



# PoP 2010

Poolitikang Pinoy 2010

Volume 2 • Issue 3 • May 2010

## SO TRUE OR SO FALSE: Dissecting Presidential Taglines

The election season is never complete without promises of change or fantastic statements about a candidate's personal character and accomplishments. The 2010 election campaigns is no different. The most notable catch phrases come from the presidential candidates but are they *fact* or *fiction*?

Here is our take on the campaign slogans of 5 of our Presidentiables.

### **Galing at Talino: GIBO TEODORO**

Gilbert "Gibo" Teodoro is betting on his credentials to earn him the presidency. Does he really have "galing" and "talino"?

Teodoro studied in De La Salle University, the University of the Philippines and Harvard University, graduating with degrees in Commerce, Law and a Master of Laws, respectively. He also has the distinction of being a Philippine bar exam topnotcher.

As a politician, he served 3 terms as Congressman of the 1st District of Tarlac from 1998 to 2007. As a congressman, Teodoro filed 106 bills related to education, healthcare, transportation and communications, justice, and appropriations among other things; 6 of these bills had been passed into law. Out of these 6 laws, 3 were for the conversion of provincial roads into national roads.

A GMA News article published in July 2007 reported that Teodoro did not chair any House committee. He was only included in a committee on dangerous drugs at the insistence of Ilocos Norte Rep. Roque Alban. The article also quoted Filadelfo Diaz III, Teodoro's former Chief of Staff in Congress, saying that Teodoro gave way to his partymates in the Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC) instead of getting committee positions. In 2007, he was appointed as Defense Secretary by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

During his time as Defense Chief, he pushed for reforms and the modernization of the military. He was also said to have reduced corruption in the military by introducing civilians to the organization that would perform clerical tasks. He also

pushed for the continued cooperation of the U.S. and the Philippines in counter-terrorism activities and assistance through infrastructural development projects. Teodoro currently holds the position of colonel as an Air Force reservist. He is also an adopted member of the Philippine Military Academy's "Magilas" Class of 1976.

Teodoro, however, has blemishes on his record as Defense Secretary. The most controversial issue hurled against him is the continued presence of private armies in the Philippines, which has been highlighted by the massacre of 57 civilians in Maguindanao on November 23, 2009. The Maguindanao Massacre was allegedly done by the private armies of the powerful Ampatuan family, the ruling political clan in the ARMM.

In a recent report by current Defense Secretary Norberto Gonzales, it was stated that there are at least 132 armed groups connected to political clans, mostly in Mindanao. He added that these groups may be in possession of at least 800,000 unaccounted firearms in the country. During the 8-day imposition of martial law in Maguindanao, large weapons caches were discovered in and near properties of the Ampatuans. These weapons bore suspicious markings such as "Department of National Defense (DND) Arsenal" and "Arms Corporation of the Philippines."

In an emotional trial hearing about the massacre, Vice Mayor Esmael Mangudadatu claimed that Teodoro and other government officials knew of the Ampatuans' violent nature but failed to stop them. When told in an open forum in Buluan, Maguindanao that the rise of private armies went unabated during his

term, Teodoro responded: "There was no election fever yet (at the time). There was no indication of a looming problem."

The tagline "Galing at Talino" can be misleading because of several issues pertaining to private armies and national security that have not been adequately addressed by Teodoro. His academic achievements and legislative experience, however, show his competence as a politician and merits the use of "Galing at Talino" as his campaign slogan.

### **Kung Walang Corrupt, Walang Mahirap: NOYNOY AQUINO**

A World Bank study in 2005 showed that 10.8% of the country's population survive on just \$1 a day, and another 41.2% make do with less than \$2 daily. The Philippine Statistical Coordination Board estimates that 27 million Filipinos now live in poverty.

Why are so many Filipinos poor? The tagline of Senator Benigno "Noy" Aquino III makes it seem like corruption is the sole cause of poverty in the Philippines. But is this truly the case?

