

How Do You Define Trapos? - MabuhayRadio

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How does one define a politician or much more, a traditional politician (or “trapo” in colloquial Filipino)?

Perhaps a good way to define a *trapo* is by comparing a politician to a statesman. According to James Freeman Clarke, “a politician thinks about the next elections — the statesman thinks about the next generations.”

Here are some comparisons that unknown authors have written about politicians and statesmen:

Politicians talk while Statesmen walk it.

Politicians run to win at all costs while Statesmen run to serve while minimizing costs and maximizing results.

Politicians are ideologues while Statesmen are open-minded.

Politicians say, “It’s all about me” while Statesmen say, “It’s all about them.”

Politicians focus on the next election while Statesmen focus on the future.

In its issue of Friday, 26 June, the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (PDI) printed an AP dispatch on the subject of errant American politicians.

In this article, Fred Greenstein, a Princeton University professor emeritus of politics, suggested that several factors make aggressive politicians prone to mischief:

1. They are disposed to thinking about themselves first.
2. These are men who have to exercise power and sometimes can become drunk from it.
3. These are men who love being admired and who often are surrounded by swarms of psychopants (sic).
4. These are also the type of men who are likely to break promises,

manipulate and cut corners.

5. Worst of all, these are men who think the rules do not apply to them and who think they are untouchable.

Do you doubt these? Professor Greenstein retorts, “Just ask their wives, their mistresses or their security details that are often privy to indiscretions.”

Without doubt, Professor Greenstein has aptly and concisely given us Filipinos a working definition of our own *trapos* (traditional politicians).

In fact, when I discussed this topic with the MabuhayRadio.com editor, he added that “Filipino *trapos* not only have become drunk with power but literally tipsy also with alcoholic drinks. The media documented the so-called ‘Midnight Cabinet’ of then President Joseph Estrada, as they consumed bottles after bottles of expensive wine and liquor while discussing vacancies in government offices and appointments were signed as they were already inebriated. Soon, it was revealed that several individuals were appointed to the same position, as they were too drunk to note the duplication of nominations to the same office.”

Bobby Reyes added that “there is more to what Professor Greenstein also said: ‘These are men who love being admired and who often are surrounded by swarms of sychopants.’ Mr. Greenstein should have added women to the swarm. There are women who like to be the girlfriends of powerful men, as what happened to a married flight attendant of Philippine Airlines. The stewardess abandoned her husband just to become the mistress of a Philippine President. In fact, reports said that she gladly bore President Estrada a child. She became supposedly the ninth woman to bear a child for that traditional politician.”

What say you, Dear Readers? Can you add more comments to this discussion? # # #

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