1945. That they didn't see Iraqi opposition coming when common people in the streets of every Arab country could have told them so strains credibility. ...

The president, the vice president and the triumvirate at Defense of Rumsfeld, Feith and Wolfowitz, have a vision of what they think is needed in Iraq, even though it has no basis in reality. They reject the advice of Secretary of State Colin Powell and CIA Director George Tenet because it contradicts their mind-set. But they should know by now that Iraqis will not welcome American occupation, the U.S. will not turn Iraq into an American-style democracy, and the road to peace in the Middle East does not run through Baghdad. ...

The legality of continued use of force in Iraq is not only related to international legitimacy or sound U.S. foreign policy, it is a fundamental question of legality under the *U.S. Constitution*.

By what legal authority are we militarily occupying a foreign country with which we are not at war?

[JR: It is obvious why the U.S. invaded Iraq. It is also painfully obvious that America has made a total mess with the continuing chaos and the slow progress in rebuilding Iraq. Yes, we do have successes like setting up the communication, banking and our very own “educational

system” which was vital in order to firmly establish our presence. The most vital systems like electricity, water, waste and filtration systems are however still back in the Stone Age. These systems have been the most compromised since Bush Sr.'s Gulf War and our twelve years of imposed sanctions. What is blurred and the least obvious is how long the U.S. can sustain it's illegitimate claims for it's hostile aggression against Iraq. Our Constitution states we do not invade another country unless we are directly threatened with an imminent attack and are forced to take appropriate defense measures. The tragedy of 9/11 didn't afford us that option. Our U.S. Knesset failed to hold any debate or declare a war against Iraq and its people. Israel has made it its own policy to react to real or imagined threats by responding with intense lethal actions. She has manipulated events to rouse her enemies that she has often made through her own cunning. The longer we Americans think like Zionists the more enemies we will have with their swords drawn against us. How dumb a defense policy is that?]

LESSONS WE CAN LEARN FROM EMPIRE'S ERRORS

By Jerome Braun (consultant at the Hudson Institute in Indianapolis), “Perspective”—*Tribune*, 09/14/03

America's presence in Iraq is grating on the nerves of some of its proud, nationalistic people.

Other nations had gone into Third World areas under the rationale of “uplifting the natives”, “White man's burden”, or whatever the slogan of the moment, all of which boiled down to claiming that the inferior culture of the natives had to be uplifted before the colonial power would ever leave.

Given that historical reality, it is now a good time to ponder the mistakes of the European colonial powers in their periods of grandiosity and hope we can avoid them.

Their biggest mistake was trying to be a colonial power in the first place, thinking they had the duty to force their values lock, stock and barrel on whomever crossed their path.

At the very least, America should come to some reckoning about what we mean by democracy and what standards should be involved so that we'll know how to recognize it. That is something quite different from telling Iraqis they must become exactly like us.

Maybe they will want a European-style parliamentary government, where parties will reflect the ethnic and religious diversity of the nation. We prefer a two-party system, in some ways for the same reason other countries like one-party systems, because it reflects a belief in the value of forcing the nation to engage in coalition building and compromise at the grass-roots level.

Most, and possibly all, one-party states in reality have their decision-making and their coalition building imposed from the top. **[JR: Our executive is now the top that rules over all matters of government and especially we...the little people.]** True, even the parliamentary states of Europe tend also to have their politics imposed from the top, and the mass of people getting to vote for ideological parties merely means that the leaders in parliament do the compromising while the people get to choose among relatively rigid ideological positions. **[JR: There is no longer any freedom of choice.]** The fine-tuning is thus always done by the leaders, almost never initiated by the followers.

Still, the ideal of America having rather non-ideological parties so that the popular vote will legitimize coalition building and political compromises is just that, an ideal. In practice, many issues are kept off the table during elections, and one way we preserve our democracy is by not expecting too much from it. The result is that historically we have not expected government to do very much for us in comparison to Europe.

Again, that may satisfy the Iraqis, or they may wish to copy, for example, European models. After all, Ireland is a democracy very much influenced by Catholic traditions. For that matter, the Christian Democratic Parties are a standing political tradition in Italy and Germany. Perhaps the Islamists of Iraq wish to copy those traditions, and not our totally secular parties. Or they may want to copy European leftist parties. Are we prepared to engage in heavy-handed manipulation to force them to think like Americans and not like Europeans?

After all, the reason we are so successful in having secular government is that America was founded when the successes of the Protestant Reformation had produced cultural dividends. The people felt they didn't need the government to make them virtuous, they already were, and what they needed was the people monitoring their leaders, who they feared would be corrupted by power, and at least in the past often were. **[JR: Now our leaders have deemed themselves to be virtuous and it is we that need their monitoring.]**

For that matter, the U.S. population puts up with a great deal of disorder just to show that our choice made more than 200 years ago was right, that we don't need a government to create social order. Whether we ourselves are engaging in wishful thinking is something we get to deal with as part of our domestic politics.