In the book "Poverty in the Philippines", the Asian Development Bank (ADB) lists corruption as an obstacle to poverty reduction in the country:

*Corruption increases income inequality and poverty through reduced economic growth; biased tax systems favoring the rich and well-connected; poor targeting of social programs; the use of wealth by the well-to do to lobby government for favorable policies that perpetuate inequality in asset ownership; and lower social spending[.]*

The research also highlighted several factors that hinder poverty reduction including issues related to economic growth, unchecked population growth, governance issues, and conflicts, particularly in Mindanao.

**Obstacle No. 1: Weak Economic and Population Management** Though the country experiences steady economic growth, the study noted that it has not been pro-poor, or has not translated into social benefits for the poor. This problem has been attributed to weak economic management. The ADB cited the fiscal deficit, national government debt and low foreign investment as major problems in light of poverty reduction efforts. With over 30% of the national budget allocated to debt interest payments, government expenditures in social services have been falling. This is worsened by a poor investment climate that limits capital formation. Investment was affected by issues pertaining to macroeconomic instability, corruption, electricity and taxes. With a population growth rate of 2.36%, it is becoming more and more difficult for the government to deliver quality public services in the basic sectors of education, healthcare, water and sanitation.

**Obstacle No. 2: Inefficient Governance** Another problem is the current status of the Philippines as a “weak and inefficient state” that is unable to deliver basic services to its people. The main culprits, according to the ADB’s assessment: the government’s inability to collect revenues; weak mechanisms for planning, agenda-setting and policy-making; failure to implement a performance management and measurement system; an inefficient bureaucracy; red tape; rent-seeking; lack of managerial and technical competencies; wrong mindsets, attitudes; and corporate culture. All of these combined has resulted to the failure of the Philippine government to deliver basic services, ensure stable employment, exact justice and provide security to Filipinos.

**Obstacle No. 3: Armed Conflict** Security from armed conflict also emerged as a direct factor affecting poverty in the Philippines. The ADB cited Mindanao as an example, where armed conflict between government forces and insurgents has led to the decline of state and deterioration of democratic processes. Coincidentally, the top 10 poorest provinces in the country are in Mindanao.

**Obstacle No. 4: Corruption in government** Though the ADB cited

corruption as an obstacle to reducing poverty in the Philippines, it did not necessarily isolate corruption as the sole cause. It mentioned other factors that contribute to higher poverty incidence in the Philippines such as macroeconomic issues, our booming population, high unemployment rates, problems in the basic sectors (notably in agriculture), armed conflict, and underdeveloped human resources. Given these findings, Noyonoy Aquino’s “*Kung walang corrupt, walang mahirap*” tagline seems to oversimplify the complex issue of poverty.

Filipinos, however, see corruption as pervasive in all levels and branches of government, and consider it as the root cause of poverty in the Philippines. According to the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC), 20% of the government’s annual budget is lost to corruption. It is believed that these losses could have been used to fund social programs that would benefit the poor.

Some foreign institutions have also said that the problem of corruption affects the country’s ability to do business in the region. In a study conducted by the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy in Hong Kong in 2007, the Philippines is perceived to be the most corrupt country in Asia. They said in a New York Times report: “The Philippines has been getting the least amount of foreign direct investment, and the level of foreign capital flowing to its stock market is also less than in either Indonesia or Thailand.” In the study, foreign investors indicated corruption as a major deterrent to doing business and investing in a country.

Despite being oversimplified, Aquino’s tagline plainly states the biggest challenge for us today — how to curb, and eventually, eliminate corruption in government in order to maximize the use of funds to support quality public services and effective poverty reduction programs.

### **Transformer: DICK GORDON**

Senator Richard “Dick” Gordon describes himself and his running mate, Bayani Fernando as “*The Transformers*”. The moniker portrays the senator as a progressive politician, backed by his vast experience in local governance, program management and legislation. But is he really a “transformer”?

Gordon is often credited for overseeing the transformation of Subic Bay from a U.S. naval base into a special economic zone following the devastating eruption

of Mt. Pinatubo in 1991 and the withdrawal of the U.S. Navy in 1992. The eruption caused significant damages to Subic, which was further exacerbated by the departure of the U.S. naval forces that left 47,000 Filipinos jobless and idle infrastructure and facilities worth \$8 billion.

