



International parliamentarians display their message during a news conference in Manila to express alarm over the mounting number of killings under President Rodrigo Duterte.



DESPITE the death of two terrorist leaders in Marawi which led to the liberation of the city, the mind of President Duterte seems to be in a state of confusion and dysfunction.

(Mabuhay ang Armed Forces of the Philippines!)

The killings of three teenagers — Kian Loyd delos Santos, Carl Arnaiz and Reynaldo de Guzman — made the Filipino people look back with belated disdain at the thousands of poor Filipino suspects killed in the last 16 months since Duterte introduced the concept that it was okay to kill.

The President's credibility, trust and confidence from his people as their leader are in their lowest.

He is less popular now.

He admitted on television that he lied and invented the charges he threw at a senator.

Almost daily since August, Mr. Duterte has been constantly besieged by barrage of criticisms and condemnations both from within and outside the Philippines.

At the same time, almost daily, this president comes up with apparent imaginary justifications to impose emergency rule in the country.

The situation has prompted his daughter to act as his spokesperson and defender.

His former defenders have been quiet.

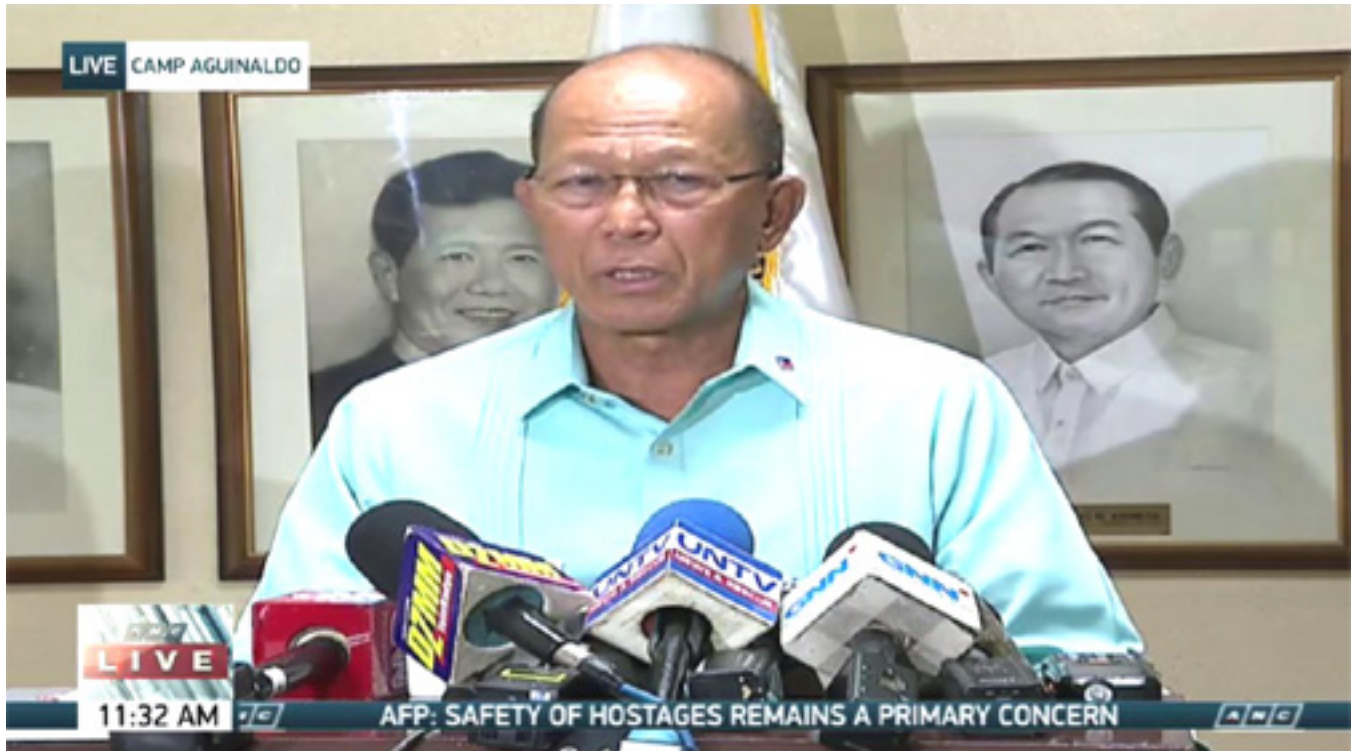
The opposition from varied sectors have united.

These are not positive signs.

