

# Sen. Villar ready for 2010 campaign, elections

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top," said Villar.  
The former House Speaker and former Senate President, who has authored countless bills in both Houses that has benefited small scale enterprises, the environment, health care, responsive social care and high quality education, among many others, said he feels he is the most ready among all the candidates to deal with the problems facing the country today. He will be relying on his experiences and wherewithal to run the government which he says has been mismanaged in the past.

"It's about time that we managed the economy well," he said. "The new President must be able to manage from Day 1. We cannot afford a President who will do on-the-job training. We cannot just focus on one aspect and move on to the next. Everything has to be done simultaneously in order to guarantee improvements in all areas of government."  
According to Villar, as President, one must be able to work with the different branches of government and society, including the Senate, the House, the Catholic Church and other in-

stitutions and have them work towards the same objective and move in one direction. If one has no experience in making the different institutions work seamlessly, then it will become chaotic, Sen. Villar added.  
While delegation of duties will be one of the keys to a successful implementation of programs, Villar hinted that concrete results and a full accounting will be demanded.  
"It is not enough that you promise me that you will do this or that," he explained. "If say you tell me that your department has presided over the planting of a million trees to help the environment, I will want proof. Where are those trees planted? How many are actually there? It is not enough that you give your word to me."  
Senator Villar further stated that efficient tax collection to about 18 percent of the gross domestic product and introducing the concept of competition may help improve the economy of the Philippines.

colleagues that the Charter Change issue is not dead as the administration and its allies would like us to believe," the Senator said. "Kaya nilang gawin 'yan in one day (They can do it in one day). I expected this to happen. I am not happy with it."  
Villar says that further movement of the Charter Change (or Cha-Cha), or its approval, will depend on how the people will react to it.  
"There are protests now," he said. "But the administration and its allies are adopting a wait-and-see attitude. If they feel that the situation will turn bad, then they will not push through with it. But if they can get away with it... On the one hand, *galit ang tao* (the people are angry), but whether that anger translates to widespread protests and a movement by the people, we'll just have to see."  
Senator Villar also lamented the fact that the Congress is asking Senators individually to support HR 1109, and not as an institution.

had to cross party lines then, and we did. That's why we were able to block this. Now, I don't think this Senate will do that."  
**C-5 Issue**  
Senator Villar also answered questions on the C-5 issue which has led to a Senate investigation on whether the Senator had benefited illegally or was involved in any impropriety related to the project.  
"Pinapahaba lang nila 'yan para manganak (They are prolonging the issue and hoping it will bear fruit)," he declared. "Look at the composition of the ethics committee... all of the other presidential candidates are bunched there. The Committee on Finance has already absolved me of any wrongdoing. Even the Department of Public Works and Highways has cleared me of any impropriety."  
"This is more of an irritation," he added. "I know that this is being used for political purposes for 2010. Even after one year of accusations, they have not proven anything. They have changed the rules in order to accommodate this case. In the original definition of the ethics committee, what they are accusing me of is not part of the rules. They changed the rules. That's why Senator (Aquilino) Pimentel and Jovy Salonga said, 'Saan ka nakakita na iniba 'yung rules and then they applied it retroac-

tively? (Where else can you see a change of rules and then they applied it retroactively?)."  
Villar revealed that their decision to not attend the Senate hearings were based on a few developments.  
"Talo ka na nga, kasi ang mga accusers mo are the judges (You've already lost because your accusers are the judges), but do you know that we learned that even before the first meeting of the Senate ethics committee on Wednesday, a decision was already being passed around on Tuesday? Could you imagine, Wednesday ang meeting but there was already a decision by Tuesday. *Ano ito, eleksyon?* (What are these, the elections?) That's why we did not attend the meeting," Sen. Villar explained.

