

Are we masochistic or stupid?

Written by Philip S. Chua, MD, FACS, FPCS
Monday, 21 September 2015 12:55



As a Filipino overseas who loves his homeland, I am puzzled, sad and disenchanted to see our beloved Philippines hopelessly entrenched in a quagmire and culture of graft and corruption involving government officials, including top legislators who had plundered the nation's meager coffers and practically go unpunished.

Evidently, even the Supreme Court was not immune from this plague that has devastated and continued to ruin the name and reputation of the Philippines, tagged as a most corrupt country among nations in the world.

The massive poverty among nearly a third of us Filipinos, the poorest of the poor languishing in the gutter of nothingness, suffering human beings, especially children, who go to bed at night not only with empty stomachs but with empty dreams and a desolate future.

While it does not take an Einstein to figure out why, it is unfathomable how we, as a society, would allow such poverty, graft and corruption, to flourish unabated, killing every fiber of human decency and pride in each one of us.

Where is our compassion towards our marginalized and disenfranchised fellowmen who are literally rotting out there?

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Overseas, Filipinos have organized the US Pinoys for Good Governance, the Filipino United Network - USA (www.FUN8888.com), a 501(c)3 humanitarian foundation in the United States, and its subsidiary, the Filipino-American Initiative to Transform our Homeland (FAITH), and countless others to join our fellow Filipinos back home and around the world in our country's battle against poverty and graft and corruption in the Philippines.

Observers around the world wonder if the Philippines is a democracy where majority rules.

And if so, they ask if this means majority of the Filipinos are also corrupt and without a heart, voting for known corrupt politicians again and again, closing their eyes, allowing this human tragedy to continue decade after decade, fence-sitting or looking the other way while the casualties grow?

Some have even concluded that perhaps the Filipinos are simply inhumane, masochistic or stupid, or all of the above.

Billions are lost every year to graft and corruption in our country, billions that could certainly alleviate the suffering of the more than 30 million of our poor fellowmen and put a dent on poverty in our country, instead of going into the deep pockets of our amoral government officials walking in the halls of congress and all the way to the bank.

Government officials, leaders who, We, the People, have elected into office must be held to a higher standard of the law and, if judged guilty of a crime, especially plunder (whose penalty was death in our constitution before 1986), must be penalized to the fullest extent allowed by law.

The higher the office they hold, the greater their accountability and culpability should be.

These plunderers must be put behind bars to serve their full jail term and return the money they stole, and not simply be placed only on house arrest to enjoy all the conveniences of a wealthy home, or on hospital arrest, unless an acute, not chronic, illness ails them.

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After treatment, they go back to jail.

As a country and as a society, are we kinder, more compassionate, more civilized, or more Christian letting plunderers go free after serving a small fraction of their jail term, while their victims continue to be homeless and hungry for life?

How about compassion for the millions and millions of their helpless victims deteriorating in poverty, who are robbed of their present and of their future?

They are the ones who deserve our compassion and care, not those greedy, self-serving, plunderers who are worse than common thieves.

In some countries, convicted plunderers are expeditiously executed.

If the majority of our people, the gigantic force behind the people power of the past, wills it, we can forcefully demand our legislators to put forth a new law disqualifying convicted plunderers, other felons and criminals, from running for office in the government, national, provincial, down to the barangays, and also to enact soonest a Freedom of Information law to help in our battle against graft and corruption in the Philippines.

Are there any other country and people on earth who allow convicted plunderers, felons, criminals or those facing charges for a major crime, to run for public office, including the highest office of the land?

People around the world must be thinking how stupid and masochistic we are, with a warped sense of justice and of right and wrong.

But we cannot blame only the criminals in our government for the sad state of our nation.

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We, the People, deserve the greater share of the blame for electing corrupt officials repeatedly in every election, for our lack of resolve to change the status quo, for lack of caring, and for our cruel inaction.

We must ask ourselves: "Have I done anything to help improve my country and relieve the suffering of my fellow human beings?"

While the commendable crusade of President Noy Aquino against graft and corruption and poverty has sent Gloria Arroyo, Corona, Enrile, Revilla, Estrada and others to jail, and his policies have led to an amazing robust economy and an impressive international credit rating for the Philippines, which have earned the Philippines admiration and respect in the world community, all of these gains will be lost unless we elect a successor who has the same wisdom, honesty, courage and determination as those of PNoy.

The next 20 years are crucial in abolishing the culture of corruption in the nation.

I have great faith in the Filipino as a whole, so I am hereby making this clarion call enjoining all of us Filipinos to pull out our head from under the sand and look around, and feel and fight for our neglected people and give them hope.

The majority of our people has the ability and power to wage a war against poverty, graft and corruption, and win.

I sincerely believe that.

But to succeed and fill up the jail with these scum and bottom-dwellers, we must be united and determined, with one voice and one action.

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We can even fight the recent Supreme Court's decision to free Enrile, who is facing plunder charges, no matter his age or health.

We can do this with reason and persuasion, or, if needed, with people power by force.

Even the Justices of the Supreme Court do not have right to mock the law of the land or the privilege of putting their personal or political preference over what is just as promulgated in our constitution and penal code.

If friendly civil means do not do it, our patriotic alternative is a revolution to end poverty and graft and corruption in our country and reclaim our past glory, dignity and honor.

With people power, we can recall and remove from office any government official from any branch of our government, including the Judicial.

As Mahatma Gandhi, Ninoy and Cory Aquino, and other peaceful leaders had shown, "We, the People," can topple corrupt and abusive governments.

I am not advocating a revolution of arms where blood shall be shed and stain our soil and reputation as a nation.

Rather, I am challenging our society, especially the young generation, the students in universities and colleges all around the country, and all law-abiding Filipinos and God-fearing leaders, to stand up and revolt and wage a revolution of principle, ideals and mindset as a people, where tears and sweat shall be shed instead, to bathe our nation clean.

The plunderers and all other criminals in our government must be exposed and have their day in court!

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When convicted, they must go to jail with no mercy and return their unexplained wealth to our national coffers.

Our people deserve justice.

Enough is enough.

Let us wake up the sleeping giant in all of us Filipinos at home and overseas now to save our beloved Philippines and prove wrong those who say we, Filipinos, are a masochistic or stupid people.

(Editor's note: Philip S. Chua, MD, FACS, FPCS, a Cardiac Surgeon Emeritus based in Las Vegas, Nevada, is a member of the US Pinoys for Good Governance, chairman of the Filipino United Network - USA and one of the founders of Filipino-American Initiative to Transform our Homeland (FAITH). Websites: FUN8888.com and philipSchua.com. E-mail: scalpelpen@gmail.com.)