

The Paradox of Civilian Control in the Philippines

— Loyalty, Reward, and Politicizing Civil-Military Relations —

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Abstract

This paper examines the relationship between president Arroyo and officers of the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) in order to consider the connection of the military with politics. During Arroyo administration, some officers of the AFP staged several coup attempts, and rumors of possible coups never ceased. Consequently, however, those attempts all failed to topple the administration, and no coup attempt occurred in the last two and half years of the administration. On the contrary, there was speculation that president Arroyo was conspiring to declare martial law to extend her grip on power in collusion with the AFP's high-ranking officers. Assuming that president Arroyo could win the support of military generals and could build a relatively favorable relationship with the AFP, this paper examines what kind of and how the president build a relationship with the AFP. To examine these, this paper looks into president's manipulation of personnel affairs (appointments and promotions of AFP officers) and several factors which influenced her manipulation. It will be demonstrated that president Arroyo appointed officers who are personally close to her and who are loyal to her to the crucial positions of the AFP and that these arrangement strengthened relationship between president and the AFP, and that the president's manipulation was strongly defined by her most important agenda, political survival. Additionally, it will be pointed out that this kind of relationship which is based on personal closeness and loyalty is general characteristic of the civil-military relations in the Philippines.

Keywords: the Philippines, civil-military relations, Gloria M. Arroyo, Armed Forces of the Philippines, political appointment

Under the authoritarian regime of President Ferdinand Marcos, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) was politicized as it took on a prominent role as “partner” of the President. After the collapse of the Marcos regime and democratization in its wake, some highly politicized officers staged several coup attempts against the then-newly established Corazon Aquino administration, causing political and social turmoil. In the 1990s it seemed the AFP retreated from politics. However, it returned with quite a force in January 2001 when it played a decisive role in the collapse of the Estrada administration by withdrawing its support from the latter and helping usher in the Gloria Macapagal Arroyo government.

During the first half of President Arroyo's ten-year rule, rumors of military unrest plagued the administration. In fact, attempted coups in which anti-Arroyo politicians and some AFP officers seemed to

collaborate were revealed on several occasions. Such circumstances put Arroyo in a situation in which she needed to depend on high-ranking generals for her administration's survival while consistently cultivating a harmonious relationship with the AFP. In the late stage of the administration, no serious disputes between Arroyo and the AFP were observed, and as the May 2010 presidential election approached, a story circulated about how Arroyo was conspiring with the AFP to extend her grip on power.

From this summary of civil-military relations in the Arroyo administration, we can assume that Arroyo succeeded in securing the support of high-ranking AFP generals and maintained a harmonious relationship with the AFP. But then it must be asked how Arroyo achieved these and what their implications would be on the AFP's political involvement after democratization in the Philippines.

Factors defining civil-military relations in the Philippines after democratization lie in both the military and civilian sides [Quilop 2009]. On the part of the military, some of the factors include the politicization of the AFP, which resulted from the expansion of its political and administrative roles during the Marcos regime; the growing frustration over favoritism in the promotion system in the AFP; and its inflated self-regard emanating from the role that it played in both the 1986 and 2001 regime changes. On the other hand, there exist two factors in the civilian side. First, the political environment in the Philippines, which induces political players to keep on trying to bring the military into the equation of the political game, and second, the seeming inability of the entire government machinery to put an end to the insurgency. These factors are interlocked and they define civil-military relations. To be sure, scholars have examined these factors, but those that stem from the civilian side—especially the first, which indicates infiltration of politics in the AFP—have not been explored or demonstrated in detail¹.

This paper investigates the infiltration of politics in the AFP by looking into the practices of promotions and appointments of military generals during the Arroyo administration and examines a couple of factors that influence these practices. In particular, this paper demonstrates the kind of maneuvering Arroyo employed in building a relationship with the AFP and what factors influenced her practice. In this manner, this paper reveals an important factor that shapes civil-military relations in post-authoritarian Philippines. Political infiltration of the AFP through a maneuvering of personnel affairs has been recognized as a problem in relation to the Marcos Martial Law regime. Because Marcos made the AFP his political power base by utilizing his authority over appointments in making the AFP his “partner” of the dictatorship, and because his maneuvering of personnel affairs, which prioritized personal ties rather than merit and seniority, led to discontent and created cracks in the AFP. Such personalistic approach contributed to the AFP's politicization. One of the arguments of this paper is that the same kind of situation could emerge even after democratization.

