

OPINION & FEATURES



Weighing the pound-for-pound king

IT came as a surprise when local LA radio show host Vic "the Brick" announced that "the boxing god has finally granted the Pride of Pomona's wish for a blockbuster fight when he faces off against Manny Pacquiao in October."

The next day, the pound-for-pound champ denied that he made an agreement to fight with Mosley or anyone.

There is no rush for The Pacman to look for an opponent anytime soon -- after all, he's on the catbird seat. At this point in his career, he doesn't need to have that same heavy workload as years past when he was fighting three to four times a year, although most of his fans would probably like that. Superstar boxers only fight two to three times a year, if that many.

If anything, Pacquiao should start counting the number of recognition he's been earning lately, instead of the opponents that he'll be contending with.

Forbes Magazine just recently named him #57 among the top 100 most powerful celebri-

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ties in the world. Earlier, he made it into *Time Magazine's* list of 100 Most Influential People. And he's graced *Ring Magazine's* cover three of the past four months.

After earning more than at least \$12 million for conquering Ricky Hatton, the 30-year-old Pacquiao can just sit back, relax and watch to see who will come up the boxing heap. Miguel Cotto is facing Joshua Clottey later this month in June. Floyd Mayweather Jr. is facing off against Juan Manuel Marquez in July. There's a possibility of a match with suspect knockout artist Edwin Valero. Mosley is willing to give Pacquiao 60 percent of the proceeds for a possible match.

Indeed, Pacquiao is worth every pound. (AJ-Press)

A Scandalous Spectacle

Philippine Senate's look into Anti-Voyeurism

LAST week, the mother of controversial young medical doctor and model Hayden Kho, Jr., Irene, broke her silence on national TV to defend her son. She hits back at her son's detractors, and towards the end of the interview, drops the bomb at starlet Katrina Halili, who came out last week to file a case against the doctor, who appears with her in the sex videos that had been circulated in the World Wide Web.

The interview was done at the residence of the Khos by ABS-CBN, with the mother sporting an heirloom santo on the background. She was, all things considered, a mater dolorosa, grieving for his son, now being crucified in a Golgotha of public opinion. "She's the reason why my son got hooked with drugs," the mothers says, referring to Halili, who had shed tears as well in public interviews, pleading people not to watch the videos anymore.

Before the weekend, both parties appeared at the Senate for an inquiry, "in aid of legislation." It must be remembered that Halili was accompanied by one of the senators, Ramon "Bong" Revilla, Jr., when she went to the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI). Questions had been foisted all over, and the drama continued to unfold. Retired policeman and tabloid columnist, Abner Afuang, known to have burned flags in several rallies in Metro Manila in the past, doused a bottle of mineral water on Kho, while the young man was explaining his side. Afuang was arrested for disturbing public proceedings. He was however released without necessary bail by a Pasay City fiscal the next day.

Filipinos have received the Katrina Halili-Hayden Kho, Jr. scandal, among others, differently. In the past few weeks, it has been the major talk of the town, a multimedia spectacle. Sales of DVDS with the filmed sexual encounters allegedly soared, and

this was not lost on the Optical Media Board which raided all known pirated DVD stores around the Metro to confiscate the DVD copies of the much-talked about videos.

In TV interviews, some of the vendors have been clever enough to keep the videos away from hot eyes; some of them even deny selling the videos. But despite the flagging of the videos at YouTube.com, where it first appeared, the videos could still be accessed not only through sellers but also via other web platforms and sites. The videos are, to say the least, sensational because there has been a steady demand for access. People have turned it into an unimaginable entertainment item, where, one critic noted, the bounds of decency and propriety have been pushed to the limits. The limits thus have become the newest spectacle of the Filipino people.

But the issue has very big legal implications, and this was the point of calling a Senate Inquiry. No matter how it looks, this case calls for specific laws that would address violations like this. At present, what Halili could depend upon are the existing provisions from the Revised Penal Code and the Act Against Violence to Women and Children. These are not enough, says politics of culture expert Dr. Antonio Contreras, former dean of the College of Liberal Arts at the De La Salle University in Manila. Contreras, currently a Fulbright visiting professor at the University of Hawaii Manoa, suspects that "except for those responsible for reproducing and uploading the videos, and those who supplied the drugs, no other character in this reality soap opera will ever land in jail, not even Hayden (Kho, Jr.)."