The Iraqis, on the other hand, may believe that social order requires a firmer hand at the top than we think we need. Or they may believe the opposite, that the nation should be so loosely federated among religious and ethnic groups that what they want is more like our failed *Articles of Confederation* than our *Constitution*. Is it our job to tell them they're wrong?

America has a track record of winning the war and losing the peace. The Civil War and the failure of Reconstruction, particularly regarding race relations, are examples, as is the Versailles Treaty at the end of World War I that sowed the seeds for World War II.

In both cases politicians and the public were more interested in getting peacetime economic bubbles started than they were in dealing with hard questions and communicating with downtrodden peoples the choices we, the winners, and they, the losers, faced. **[JR: The question is who were the false Jews or neo-cons who were influencing our policies then and that are continuing through to today?]**

Our track record in leaving behind successful democracies in the Philippines after our colonial period there or even in post-World War II Italy is decidedly mixed. Producing democracy requires thoughtful discussion, not demagogic slogans.

Too bad some politicians think the latter is what democracy is all about.

[JR: “The greatest calamity which could befall us would be submission to a government of unlimited power.”—Thomas Jefferson. Bush Jr. is no Alexander the Great and Bush Sr. is no King Philip II of Macedonia. That is a big problem for America, which is out to become the world's empire builder. Our U.S. brand of democracy imposes its laws through force and rules through secret cabals. Not only have Americans lost a voice in their own government but they also have been conquered from within that government. America and Americans have been and are being badly used by foreign influences and we are paying a hefty price in the loss of our credibility, prestige, as well as financially. The U.S. cannot solely be the world's mentor in advocating world democracy because it has lost its own moral compass. We are no longer the master of our own affairs and are now the slaves of a falsely ordained destiny.]

THE HUTTON ENQUIRY AND THE WAR IN IRAQ

By Timothy Bancroft-Hinchey, *Pravda.com*, 09/01/03

It is important that the world has no illusions as to where the crux of the matter lies and what are the important issues at stake.

The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom is called to testify before a court of law to ascertain how the process was handled which resulted in the death of an expert on WMD, who always claimed that the case for war against Iraq based on the supposition that Saddam Hussein had WMD and could deploy them in 45 minutes was without foundation.

The crux of the matter is not whether Tony Blair indicated that David Kelly was the source used by the BBC, the first British news organism to claim that someone with the proper knowledge had great reservations about the veracity of the contents of the dossier which in turn was the *caus belli* of the U.S.A. and UK against Iraq.

The crux of the matter is not whether David Kelly committed suicide, assuming he did, because he was exposed in public or whether he committed suicide because he had broken internal rules of publicizing information and knew he would be punished.

The crux of the matter is not whether Tony Blair or his Director of Communications, Alistair Campbell, decides how the country is run and the crux of the matter is not whether Saddam Hussein had to be deposed because he was a tyrant.

The crux of the matter basically and very simply has to do with principles; principles towards which Mankind has striven so hard and for so long with so much dedication, love, hope and energy, millions of lives having been lost during this quest. To insult and denigrate these values is to become morally involved in these deaths and stab in the back all those who have fought for freedom and democracy and lost their lives, or their loved ones, in so doing.

The values in question for which we have fought so hard are the honesty and integrity of the leaders of our democracies. Many political models were tried and tested before Mankind reached the conclusion that representative, parliamentary democracy is the least bad of a lot of bad options, a process which was completed recently in Russia, after the transition from the Soviet Union to the Russian Federation.

This democracy, which is synonymous with freedom, or should be, has to do with dialogue, discussion and exchange of opinions, using diplomacy as a means of persuasion, not demagoguery, arrogance, overbearing and force of arms. These have long since been discarded by each and every country which calls itself civilized.

This modern democracy is based internally upon parliaments and externally, on the United Nations Organization, whose Charter, upon the act of signing, binds its signatories to a series of rules, principally the use of the Security Council for crisis management.

Now we reach the crux of the matter. The Bush regime had decided to attack Iraq and remove its President, His Excellency Saddam Hussein, from power, a long time ago. All the signs point towards this scenario, including the mention of Saddam Hussein every time the name of Osama bin Laden was brought up—an absurdity since anyone with a modicum of knowledge about the Islamic world knows only too well that the two hated each other—it was bin Laden who wanted to expel the Iraqi forces from Kuwait.