The emergence of a situation in which a democratically elected politician exercises his/her power

1 For example, Hernandez (2007) and Quilop (2009) partly pointed out an infiltration of politics into the AFP after democratization.

over the AFP's personnel affairs could be considered an indication of the progress of democratization and civilian control of the military. However, it is undeniable that under civilian control there is the possibility of political or partisan intent infiltrating the AFP, which should remain politically neutral. Even though some degree of political intent is imaginable or even allowed, reactions to this would vary depending on how political (or emotional) it is. In some cases, it might result in the destabilization of civil-military relations. Therefore, civilian control must be evaluated and exercised with utmost caution based on an examination of the situation on the ground, even though a democratically elected politician does exercise power over the military's personnel affairs.

As will be seen below, even after democratization, the president, officially and unofficially, continues to wield considerable power over promotions and appointments of AFP officers. Thus, the way personnel affairs are managed can be regarded as being related to personal factors such as the preferences or characteristics of the president. This paper, however, will also pay attention to nonpersonal factors such as political, social and historical institutions, customs and contexts surrounding and shaping the relationship between the president and the AFP, and influencing his/her practice of appointments. In this manner, the paper hopes to acquire an implication for factors that shape contemporary civil-military relations in the Philippines over and beyond the Arroyo administration.

1. Civil-military relations and post-EDSA² political contexts

Political contexts that provide the setting for civil-military relations after democratization become basic elements that influence the president's practice of promotions and appointments of military generals on two points.

First, the fact that the AFP expanded its role in the political and administrative sphere during the Marcos regime, making it a power bloc in the regime, and that the AFP played a significant role in the collapse of the same regime have changed the perception of the AFP officers toward their political involvement. This change in their perception left a major impression on civil-military relations after democratization.

In the Martial Law period, a number of officers claimed that the regime gave the AFP officers a sense of confidence to assume a large role in government [Maynard 1976: 535]. Such thinking has obviously lingered long after the Marcos regime. Many officers have come to recognize the importance of their role in nation building and governance, and their capability to politically intervene in the affairs of the country owing to their experience in the Marcos regime. Not a few officers have come to justify the political involvement of the AFP as arbiter³. As there were officers involved in anti-Estrada activities who tried to

2 "EDSA" indicates the popular uprising which brought democratization to the Philippines in 1986.

3 For example, Casper (1995), Miranda and Crion (1988), and Selochan (1989).

encourage the upper echelon to withdraw their support for Estrada in “EDSA 2” in January 2001 [Doronila 2001: 168-204], a group of officers apparently still had a propensity for political involvement fifteen years after democratization.

Immediately after democratization, most radical segment of the AFP’s officer corps staged several coup attempts against the Corazon Aquino administration. Although all of them failed or were aborted, these have created a situation in which the president needs to depend on the AFP’s backing for his or her administration’s survival. Some of those coup participants had the idea that the military must step in to preserve and protect the State if and when the civilian counterpart fails or abdicates the responsibility for credible governance [Coronel 1990: 55]. Those who participated in coup attempts in the 1980s have been given amnesty and reintegrated the AFP in the late 1990s. A group of them again participated in a coup attempt against the Arroyo administration in February 2006, invoking the same kind of “cause” they created twenty years ago.

A survey of young AFP officers in 2004 showed that many of them were inclined to intervene in the event of a crisis in the civilian government. When asked, if the government were experiencing problems like corruption, poor state of economy, poor governance of national leaders, and so on, “do you think the military should intervene?”, 48 of the 128 respondents (or 37.5 percent) answered in the affirmative, although there were differences as to how intervention should be carried out [Pacis 2005: 10]. The survey results and behavior of the AFP officers in the 2000s indicate that not a few officers still harbor a persistent propensity for political involvement.

Second, it is important to recognize an impact of the AFP’s decisive role in the change in government both in “EDSA 1” and “EDSA 2.” These events impressed the actors in Philippine political society with the point that the fate of the president depends on whether she/he has the requisite military backing. It is argued that in the Philippines, twenty years after democratization, the democratic process has not become the “only game in town.” The frequent attempts at, and occasional successes in, extra-constitutional government change—in other words, replacement of the president through popular street demonstrations—happened, and according to a survey conducted in 2005 more than half of respondents support this style of government change if the president is deemed incapable of running the country effectively. That is to say, democratic consolidation, which entails the institutionalization of constitutional procedure via choosing policy makers through elections, is stalled [Kasuya 2010]. Under these circumstances, especially after “EDSA 2,” a scenario that the president could be brought down by opposition elements in collusion with disgruntled military officers has been recognized as one option or a possible way to transfer power by some political actors [Go, Rufo, and Fonbuena 2006: 18-21, *Philippine Daily Inquirer (PDI)* 19 July 2006].

