

# 'No elections still possible'

by MIKE FRIALDE  
Philstar.com

MANILA – A former defense secretary of President Arroyo urged the public on July 22 to be wary of a “disturbing trend” that points to an administration plot to cancel the elections in May next year.

Avelino Cruz, who was for several years also the President’s personal lawyer and then chief legal adviser, voiced his

observation in a speech on July 22 before the Integrated Bar of the Philippines.

He said recent developments showed that Arroyo might impose martial rule and prevent the elections from pushing through.

“As lawyers, when you weigh evidence for facts, you look at the pattern. There is a disturbing trend that may imperil the 2010 elections,” he said.

Cruz said the trend bore re-

semblance to the events that led to the martial law declaration in September 1972 by then president, Ferdinand Marcos.

Cruz resigned from the Arroyo Cabinet in 2006.

He said there should be no room for complacency despite Arroyo reassurance that elections would push through.

“Back in Rizal Day 2002, President Arroyo took the solemn occasion of the death anniversary of our national hero to announce that she will not seek another term during the 2004 elections. After her teary eyed announcement, media attacks from the opposition ceased. By October 2003, after a surge in her ratings, President Arroyo declared her candidacy,” he said.

“Through the years, we have gotten used to getting mixed signals from this government,” he pointed out.

“What can we make of this latest announcement from President Arroyo that the 2010 elections would proceed? Can we trust her word this time? Or is the public again being lulled into complacency?” he asked.

Cruz also said the appointment of members of the Philippine Military Academy Class of 1978 to key positions in the Armed Forces of the Philip-

pires and the Philippine National Police could also be interpreted as part of the pattern. President Arroyo is an adopted member of the PMA makatarungan Class of 1978.

“*Mas komportable sya sa* (She’s more comfortable with) Class 1978,” he said.

There are now 22 members of PMA Class ‘78 now in key positions in the AFP. They include J2 (Intelligence) Rear Adm . Victor Martir (Navy), Deputy J2 Commodore Efren Tedor (Navy), J3 (Operations) – Maj. Gen. Carlos Holganza (Army), J6 Maj. Gen. Jonathan Martir (Marines), ISAFP-Maj. Gen. Romeo Prestoza (Air Force), and Presidential Security Group commander Brig. Gen. Celedonio Boquiren (Air Force).

In the Army, six of the 10 infantry divisions are under the control of Class of 1978 members. Even the commanding general of the Army, Lt.Gen. Delfin Ban git is a member of the class.

The Air Force is headed by a member of the class, Maj. Gen. Oscar Rabena as Commanding General while in the Navy, the chief of the Naval Staff, Commodore Feliciano Angue, and the head of the Cavite naval station, Commodore Nestor Los Banes are both members of Class 1978. ■

# GMA, Obama to tackle substantive matters – Ermita

by PAOLO ROMERO  
Philstar.com

MANILA – The meeting between President Arroyo and US President Barack Obama at the White House would tackle “substantive matters” and not about the country’s internal politics as the opposition are claiming, a top Palace official said on July 22.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita was commenting on statements from critics that Pres. Arroyo would be given a lecture by Obama on reported efforts to extend her term via amendments to the Constitution.

The US-based Heritage Foundation earlier cautioned Obama to make clear to Pres. Arroyo in their talks that his support for her administration does not include backing for alleged efforts to prolong her stay in office.

Pres. Arroyo is scheduled to meet Obama on July 30. The White House earlier said she will be the first Southeast Asian leader to meet with Obama and the talks would likely center on terrorism and

climate change.

Among the Cabinet members who would join the President entourage is Presidential Adviser on Global Warming and Climate Change (PAGWCC) Heherson Alvarez.

Alvarez will meet with his US counterpart, chief climate negotiator Todd Stern, in the US to discuss specific programs that would keep the two countries in stead with their respective climate change plans.

Among the terms Alvarez wants discussed is transfer of technology, which could give a long-term benefit to the country.

“This is not business in the sense that we’re asking for technology not to acquire profit. We’re looking at this as a chance to enhance our capacity to combat the ever-growing problem of climate change with the new technology that they can offer. In short we buy the technology at a minimum cost but with the maximum benefit to us. They sell it at a low cost and they do their share. It augurs well for everyone,” he said. ■

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