The only connection between the administration of Saddam Hussein with international terrorism started after the illegal and terrorist attack by the United States of America and its lackeys, the United Kingdom, Portugal, Spain, Poland and Australia, countries whose leaders demonstrated a total lack of courage and principles in not drawing the line between democracy and freedom on one hand and fascism and demagoguery on the other. To participate in murder or to support it is one and the same thing.

Because there was no legal reason to attack Iraq, the Bush regime and its lackeys decided, against the collective will of Mankind, to proceed with this act of mass butchery which they are all guilty of, without using and worse still, despising, the properly constituted institutions to manage the crisis through democratic means, based on discussion of ideas on a basis of equality of status. They decided to attack without going through the UNSC, knowing that a second resolution was always necessary under the terms of any and all of the documents which composed the UN Resolutions pertinent to the issue.

Ten thousand civilians murdered by the Coalition forces. 16,000 civilians mutilated. Twenty-six thousand people, representing who knows how many families destroyed or affected by a savage and barbaric attack without any legal foundation whatsoever. Being illegal, those who perpetrated this act of evil, or supported it, are as guilty as the war criminals who butchered so many thousands of innocent people.

The crux of the matter is this and let there be no doubts: it cannot be said that the death of David Kelly was any more tragic than the death of Iraqi civilians or the death of a British or American soldier—the loss of human life is always a tragedy.

The crux of the matter is that Mankind must remember what we have witnessed this year, at the beginning of the Third Millennium—the worst outrage against international law and against world public opinion since the Second World War.

That the leaders in question acted under the assumption that what they were doing was right, let there be no doubt whatsoever. However, Mankind cannot and must not accept a world order in which leaders act without obeying basic principles and the properly constituted institutions, of which they are full members and by whose rules they are bound.

In the United Kingdom, the Hutton Inquiry tries to get at the truth and it would be an injustice to forget that it was the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, who called for the independent inquiry to be set up, to leave no stone unturned until the truth was found. However, 26,000 people are either buried or missing or amputated or mutilated.

This is the crux of the matter. What is so incredible is that the world can accept such horrific acts of barbarity with a shrug of the shoulders, how these murderers can still get up every day and carry on in their positions and how they can face the image in the mirror every morning when they shave—or do they shave blindfolded.

[JR: The crux of the matter basically and very simply has to do with principles; principles towards which Mankind has striven so hard and for so long with so much dedication, love, hope and energy. Millions of lives have been lost during this quest. To insult and denigrate these values is to become morally involved in these deaths and is a stab in the back to all those who have fought for freedom and democracy and lost their lives, or their loved ones, in so doing.]

VENEZUELAN ELECTION COUNCIL
TOSSES ASIDE RECALL PETITION
OPPOSITION DEALT SETBACK
IN EFFORT TO OUST CHAVEZ

Tribune, 09/13/03

CARACAS, Venezuela—Election officials Friday rejected a petition signed by 3.2 million Venezuelans calling for a referendum on Hugo Chavez's presidency, dealing a major setback to opposition efforts to oust the leftist leader.

The petition was thrown out because the signatures were gathered before the midpoint of Chavez's term, an election rule violation, said National Elections Council President Francisco Carrasquero.

The council is considered an impartial body by rival political groups.

Thousands of Chavez supporters outside the council headquarters cheered and pumped their fists upon learning of the decision. Dozens of national guardsmen surrounded the building to keep order.

The decision put a damper on opposition chances of holding a vote by the year's end. Many Chavez supporters believe that such a vote could now be put off indefinitely.

Opposition leaders vowed to launch a new signature drive Oct. 5. **[JR: With the covert assistance from the U.S.]**

"We are going to sign again for the millions of Venezuelans who are unemployed . . . who live in extreme poverty... who live in insecurity," said opposition Governor Enrique Mendoza.

It was another victory for Chavez in his longstanding power struggle with traditional political leaders who accuse him of putting his ambitions before helping the country's poor.

"The opposition has been irresponsible and they have deceived their own people into believing in them," said Tarek William Saab, a congressman and close ally of Chavez.

The United States has expressed support for the referendum as a means of preventing more unrest in one of the world's top oil producing nations. Crude oil shipments slowed to a trickle earlier this year during a two-month general strike. **[JR: Failed to make mention that oil production is up since the failed coup.]**

The council also found other procedural problems with the petition and the signature drive sponsor, Sumate. . . .

Chavez has expressed confidence that no referendum would be required this year. He had long insisted the opposition petition was invalid, citing the same reason the elections council used in tossing it out.

The Venezuelan Constitution allows citizens to petition for a recall halfway through a president's 6-year term. But the document is unclear about many details. The council promised to issue regulations on the referendum process next week.

Leaders of Chavez's Fifth Republic Movement Party have expressed hope that if the process runs to 2004, Venezuela will be too preoccupied with regional elections to bother with the referendum. The next presidential elections are in 2006, but Chavez would not relinquish power to his successor until 2007. . . .

