

Prelude to Martial Law?

Written by Manuel Caballero
Saturday, 24 September 2016 12:05



President Rodrigo Duterte (center) does the fist gesture together with soldiers at the 10th Infantry Division in Compostela Valley on Sept. 20. (Richard Madelo/PPD)

WE are wondering why a 90-day-old presidency, which, won by a landslide is now talking of secret plans supposedly by various groups, in and out of the Philippines, including New York Filipino-Americans, to oust President Rodrigo Duterte.

The Duterte communications department is busy imputing “destabilization” charges

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around, including against both domestic and international media.

Imagine, telling The New York Times and The Washington Post to be factual and responsible in writing the news because they are destabilizing the Philippines?

Wow!

We, in the Filipino Reporter, have been “Fair, Fearless, Factual” for the past 44 years that’s why we are still here.

And they are reminding us now?

Those people must be lost.

It’s the message-giver who needs to be reminded to guard his language, not the messengers who merely write or report the message the way it is given.

Or are the Duterte boys deliberately creating an atmosphere of “lawlessness and disorderliness” as prelude to a declaration of martial law?

When President Duterte spoke before the Filipinos in Laos recently, he told them it took him 20 years to accomplish what he wanted to do for Davao City.

He also told them, he needed more time to do what he wanted to do for the Philippines.

We hope he was not thinking of 20 years.

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He is 71 years old now.

He declared state of lawlessness and national emergency throughout the country.

An ally senator wants to file a Resolution suspending the Writ of Habeas Corpus and grant President Duterte emergency powers.

This President continues to sanction extrajudicial killings.

The pattern of killings is the same as what transpired in Davao City when Mr. Duterte was mayor according to the testimony of a self-confessed member of the Davao Death Squad during a Senate investigation in aid of legislation.

The truth to the testimony might just fade away as the allies of the President in the Senate, instead of asserting the independence of that body as a separate constitutional branch of government, obviously kowtowed with the President and replaced the lady senator chair of the committee with another ally of Mr. Duterte.

The enemy of President Duterte is himself and some of his controversial and inconsistent pronouncements, policies and words.

As the former Speaker of the House of Representatives said, he was the one who was impeaching himself.

He is pugnacious.

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His good intentions for his country are overshadowed by his unacceptable and unstatesman-like language.

His radical shift in foreign relations, talking anti-American, pro-China and pro-Russia is disturbing to traditional friends and allies.

His cursing of the American President, United Nations Secretary-General, Pope and, now, the European Union may isolate him from the rest of the world, i.e., if he is not disliked and isolated yet.

Above all, President Duterte should bear in mind the Philippine military owes allegiance to the Constitution and to the Republic of the Philippines and not to one man.

The moment this institution turns against him, his presidency is finished.

This happened twice already in the history of the Philippines.

His popularity with his people can only go down, as it has begun to show by the increasing number of groups in civil society and the Catholic Church calling for him to stop the killings.

One bishop publicly asked for his resignation.

There is a noticeable increase in the number of people in social media who have begun to criticize him.