As an array of failures indicates, the AFP cannot make a coup successful without colluding with actors from other political sectors. However, as attempts to effect a change in government through extra-constitutional means such as street demonstrations have occurred frequently, a style tolerated to a great

extent by popular sentiment. Besides, there exist plots to enlist AFP officers in the attempts to imitate “EDSA 1” or “EDSA 2,” and among the AFP officers, there are those willing to be involved in politics. Under these circumstances, it became necessary for the president to deter the AFP officers from defecting to the camp of street demonstrations and from joining opposition forces as well as to encourage them to prevent and neutralize coups.

In these political contexts, any president, once inaugurated, will be thrust in a situation where tightening the grip on or cozying up to the AFP is required. To ensure a good relationship with the AFP, maneuvering the promotion and appointment of generals and colonels has proved to be extremely important and effective. It would become difficult for the president to hold the AFP in his/her grip if its top ranks are occupied by officers with grievances against the administration; thus it becomes easier for the president if he/she appoints officers loyal to him/her to the majority of high-ranking AFP posts. Besides, by maneuvering the promotions and appointments, the president could create and retain the loyalty of the officers or placate the disgruntled officers, because this would directly affect the officers’ career advancement, hence making relationship between the two more harmonious than contentious. In this manner, political contexts that require the president to ensure a grip on the AFP shape the way he/she exercises the power to promote and appoint AFP officers.

2. Personal relationship between politicians and officers

In the Philippines, there are various incentives and opportunities for politicians and individual AFP officers to create a personal relationship of mutual dependence. This is, more or less, common practice among politicians and officers. Presidential decisions on the promotions and appointments of the AFP officers are often affected by these kinds of personal relationships. In this section, I will consider a couple of customary and institutional factors that create, sustain, and develop a personal relationship of mutual dependence between politicians and officers.

2.1. Politicians and officers in the elections

Election periods in the Philippines see politicians enlisting the assistance of AFP local commanders in providing transportation services by AFP-owned helicopters or vehicles, and deploying AFP personnel as bodyguards or even as members of their campaign staff. Politicians are also known to request military commanders to harass or intimidate rival candidates by offering money to these military personnel and officers or by pressuring them to collaborate. This has been traditional behavior since Philippine independence [Danguilan-Vitug 1992: 79-93, Patiño and Velasco 2006: 233-234]. As will be seen below, AFP officers are put in a situation where they almost cannot decline or ignore the request from politicians because most of these officers hope to cultivate a friendly relationship with these politicians or those who have power over the processes of the promotion and appointment.

Although involvement of the AFP personnel in partisan activities and electoral fraud is widely viewed as problematic, the presence of military forces in elections is institutionalized. In the Philippines, rampant use of violence has been a serious problem in the campaign and polling stages. Therefore, to eliminate these violent acts and ensure honest and peaceful elections, the AFP has been assigned to maintain security in the precincts and polling stations, as well provide security for candidates under the supervision of the Commission on Elections (Comelec). The role of the AFP in the elections is stipulated in the 1987 Constitution⁴. Furthermore, specific security and supervisory tasks of the AFP during election periods are stated in a Comelec resolution, and these include providing security to polling places, election inspectors, Comelec personnel and other civilian employees of the government performing election duties; providing transportation and communication equipment to election inspectors; maintaining security; enforcing fire-arms regulations; policing electoral fraud and so on [Commission on Elections 1991]. Based on the provisions, the AFP has been deployed in many parts of the country and its members have assumed these tasks during elections.

It can be said, however, that those provisions and practices institutionalize opportunities for the politicians to exploit AFP units for private purposes. Whether or not politicians actually exploit the AFP units, this situation would provide an incentive for politicians, especially those who want to accumulate as much political resources as possible, to build a personal relationship with the officers.

2.2 Authority of politicians over the officers' promotions and appointments

As will be described in detail later, the president has considerable authority on the promotions and appointments of AFP officers. However, politicians generally also exert, officially or otherwise, some degree of influence on the promotions and appointments of officers.

