

Written by Bobby M. Reyes

Saturday, 17 April 2010 10:31 - Last Updated Saturday, 17 April 2010 10:36

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To borrow the title in President John F. Kennedy’s book, then Speaker of the House of Representatives Manuel B. Villar, Jr., showed to his homeland and the world that he was a “Profile of Courage” in November 2000.

The *Newsweek Magazine* described Manny Villar’s defining moment in Philippine presidential history in its Nov. 27, 2000, issue, which is reproduced hereunder.

It takes not only ability to build working coalitions but also guts for a Filipino to be elected, and become effective as, a Speaker of the House of Representatives. These qualities will serve Manny Villar well when he is elected the President of the Philippines. He can add more defining moments in the annals of the Philippine presidency.

{xtypo\_quote} Editor’s Note: To read the other qualifications of Manny Villar for the presidency, please click this link, [Why the MabuhayRadio.com Endorses Manny Villar for President of the Philippines](#) {/xtypo\_quote}

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Here is the *Newsweek* article:

PHILIPPINES

## **Tightening The Noose**

### **The Lower House Moves Quickly To Oust Estrada**

By Marites D. Vitug | *NEWSWEEK*

From the magazine issue dated Nov 27, 2000

<http://www.newsweek.com/id/86786>

Manuel Villar took his revenge last week. The speaker of the Philippine House of Representatives had been a member of President Joseph Estrada's ruling coalition. But after allegations surfaced last month that Estrada had accepted almost \$9 million in payoffs from illegal-gambling syndicates, Villar bolted from the party and joined an opposition effort to impeach the president.

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Last Monday (Speaker) Villar opened the daily House session by leading the lawmakers in singing the national anthem. He said a prayer asking for "light and grace... on this momentous and historic day"--and then suddenly he started reading a resolution stating that (President) Estrada had been impeached. Ruling-party House members were stunned; one jumped up and tried to interrupt Villar. The speaker didn't look up. When he finished reading the resolution, Villar said: "The secretary-general is immediately directed to transmit to the Senate the impeachment complaint." And with a bang of the gavel he suspended the session.

When Villar stepped down from the podium, he was met by the cheers of more than 70 members of Congress who had signed the impeachment complaint--no formal vote was even necessary. Some of the lawmakers broke into tears; others hugged each other. In the House gallery, anti-Estrada groups began yelling: "Erap, resign!" (Erap is Estrada's nickname.) Estrada, who has served two and a half years of his six-year term, could now become the first Philippine president to be booted from office. Estrada's fate will be determined next month, when he's put on trial by the Philippine Senate. It could be a bruising affair. To oust the president, two thirds of the upper house's 22 senators must vote to impeach him. It is hard to predict the outcome. "The situation is in flux," says Fulgencio Factoran, a human-rights lawyer and former cabinet member. "We may see [senators] shifting from one side to another, depending on pressure from the streets, civil society and Estrada and his allies."

Many Filipinos calling for Estrada's head believe that the corruption evidence to be presented at the Senate trial will be conclusive. But as Factoran points out, "The impeachment process is mainly a political act." Ten of the 22 senators are running for reelection in May--and since they are selected by a national vote, they will be checking the winds of public opinion before making a decision. Right now, Estrada is facing a nation infuriated by his alleged misconduct. The day after the House impeached the president, stockbrokers in Manila wearing black armbands walked off the trading floor of the Philippine Stock Exchange. Many were wearing stickers on their clothes emblazoned with the word resign.

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Last week the Senate finalized its impeachment procedures--borrowing most from the United States

One difference: though Bill Clinton did not have to face questioning by the U.S. Senate after the Monica Lewinsky imbroglio, Estrada may be summoned before the upper house and grilled on the corruption charges. He has denied accepting gambling kickbacks. New Senate President Aquilino Pimentel vowed to hold daily hearings to hasten the processing, saying: "I intend to see the process through in a fair and just manner, to put to rest the disturbing dissension that is being fueled by the accusations of presidential corruption." Since the crisis broke in October, the country's currency has plunged to a historic low. Even if Estrada survives the impeachment trial, he is not likely to regain his credibility or the confidence of the people. Vice President Macapagal Arroyo acknowledged as much last week. "The president's honor and prestige have undergone a terrible beating," she said. "Even if more than one third of the senators declare him innocent, he will be tainted, ridiculed and mistrusted." In other words, Estrada's days as an effective leader are probably over--no matter the outcome next month.

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