"The worst that can happen to him is that his license as a doctor will be revoked, and he can be sued for damages. I am not at all convinced that

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Louie Jon Sanchez
AJPress Manila

the videotaping of a sex act for private consumption can be classified as a crime under the Anti-Violence against Women and Children act.

"It is despicable. It is atrocious. It should be condemned. But under our laws, a good and expensive lawyer can easily save Hayden from legal retribution. Hence, the need to formulate more laws, or to clarify existing ones," says Contreras, who is also a fulltime professor of political science at La Salle.

Thus, at the height of the brouhaha, Sen. Pia Cayetano filed a bill in the Philippine Senate to curb these so-called "sex scandal videos" which has been plaguing society since the emergence of multimedia.

In what has been filed as the Anti-Voyeurism Act of 2009, Cayetano, who also chairs the Senate Committee on Social Justice, described the videos as "the highest form of invasion to the privacy of the offended party, most of whom are women." The existing laws, she believes, may be "too general and could not entirely cover "modern" and "high-tech" methods of violating privacy." She adds, in a press statement, "An updated law is therefore needed to effectively curb the proliferation of sex scandal videos."

But apparently, legislations on anti-voyeurism had been waiting in line at the Senate. Research by the *Asian Journal* shows that even before the Katrina Halili-Hayden Kho, Jr. scandal, the feisty Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago had already filed another Anti-Voyeurism Law back in July of 2007.

The law seeks to punish photograph and video voyeurism and had been read already through public hearings conducted by the Committee on Justice and Human Rights headed by Sen. Francis

Escudero. A committee report had already been submitted to the plenary, a year after. The act is yet to be calendared.

"For the victim, it is obviously very embarrassing and degrading to be photographed or videotaped in a compromising situation. It is a form of invasion of personal privacy," Santiago said, in another Senate press statement.

Another way out of the labyrinthine issues could be comparisons to video voyeurism laws abroad. In the United States, President George W. Bush signed into law the Video Voyeurism Protection Act of 2004, which considers a federal crime the act of secretly capturing images of people in very private situations. Under this law, anyone found guilty of video voyeurism could be fined and/or imprisoned for up to one year. Currently, reports from online American papers claim that about 30 states have already adopted laws that criminalize video voyeurism. This recent development in anti-voyeurism in America was a result of widespread campaign and expose in American media, like the one which happened to Susan Wilson's family in Louisiana, where a trusted neighbor had been secretly videotaping the Wilsons in their bedroom and bathroom.

Just last month, a New Mexico district judge's decision to convict a state employee of sexual exploitation of children was upheld by the state's Supreme Court. The case involved a certain Ronald Myers who confessed to being addicted to videotaping women using the bathroom. He taped two teenage girls using the unisex bathroom beside his office. The case reached the Court of Appeals, and finally, the Supreme Court, as debates regarding the video's pornographic quality ensued. ■

Obama and multilateralism



FILIPINO WORLD VIEW
Roberto R. Romulo

THE election and inauguration of President Barack Obama has seemingly lifted the spirits, if not the sails, of those who believe in the multilateralist approach to foreign policy and diplomacy.

Not only has the Obama team adopted the soothing language of "smart" diplomacy, but Democratic administrations have had a better press in this area for some time.

This hope was further substantiated earlier this month when the US House of Representatives released the latest Foreign Relations Authorization Act (HR 2410). According to reports, the Act would authorize full payment of all outstanding US dues to the UN accumulated since the 1999 Helm-Biden legislation. It would also lift the Congressionally-mandated 25-percent cap on US funding for UN peacekeeping.

This would certainly represent significant support for multilateralism and the United Nations. For the Philippines, which is both an ally of the United States and a country with a long tradition of multilateralism, this is definitely a good thing.

However, there are at least two worrying signs on the horizon that cannot easily be dispelled. The first is North Korea's second nuclear test since 2006 just last month, and its accompanying tests. The second is the fate of democracy in Myanmar (Burma). To make matters worse for the Philippines, both these problems are in our own East Asian home region.

