

Privilege Speech of Senator M.A. Madrigal
7 March 2006

Mr. President:

There are those who say, the emergency has passed, Mrs. Arroyo has won, and the Republic is stronger than ever. They are wrong. It is wrong to confuse a cosmetic approach to governance with the genuine article. The putrefying cadaver of the administration has simply received a light dusting of makeup, Mr. President. It's true nature –corrupt and corrupting- remains the same.

When Mrs. Arroyo lifted her self-proclaimed state of emergency, she did so not because she wanted to, but because an aroused and enraged citizenry and world community forced her to.

Just as Mr. Marcos lifted martial law, to make possible the visit of Pope John Paul II, so has Mrs. Arroyo lifted her state of emergency to make possible the prevention of a new round of criticism from the governments of the world and international media. She displayed, therefore, a cosmetic approach to governing; everything is changeable, totally mutable, so long as propaganda points can be earned.

She has proclaimed things are back to normal, yes. But what, in fact, is Mrs. Arroyo's definition of normality?

Normal, to her, is a perpetual state of investigation and intimidation with regards to Philippine media.

Normal, to her, is the continued harassment of oppositionists, whether belonging to progressive groups, or to the mainstream political parties. She denounces the party list representatives, then confers heroic status on them by ordering their arrest; we may not always see eye to eye with Rep. Crispin Beltran, but we all recognize his sincerity and absolute loyalty to the working man; and if Mrs.

Arroyo must make us choose between Ka Bel and her administration, then every right-thinking Filipino must unreservedly support Ka Bel.

Normal, to her, is sending of more troops to Metro Manila, their continued garrisoning in the capital, and the creation of mock investigations in order to defuse the tensions created by the successful efforts at probing abuses like the Fertilizer scam.

Even as Mrs. Arroyo lifted her self-proclaimed state of national emergency, she continued her policy of aggression towards all who are in opposition to her, and who possess an independent mind.

Where occupation of the Tribune did not work, she instructed her lawyers to file cases of sedition against Ninez Cacho Olivarez and two other columnists of the Daily Tribune.

Where a broad effort to cow the press failed, she had her factotums go forward with threats against not only national, but provincial media.

Where politicians refused to succumb to her dangling perks and favors, she embarked on an invasion in aid of destabilization in the Liberal Party. Already being titular leader of LAKAS, already acting as chief patron of KAMPI, she has now presided over her own coronation as Queen of Atienza camp in the Liberal Party. Thus laying out, indisputably, her desire to create a new *Kalibapi*, a modern day **KBL** of the dictator.

Indeed, Mr. President, what Mrs. Arroyo has done in the wake of her lifting her own proclamation, is a louder proclamation of her intentions and approach to power, than anything her lawyers could plagiarize from Ferdinand Marcos.

She never needed Proclamation 1017; the proof of that is that what she claimed she was empowered to undertake because of that proclamation, she continues to

do, even without it. Proclamation 1017 was merely one item in a lethal arsenal of quasi-legal executive issuances. Former President Fidel V. Ramos, for example, pointed out recently that besides Proclamation 1017 and its accompanying General Order no. 5, there was a General Order No. 6, which remains secret. No one knows –and probably, will ever know- what was in this secret order. Or whether or not it remains in effect.

As Atty. Marvic Leonen said, Mrs. Arroyo confuses herself with the State. I beg to differ, however, with Atty. Leonen's comparing Mrs. Arroyo with the Sun King, Louis XIV who famously proclaimed, "*L'etat c'est moi,*" or *I am the State*. To compare Mrs. Arroyo to Louis XIV is to grant her a pedigree and level of sophistication and statesmanship she frankly does not deserve. A far more useful, and accurate, comparison, between Mrs. Arroyo's coarse ambitions and naked aggression, is between her and the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini.

Before history reduced him to where he is now, an ill-fated, posturing buffoon, Mussolini was actually taken seriously. He impressed Italy and the world; his countrymen found themselves living under the ruthless heel of his terror.

It was Mussolini who first (and then repeatedly) applied the idea of totalitarianism to the Fascist Italian state. In a speech of October 28, 1925: *Tutto nello Stato, niente al di fuori dello Stato, nulla contro lo Stato* ("*Everything in the State, nothing outside the State, nothing against the State*"). This formula was, however, more than simply extreme statism; at the same time Mussolini and other leading Fascists pro-claimed their *feroce volontà totalitaria* ("*violent totalitarian will*") and talked about the "*totalitarian program of our Revolution.*" The slogan of Fascist blackshirts became, "Mussolini is always right." And his propagandists and their foreign fellow-travelers praised him, saying, "At least Mussolini made the trains run on time."