For officers to be promoted to full colonel and higher ranks, nomination in the AFP, and nomination and appointment of the president are required. More important, appointments made by the president must be confirmed at the congressional Commission on Appointments (CA), which comprises 24 members from the House of Representatives and the Senate. Under the law, the proportion of officers who hold ranks of full colonel and upward is limited to 7.125 percent among the entire officer corps⁵. Promotion to full colonel and upward is highly competitive. In such a situation, it has been pointed out that the AFP officers have very little choice but to build a personal relationship with politicians sitting in the CA. Before Marcos declared Martial Law and abolished Congress, a large percentage of officers perceived promotion to the rank of colonel and higher as necessitating a personal identification with and subordination to politicians who, by law, sat in the CA. In addition, to be assigned to the top posts, officers needed a political

4 Philippine Constitution, Article 9, Section 2(c).

5 Under the law, the proportion of Generals, including Lieutenant General, Major General and Brigadier General, is limited to 1.125 percent and that of Colonel is limited to 6 percent. Republic of the Philippines, Republic Act 9188.

patron who lobbied for the officer's assignment [Lande 1971: 394, Goldberg 1976: 110]⁶. These official and unofficial authorities of politicians have produced an incentive for the AFP officers to seek to build a personal relationship with the powerful politician.

The 1987 Constitution stipulates the role of the CA, which has been in place since 1987. It's reported that there has been no change in the situation in which political backing helps officers get promoted; in fact, the latter are forced to deal with politicians to get their promotions approved by the CA [Armed Forces of the Philippines 2008: 18]. As one of the members of the CA pointed out, it cannot be denied that the process of confirmation in the CA opened up opportunities for politicians to establish a patronage network among officers [Arcala 2002: 62-63]. Under these circumstances, the officers, especially the high-ranking ones, have been accommodating this setting rather than trying to secure autonomy in their personnel affairs, as will be discussed in the next section.

2.3. Honorable members of the Philippine Military Academy

In the Philippine Military Academy (PMA), the training school of future AFP officers, there is a practice in which the alumni association adopts a politician, a businessman or a prominent personality as an "honorable member" of a certain PMA class. For example, the 1970 alumni association has adopted a politician totally unrelated to the PMA or without any military record as an honorable member of the class of 1970. In many cases, such "adopted" members are powerful politicians or members of their families [Servando 2010a].

The practice began during Martial Law in the 1970s, when some military officers realized they needed political backing to bolster their careers in government service. A brigadier-general and former PMA superintendent said that "this is largely unspoken, but adopting alumni who are politically influential is really about power" [PDI, 20 February, 2010]. A retired general turned senator noted that PMA classes whose members are still in active service and are ripe for promotions or higher appointments usually adopt politicians. As one politician remarked, "It's like an instant network within the military. If you work with your adopted classmates, you have a pool of talent instantly available to you." Another politician said that when he ran for reelection, his "classmates" helped him. In short, politicians are able to grant favors to class members, for example, by backing a classmate-officer's promotion. In return, the politicians expect support from their adopted classmates during elections [Servando 2010b, Martin 2003: 9].

To be sure, this practice has been regarded as problematic. Some have said the practice tends to degrade the AFP because it puts military officers in a patron-client relationship with their respective classes' adopted politicians, or that the practice drags the AFP into partisan politics and taints the selection process of the AFP chief of staff and other internal military processes such as promotions. Still others have cited the practice as being "divisive" to the military because the officers become identified with their

6 For example, see an episode described in McCoy (1999: 110-111).

respective adopted “classmates” who are usually engaged in intensive and destructive political competition [Department of National Defense 2010].

As stated above, there exist several customary and institutional factors that encourage the creation of personal relationships of mutual dependence between politicians and officers. Any president, being a politician, has to have had personal relationships with the officers before being elected. Similarly, politicians seeking to become president would actively try to build relationships with the officers.

3. Authority of the president over promotions and appointments of officers

Obviously, the president’s prerogatives and influence, official or otherwise, over the promotions and appointments shape the relationship between the president and the AFP officers. In the Philippines, the power of the president over personnel affairs in various government agencies is enormous, and the AFP is no exception. When considering how the use (or misuse) of such presidential power shapes the relationship between him/her and the military officers, we need to focus not only on the effects of the promotions and appointments that were actually effected but also on the fact that the officers may behave in consideration for the need of such presidential power to advance their careers.