Recent independent polls suggest Venezuelans would vote 2-1 to oust Chavez in a referendum because of disappointment with his failure to create jobs and to fight crime.

Chavez insists his polls show he has 70 percent approval ratings among Venezuelans.

[JR: The U.S. has been setting off fuses in Venezuela ever since Bush sat down in the Oval office. American intervention in Venezuela is the same as in Iraq. Our efforts are to bring about a regime change or democracy to the Venezuelan people. President Chavez is being made a target just like Saddam was. Here again it's all about oil and its profits.]

EURO DENTED AFTER SWEDEN'S VOTE OF NO

By David McHugh, *Washington Post*, 09/15/03

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP) Sweden's "no" to the euro dents the prestige of Europe's shared currency, already tarnished by powerhouses Germany and France ignoring rules on government spending and the public perception that the euro caused prices to rise.

Euro opponents in Britain and Denmark—the two other European Union members not using the currency—took courage from Sunday's vote, which comes as the monetary union struggles to overcome slow growth and lingering public rancor over inflation blamed, rightly or wrongly, on the new money.

The immediate impact of the vote on the existing union is slight, since Sweden would have increased the size of the euro economy by only 3.6 percent. But the refusal by a trade-dependent nation with strong public finances—exactly the kind of country the euro’s founders envisioned as ideal for the joint currency—was seen by many as a sharp rebuff for the 4½-year-old euro.

Coming after Denmark’s 2000 vote against the euro and Britain’s decision this year to postpone any referendum, it also sends a cautionary signal to the Eastern European countries slated to be admitted to the EU next year. The 10 eventually will have to decide whether to try to meet the strict economic criteria for joining the euro, or to keep their own currency. ...

At the center of the current tension among the 12 euro countries are budget deficits run up by France and Germany, above the agreed-upon 3 percent of gross national product limit—limits imposed to keep profligate state spending from boosting inflation and undermining the new currency.

Smaller countries have voiced dismay that they took painful steps to control their spending in order to join the euro, only to see their bigger neighbors take a relaxed view. The Netherlands’ finance minister has even threatened to sue the European Union to enforce the rules.

Violators can face heavy fines—but officials have instead begun floating ideas to loosen the rules.

“Getting large governments to stick to the rules they at one time subscribed to—that’s the issue,” said economist Julian von Landesberger at HVB Group in Munich.

With apparently one rulebook for big countries and another for small ones, Swedes feared being forced to cut government spending on their politically popular welfare state, with its extensive public agencies and workers.

“The Swedes are in a special situation,” said Daniel Gros, director of the Brussels-based Center for European Policy Studies. “I think the ‘no’ votes reflects almost exactly the percentage of public sector employees in Sweden.”

Gros said he didn’t think the Swedish refusal was a major setback for the monetary union.

Beyond the rules controversy, more euro malaise has come from the sluggish economy among the 12 members, which showed zero growth in the second quarter. ...

[JR: Changing to the Euro can be a difficult selling point because most sovereign people become very uncomfortable about changing from their Nation’s currencies. To them it is a symbol of their strength, stability and economic well-being. In all fairness, the Euro has been holding its own against our weakening American dollar. It would serve the proponents of the Euro to promote the (15% gold-backed) Euro outside of Europe as a Central Bank reserve in addition to the U.S. dollar. Malaysia has been successful doing this by promoting their new gold dinar for trading. The dollar has been made vulnerable through our bleeding debt, wars, our soft economy and non-stop government spending. The U.S. will come to find that military might is not an effective weapon in fighting an economic war.]

PENTAGON PROBING BID BY BOEING

By Stephen J. Hedges, *Washington Bureau*, 09/04/03

WASHINGTON—The Pentagon is investigating whether an Air Force official shared privileged information with Boeing Co. in the company’s bid to secure a \$21 billion lease agreement for 100 aerial refueling tankers.

Air Force Secretary James Roche confirmed Wednesday that the Pentagon inspector general is examining the transfer of competitive bidding information to Chicago-based Boeing during negotiations over the tanker contract.

Boeing memos obtained by Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) suggest the information was relayed by Darleen Druyun, a former Air Force acquisitions official who now works for Boeing. ...

The investigation is the latest stumbling block for an unusual lease-to-own arrangement the Air Force and Boeing negotiated in order to replace a fifth of the military’s aging refueling fleet, while giving Boeing, struggling with the decline of airliner orders, a much-needed boost.

The deal has come under increased scrutiny from some members of Congress as well as taxpayer and Pentagon watchdog groups, who say that it will cost up to \$5 billion more to lease the planes than if the Air Force bought them outright. ...