Those trains that the Italian fascists made punctual, efficiently and punctually delivered Italian Jews to Hitler's concentration camps. The phenomenal will, discipline, and iron rule so widely admired subjected Italy to slavery. So thoroughly have Italians rejected that era of Fascist repression that they have

endured revolving-door governments for fifty years, rather than go back to the false certainties of the Fascist era.

Like Mussolini, Mrs. Arroyo would have the local officials in her pocket march on Manila, as if it were some Fascist march on Rome. But those in Ulap proclaiming their undying loyalty to Mrs. Arroyo are a far cry from the fighting Fascists that marched to Italy to demand King Victor Emmanuel's appointment of Mussolini as prime minister. The provincial leaders, first of all, are not in touch with their constituencies, and they are not tied to their patron with ties of ideology; rather, the ties that bind them to the Palace are the apron strings of patronage.

The Minister of Propaganda and Enlightenment of the Third Reich, Joseph Goebbels, once wrote this, Mr. President:

"If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it. The lie can be maintained only for such time as the State can shield the people from the political, economic and/or military consequences of the lie. It thus becomes vitally important for the State to use all of its powers to repress dissent, for the truth is the mortal enemy of the lie, and thus by extension, the truth is the greatest enemy of the State."

Mrs. Arroyo thinks she is the state; and as the personification of the state, she proves herself, every day, and in every way, allergic to the truth, and comfortable only with the Big Lie.

The question is, how much longer she will use Communism and Right Wing concoctions of her Palace propagandists as the ammunition with which to threaten our people? Or must she escalate, to the extent of fomenting false bombings, as Marcos did, or burning down either house of our legislature, to capitalize on the destruction of Congress as Hitler did with the *Reichstag* fire? Will we keep allowing her to turn the intelligence services of the AFP into her own Waffen-SS, and keep transforming the PNP into her own private Gestapo?

Mr. President: Mrs. Arroyo has not won a victory. She has lost a fight. She has

been faced with the implacable refusal of Philippine media to surrender to her; she has been confronted by a citizenry whose basic sense of decency has been affronted by her persecution of party list representatives; she has been frightened and has beaten a hasty retreat in the face of international skepticism to her claims of a Rightist-Leftist plot.

More importantly, Mrs. Arroyo has not paused, will not pause, and in fact, continues to vigorously pursue a totalitarian effort to subvert and erode the free institutions of our Republic. She has recklessly magnified whatever threats that exist –threats, we all know, are of her own making- and tried to alarm the population to the extent that it will blindly support her in her actions. The country and the world has shown it sees right through the charade.

Ask the media, Mr. President. Ask the decent members of the Liberal Party. Ask our party list organizations. Ask the world, Mr. President, if Mrs. Arroyo has, indeed, returned our country to normality. She has not. She never will. She never can. And so long as she persist in trying to ignore reality, and turn her back on the consequences of her actions, she, and we, will never find peace. She has put the country in a permanent state of national emergency; she has permanently put this country on a war footing. We are, each one of us, in this hall and outside, throughout the length and breadth of this nation, required to be in a permanent state of mobilization. For the defense of liberty and democracy, requires no less.

Mr. President, in closing allow me to reiterate my condemnation of what Mrs. Arroyo has done to your party. I am incensed over what has happened to the Liberal Party. The Japanese, in forming the Kalibapi, and Marcos, in forming the KBL, at least did so at the point of a gun. The Liberal Party was hijacked with the enthusiastic participation of Palace sycophants. I join the country in condemning what Mrs. Arroyo has done to the Senate President. I do so, not only because of sentimental ties –my grandfather was one of the founders of the LP- but because every free Filipino, in a sense, owes something to the statesmanship of Manuel Roxas, Elpidio Quirino, Ninoy Aquino, Gerry Roxas and even Diosdado Macapagal. All of these great Filipinos must be turning over in their graves.

What was done to the party of my esteemed colleagues Senate President Drilon, Senators Biazon, Roxas, and Pangilinan, was done to us, Mr. President. No Filipino, no institution, no organization, is safe.

Thank you.