Pres. Duterte is the object of criticisms and condemnations not only because of the thousands of poor suspects killed without due process of law in his bloody and brutal campaign against drugs, but also because of charges of corruption and smuggling of drugs against him and his family, threats of establishing dictatorship and a revolutionary government due to fake accusations of destabilization allegedly by his political enemies and the Communist Party of the Philippines.

The President's refusal to sign a bank waiver and his obvious intent to mess up the democratic institutions by threatening the head of Ombudsman with impeachment evidently because that office has started investigating his possible hidden billions of pesos in a bank is also part of the mess in Manila.

Isn't it weird that a leader and his family who won on the pledge that he would eliminate crimes, corruption and drugs is now being charged of being involved in the social ills he promised to eradicate?



Secretary of Defense Delfin Negrillo Lorenzana speaks to the media earlier this week. (S creengrab)

Threats of revolutionary government

In light of all the above, President Duterte has repeatedly accused his critics of destabilization.

And he repeatedly threatened to impose revolutionary government throughout the Philippines.

It could mean abolition of the Constitution.

These, despite flat denials there are destabilization efforts anywhere in the Philippines both by his Secretary of Defense and the Armed Forces spokesperson.

READ: Secretary of Defense Delfin Negrillo Lorenzana denies there is destabilization at: <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/624479/no-proof-of-1p-destabilization-slay-plot-vs-duterte-dnd/story/>

The Duterte threats prompted former Sen. Francisco Tatad, a fellow **Filipino Reporter** columnist whom I consider the brightest columnist in Manila today, to write in part, the following:

“...If DU30 believes the solution to his problems is to abolish the Constitution, then he must be prepared to contend against the people, who are the real authors of the Constitution; against the Church which confirms the moral and spiritual as well as the temporal and eternal values of the people; and against the Armed Forces of the Philippines, whose goal is to secure the sovereignty of the State and the integrity of the national territory, as constitutional protector of the people and the State.

“DU30 must be prepared to be declared in rebellion against the Constitution he has sworn to preserve and defend, and for the God-fearing and law-abiding Filipino people and their loyal armed forces to overthrow his rebellion. This is fraught with unimaginable dangers. It could lead to civil war, a bloody civil war, such as we have not known before, where brother will slay his own brother for nothing. Its first inevitable result would be the collapse of the State, which DU30 would like to control...”

Defending his boss, Duterte's legal counsel and friend Salvador Panelo opined it was the Constitutional right of the President to impose a revolutionary government "to save the country from destabilization," if necessary.

Another bright Filipino, lawyer Manuel Laserna, Jr., replied to Panelo, and expressed the following:

"I challenge Panelo to point to me the express or implied provisions of the Constitution, if any, that support his self-serving theory.

"The Constitution is specific as to the conditions and limitations of the

* "call out" power,

* "martial law" powers,

* "suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus" power,

* "war" powers, and

* “administrative” powers of the Executive. (Art. VII, Constitution).

“Duterte, as the “Executive” and “Head of State,” is merely a “salaried/paid public servant” of the sovereign Filipino people.

“He is not “The Sovereign.”

“He is not a King/Monarch who “owns” the Philippines as a kingdom.

“Sovereignty” and “all governmental authority” reside in the Filipino people.

“This is a basic constitutional doctrine.

“When a tyrant openly embraces and promotes “dictatorship (revolutionary government)” as a platform of governance, the sovereign people have the constitutional, inherent, natural and divine right to remove and eliminate such an enemy of the democratic republic.”

Dangers of a mediocre president

Since the Filipino people won what the world hailed and proclaimed as glorious People Power Revolution in 1986, the Philippines had elected six presidents, but ousted one of the six less than two years after his elections, like how they ousted the dictator Marcos.

Not one of the former presidents dared to mention martial law, much less threaten to declare it, probably because of the bitter experiences and political vacuum that resulted from 20 years of Marcos' authoritarian rule.

But a mediocre president, Rodrigo Duterte, has been making threats of revolutionary government which could abolish the Constitution.

(He admitted after winning the elections he was a mediocre student in college.)

The danger with a mediocre leader comes up when he is entrusted with vast powers, but is not analytical and not brilliant.

There is the likelihood, he will abuse, either by commission, or ignorance.

Because he doesn't have a profound appreciation of democratic principles and practices.

The English philosopher John Locke said, "Tyranny is the exercise of Power beyond right."

Likewise, Locke said, "Wherever Law ends, Tyranny begins."

In some ways, Mr. Duterte has been behaving the way tyranny was described by John Locke in the 18th century.



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<http://www.inquirer.com/news/philippines/2017/10/18/philippines-president-erickson-visit-us-education.html>