Congress initially authorized the lease arrangement in a little noticed provision of the 2002 Defense Appropriations Act, but the deal requires the Air Force to report back to Congress with the terms of the agreement, which has not been finalized. ...

An April 1, 2002, memorandum suggests that Druyun provided Boeing with bid information from Airbus for the lease of its A330 aircraft as a tanker. Airbus is owned by the European Aeronautic Defense and Space Consortium and Britain’s BAE Systems PLC. ...

That information was passed after the Air Force already had chosen Boeing for the tanker contract, a Boeing official said Wednesday. ... **[JR: If that is so, why all the fulmination?]**

Critics of the deal, led by McCain, contend the Air Force and Boeing negotiated the lease agreement to avoid Pentagon contracting rules, and that the need for new tankers was a low priority for the Air Force until recently.

They pointed to a new Congressional Budget Office study that found the cost of leasing the 100 planes through 2017 is \$21.5 billion, while the price for simply purchasing the same tankers would be \$15.9 million **[JR: I think they mean \$15.9 Billion.]** over the same period.

In addition, McCain said, the Air Force agreed to a \$5 billion “sole source” maintenance contract with Boeing without asking for competing bids.

“From the beginning,” said McCain, “the Air Force appeared not so much to negotiate with Boeing as to advocate for it, to the point of appearing to allow the company too much control not only over pricing and the terms and conditions of contract but perhaps also over the aircraft’s capabilities.

“The documents obtained provide a troubling view of the extent to which the company, and not the military, controlled the acquisition,” added McCain, who chaired Wednesday’s hearing. ...

One of the deal’s most forceful critics is Illinois Sen. Peter Fitzgerald. He pointed out that, under the terms of the lease, a special Air Force trust—and not Boeing—would hold title to the 100 planes. He said it was an attempt by the Air Force to purchase the planes, at a higher price, without admitting it.

“You’re the lessor and the lessee,” Fitzgerald told Roche. “It’s just a complex legal construct to help you avoid the procurement laws around here, and I’m very troubled by that.” ...

[JR: Washington reeks with corruption and that includes our U.S. Knesset whose fake indignation doesn’t match their propensity for taking bribes from the powerful PAC groups that roam and overrun the corridors of D.C. The Boeing deal with the Air Force is a perfect example as to why wheels and deals are made in our nation’s capital. What is missing from this equation is that U.S. taxpayer dupes—because of the controlled media—are keep dumb and dumber about these ongoing wheels and deals. Case in point is the lucrative Iraqi contracts that Halliburton and its subsidiary Brown and Root acquired through their insider connections with ex-CEO Cheney, for the rebuilding of the oil fields, as well as the managing and supplying of our military bases. Where was the concern of our Knesset and media then?]

CHANGE FREDDIE, FANNIE OVERSIGHT: BUSH TREASURY WOULD REGULATE AGENCIES

Reuters, 09/11/03

WASHINGTON—The Bush administration on Wednesday supported turning over regulation of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to the U.S. Treasury to reassure markets that the mortgage finance companies do not pose a risk to the financial system.

Treasury Secretary John Snow urged lawmakers at a congressional hearing to create a stronger, better-funded regulator to oversee the companies, after an accounting scandal at Freddie Mac appeared to catch government supervisors off guard.

“There is a general recognition that the supervisory system for housing-related, government-sponsored enterprises neither has the tools nor the stature to deal effectively with the current size, complexity and importance of these enterprises,” Snow said in testimony prepared for delivery to the House.

Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, which own or stand behind 45 percent of the \$7.1 trillion of U.S. mortgage debt, are monitored for financial soundness by the Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight, an independent arm of the Department of Housing and Urban Development that lawmakers have criticized for its slow pace in dealing with Freddie Mac’s accounting crisis. ...

Freddie Mac acknowledges ignoring accounting standards while underreporting earnings by \$1.5 billion to \$4.5 billion from 2000 to 2002 to push earnings into the future and sustain a reputation for steady earnings growth. **[JR: Are they admitting to cooking the books?]**

The company replaced two chief executives in less than three months because of ties to the irregularities, which are under investigation by regulators and law enforcement officials.

Snow said he was not proposing immediate changes to capital standards for the mortgage finance companies. But he said the new regulator should be better equipped to adjust capital standards, which some critics charge are too low.

“The new agency should have more flexible authority to adjust risk-based capital standards than what is currently provided in the law,” Snow said.

Snow also said the Federal Home Loan Banks—12 regional banks that advance funds for mortgage lending—eventually should come under the same regulator as Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. But he said that Congress should focus first on oversight of the two companies.

The Treasury secretary said the new regulator should have authority to make sure Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac do not stray beyond the bounds of their congressional charters, which limit them to buying loans from lenders and bar them from lending directly to home buyers.

