

Many Overseas-Filipino community leaders say that President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo (PGMA) will not be able to duplicate what then President Ferdinand E. Marcos did in 1972 – declare martial law and prolong his presidency. In fact, Washington, DC-based writer, Ado Paglinawan, goes further by predicting that if President Arroyo will decide to stay in power after June 30, 2010, she would leave the presidential palace in a horizontal position.

This writer posted on Jan. 25, 2008, this article,

[GMA Will Never Be Able to Prolong Her Rule Beyond June 30, 2010, or Declare Martial Law](#)

Please read it and perhaps you will conclude with what I wrote in the said article,

QUOTE. Then there is the fact that for all the brave pronouncements of her ability and prowess, PGMA cannot compare herself to Ferdinand E. Marcos at the height of his power. In 1972, then President Marcos had more political support than PGMA today. On an individual basis, PGMA is a political midget (pun not intended) if compared to Apo Ferdie and from these aspects: intellect, oratory, looks and persuasion. The other politicians who could be compared closest to Mr. Marcos were President Ramon Magsaysay and then Sen. Benigno S. Aquino, Jr. This writer has seen Mr. Marcos, Mrs. Arroyo, President Magsaysay and Ninoy Aquino enter a room full of leaders. People, like this writer, could feel the aura and magnetism of Mr. Marcos' presence or the company of President Magsaysay or Senator Aquino. But this writer and for that matter many individuals find lacking the same impression in Mrs. Arroyo or even in her predecessors, Presidents Cory Aquino, Fidel V. Ramos and Joseph Estrada – while they were still in power.

Tony Abaya Is Wrong: PGMA Cannot Stay in Power Beyond June 2010 - MabuhayRadio

Written by Bobby Reyes

Tuesday, 13 May 2008 01:00 - Last Updated Thursday, 15 May 2008 00:13

In short, the reality is that among the present national leaders in the Philippines—Mrs. Arroyo, the living former Presidents and the crop of 2010 presidential timbers included—nobody can come up close to a Ferdinand E. Marcos or a Ninoy Aquino or a Ramon Magsaysay. UNQUOTE.

Mr. Abaya is wrong and he did not read his crystal ball right. Let us just hope that there will be an orderly transfer of power to the victor of the 2010 presidential election. Otherwise, Mr. Paglinawan will appear to be a true descendant of Michel Nostradamus.

Here are excerpts of what Mr. Abaya wrote yesterday:

Prelude to 2010

By Antonio C. Abaya

Written on May 12, 2008

For the Standard Today, May 13 issue

In his presentation last week at the Asian Institute of Management, on the 2010 presidential elections, political analyst Tony Gatmaitan made his usual pitches about the Lucena-Lingayen corridor, the relative strengths of the Kampi-Lakas, NP, LP, NPC and PDP-Laban and their announced or expected nominees, the role of radio and TV ads in the campaign, etc. He spoke in a lecture sponsored by the Futuristics Center, of which I am a director.

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Tony Gat did drop a bombshell of sorts that few in the audience may have expected, to wit, that Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno was the “secret candidate” of Lakas-Kampi.

As one of the reactors to Tony Gat, I agreed that Puno was indeed a potential successor to President Arroyo – I did mention it in an earlier column – but my sense is that it will not happen in 2010 because President Arroyo intends to stay in power beyond that year, either as prime minister under a parliamentary set-up, or as president without term limits if we retain the presidential system.

That is really the reason for the continued and insistent agitation for charter change in both the Lower House and, now, the Senate, even after the people’s initiative of the Sigaw ng Bangaw was junked by the Supreme Court, and even after the obscene maneuver of then Speaker Jose de Venecia to convene the Lower House into a constituent assembly, without the participation of the oppositionist Senate, to amend the Constitution, was hooted down by the public, in 2006..

<<Snipped>>

I reminded the audience of the uncanny accuracy of my crystal ball. On Dec. 30, 2002, President Arroyo promised that she would not run in 2004. In my article titled She Will Run, published in May 2003, I wrote that she would, and she did.