The AFP chief of staff is political appointee of the president, although a seniority system is taken into account. For other top posts (vice chief of staff; deputy chief of staff; commanders and vice commanders of the Army, Navy and Air Force; those of the Unified Commands; those of Army Infantry Divisions, etc.), the appointments take place as follows. First, the Board of Generals of the AFP drafts a list of candidates based on seniority, present post and merits. The Board of Generals is composed of the AFP chief of staff, vice chief of staff, deputy chief of staff, and commanders of the Army, Navy and Air Force. Then, the list is sent to the defense secretary. Finally, the list is sent to the president, who decides on the appointments based on the list and other references. Although the list of candidates is supposed to be drafted within the AFP, the president, other politicians and the AFP officers lobby to put someone’s name on the list.

Although various actors officially or unofficially get involved in this process, the president exercises the most power because he/she has the final word on the appointments. Since the members of the Board of Generals are also presidential appointees, the presidential preference might heavily be reflected at the very outset. And in addition to official power, the president could, in a private capacity, exercise influence on the process. For example, the president sometimes gives “guidance” to the Board of Generals or the defense secretary to give special consideration to a particular officer, or the president may appoint an officer whose name is not on the list. The president even can make changes on the list of candidates for promotion if he/she so wishes.

Furthermore, the officers rely on the power of president even after retiring from the service. As the AFP officers’ compulsory retirement age is 56 years old, many officers hope to find employment in government agencies after retirement. However, even retired high-ranking generals are not assured of such

reemployment. Therefore they must rely on the president's influence and good graces to be appointed to government posts after retirement.

Because the president, both officially and unofficially, wields considerable power over promotions and appointments, it becomes extremely important for officers who hope to advance their careers to build a good relationship with the president. Arguably it may be politically risky in the long run for officers to become overly dependent on a president whose tenure is limited to one six-year term by the constitution. However, for ranking generals retiring in two or three years and for middle-rank officers who want to get on the career track as soon as possible, immediate promotion is most urgent. In any case, there is little doubt that the president can use these extensive powers to hold hostage the AFP officers.

From the foregoing discussion, there emerges the fact that political will and personal connection affect decisions relating to promotions and appointments of AFP officers in various phases. As the survey conducted among the company-grade officers reveals, young officers regard this situation as one of the most serious problems in the AFP [Pacis 2005: 104]⁷. On the other hand, the practice of adopting "honorable member of the PMA" suggests that high-ranking officers are seeking to adjust to the prevailing reality.

4. Maneuvering the AFP's personnel affairs during the Arroyo administration

4.1. Loyalty and reward

To have a grip on the AFP was President Arroyo's political agenda as it had been for other presidents after democratization. This agenda influenced Arroyo's manner of maneuvering the AFP's personnel affairs. Moreover, the political context generated by "EDSA 2" had a major influence on the matter.

In 2000, public anger had fueled the protest movement against the corruption-tainted Estrada administration. Finally, in January 2001, the leaderships of the AFP and the Philippine National Police (PNP) declared the withdrawal of their support for the government, thus bringing down the presidency of Joseph Estrada. In the run-up to the decisive moment, pockets of anti-Estrada activities initiated or participated in by AFP and PNP officers were happening in various places. Quite obviously the AFP and PNP played a critical role in ushering in the Arroyo administration. Therefore, Arroyo needed to reward the AFP/PNP officers for their contribution in establishing new administration.

Not long after its inauguration, the Arroyo administration confronted doubts about its legitimacy and suffered several public protests. For example, in May 2001, pro-Estrada politicians and followers assembled in front of the EDSA shrine calling for "EDSA 3," seeking to topple the Arroyo administration. A splinter group started to march toward Malacañang in Mendiola, clashing with police and military units

7 Young officers who participated in the coup attempt in 2003 shared the same perception (Fact-finding Commission. 2003: 21)

and leaving several casualties. In July 2003, some 300 young AFP officers and rank-and-file seized a hotel in Makati City, Metro Manila, calling for the resignation of President Arroyo. A fact-finding commission organized by the government to investigate the disturbance concluded that the incident was part of a coup d'état [Fact-finding Commission 200]. Moreover, rumors of a military coup against the administration had persisted during the early years of the Arroyo government. Undoubtedly, at the time, a plan to take over the government in collusion with AFP units was one of the political options of anti-Arroyo forces. Under these highly volatile circumstances, President Arroyo needed to have a grip on the AFP and make it a reliable tool for the administration's survival by appointing officers who were apparently loyal to her to top posts.