Snow also proposed giving the new agency the authority to liquidate the assets of Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac in the event of a business failure.

[JR: This is typical when Congress forms government-owned corporations to operate in the business arena—like NGOs—and does not clearly establish guidelines, regulations and oversight to keep these off-budget corporations from overstepping their authority and making their own rules. Without clearly defined and legislated oversight, these government-owned corporations invariably go beyond their intended scope as well as using “creative accounting”. But this is exactly what most governments do today. How can we get an honest government of the people when we-the-people fill Congress with lawyers and crooks? Now who do you suppose will watch the watchers?]

UNCERTAIN FED HOLDS ITS COURSE ON RATESBy William Neikirk, *Tribune* 09/17/03

WASHINGTON—Rarely has the Federal Reserve been so wishy-washy about the economy's direction.

The central bank showed its deep uncertainty Tuesday as it decided to stand pat and leave short-term interest rates at a 45-year low "for a considerable period". Its benchmark overnight bank-lending rate remained at 1 percent.

In a statement, the Fed expressed concern that the economy could sink into an unwelcome deflationary cycle, but it also expressed satisfaction that the economy appears to be strengthening, with spending firming up.

Which direction is the right one? Chairman Alan Greenspan's Fed had no real guidance for Americans on the economy's future. The upside risks and the downside risks are roughly equal in the immediate future, it said.

But it did note that "the labor market has been weakening," a possible sign that the Fed will pay particular attention to joblessness as it considers monetary policy in the future.

Many economists believe that the economic recovery will not be sustainable until businesses begin to rehire workers and force the unemployment rate down sharply. ...

After its meeting Tuesday, the Fed said that "business pricing power and increases in core consumer prices remain muted", signs that deflation worries have not gone away. ...

The Fed said that "the risk of inflation becoming undesirably low remains the predominant concern for the foreseeable future," leading to a pledge to hold interest rates low for a considerable period.

The consumer price index rose by 0.3 percent in August, the Labor Department said Tuesday, after a 0.2 percent increase last month. Energy costs led the way. Excluding food and energy, which tend to be more volatile, consumer prices went up 0.1 percent last month, half the increase that occurred in July. **[JR: Food and energy may be volatile, but they're our basic necessities, so why exclude them from the CPI?]**

Brian Wesbury, chief economist at Chicago's Griffin, Kubik, Stephens & Thompson Inc., an investment banking firm, said that in taking a neutral stance about the economy's direction, the Fed is ignoring strong indicators in recent weeks that the pace of the recovery is accelerating.

"That shocks me," Wesbury said.

He added that the central bank possibly is ignoring the good news for a reason. If it said things were better, he said, then the markets would immediately begin to think that interest rates were going up. "They've got themselves in a pickle," Wesbury said.

But others said the Fed is simply so unsure of the future that it is waiting to see what happens. **[JR: This is what I believe the scenario is: Wait until it becomes a crisis, then try to rectify it.]**

"There is no question in my mind that the Fed is stumped," said Kurt Barnard, president and chief economist at Retail Forecasting LLC and an expert on retail trends. "They are accustomed to manipulating the economy through interest rates. But lower interest rates are good only so long as you want the money."

Many companies can get low interest rates on loans these days to expand, he said, but they don't need to borrow since they can meet all the demand for goods and services with their existing labor force.

Barnard said the economy has lost 3 million jobs for good. Many people who were swept out of their jobs in the past few years will have to take lower pay when they get rehired, dampening economic growth, he said.

With that uncertainty, the central bank is in no hurry to act, analysts said. ...

[JR: In the meantime, millions of retirees that relied on interest income are forced back into the workforce at low-

level retail services in order to survive. Many of the unemployed have run out of benefits, given up finding a permanent job and have been removed from the unemployment roles to make the administration's bogus numbers acceptable to the uninformed that might still have jobs. With all these unemployed, where are all the taxes—that are needed to pay for all these wars—going to come from? It's coming from low-interest loans from the Fed, borrowed against future generations' income. Every fiat U.S. dollar the government spends is borrowed directly from the Fed, so why should the Fed be concerned? The Fed will wind up owning everything anyway.]

HEAT ON CONGRESS TO FIX POWER WOESBy Melita Marie Garza, *Tribune*, 08/29/03

Congress must push for mandatory rules for electricity grids and the industry must stockpile critical equipment for use in the event of a terrorist attack, the National Commission on Energy Policy said Thursday.

"The massive power outages two weeks ago are symptoms of a system that needs both new regulatory requirements and better economic incentives," said John Rowe, co-chairman of the commission and chairman of Chicago-based Exelon Corp.

The group's recommendations likely would be funded by taxpayers and electricity users.