## Fed survey sees signs recession is easing

by JEANNIE AVERSA  
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON—The economy's sharp downhill slide eased in the late spring and hopes for future business activity improved, suggesting that the worst of the recession has passed.  
A Federal Reserve snapshot of economic conditions issued Wednesday found that five of the Fed's 12 regions said the "downward trend is showing signs of moderating."  
In addition, "several" regions said their expectations of future business activity have improved, although they don't see a "substantial increase" through the end of the year. In the last survey, several regions simply noted signs of some stability at low levels.

report said. However, the Atlanta and Kansas City regions indicated that the rate of decline slowed. The New York region described factory activity as having "stabilized," and the Dallas region observed "signs of stabilization."  
In an encouraging note, the Richmond region reported a rise in both new orders placed with factories and shipments.  
Consumer spending, the lifeblood of the economy, "remained soft" as shoppers focused on buying "less expensive necessities." Reports from New York, Minneapolis and Dallas indicated a modest rise in retail sales, while the Boston, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Atlanta, Kansas City and San Francisco regions said sales were "flat or mixed." The other regions experienced declining sales.  
New car sales stayed "depressed" across most Fed regions.

**Elections in 2010?**  
As Sen. Villar prepares for the upcoming elections next year, he is wary of moves by Congress in promoting the forming of a Constituent Assembly (or Con-Ass) as evidenced most recently by the passage of House Resolution 1109 through Congress.  
"I have been warning

My worry is when they say that, I have a feeling that they already have some senators with them. Otherwise, they would not be saying that," Villar explained. "When I was Senate President, I had to ask the Senators to act as one, as an institution. I had to rally all the senators when they attempted to do this before. We

**Ready to face anything**  
Senator Villar's readiness for the rigors of the campaign for the 2010 elections can be gleaned from his response to the Senate investigation.  
His family, he said, is also ready to deal with what's coming.  
"My family is ready," he declared. "Simple lang ang family ko, walang gulo (We have a simple life with no drama)."  
And himself? "They cannot do anything more to me," said the Senator. "They've already started. I have nothing to hide." ■

Altogether the assessments of businesses on the front lines of the economy appeared to be slightly better than those they provided in the previous report issued in mid-April.  
Known as the Beige Book, the Fed survey is consistent with observations made by Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke and other central bank officials that the recession—which started in December 2007 and is now the longest since World War II—is loosening its strong hold on the economy.

Travel and tourism activity dropped as vacationers spent less. Business at Manhattan hotels and Broadway theaters fell in May after a modest increase in April, the report said. The San Francisco region reported "pronounced" declines in occupancy rates, especially in luxury hotels. However, bookings at resorts in the Richmond region are starting to pick up and the Minneapolis region saw indications that summer reservations at campgrounds and resorts are "strong."



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Many analysts predict the economy is sinking at a pace of between 1 and 3 percent in the current quarter. If they are right, that would mark a big moderation from the steep declines seen since last fall. The economy shrank at a pace of 6.3 percent in the final quarter of last year, and by 5.7 percent in the first three months of this year. It marked the worst six-month performance in 50 years.  
The survey's findings will figure into discussions when Bernanke and his colleagues meet next on June 23-24. Economists have mixed opinions on whether the Fed will take additional action to bolster the economy at that time.  
Some believe the Fed will move to increase its purchases of government bonds beyond the \$300 billion already announced in a bid to drive down rates on mortgages and other consumer debt. The goal: spur Americans to buy more, which would aid the economy.  
Manufacturing activity declined or stayed at low levels across most Fed regions, the

On the housing front, the residential market remains weak, but there were some positive signs. Real-estate agents in eight of the 12 regions—New York, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Richmond, Chicago, Kansas City, Dallas and San Francisco—reported an "uptick in home sales."  
Low interest rates, declining home prices and tax credits for first-time home buyers were cited as factors in the improvement. Much of the increase in sales was found in the lower-priced end of the housing market.  
In manufacturing, employment stayed at low levels, although some regions saw signs that job losses may be moderating. Retail employment was mixed, with some regions like Boston and Cleveland reporting stability, while Richmond reported more reductions. ■

## The Nacionalista Party: 100 Years and Beyond

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still against the oppressive clutches of poverty and inequality. For the past five years, Sen. Villar has been at the helm of NP, infusing new blood to the party, strengthening the involvement of the youth and encouraging party-mates to a more pro-active role. ■

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