a) Appointment as reward

In the unraveling of the Estrada administration, several groups comprising AFP/PNP officers had mounted anti-Estrada activities based on different political persuasions. For example, there were anti-Estrada groups separately headed by Edgardo Espinosa, Arturo Carillo, Leandro Mendoza, Hermogenes Ebdane [Doronila 2001: 168-204] (Table 1). Not a few officers in these groups had a connection with then-Vice President Arroyo [Doronila 2001: 177]. Some officers in Ebdane's group started to provide her with information and took on the role of her security escort immediately after allegations against Estrada were revealed [Gloria 2001: 20]. These movements of the officers strongly influenced the decision made by the AFP top brass to withdraw its support from Estrada.

After establishing a new government, President Arroyo rewarded these officers by appointing them to prominent positions within the AFP and PNP. Some of them were appointed to commanding posts of the AFP units, which were crucial in deterring coups, as their defection affects the fate of the administration. Thereafter, too, they held important posts in government agencies. Those officers who played a critical role in the defense of the presidential palace at the time of "EDSA 3" were among those who were rewarded with appointments. It seems reasonable to suppose that these appointments had the effect of announcing to the entire officer corps that officers loyal to the president were rewarded. Table 1 shows the career advancement of the key officers who contributed to establishing the Arroyo administration in "EDSA 2" and/or defending it in "EDSA 3."

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Table 1. Career advancement of key officers who contributed to establishing and/or defending the Arroyo administration

Name	AFP/ PNP	PMA class	Post at EDSA2	Behavior at EDSA2 = (2) and/or EDSA3 = (3)	Career Advancement in the Arroyo administration (☉= top 10 posts in the organizations, ●= ministerial level posts, <Rt.>= after retirement, Sec.= Secretary, Dir.= Director, Com.= commander, UC= Unified Command, ID= Infantry Division)
Angelo Reyes	AFP	66	AFP Chief of Staff	(2) Declared withdrawal of support	<Rt.> ●Sec. National Defense→●Sec. Interior and Local Government→●Sec. Energy
Hermogenes Ebdane	PNP	70	Chief of Directorate for Human Resources and Doctrine Development	(2) Anti-Estrada activity from early on. Defected in early phase. Led a group. Provided security escort to Arroyo.	☉Deputy Chief of the PNP→☉Chief of the PNP <Rt.> ●National Security Advisor→●Sec. Public Works and Highways→●Sec. National Defense→●Sec. Public Works and Highways
Dionisio Santiago	AFP	70	Com. Special Operation Command	(2) Anti-Estrada activity in Ebdane's group. Suggested to Reyes to defect. (3) Led the defense of the Presidential Palace.	☉Com. Central UC→☉Army Chief→☉AFP Chief of Staff <Rt.>Dir. Bureau of Corrections→Dir. Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency
Clyde Fernandez	PNP	70		(2) Anti-Estrada activity in Ebdane's group. (3) Led the defense of the Presidential Palace.	Dir. Philippine Center on Transnational Crime→☉ Deputy Chief of the PNP
Victor Signey	PNP	70		(2) Anti-Estrada activity in Ebdane's group.	Chief of Directorate for Research and Development of the PNP
Efren Abu	AFP	72	Com. Army Light Armor Brigade	(2) Anti-Estrada activity in Ebdane's group. Suggested to Reyes to defect. (3) Led the defense of the Presidential Palace.	Deputy Chief of Staff for Operation→Com. 2nd ID→ Deputy Com. Army→☉Army Chief→☉AFP Chief of Staff <Rt.>Special Envoy to the BIMP-EAGA
Alfonso Dagudag	AFP	ROTC	Deputy Chief of Staff for Operation	(2) Suggested to Reyes to defect.	Com. 4th ID→☉Com. Northern Luzon UC <Rt.> Head of Task Force Sagip Kalikasan
Edgardo Espinosa	AFP	68	Commandant of the Joint Command and Staff College	(2) Led anti-Estrada group.	<Rt.> Chief of the Manila Economic and Cultural Office (MECO) in Taiwan.
Adelberto Yap	AFP	68	Deputy Chief of Air Force	(2) Defected in early phase. Anti-Estrada activity in Espinosa's group.	<Rt.> Dir. Air Transportation Office→Clark International Airport Authority, General Manager→ Mactan-Cebu International Airport Authority, General Manager
Arturo Carillo	AFP	68	Com. Northern Luzon UC	(2) Defected in early phase. Collaborated with Espinosa.	<Rt.> Presidential Adviser on Military Affairs
Alberto Braganza	AFP	ROTC	Deputy Com. Northern Luzon UC	(2) Anti-Estrada activity in Carillo's group. Collaborated with Espinosa.	Senior Military Aide of the President→Com. 7th ID→☉ Com. National Capital Region UC→☉Com. Southern UC <Rt.> Chief of Regulation Division of Bureau of Immigration
Delfin Bangit	AFP	78	aide-de-camp of Vice President	(2) Leader of PMA class of 1978, which warned of mass leave.	Com. Presidential Security Group→Chief of AFP Intelligence Service→Com. 2nd ID→☉Com. Southern Luzon UC→☉Army Chief→☉AFP Chief of Staff
Leandro Mendoza	PNP	69	Deputy Chief of PNP	(2) Anti-Estrada activity from early on. Defected in early phase. Led a group.	☉Chief of the PNP <Rt.> ●Sec. Transportation and Communication→● Executive Secretary
Delfin Lorenzana	AFP	73		(3) Led the defense of the Presidential Palace.	Com. Special Operation Command→military attache to the Philippine Embassy in Washington DC <Rt.> Heads the Office of Veterans Affairs at the Philippine Embassy in Washington, D.C.
Pedro Cabuay	AFP	ROTC		(3) Led the defense of the Presidential Palace.	Com. Army Light Armor Brigade→Com. 2nd ID→☉ Com. Southern Luzon UC <Rt.> Chief of Intelligence Service of the AFP→Dir. General of the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency

