

Mikey: No power outage in 2010 polls

by DELON PORCALLA
Philstar.com

PRESIDENTIAL son and House energy committee head Rep. Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo said uninterrupted power supply in the 2010 elections "would be a legacy of this administration."

"The election is a historic one as this would be the very first election in the country that will be automated," Arroyo said.

"Personally, I would not want power outages on that date to create an iota or even a semblance of doubt on the credibility of the elections," he said.

Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes, in a budget hearing last week, made a stunning announcement that a massive power crisis looms over Luzon next year or in time for the May 2010 presidential elections.

The energy secretary drew scathing reactions for his statement and critics even said he was conditioning the minds of the public for a failure of elections scenario.

Reyes' statement came on the heels of projections by Tarlac Rep. Mark Cojuangco of a 2,000-megawatt shortfall in electricity in 2012.

Cojuangco is battling for the activation of the mothballed Bataan Nuclear Power Plant.

"I will use all powers within the means of my committee, particularly the committee's oversight powers, to ensure there will be no power outages on May 10 when we cast our votes until such time the last vote has been tallied," Arroyo said.

"It is time to put a stop to those brownouts on election day, much more than next year's elections will be automated and it is going to rely heavily on power," the young Arroyo said.

He would be holding dialogues with power producers and distributors regarding the matter.

"These power outages during election days have become so notorious they have become suspect as part of a grand design by some

politicians to rig the election results in their favor," he said.

Arroyo said he hopes to pinpoint problems and how to address them in his planned meeting with power producers and distributors.

"First, we have to trace what caused the power outages in the past elections," he said.

"If they say those power outages were caused by the expected huge demand for power during summer when we hold the elections, then let us find ways to prevent power overloads so we will not have those power outages," he said.

"I firmly believe there is a solution to every problem, including this one. We do not want a repeat of the energy crisis in the late 80s and early 90s when the country experienced daily brownouts from six to eight hours," Arroyo recalled.

The young lawmaker said the country still has at least two and a-half years before the power crisis expected by Rep. Cojuangco in 2012.

"I believe we still have time to address that problem. But we have to start now," Arroyo said, declining to comment if there is a need to activate the BNPP.

Prelates hit DOE chief

Roman Catholic bishops lashed out at Reyes for reportedly sowing panic with his announcement of a possible power crisis.

"Secretary Reyes should not give warning against a possible power shortage. We have eight months before the 2010 national elections, he can prepare and find solutions to the problem," Borongan Eastern Samar Bishop Crispin Varquez said in an interview over Church-run Radio Veritas.

"He should give us assurance that there will be no brownout before, during and after the elections," he said.

"Secure all power sources and all the mainlines to give assurance that there will be no brownout," the prelate said addressing Reyes.

Varquez also debunked Reyes' proposal to grant President Arroyo "emergency powers" to help her deal with the situation. ■

More overseas registrants for 2010 polls—DFA

by LIRA DALANGIN-FERNANDEZ
Inquirer.net

THE number of Filipinos overseas who registered to vote in the May 2010 elections is still expected to rise as the Department of Foreign Affairs awaits the final tally of registrants from posts worldwide.

According to a report by the Overseas Absentee Voting Secretariat, a total of 231,621 Filipinos abroad registered for next year's election as of September 16.

The DFA has targeted one million new registrants during the period of registration from February 1 to August 31 this year.

Filipinos in the Asia and the Pacific registered the biggest number of registrants with 68,884, followed by Middle East and Africa (48,980), Americas (41,639), and Europe (24,296). ■

Arroyo's support...

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formance of the administration-backed senatorial lineup during the 2007 polls, Teodoro said the election two years ago should not be compared to a presidential election.

"It's different," he said.

Teodoro declined to comment when asked about his plans to better his ratings in the surveys which showed him lagging behind other possible presidential candidates.

"The theme is recurring and recurring," he replied.

He also refused to comment on his chances of winning the presidency if he agrees to pick Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno as his vice presidential candidate.

Teodoro welcomed the tandem of Senators Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III and Mar Roxas of the Liberal Party.

"All tandems are formidable. You must not underestimate the others. What is important is what our party does. They have their credentials, I also have mine. I'm sure the people know what we did (as political leaders)," he said. ■



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