Successfully lobbying for the U.S. Bases Conversion Act in 1992, Gordon initiated the creation of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA). As its first chairman, he directed the conversion of the naval base into an economic zone to attract foreign investors. The shipyard was transformed into a shipping port; the old airfield was converted into an international airport, with funding from World Bank; and the base’s communication equipment was used for Subicel, the port’s own telecommunications company. Under Gordon’s administration, Subic Bay attracted international companies such as Fed Ex, Enron, Acer, Hitachi and Coastal Petroleum to set up production and operation facilities in Subic. Today, Subic has been cited by the Bureau of Customs as one of the country’s top revenue earners. According to Armand Arreza, the current SBMA administrator, Subic has generated \$5.75 billion in committed investments, \$11.21 billion in exports and PHP 2.2 billion in seaport revenues since its creation in 1992. Subic Bay Freeport also provides an estimated 88,000 jobs as of December 2008.

When Gordon was appointed as Tourism Secretary in 2001, Philippine Tourism was posting negative growth. Between 1999 and 2001, the number of international visits to the Philippines reportedly declined from roughly 2.2 million to 1.8 million visits.

To boost tourism in the country, the Department of Tourism under Gordon initiated various programs including the award-winning “WOW Philippines” promotional campaign that showcased the most scenic spots in the Philippines via advertisements on television and in print. By the end of his term in 2004, international visits to the Philippines increased to 2.3 million. Since then, Philippine tourism has had consistent positive growth. In 2008, the number of international visitors was estimated at 3.1 million.

Gordon actively promoted tourism because for him, “tourism means jobs”. Tourism promotes the generation of jobs in related industries, particularly in the hotel and restaurant industry. According to the National Statistics Office (NSO),

the number of persons employed in that sector increased from roughly 490,000 in 2000 to 794,000 in 2003. After Gordon stepped down as Tourism Secretary in 2004, the number of jobs in this sector dropped to approximately 142,000 jobs, as reported in 2006.

As a senator of the 13th and 14th House of Congress, Gordon has authored and sponsored several bills that seek to address problems in education, healthcare, public infrastructure, human rights, economy, environment, energy, national security, and public planning.

Some notable bills that have been enacted into laws include:

- Biofuels Act of 2006
- International Humanitarian Act
- The Mindanao Economic Development Authority Act
- The Bataan Special Economic Zone and Freeport Act
- Tourism Act of 2009
- The Philippine Disaster Risk Management Act of 2009
- The Automated Election System Law.

Despite his outstanding credentials, however, Gordon seems to lack the political linkages that will help him introduce transformative legislation and reforms. This is shown by the lack of senatorial bets in his political party, the Bagumbayan-Volunteers for a New Philippines. The Liberal Party has 12 senatorial candidates; the Nacionalista Party has 11; Lakas-Kampi-CMD has 7. The Bagumbayan-Volunteers for a New Philippines has none.

Gordon's track record and his toughness adequately justifies the "Transformer" image that he is portraying. His lack of political alliances, however, might make it a bit difficult for him to implement the transformations he intends to do.

### ***Tunay na Mahirap/Magtatapos ng Kahirapan: MANNY VILLAR***

Senator Manny Villar has consistently asserted that he is "*tunay na mahirap*" or genuinely poor because he didn't come from a well-to-do family. He was born and raised in Tondo, one of the poorest districts of Metro Manila.

Villar's claim, however, is being disputed by columnists and journalists such as Winnie Monsod of The Philippine Daily Inquirer and Howie Severino of GMA News and Current Affairs, saying that Villar's family was

not poor at all based on evidence that they have uncovered. Villar's camp has responded to these allegations and even released a television ad of his mother talking about their family's humble roots.

Villar evidently takes great pride in being a rags-to-riches kind of person, using hard work and persistence to rise out of poverty and becoming one of the wealthiest real estate magnates in the Philippines.

A look at his statement of assets and liabilities (SALN) confirms that the senator is indeed a very wealthy man. He has several business and financial assets in companies such as Adelfa Properties, Inc. and Fine Land, Inc. His overall net worth according to his SALN is PhP1.05 billion.