(Sources) *Philippine Daily Inquirer* [various issues], Doronila [2001], Salazar [2006], Philippine Military Academy [1989]

*ROTC: Reserve Officers Training Course

b) PMA class

To build a relationship with the AFP, President Arroyo used the ploy of giving important posts to officers who graduated in a particular PMA class. She built an especially close relationship with the officers belonging to the classes of 1970 and 1978, making sure to hand their members important posts. Many officers of the group headed by Ebdane were from the class of 1970 (Table 1). While the Estrada administration unraveled, twelve AFP/PNP officers from class 1970 were said to be working for Arroyo side behind the scenes [Gloria 2002a: 21]. President Arroyo appointed members of this class to vital posts in the early phase of her administration, taking advantage of the class's horizontal fraternal ties to consolidate her grip on the AFP⁸. Notably, three AFP chiefs of staff were appointed from the class of 1970 in the early years of the administration. Moreover, not a few officers from the class were given posts in government agencies after retirement.

The most trusted PMA class by Arroyo was that of 1978. She got to know the AFP/PNP through officers introduced to her when she was seeking a second term as senator in 1995. When she was elected vice president in 1998, she got more familiar with officers. Her first aide-de-camp was Delfin Bangit, a 1978 PMA graduate; Bangit's wife also served as Arroyo's staff when the latter was a cabinet minister in the Estrada government. Thus Arroyo became the adopted classmate of PMA class 1978 [Gloria 2002a: 21]. During Arroyo's term as vice president, Bangit and his classmate Carlos Horganza were always with her as military aides. After Arroyo's inauguration as president, several 1978 PMA graduates, including Bangit and Horganza, were appointed to Malacañang-based posts in the Presidential Security Group, the National Anti-Crime Commission and the Office of the Presidential Adviser [Gloria 2002b: 23].

In the first major revamp of the AFP top brass conducted in the Arroyo administration from February to March in 2001, officers who contributed to install the Arroyo government were appointed to important posts such as AFP vice chief of staff, 3 out of 5 commander posts of the Unified Commands, commander of the Presidential Security Group, PNP chief, and so on. Officers of the same kind occupied other vital posts for a long period during first term of the Arroyo presidency (February 2001–April 2004). Table 2 shows how many and how long officers mentioned above and listed in Table 1 occupied top posts in the AFP during first term of the Arroyo presidency.

