

## Report Card by Januario Azarcon, Esq. 15 January 2010

Another year has passed. The last one was laden with so much hope. A new era was dawning. Change has come, or so we thought.

With one year tucked under his belt, Pres. Barack Obama was asked by Oprah in a TV interview to grade himself. Obama gave himself a B plus.

At the massive evening rally in Chicago soon after Obama was declared the winner, a young lady hyperventilating with joy tearfully proclaimed before a TV camera that she never thought that this moment would come in her lifetime that she would not have to worry anymore about paying her mortgage nor putting gas in her car.

Has the orator delivered the beef behind those lofty words?

As unemployment threatened to head north when he took office, he was able to ram the so-called stimulus package through Congress by sounding the alarm. He warned that unless we immediately pass the \$750 billion proposed expenditure, unemployment would rise above 8.2%. At that time, it was under 7%.

What's the score almost a year after Obama's stimulus? Unemployment shot up to 10.2 % and we are stuck with roughly \$1.5 trillion deficit, more than three times the deficit in the last year of the G. W. Bush presidency.

He promised change. His presidency will be the most transparent administration. He promised that negotiations involving his policy and legislative initiatives, including health care, will be open to the public on C-

Span TV. Well, there is change indeed. Obama changed his mind. The way the health care reform bills are being negotiated behind closed doors, C-Span would be left to focusing their cameras on door knobs.

I applaud him for reaching out to the Muslim world. Yet I do not understand why he had to apologize for America. This is the America that defended Muslims in Kuwait when a fellow Muslim tyrant invaded their country and brutalized its people. This is the America that stood up for the Muslim people in Kosovo. This is the America that came to the aid of the Muslim people in Indonesia when it got hit by the tsunami disaster not to long ago. His apology has not appeased the Islam jihadists. It did not matter to Abdulmutallab, the so-called underwear bomber who almost blew up a passenger airliner in Detroit.

He promised change. He would be the president who will bring people together. After a year, the political sniping has not abetted. But instead of being above the fray, the White House joined the fracas. Its target was Fox News, the TV network whose news broadcast and opinion makers would not kowtow to the storyline preferred by the onion-skinned administration. After looking like immature whiners, the Fox News boycott promoted by the White House was called off.

He has decided to bring a suspected terrorist detained at Gitmo to New York and be tried so that we can demonstrate to the world our system of justice, innocent until proven guilty. Yet Obama and his Attorney General already proclaimed that this bad guy will be convicted. Kangaroo Court? He has banned water boarding as a tool in extracting

evidence, yet he has no qualms about U.S. drones firing missiles to pulverize into oblivion suspected terrorists in Pakistan and Afghanistan without the benefit of cross examination of witnesses.

From a stratospheric popularity rating of almost 70% early in his presidency, it is now down to below 50% from all published polls. That's nothing to be concerned of. If most Americans are starting to get bored with his promises, Norwegians are star-struck. They gave him a medallion, also known as the Nobel Peace Prize. Was he responsible for bringing peace between Bill and Hillary Clinton?

Pres. Obama still has a long way to go. "Give him a chance," says an ardent supporter. For now, that hyperventilating young lady who attended Obama's election victory rally in Chicago still has a long way to go worrying about her mortgage payments and scrimping for gas money. So far, the change has fallen short.

\* \* \*

The Filipino artist as an entertainer has finally arrived on the world stage. Leah Salonga paved the way with her lead role in Broadway's Miss Saigon. Recently, teenage Charice Tampinco vaulted into stardom courtesy of Oprah and musical genius David Foster. And then there is

Arnel Pineda who is now the lead singer for the rejuvenated world famous band of the 80's, Journey.

If you have not seen a live performance of a Filipino entertainer, I challenge you to see one. It will warm this frigid weather.

On February 27, 2010, the Travel Outlet of Virginia Beach and eStar eNertainment will present the top two Filipino entertainers Gary Valenciano and Martin Nievera at the DC Armory in Washington, D.C. Both artists are known for their powerful vocals delivered in high energy performance with a passion that's intensely Filipino. See you there!