

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

# 'It's all lies'

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and if he was telling the truth why did it take him almost 10 years to disclose it. Estrada said there are speculations that his political enemies are using Lacson to derail his bid in the coming May 2010 presidential elections.

Estrada shrugged off the threat of Lacson to implicate him in more irregularities when the senator delivers his next privilege speech.

Estrada said he could say everything "on the air" and hinted that he, too, knew a lot about Lacson.

Estrada agreed with observations that Lacson's attacks on him were related to his steady rise in the survey ratings among the preferred presidential candidates running for next year's elections.

He also said that the people, even the so-called *masa*, could not be fooled with blatant lies.

In particular, Estrada strongly took exception to Lacson's allegations that he supposedly abetted smuggling of chicken in favor of an unnamed crony businessman.

"That's why I changed the task forces going after smuggling. I put him and the PAOCTF (Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force) to stop smuggling. Now he blames me because he didn't do his job," Estrada said in Filipino, fuming.

Contrary to claims of Lacson, Estrada said he had never given any leeway to any smuggler, reiterating that that was why he put Lacson in that position.

On Lacson's tirades against him on *jueteng*, Estrada recalled his own stint at the Senate where his first privilege speech was calling for the legalization of the illegal numbers game.

Estrada said when Lacson was the chief of the PNP, he was the one who ordered him to give priority to illegal drugs, kidnapping and car theft cases.

He explained that many people earn their livelihood through *jueteng*, such as the bookies, who live a hand-to-mouth existence. If *jueteng* is removed, they will not be able

to find other jobs.

"As they say, hungry stomach knows no laws," Estrada pointed out.

Lacson also accused the former president of ordering police officers to "harass" the family of former Ambassador Alfonso Yuchengco to sell their shares in the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) to businessman Manny Pangilinan.

He admitted knowing Yuchengco, but insisted that he had nothing to do with what was a private transaction.

Estrada also emphasized that he never gave instructions to Lacson's subordinates, and that he only communicated with Lacson. "That's my style of management, I only deal with the head of agency," Estrada said.

Following the privilege speech of Lacson, Sen. Estrada took the Senate floor to denounce what he said was "a clear vilification drive against my father."

Sen. Estrada sets privilege speech against Lacson

Sen. Estrada did not interpellate Lacson but he vowed to answer all accusations point by point during a privilege speech on September 15.

"I don't wish to dignify his privilege speech through interpellation. As far as I am concerned, they are all lies. And I will deliver a privilege speech on September 16 [Wednesday]," said Estrada.

"And if this gentleman does not stop spreading lies about my father, I will tell that truth about the person of Senator Lacson," Estrada said.

Estrada said Lacson was diverting the issue from the Dacer-Corbido case.

"If President Estrada really ran the government badly, when he was PACC (Presidential Anti-Crime Commission) chairman and when he was president of the Philippines, why did he seek the endorsement of my father (during his past senatorial bids)?" Estrada said.

Estrada said his father "nev-

er interfered" in the anti-smuggling operations during his term.

Sen. Estrada challenged Lacson to bring the issue to court, rather than hide under the cloak of parliamentary immunity.

Edno Josen, former National Food Administration head who served under President Estrada, denied that there was rice smuggling during their time.

San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito, another son of the former president, said Lacson's tirades against his father were a rehash of old issues.

Ejercito said he pitied Lacson for allowing himself to become part of an orchestrated effort to destroy the former president.

"I feel sorry for Sen. Lacson for submitting himself to become part of an effort to further destroy the image of President Erap. If all his allegations were true and that he is a man of principle, why did he only speak now?"

"All the issues he raised against President Erap were the same lies used in 2001 by syndicates that put President Arroyo in power and that caused the suffering of the Filipino people since 2001. The same old issues were the same lies that caused President Erap's imprisonment. Does Sen. Lacson want to once again put in jail President Erap?" Ejercito said.

Ejercito also advised Lacson to rethink his position.

Former narcotics agent turned whistle-blower Mary "Rosebud" Ong questioned the timing of the exposé of Lacson against Estrada.

"The last laugh is mine. Too late to be a hero, why now?" said Ong in a text message in reaction to Lacson's privilege speech. "Did Ping's conscience bother him too? Ping is super desperate. He is digging his own grave deeper than Erap. He is pulling Erap to join him in his grave, pathetic policeman."

Ong has accused Lacson of criminal activities, some of which remain pending in courts. ■

# 'God save RP from..'

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into the layers of the entire government bureaucracy, the PNP and the PAOCTF (Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Commission) included," Lacson added.

