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Editorial

Prepare for a decisive confrontation with the Arroyo regime



Gloria Arroyo's desperation knows no bounds in the face of renewed threats to her stay in power. She is haunted by seemingly endless exposés of her involvement in various anomalies, by the people's mounting anger, growing threats from the opposition and deepening rifts within the ruling coalition.

The unrelenting political crisis is shaking Arroyo's rule to its very foundations, making the end of her regime a looming possibility and forestalling her plans to stay in power beyond 2010.

Malacañang has thus been frenziedly engaged in maneuvers and counter-maneuvers. It has been caught in its own web of lies and dirty tricks, fascist and criminal attacks against the people.

Even as Arroyo has been trying to the hilt to cajole, divide and sow discord among the anti-Arroyo forces, she is also desperately trying to consolidate her own forces and make sure that no one within her own camp will stand in her way. She is currently occupied with maneuvering against Speaker Jose de Venecia because of the role he played in exposing the anomalous NBN-ZTE deal.

Even after failing to put down de Venecia in the last polls and do away with him as House Speaker last June, Malacañang has not relented in finding other ways to depose him. Arroyo shelled out up to half a million pesos in bribes to almost 200 congressmen to buy their loyalty in

the face of a possible alliance between de Venecia and anti-Arroyo forces in the House to file a new impeachment complaint against the president.

Arroyo immediately got what she wanted from the congressmen she had bribed. They referred a weak impeachment case to the Congress Committee on Justice without much ado to derail opposition plans to file a genuine and airtight case.

Plans by Arroyo allies to unseat the Speaker are on hold amid worrying threats that de Venecia will side with the opposition in pushing for an impeachment. Malacañang makes it appear that the Arroyo-de Venecia rift is now a thing of the past. In fact, it is a ticking time bomb, ready to go off at a moment's notice.

The Palace's blatant bribery has incensed the public even more, worsened the rift between Arroyo and de Venecia, given the opposition more ammunition and bolstered calls to boot Arroyo out of Malacañang.

Rattled by the crisis that has exploded, the regime tried to drown out the scandals hounding it by setting off a bomb at the Glorietta Mall in Makati and use it as a pretext to suppress anticipated protests.

But the blood of the defenseless people who were killed and injured in the bombing failed to blind a public already convinced of the fact that only the Arroyo regime is capable of perpetrating such a heinous crime.

At first, the regime blamed the bombing on "destabilizers." Now it is pushing the theory that it was an accidental explosion due to negligence by Glorietta's owners, even after the discovery of evidence pointing to the military as the source of the bomb.

Malacañang has also speeded up the granting of pardon to Joseph Estrada in a bid to divide and weaken the opposition and derail or temporarily thwart the latter's moves against the regime.

Despite the pardon, no one in the opposition has expressed plans to stop assailing the Arroyo regime. Instead, the opposition, including the Estrada camp, is feverishly preparing for a decisive confrontation. Plans are currently underway to acquire the necessary numbers within Congress to push a genuine impeachment case.

The mass movement to oust Arroyo is likewise resurgent and growing. The depth and intensity of the people's loathing for the regime, and mounting demands for Arroyo's ouster practically guarantee the renewed explosion of gigantic street protests. They are deepening the rifts within the reactionary camp and even within the ruling clique. They give the opposition renewed confidence to pursue not only Arroyo's impeachment but all other moves to change the regime and hold it accountable for its crimes against the people.

A decisive battle looms between Arroyo and the Filipino people.

The current situation presents tremendous challenges for the revolutionary forces, the mass movement and united front. All forces must act swiftly and in their numbers to massively, quickly and assiduously arouse the people, harness their anger and bring them to the streets and create a thunderous movement to oust this burdensome regime. The national-democratic forces must likewise make sure of engaging in solid, painstaking organizing which is crucial to ensuring a strong foundation for the mass movement, providing it with a clear direction and assuring that it would serve the all-sided advance of the Philippine revolution.

We must effectively lead the people. We must mobilize them in their numbers in the streets. We must take advantage of the deepening rifts within the ruling class and further expand the united front to put an end to the Arroyo regime. **AB**

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