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After the party caucus of Kampi in February 2005, in which then Kampi President Ronaldo Puno stated the strategic goal of Kampi to become the biggest political party by 2007 – three years before the end of GMA's non-extendable presidential term – I wrote in Prime Minister Gloria? and GMA Forever, both published in 2005, that President Arroyo was planning to remain in power beyond 2010, as prime minister.

And, sure enough, in 2006 we saw the separate maneuvers of Sigaw ng Bangaw and De Venecia to engineer a shift to parliamentary. These articles are archived and can be read in my website www.tapatt.org, unless someone is blocking access to it.

So when I say that President Arroyo is planning to remain in power beyond 2010 – by doing a Vladimir Putin – I am not speculating idly..

And what would be the issues in 2010? Tony Gat had his usual laundry list. I have mine.

I am concerned with only two issues: a) food sufficiency or insufficiency and its impact on a rapidly multiplying population; and b) the possible resumption of hostilities in Mindanao and Sulu.

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I reminded the audience that by the year 2014 (or only six years from now), we will number 100 million; and by the year 2050 (or only 42 years from now), we will number 199 million. Where in the world will we find the food (and the water, the energy, the fuel, the schools, the housing and the jobs) for such a massive population, when we can barely provide for a population of “only” 90 million?

In its Medium Term Development Plan, made public – I believe – in September or October 2001, the Arroyo administration articulated its strategic goal of focusing on only three sectors: agriculture, tourism and information technology.

The welcome proliferation of call centers and business processing enterprises, not only in Metro Manila but in many other urban centers in the provinces, is proof that President Arroyo was very successful in this sector, whether or not her administration did anything concrete to promote this industry..

The second preferred sector, tourism, is only a middling success. We drew in only 3.0 million tourists in 2007. Vietnam overtook us last year with 4.2 million. Indonesia surpassed us long ago; it now draws in six million, even though we each drew in one million in 1991. Let's not even compare ourselves with Thailand/Malaysia (16 million) and Hong Kong (26 million). (13 million tourists),

It is in agriculture that the Arroyo administration must be rated a failure. I cannot imagine how any government could claim to focus on agriculture without making a specific effort to be self-sufficient in the most important crop, rice.

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Especially since we are host to the International Rice Research Institute, to become the biggest rice importer in the world is an irony beyond comprehension. It is like Italy becoming the world's biggest importer of pasta.

President Arroyo has vowed to make the country self-sufficient in rice by the year 2010. Why didn't she think of this in 2001? If she had, there would have been specific measures taken as early as 2001 to increase production and to limit population growth. As for Mindanao and Sulu, this problem looms as an 800-pound gorilla, more menacing than the food and population issue. The peace between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Manila government has been tenuous at best. It now looks ephemeral and dicey.

Malaysia, a major player in the international monitoring team that has kept that peace, has just withdrawn most of its military contingent from Mindanao. Do the Malaysians know something that we don't?

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That seems to be the case here as the talks bogged down on the issue of ancestral domain. The Bangsamoro have demanded that their ancestral domain should include Palawan, clearly an unacceptable demand. Will the MILF now break off negotiations and resume hostilities? Even if the peace holds, there are other issues that complicate the problem.

Certainly the majority Christian populations in urban centers in the present Autonomous Regions of Muslim Mindanao (ARRM) do not relish the prospect of being included in the ancestral domain of the Bangsamoro. Will they now re-arm as they did in the 1970s?

There is also the rivalry between the MILF and the Moro National Liberation Front or MNLF from which the MILF had split in the 1990s. The MNLF wanted to set up a secular state, the MILF prefer an Islamic state under Sharia Law.

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Do the Malaysians know something that we don't? We will find out before 2010. Sen. Pimentel's espousal of federalism before the end of President Arroyo's term may be an attempt to stave off secession. But to the Bangsamoro, it may be too little too late. To them, it may look more like a sign of weakness. It is either Palawan or nothing. *****

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Reactions to tonyabaya@gmail.com . Other articles in www.tapatt.org and in acabaya.blogspot.com.

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