

# Cory Aquino buried martial law

*Think tank says road to 2010 smoother*

by **DORIS DURLAO**  
Inquirer.net

MANILA – Even in death, former President Corazon Aquino did Filipinos one last favor by paying a smoother road to the 2010 presidential election, according to the New York-based think tank Global Source.

In a report dated Aug. 11 and titled "The Road Gets Easier,"

Global Source said concerns over a potential upheaval in the political system arising from a premeditated change in the Constitution or even a "self-coup" to extend the party rule of outgoing President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo had become increasingly irrelevant.

"One that significantly changes the matrix of outcomes is the demise of Corazon Aquino.

In the past, we had argued that chances of Charter change succeeding through strictly constitutional processes before next year's elections are slim but left some possibility of high-risk political schemes being pulled, such as emergency rule or martial law, in order to force the desired changes," Global Source said in the report written by Filipino economists Romeo Bernardo and Margarita Gonzales.

In Global Source's view, the death of Aquino, the heroine of the 1986 EDSA People Power Revolution and a world icon of democracy, put an end to such scenarios.

"Huge crowds at her burial [on Aug. 5] offer would-be plotters a preview of what awaits them if they pursue their schemes. While memories are fresh, the 1987 Constitution would be almost untouchable as it forms part of what many consider as the Aquino legacy," it said, adding:

"Hence, even if a constituent assembly were to be suddenly

convened and a referendum organized, the answer of the people would likely be 'no' to honor a woman elevated by public acclaim to near sainthood."

Global Source noted that Malacañang had already asked its allies in Congress to end their push for Charter change, against which Aquino crusaded.

"Another outcome-changer for the near term lies in the way the new US administration has turned its attention recently to the Philippines, with Pres. Arroyo finally able to meet with American President Barack Obama ... after some botched attempts to do so," it said.

"Seasoned US political analysts believe this is a good sign she will leave office peacefully in 2010."

Foreign policy experts say any visit with a US president could not have been cleared without assurances that it would not turn out to be a diplomatic blunder later, according to Global Source.



**CIA chief's visit**

"Oddly enough, after a lightning visit of the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) chief to Manila around mid-July, bomb blasts and bombing attempts rumored to lay the predicate for a state of emergency in the country suddenly declined in frequency," it said.

Prior to Aquino's death and Pres. Arroyo's meeting with Obama, Filipinos "waited anx-

iously" for that moment when she would say goodbye during her last State of the Nation Address (SONA), Global Source said.

It noted that two post-Marcos Presidents—Aquino herself and Fidel V. Ramos—had some version of farewell worked into their last major speech.

But it observed that all Pres. Arroyo said in her SONA was: "At the end of this speech I shall step down from this stage, but not from the presidency. My term does not end until next year."

"It was an obvious jab at critics and political enemies who had been goading her to state explicitly that she would relinquish power to an elected successor in 2010," Global Source said.

"We believe, though, that the debate on whether or not this omission indicates an impending upheaval in the political system has increasingly become irrelevant..." it said.

**Horse race**  
Global Source said the ruling party would have to find other ways to keep itself politically relevant until and beyond the 2010 elections, which, it said, were now certain to happen.

In an earlier report, Global Source likened this search for options to a horse race, with the current leadership betting on a preferred horse and switching bets whenever the chosen one fell off the track.

As events have turned out, the race is now down to the last few horses, it said.

The first of the options is a post-2010 elections Cha-cha (Charter change). "Pundits call

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