It is generally assumed by North Korea watchers that its Dear Leader wants closer bilateral negotiations with Washington. There is a certain brutal logic to this deliberate use of nuclear proliferation to catch the attention of the world in general, and of the US in particular.

But it is also the kind of logic that our world must not allow. Because this involves nuclear power, the international community has a vital interest to reinforce all multilateral structures and bring to bear all possible influence (read: China), to get the North Koreans to play by the rules of the game. The Six-Party Talks have to be kept a going concern, and we must watch the US lest it be tempted to go it alone or work only with a select "group of the willing" again.

The Philippines may actually have a role in these efforts, since it will hold the presidency of the next Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review conference scheduled in 2010. The NPT is the backbone of the global nuclear non-proliferation framework, that is

to say, the international legal effort to keep nuclear weapons from spreading. Since the United States and the current nuclear-weapon countries have only been serious about using the NPT to restrict membership in their select club rather than to disarm themselves, it is really up to other countries, including the Philippines, to make sure that both aspects of the non-proliferation agenda are adequately covered.

The problem of Myanmar is less urgent from a security standpoint, but more prickly for the Philippines since it is a member of ASEAN. Yangon's latest actions on Aung San Suu Kyi are outrageous and ASEAN, our chosen instrument for regional multilateralism, has only had an anemic response. A dialogue with the most influential nations (read China again, and this time India as well) is unavoidable for ASEAN if we wish to be a principal facilitator in helping Myanmar help itself. Care, nonetheless, is needed. For ASEAN to seriously sanction or expel Myanmar from its ranks, as some in the US and the West would have us do, would irreparably damage ASEAN's aim of building a regional community while making it only harder to effect any change in Myanmar.

Beyond security, we must also push the US, the major industrialized market economies and perhaps the stronger developing nations to work harder towards an acceptable outcome at the

WTO Doha Development Round. In this regard, we sincerely hope the United States will not veer towards protectionism despite the rhetoric of the last presidential campaign. This is the fundamental leadership we should expect from the Obama Administration.

Multilateralism in the UN

The key ingredient in these and other global problems is clearly a multilateralism that works. In the modern United Nations, the power of the Member States has grown, while the influence of the UN Secretary General has waned. But the Secretary General, the symbolic office he holds, and the global platform from which he speaks, remain important in rallying the international community. Multilateralism cannot work if its most potent symbol is wanting.

As an example of UN leadership shortcomings, the Washington Post published a June 2 article headlined "What The UN can't ignore" and written by Pedro Nikken and Geoffrey Nice (principal prosecution attorney in the case of Slobadan Milosevic in the Hague). They referred to the crimes against humanity and war crimes committed under Burma's military regime, including the recruitment of thousands of child soldiers and attacks on ethnic minority civilians. The article concluded: "Given that the UN is aware of the scale and severity of rights abuses in Burma, it is incumbent on the UN Security Council to authorize a commis-

sion on inquiry into the crimes". On the other hand, it would be a mistake to value multilateral diplomacy only in terms of whether it can manage high-profile issues like North Korea and Myanmar. There are many security, development and humanitarian efforts where the UN and regional organizations have been making headway without too much fanfare. Space does not allow me to enumerate these efforts.

Fortunately, the US has been very involved in these initiatives. Witness the positive role played by the US in the international humanitarian cooperation in the wake of Nargis that devastated Myanmar. This is a behavioral pattern that the Philippines, as a key regional ally of the US and an ASEAN leader, can continue to encourage in concert with the rest of ASEAN and the region. We need Washington to stay the course in building multilateralism from the ground.

Chacha train to nowhere

While many are aghast and alarmed by this development, I submit that this is a train going nowhere. Bypassing the bicameral nature of our legislature is a mortal flaw of the scheme. The decision of the Senate to sit on House Resolution 1109 will effectively bottle it up. And the indignation of the people about this naked assault on our democratic system will ensure that it will not prosper. (Philstar.com)

ASIAN JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS

Main Office:
1150 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90017-1904
Tel: (213) 250-9797 • Fax: (213) 481-0854
e-mail: info@asianjournalinc.com
http://www.asianjournal.com

Manila Office:
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