Following the Aug. 14 blackout that swept across eight states and parts of Canada, U.S. Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham said it would cost \$50 billion to rebuild the nation's ailing electricity system.

The report, which has been in the works for nine months, offered a blueprint for improving the nation's electricity sector that would require action by Congress, the Bush administration, state and federal regulators, and the boards of investor-owned utilities. [JR: This proves that those in the electrical-energy field—who are responsible but not held accountable—were well aware of the blatant neglect of the entire energy grid system.]

The policy group called the lack of investment in the nation's transmission infrastructure "particularly acute", and said the system is "seriously overloaded in many areas".

In part, the solution lies in encouraging more research and development, an area in which spending has been cut by more than 75 percent during the past 20 years, the commission said.

The commission suggests financing research with a combination of federal tax incentives and state-approved utility investments, the cost of which utilities would pass on to consumers through small charges on their electric bills. ...

Consumers will likely pay for needed improvements one way or the other.

The report said the nation's faltering effort to restructure the electricity industry was partly to blame for failures that led to the largest blackout in U.S. history. "Electricity industry restructuring has derailed," the report said.

The report said wholesale markets continue to "evolve slowly and erratically" and are caught up in infighting among federal, state and local governments.

Other roadblocks to the developing market include "regulatory uncertainty, malfeasance, poor credit and outright collapses, of which Enron is only the most notorious," the report said.

Commissioner Philip Sharp, a former Indiana congressman, said: "It's up to state and federal regulators to provide clarity. Without it, companies are stuck between uncertain regulatory regimes. No one knows if the rules today will be the same tomorrow—or how they will recover the sizable capital commitments needed to maintain a reliable and efficient electric system."

For example, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's plan to create regional transmission organizations, an effort to put order in the nation's developing electricity market, has become mired in conflict.

"There is no nationwide agreement for any particular vision for the electricity industry," Rowe said. "We have sort of lost a clear consensus on what the shape of this industry should be."

The policy group's report also recognizes that regulated utilities are still needed to serve residential and small-business customers who generally find deregulation "an annoyance" that doesn't benefit them. The report suggests that regulated distribution companies, such as ComEd, also need investment certainty and incentives to pursue energy-efficiency improvements, among other things.

A key question will be who will foot the bill to put the recommendations in place.

For example, the strategic electricity equipment stockpile would cost "low numbers of billions—as opposed to high numbers of billions," Rowe said. The stockpile, which would be kept in guarded, dispersed locations, could be financed with taxes and increased consumer rates, he suggested.

Since the Sept. 11 attacks, the Edison Electric Institute, at the behest of the utilities, has tried to develop a way utilities could more easily replace major pieces of equipment that might be damaged in a terrorist act.

Most of this equipment is no longer made in the U.S. and can take up to a year to obtain. Another problem is that equipment is generally not interchangeable among utilities or even within a single utility, since no two substations are exactly alike.

To enhance security of the network, commission members concluded that transformers and circuit breakers have to be standardized.

"You need to design them so they can be used in a number of voltage situations, and you need to have them available for real emergencies," Rowe said. ...

[JR: It must be nice to have an internationally owned (energy) corporation designated as critical to the infrastructure of the U.S. and National Security. All they have to do is skim the cream off the top until conditions become critical—and then they know that the U.S. government (TAXPAYERS) will step in to subsidize the upgrading and bringing equipment back up to acceptable standards. This willful neglect also gives them the justification to increase customer-service fees, overriding local rulings by consumer and state Utility Commissions. In today's multi-national business environment, mismanagement is the name of the game and the goal is obviously GREATER PROFITS.]

U.S. JEWISH POPULATION DROPS, BUT STUDY FINDS POSITIVESBy Holly Lebowitz Rossi, *Religion News Service*, 09/12/03

The Jewish population of America has dropped slightly over the last decade, marking its first decline since the Colonial period of American history, a major national study reports.

Researchers for the National Jewish Population Survey 2000-01, released this week by United Jewish Communities, say the survey is "a mixed bag" for the Jewish community that points to both challenges and strengths for the coming years.

"We see some tremendous strengths in the Jewish community in terms of increases in Jewish education and in terms of what the closely connected Jews do in their lives," said Lorraine Blass, the survey's project manager.

"We also see some challenges. We've got a very strong Jewish population on the one hand, doing a lot Jewishly, then we have people that are doing very little Jewishly, if anything," she said.

The survey was based on interviews with more than 9,000 Americans, both Jews and non-Jews. [JR: **These “non-Jews” must be the Judeo-Christian Evangelists who support the Zionist cause.**]

A major finding of the study is the decline in overall population, from 5.5 million in 1990 to 5.2 million in 2000. Jews were defined for the study as those who identified themselves as Jewish, said they were Jewish and something else or had no religion or a non-monotheistic religion but one Jewish parent or some Jewish upbringing.