But Villar may actually be wealthier. According to the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ), Villar did not disclose several properties and business interests such as a vast residential estate along Shaw Boulevard and interests in Vista Land. The PCIJ adds that Villar does not list any liabilities, and repetitively declares the same values for some of his assets in successive years. Among all the candidates, the PCIJ also noted that Villar is the stingiest with details when it comes to his assets and liabilities.

It was reported by Nielsen Media that Villar spent the most in terms of pre-campaign advertising among all the presidential candidates. Between November 2009 and January 2010, Villar spent an estimated PhP475 million for print, television and radio ads. In addition to his pre-campaign expenses, *Pera't Pulika*, an independent study of candidates' election expenses, reported that in the first 60 days of the election campaign period, Villar has already spent PhP273 million.

Villar also is sending out the message that he is the solution to poverty; that he will, if elected end poverty in the country. Addressing poverty is the core of his platform:

*"The main thrust of our platform is emancipating the people from poverty and injustice. Self reliant and sustainable economic development program shall be pursued by implementing agrarian reform, increasing agricultural productivity and developing domestic industries... High priority shall be given to education, health, housing and other basic social services."*

To order to achieve this, Villar, according to his platform, will do the following:

#### **Basic Social Services**

- Improve and expand free primary and secondary education, and [give] greater access [to education]
- Improve basic healthcare and develop a comprehensive health care system
- Prioritize funds for basic social service and develop agriculture and industry

#### **Agriculture and Rural Development**

- Raise the standard of living in rural areas and increase manpower productivity through the development of agricultural lands and providing livelihood opportunities

#### **Agrarian Reform**

- Provide land to landless tillers
- Enable access to rural finance and technical support to improve land productivity and generate income

As a senator, Villar has authored, co-authored, sponsored or co-sponsored several bills relevant to poverty alleviation, some of which have been enacted into law. These include:

- Agri-Agra Reform Credit Act of 2009
- Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reforms
- Universally Accessible Cheaper and Quality Medicines Act
- Barangay Micro Business Enterprise (BMBE) Law

These laws seek to address problems related to healthcare and agricultural development by providing better access to resources (i.e. arable land) and services (i.e. agricultural credit financing and cheaper medicine) to poorer segments of our society.

Given his campaign platform and his pro-poor legislations, it is evident that Villar has been and is still committed to the goal of eliminating poverty in the country.

### ***Kung May Erap, May Ginhawa: JOSEPH ESTRADA***

When Joseph "Erap" Estrada won in the 1998 elections, his win may be attributed to his definitive pro-poor stance, as communicated by his campaign slogan then ("*Erap para sa mahirap*"). This 2010, Estrada is maintaining his pro-poor image with the new slogan, "*Kung May Erap, May Ginhawa*".

The statement implies that if Estrada is president, Filipinos (particularly the poor) will live better or more comfortably. Given our previous experience with him as President, can he truly lead the country and our people to better times? The legacies of Estrada's term from 1998 to 2001 can give us a few insights.

Poverty was notably higher during the Estrada administration. The National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) reported the poverty incidences of 1997 and 2000 to be 28.1% and 33%, respectively. In terms of population, this means that roughly 24 million Filipinos lived in poverty in 1997, a number that increased to 25.4 million during the height of the Estrada administration. It must be noted that after Estrada was impeached, the poverty incidence decreased to 30% percent under the Arroyo administration in 2003 but increased to 32.9 percent in 2006.

A paper by the East Asian Development Network explains that two factors had a negative effect on poverty reduction programs during Estrada's time: the Asian Financial Crisis that led to the devaluation of the Peso and to a poor economic climate, and the extreme El Niño weather effects on the farming, fishing and forestry sectors that exacerbated the financial crisis. The social impacts of these were higher unemployment, prices increases, and cuts in public services. This not only led to a greater feeling of poverty among Filipinos but to an actual increase in poverty incidence.

Poverty also increased during the Estrada administration because of the "all-out war" against insurgents in Mindanao that led to lesser and poor economic investment, the destruction of resources and infrastructure, the displacement of people, and the loss of agricultural and industrial productivity. According to the World Bank, the conflict in Mindanao has displaced over 2 million people since the 1970s — almost half of which were displaced during Estrada's military campaign in 2000. Poverty incidence in Mindanao for 1991, 1997 and 2000 were reported to be at 56%, 62.5% and 71.3%, respectively. Today, when asked about his strategy for peace and order in Mindanao, Estrada says he will resume the all-out war against insurgents to attain peace.

