



Vice President Leni Robredo speaks before lawyers.



Let me start with a definition.

The word is *ek-ek* (read as written).

It is a counterproductive discourse.

It is the equivalent of “*sitsit, satsat, dalda*” in Pilipino.

There is too much *ek-ek* in the Philippines these days.

The country is polarized between the pro-Duterte and anti-Duterte’s EJK and propensity to violence groups.

In fairness, there are achievements by the Duterte Administration, no matter how miniscule those achievements are.

But, no amount of accomplishment could compensate for the reported 8,000 suspected poor citizens killed and their orphaned families related to the anti-drugs campaign of this president.

Duterte is being condemned by the international human rights groups, the European community and the United Nations because of those extrajudicial killings or executions.

He could be the subject of prosecution by the International Criminal Court because EJK, under the Duterte regime, has been classified as crimes against humanity by Amnesty International and the Human Rights Watch.

An impeachment complaint had been filed with the House of Representatives against President Duterte.

And there are those who want to impeach Vice President Leni Robredo for criticizing EJK in a speech sent to the UN Committee on Narcotics.

Congressman Edcel Lagman of Albay aptly said the following, “President Duterte is charged with betrayal of public trust for said extrajudicial killings, while Vice President Robredo upheld public trust by reporting said summary executions to seek the stoppage of and sanctions for said wanton criminality.”

What’s happening in Manila is quite sad and disconcerting.

Even if Mr. Duterte has dissuaded his allies in Congress from proceeding with their plans against VP Leni, impeachment is being resorted to as an exercise of political revenge and not as constitutional mechanism to right a wrong as envisioned by the framers.

In a recent speech during the 16th National Convention of Lawyers, organized by the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, Vice President Robredo exhorted, “Now more than ever, the Philippines needs its lawyers. Let us safeguard our Constitution against abuses, prevent our institutions from weakening, and save our people from their disillusionment. Our fellow Filipinos need our leadership.”

It could also be that those impeachments are being done for personal interests particularly those who are next in lines of succession.

Democracy and the Philippine Constitution are under attack in Manila.



President Rodrigo Duterte (from The New York Times photo).

Bad press for two presidents

The week that ended was not too kind to two Presidents, Donald J. Trump of USA and Rodrigo Duterte of the Philippines

In an op-ed column in *The New York Times*, Richard C. Paddock titled his revealing and well-researched article: "Becoming Duterte: The Making of a Philippine Strongman."

He wrote in part, "He (Duterte) is a child of privilege turned populist politician, an anti-drug crusader who has struggled with drug abuse. Obsessed with death, he has turned his violent vision into national policy."

Mr. Paddock interviewed the brother and two sisters of President Duterte who told him that from early age, their brother had been involved in violence and troubles.

That the reason why their father, a former governor of Davao, asked his son who is now president, to take up law was because it was expensive to hire defense criminal lawyers.

The story by Mr. Paddock was readily backed up by the former chairwoman of the Human Rights Commission of the Philippines, Etta Rosales, who said in an interview, “Unfortunately, I think President (Rodrigo) Duterte has a very myopic view of how to address complex socio-economic and political problems in our country. His view is so myopic in the sense that *ang tingin lamang niya sa solusyon*

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ano

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psychosocial economic problems

at hingin o konsultahin ang mga dalubhasa na makakatulong sa kaniya

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para harapin itong mga ugat ng problemang ito

,” Rosales explained.

Presidential spokesperson Ernesto Abella criticized *The New York Times* article this way, “The making of a Philippine strongman sounds like a well-paid hack job for well-heeled clients with shady motives.”

Mr. Abella wants us to believe that the 165-year-old *New York Times*, which is respected and read around the world, was bribed to publish the story.

Once again, the theory of an eminent psychologist that the pattern of behavior of an individual is constant from birth to death was more or less confirmed.

There are slight variations depending on the environment where the person moves around, according to same theory.

The Wall Street Journal on President Trump

Another influential international newspaper, *The Wall Street Journal*, in an editorial titled “A President’s Credibility” hammered President Trump for sticking on his wiretapping claims despite being recently refuted by the director of the FBI himself.

“Yet the President clings to his assertion like a drunk to an empty gin bottle, rolling out his press spokesman to make more dubious claims,” read the editorial.

The article argued the President has become his own “political enemy” by creating a credibility problem for himself, alienating allies such as Britain by falsely claiming the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) helped tap his phones.



[Bishop Antonio](#) in Christ **Amy Vila** (pictured above).