The number of Jewish households, however, increased from 2.7 million in 1990 to 2.9 million today, a phenomenon researchers attribute to continuing interfaith marriage.

In a parallel statistic to general national figures, the Jewish population is weighted toward older ages. The median age for American Jews is 42, a five-year increase since 1990 and also higher than the median age of 35 for Americans in general. Elderly Jews, ages 65 and over, make up 19 percent of the total Jewish population.

The fertility rate for Jewish women is below both population-replacement levels and the national average.

Demographic studies generally consider 2.1 children per woman as the necessary number to sustain the population; Jewish women average fewer than 1.9 children.

The long-awaited figure of the percentage of Jews who are married to people from other faiths indicates a stabilization since 1990. The intermarriage rate is 47 percent, according to the current report, which appears at first glance to be down from the 52 percent reported figure from a decade ago.

But in the 1990 study, the definition of a Jew was expanded for the calculation of the intermarriage rate. If the 1990 methodology were applied to this year's study, the rate would be 54 percent for those married between 1996 and 2001. If the current methodology were applied to the 1990 data, the figure is 43 percent for people who were married in 1985-1990.

One area that shows improvement for the Jewish community is participation in Jewish education. Twenty-nine percent of Jewish children ages 6-17 are enrolled in Jewish day school or yeshiva, which compares with only 12 percent of Jewish adults who attended such schools when they were children.

Jewish leaders lauded the positive education numbers, with the Orthodox Union referring to education as “the No. 1 priority” for the community.

Some Jewish leaders argue that demographic studies of nuance concepts, like spirituality and identity are fundamentally misguided.

“Trying to capture people's spiritual and ethnic identity with numbers is always a mistake,” said Rabbi Brad Hirschfield, vice president of The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership.

“What we are continuing to see in this survey is a Jewish community that simultaneously is experiencing good news and bad news, simultaneously experiencing assimilation and revitalization,” said Jonathan D. Sarna, professor of American Jewish history at Brandeis University.

“Even if the community is smaller, it is a smaller community that seems to be more engaged than it was before,” he said.

[JR: **The Jews today are most definitely more engaged than ever before. Zionists dominate all banking, education, courts, entertainment, media news (TV & print), politics (local, state and federal) and of course there are the “neo-cons” running every government department and agency in Washington, including the White House. They make sure they are at the right place or position to be the most effective. This isn't bad for a small 5.2 million Jews in America manipulating a population of over 280 million—but they have always been good at fabricating numbers when Jews are counted, like in the “Holocaust”.**]

NEVADA CORPORATIONS:

Maintaining Privacy Of Corporate Records

Budget's “Tip of the Week” #2:

NRS 78.257—Right of stockholders to inspect and audit financial records; exceptions

Last week we discussed *NRS 78.105* and how it appears to have been written specifically to provide access to the corporation's records by the corporation's *stockholders*. What about a case where the stockholder's interest in accessing the records has nothing to do with the stockholder's interest in the corporation? And what about other parties who might want to access the corporation's private records? *NRS 78.257* holds the answer to those questions, though the answers are, no doubt, NOT what such parties might wish to hear!

After defining who is entitled to inspect the corporate records and the notice that must be given for doing so in paragraph 1, then specifying that the inspecting party bears the costs of extracting such in paragraph 2, *NRS 78.257*, paragraph 3, states (emphasis added):

3. The rights authorized by subsection 1 may be denied to any stockholder upon his refusal to furnish the corporation an affidavit that such inspection, extracts or audit is not desired for any purpose not related to his interest in the corporation as a stockholder. **Any stockholder or other person, exercising rights under subsection 1, who uses or attempts to use information, documents, records or other data obtained from the corporation, for any purpose not related to the stockholder's interest in the corporation as a stockholder, is guilty of a gross misdemeanor. ...**

A gross misdemeanor conviction is punishable by incarceration for up to one year in the county jail and a \$2,000 fine. Note that this statute spells out rights of the *stockholders* to inspect corporate records—the *stockholders*, not “just anyone”. **There is no mandate of any kind for non-stockholders to ever inspect any corporate records. It is a gross misdemeanor for any non-stockholder to even attempt to use information from the corporate records in any way contrary to the interests of the stockholders.**

Next week, we'll look at a method of owning a corporation without owning its stock—and yes, the answer to that riddle can also be found built right into the *Nevada Revised Statutes!*

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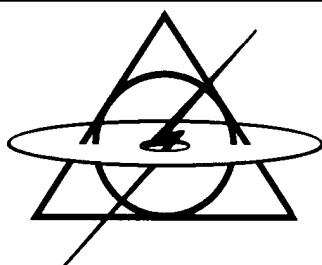
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