

By Remedios F. Marmoleño

Over the years Mindanaoans have been said to be discontented with what is often called a government run by “Imperial Manila”. Are things any different in this administration? We have a President, (until lately) a Senate President and a Speaker of the House who are all from Mindanao. They may be Mindanaoans but they make their decisions in Manila. Does that come up to a government by “Imperial Manila”?

This administration of the Mindanaoan President has been labeled by a columnist as the “sultanic presidency”. The adjective “sultanic” is apropos as the sultanates have been associated with Mindanao up to this time and the word connotes a kind of ruler whose command does not brook any dissension. But is this government better than what we had in the past?

Let us not make our lens too wide. Let us focus on just a few items that have come up in the last 22 months or so and have distinctly marked this government.

The fight against drugs. The war, and it has been called a war, has resulted in the death of thousands. Those killed have been hardened criminals as well as teenagers.

The fight against corruption in government. The man elected president made this one of his key objectives as he campaigned for the office he now holds. Are we anywhere solving this key problem of governance in our country? There are those who say that corruption is as bad as ever and may even be worse.

Exercise of our rights. From where I stand this seems to me the most challenged of our inherent rights as citizens. The detention of Sen. de Lima. The impeachment effort against CJ Sereno. The detention of Sr. Patricia Fox. The attempt to give Napoles the status of state witness in the very same case where she is the principal accused.

## Is there such a thing as Imperial Manila?

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Application of accountability of government officials in the discharge of their duties. Remember the case of Marwin Marcos in the killing of Albuera Mayor Espinosa? Remember the case of BOC head Faeldon and the P6.2 billion worth of shabu that almost managed to clear customs? According to media reports the smuggled drugs had already been cleared by customs and were already out when there was a change of mind about the case. The shut-down of Boracay for various disregard of law by the business owners there and I might add, the disregard of the law by those who are supposed to monitor whether the law is obeyed or not.

The problem/s we have does/do not have anything to do with Imperial Manila but a lot to do with our tolerance for wrong-doing throughout the country.