

Mobocracy (sic) in the Philippines Is Harming True Democracy - MabuhayRadio

Written by Bobby Reyes (as updated on Feb. 15, 2008)

Thursday, 17 January 2008 05:51 - Last Updated Sunday, 24 February 2008 15:37

The latest attempt by disgruntled elements and reformers in the Philippines to force the resignation of Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo because of alleged corruption in her inner circle is not conducive to the growth of democracy in the archipelago. A people-powered revolution, even if done peacefully, is contrary to the doctrines of a true democracy. More so, because the New York-based Freedom House (www.freedomhouse.org) dropped the Philippines from the list of world democracies. Democracy in the Philippines started to suffer on Sept. 21, 1972, when then Philippine President **Ferdinand E. Marcos** declared martial law. The Philippine homeland experienced in February 1986 a military-backed people's revolt that this writer's father, Dominador S. Reyes (1909-1999), described as a "mobocratic" (sic) process that toppled President Marcos. The 1986 revolution (that was a United States-backed coup d'etat in reality) was known as the EDSA I. Another military-backed revolution, albeit again relatively peaceful, installed then Vice President **Gloria Macapagal Arroyo** as President in February 2001. It has been called EDSA II.

Right now, some human-rights activists and advocates argue that a "mob" composed of less than five-hundred leaders and their kin rules "The Imperial Manila" (TIM). The "mob" has actually been lording over a rule of the minority for the past 36 years. Including their kin and in-laws, the 1,000 (more or less) powerful people occupy the corridors of power in the three departments of the Philippine national government. The number includes their allies who are local-government officials, the military top brass and some favored cronies and taipans. In reality, it may be a confrontation between the mob (of an status quo) against another mob of people seeking to overthrow the former and change the status quo.

Can the Philippine democracy – as last practiced when then Senate President Ferdinand Marcos beat incumbent President Diosdado Macapagal in a relatively-clean and honest presidential election in 1965 – be restored?

Overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) and Filipino emigrants think that they can restore full democracy in RP – if the voters would give them their votes in 2010.

Several groups of politically-active Overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in the United States and other foreign countries think that they can restore full democracy in the Philippines

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. This is the scenario for its restoration:

Step No. One: Organize a well-funded OFW-led political party that will field national and local slates for the 2010 Philippine elections. The coming elections will actually serve also indirectly as a referendum for the OFW's platforms of government and socioeconomics. The platforms will come complete with pre-announced and printed goals, objectives and timetables. The OFWs will sign a "Covenant with the Constituents" that would specify the things to do and accomplish within specific time frames.

Step No. Two: On the assumption that the OFW-led political party would win the 2010 national elections, for the new President – with the approval of a working majority in Congress and local governments – to call for a constitutional convention (ConCon) to decide once and for all the form of government that the country wants. The new Dispensation would guarantee full honesty of the elections to select the ConCon delegates – without the use of dirty election tricks, vote buying, intimidation of voters and other nefarious activities.

Step No. Three: Should the ConCon decide on a parliamentary system (based on the English model and not on the French system) and the people approve the new constitution in a plebiscite, the President and the Vice President will make official their resignation (as post-dated and signed prior to the 2010 elections), as soon as the winners in the first parliamentary elections are proclaimed and sworn into office. There will be an orderly turn over of the country's leadership, as had happened in 1965 between outgoing President Macapagal and incoming President Marcos. The President and the Vice President (as elected in 2010) and their Cabinet members will pledge also in a formal notarized covenant not to run in the parliamentary elections and would serve only the country as "ambassadors of goodwill" after the new parliament is convened and the Prime Minister is chosen. It is given that the President, the Vice President and their Cabinet will guarantee the first parliamentary election to be absolutely clean and honest – without the use of dirty election tricks, vote buying, intimidation of voters and other nefarious activities.

The OFW-led political party intends to provide an honest and well-meaning government-in-transition, so as to restore full democracy in RP.

If you think that the said three steps are impractical and unreal, wait till the OFW-led political platforms are finalized and the "Covenant with the Constituents" is signed. The OFW-led

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political party proponents do not need really the Philippines to live comfortable and peaceful lives, as they are now doing fine in their respective new foreign domiciles. After restoring full democracy, they can go back to their respective foreign homes and serve to promote the interest and welfare of the Filipino motherland. After all, they trust that they do not have a monopoly of patriotism and dedicated public service.

Here are excerpts from an Associated Press article, datelined Washington, DC, Thursday, January 17, 2008

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The Philippines was one of three countries relegated by a private democracy watchdog organization from a list of totally free countries to partly free.

The New York-based Freedom House reported that freedom declined significantly in 2007 in almost four times as many countries as registered improvements last year as the world was less free for a second consecutive year.

According to a survey by Freedom House, 36 percent of the people in the world – about half of them in China – were not living in freedom.

RP was relegated by a private democracy watchdog organization from a list of totally-free countries to a partly-free category.

The Philippines received a downward trend arrow due to a spate of political killings specifically targeting left-wing political activists, the organization's website said.

Reversals in freedom were seen in one-fifth of the world's countries, including Pakistan, Kenya,

Egypt

,

Nigeria

and

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Venezuela

. One country,

Mauritania

, joined the list of democracies, while three – the Philippines

,

Bangladesh

and

Kenya

– dropped off it to partly free. Two countries,

Thailand

and

Togo

, were upgraded from not free to partly free.

While the number of countries judged not free declined by two to 43 last year, "There were many and overwhelmingly negative changes within countries already designated not free," the survey found.

The number of countries judged free stood at 90, representing 47 percent of the world's 193 countries, and those considered partly free stood at 60, or 31 percent.

Those found not free accounted for nearly 2.4 billion people, about half in China.

Expectations of government concessions on human rights or modest democratic reforms in advance of the 2008 Summer Olympics did not pan out in China, where the government continued to crack down on political activists, Internet journalists and human-rights lawyers, the report said.

South Asia, the former Soviet Union and the Middle East did particularly poorly, giving "an alarming signal about the development of freedom worldwide, something formerly viewed as inevitable," said Jennifer Windsor, executive director of Freedom House.

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Four stark reminders of the perilous condition of freedom were singled out:

- Parliamentary elections in Russia were held under patently unfair conditions.
- Democracy in Georgia was sullied by imposition of a state of emergency and a violent police crackdown on demonstrators.
- In Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto was assassinated, and terrorism by Islamic extremists rose.
- In Kenya, hundreds were killed in rioting in the wake of "highly credible reports of vote-rigging by the government" in the country's presidential election.

(Snipped) Using its enormous oil and gas resources, Russia exerts influence in former Soviet republics, providing political, moral and material support to authoritarian regimes that dominate Central Asia

, the report said.

Three of the countries in the region – Belarus, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan – have consistently ranked among the world's most repressive societies, Freedom House said.

Modest gains in the Middle East, where President George W. Bush focused his hopes for democratic change, came to an end last year, the report said, with major declines in both the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli-occupied territories.

(Snipped) Sourced from the Freedom House dispatch, as published also by the Associated Press. # # #

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