The former actor was quoted saying that this coming election will be the "last performance" of his life. His

campaign has been described as an act of redemption, having been impeached because of massive corruption in 2001. While his platform today bears the stamp of a pro-poor president, Estrada's track record in office shows otherwise.

## REFERENCES:

"Poverty in the Philippines: Income, Assets and Access". Asian Development Bank.

"2006 Official Poverty Statistics." Philippine Statistical Coordination Board

Statements of Assets and Liabilities of Manuel Bamba Villar.

"Top bets for president grow wealth despite poll expenses." Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism.

11th Congress House Measures (National/Local)  
Authored By Teodoro, Gilbert Jr. C. 1998-07-01 to 2001-06-30.

12th Congress House Measures (National/Local)  
Authored By Teodoro, Gilbert Jr. C. 2001-07-01 to 2004-06-30.

13th Congress House Measures (National/Local)  
Authored By Teodoro, Gilbert Jr. C. 2004-07-01 to 2007-06-30.

"New DND chief Gilbert Teodoro: Walking in Uncle Danding's shadow". GMANews.TV Special Report. Date published: 3 July 2007.

"Who is Gilbert Teodoro?" ABS-CBN News Online Beta.

"132 private armed groups exist nationwide—DND Chief." GMANews.TV.

"The Guns of Gibo." Philippine Daily Inquirer.

"Estrada seeks redemption in RP election". ABS-CBNnews.com. Date published: 25 October 2009

"Erap to resume all-out war if elected". ABS-CBNnews.com. Date published: 20 October 2009

Schiavo-Campo and Judd. "The Mindanao Conflict in the Philippines: Roots, Costs, and Potential Peace Dividend". Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction. World Bank, 2005

Tuano, Philip. "The Effects of the Asian Financial Crisis on the Philippines Labour Markets". EADN Regional Project on the Social Impact of the Asian Financial Crisis. East Asian Development Network, 2002.

Department of Labor and Employment. "2009 Yearbook of Labor Statistics".

"2010 Platform of Joseph Ejercito Estrada". From: Erap.ph

Reyes, Alan. "Unsinkable: economic development in Subic Bay". Harvard International Review. Published: Spring 1998

Tabladillo, Stephanie. "Tourism creates jobs". Institute for Labor Studies. Published: Jan – Mar 2004

"SBMA seaport posts all-time high income of P 449.15-M as 2009 closes". Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority. Published: 2009

"2006 Census of Philippine Businesses and Industry. Hotels and Restaurants Sector." National Statistics Office.

"2000 Census of Philippine Businesses and Industry. Hotels and Restaurants Sector." National Statistics Office.

Bills of the 14th Congress. Legislative Information System. Senate of the Philippines.

Bills of the 13th Congress. Legislative Information System. Senate of the Philippines.

Legislative Record of Manuel Villar. <www.mannyvillar.com.ph/record.php>

Manny Villar's Platform. Halalan 2010. www.eleksyon.co.cc/manny-villars-platform

"Is the Philippines ready for Dick Gordon?" ABS-CBNnews.com.

"Bayani elects to run with Bagumbayan". Manila Times. Date published: December 2009.

Mahar Mangahas. "The New SWS corruption surveys". Inquirer.net. Date published: 19 Feb 2010

Claire Delfin. "Transparent As a Moonless Night: The Budget Process and Spending". Philippine Human Rights Reporting Project. Date published: 19 June 2009

Carlos Conde. "Philippines most corrupt, survey says". The New York Times. Date published: 13 March 2007

### Editorial Board

Dr. Antonio G.M. La Viña  
Joy Aceron  
Mary Grace Santos

### Contributing Writers

Evan Yap  
Glenford Leonillo  
Rafaela Mae David  
Phillip Don Recentes

Poolitikang Pinoy 2010 (PoP 2010) is a monthly election fact sheet published by the Ateneo School of Government (ASoG) with support from Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES).

For comments and suggestions email [political\\_democracy@yahoo.com](mailto:political_democracy@yahoo.com).