Lacson also slammed Estrada for accusing him of having a hand in the so-called Operation Delta, or the alleged plot to kill Dacer.

"*Mabuti pa si* Mr. Estrada, *alam niyang may* Oplan Delta. *Ako sa mga pahayagan at kamakailan ko lamang narinig at nalaman na mayroon palang* Oplan Delta (At least Mr. Estrada knew about Oplan Delta. I only learned about it recently from newspapers)," Lacson said.

**Smuggling**  
Lacson also revealed that Estrada asked BOC officials to turn a blind eye on a big shipment of dressed chicken and rice from Vietnam, saying his capabilities in this regard are unmatched.

He recalled that Estrada phoned him to ask him to go slow on the government's anti-smuggling campaign.

Lacson said the former president intervened in the release of 20 40-foot containers of dressed chickens sometime in 2000.

Lacson revealed that Estrada even gave direct orders to one of Lacson's subordinates for the release of a shipload of smuggled rice from Vietnam that was seized by the PAOCTF somewhere in the Cebu-Bohol area.

After he was appointed PNP chief in November 1999, Lacson recalled another conversation with Estrada in Malacañang when he asked him again to reconsider his strong position against *jueteng*.

It was also during that conversation that he told Estrada about a P5-million a month *payola* (protection money) given by former Ilocos Sur Gov. Chavit Singson to PNP chiefs as "standard operating procedure."

The senator said Estrada even asked Singson to remit to him the *payola* that Lacson refused to accept, three to four months after he was appointed as PNP chief.

**Out of the loop**  
"*Jueteng* became the sour point between me and Mr. Estrada. I made it clear that I would stick to my 'no-take policy' and I continued to issue stern warnings to my regional and provincial directors that if they tolerate operations in their areas of responsibility, they would be removed and subjected to harsh disciplinary action," Lacson said.

Lacson said his life became miserable when he maintained his no nonsense campaign against *jueteng*.

"The general public, even most of my distinguished colleagues in this hall, may not be aware of this, but it was common knowledge in Malacañang as well as in Camp Crame at that time, that for the most part of the second half of the year of 2000, I was not welcome in the Palace due to my differences with then President Estrada over the issue of *jueteng*," Lacson said.

Lacson noted that Estrada and Singson, who later turned witness in the plunder charges against Estrada, had a falling out during the implementation of the Bingo 2-Ball, which competed with *jueteng*. ■

# Villar, poor man's son...

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3do."

Villar said he was not taking potshots at Aquino in his speech.

"Even GMA is child of a former president," he said.

"So there is nothing wrong with that, for as long as a child of a poor man will also be given a chance to become president."

Villar said he has not decided yet on who will be his running mate.

"We are considering everyone, all are classified," he said.

Villar led the NP on September 15 in signing an agreement for a coalition with the Partido Magdalo of Cavite.

Representing the three-decade-old Partido Magdalo were Cavite Rep. Crispin Remulla and gubernatorial aspirant Jonvic Remulla.

"We deem Sen. Villar as the sole unifying factor whose leadership can reach out to various

sectors in a bid to propel the country to higher ground," Representative Remulla said.

"We are guaranteeing his win in Cavite," Jonvic Remulla said.

"That's a snapshot, and whoever commissioned the survey, we have to respect that. Let's see two months from now where are contenders will be when the emotions have died down."

Villar said as the country's two oldest political parties coalesce, the fight against poverty, reminiscent of the forefathers' struggle for independence has intensified.

"The support from Partido Magdalo empowers our drive against hunger in the country," he said.

Villar administered the NP oath to more than 300 Caviteño leaders, including 13 out of 23 mayors in rites at the historic Laurel House in Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong. (*Philstar.com*)

# Bernanke...

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at this point," Bernanke said in responding to questions at the Brookings Institution.

The Fed boss also said he is confident that Congress will enact a revamp of the nation's financial rule book to prevent a future crisis from happening.

"I feel quite confident that a comprehensive reform will be forthcoming," Bernanke said. It has been "too big a calamity" over the past year, with the near meltdown of the U.S. financial system, for Congress not to take action, he added.

President Barack Obama on Monday urged Congress to enact legislation this year.

Bernanke's speech to at Brookings was identical to the one he delivered last month at a Fed conference in Wyoming. Analysts predict the economy is growing in the current quarter, which ends Sept. 30, at an annual rate of 3 to 4 percent. It contracted at a 1 percent pace in the second quarter. (*AP*)



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