8 Generally, graduates of the PMA maintain strong horizontal ties among classmates (McCoy 1999).

Table 2. The tenure of AFP officers who contributed to establishing and/or defending the Arroyo administration in its first term

	Chief of Staff	Deputy Chief of Staff	Vice Chief of Staff	Army Chief	Chief of the PNP	Commanders of the Unified Commands					Commanders of Army Infantry Divisions								Com. Presidential Security Group	Com. Army Special Operation Command		
						National Capital Region	Northern Luzon	Southern Luzon	Western	Central	Southern	1st (Southern)	2nd (Southern Luzon)	3rd (Central)	4th (Southern)	5th (Northern Luzon)	6th (Southern)	7th (Northern Luzon)			8th (Central)	
2001 Feb.																						
Mar.																						
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Sources: *Philippine Daily Inquirer* [various issues]

c) *Appointment of the AFP chief of staff*

Appointments to the top and important posts were conducted as if they were on a reward or loyalty basis. The post of the AFP chief of staff was no exception.

Arroyo appointed as many as five AFP chiefs of staff during only two years and three months of her first term. First, she appointed a general who was close to mandatory retirement age to the top post⁹ then extended his tour of duty a bit. After this general retired, she appointed another general to the post who also was close to the mandatory retirement age. After doing this twice, Arroyo popularized the so-called “revolving door” policy—a distinctive feature of the Arroyo administration between May 2002 and March

9 The compulsory retirement age of the AFP officer is 56 years old.

2003. As Table 3 indicates, in less than a year, three generals appointed chief of staff retired shortly thereafter. Appointments such as these bolster the opportunity for generals to be appointed AFP chief of staff; in other words, there's a greater possibility of getting the highest reward for loyalty to the president.

Table 3. The AFP chiefs of staff and their terms of office under Arroyo

Name	PMA class	Term of Office	Months	Extension
Diomedio Villanueva	68	Mar. 2001-Apr. 2002	14	none
Roy Cimatu	70	May 2002-Aug. 2002	4	2 months + 6 days
Benjamin Defensor	69	Sep. 2002-Nov. 2002	3	(appointed 2 days before retirement) 69 days + 10 days
Dionisio Santiago	70	Dec. 2002-Mar. 2003	4	none
Narciso Abaya	70	Apr. 2003-Oct. 2004	19	none
Efren Abu	72	Nov. 2004-Jul. 2005	9	1 month
Generoso Senga	72	Aug. 2005-Jun. 2006	11	none
Hermogenes Esperon	74	Jul. 2006-Apr. 2008	22	3 months
Alexander Yano	76	May 2008-Apr. 2009	12	none
Victor Ibrado	76	May 2009-Feb. 2010	10	none
Delfin Bangit	78	Mar. 2010-Jun. 2010	4	resigned in June 2010 and retired

Sources: Author

d) Appointment of retired generals to posts in government agencies

President Arroyo appointed many retired generals to posts in government agencies (Table 4). These appointments represent a last reward for officers; at the same time these have the effect of winning over retired generals to the president's side. It is necessary for the president to take care of retired generals, considering that a couple of groups of retired generals had vigorously worked to encourage officers on active duty to defect from government to help bring down the Estrada administration. Although appointing retired generals to posts in government agencies is common practice in post-democratization Philippines [Gloria 2003], the number of appointees was biggest under the Arroyo administration.

However, not all retired generals were appointed to these posts. There is the case of a general who criticized Arroyo upon retirement and was not appointed to the post. It does seem that Arroyo manipulated the generals with a reward-and- punishment approach.

Table 4. Generals appointed to government agencies after retirement under Arroyo

Name	Post upon retirement	PMA class	Post in gov't agency after retirement
Diomedio Villanueva	AFP Chief of Staff	68	Postmaster General
Roy Cimatu	AFP Chief of Staff	70	Special Envoy to Middle East
Benjamin Defensor	AFP Chief of Staff	69	Chairman, APEC Counter-Terrorism Task Force
Dionisio Santiago	AFP Chief of Staff	70	Director, Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency
Narciso Abaya	AFP Chief of Staff	70	President, Bases Conversion and Development Authority
Efren Abu	AFP Chief of Staff	72	Special Envoy to the BIMP-EAGA
Generoso Senga	AFP Chief of Staff	72	Ambassador to Iran

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Name	Post upon retirement	PMA class	Post in gov't agency after retirement
Hermogenes Esperon	AFP Chief of Staff	74	Secretary of Presidential Management Staff
Alexander Yano	AFP Chief of Staff	76	Ambassador to Brunei
Ernesto Carolina	AFP Deputy Chief of Staff	70	Undersecretary, National Defense
Rodolfo Garcia	AFP Deputy Chief of Staff	70	Chairman of the government peace panel to Mindanao
Ariston delos Reyes	AFP Deputy Chief of Staff	71	Undersecretary, National Defense
Christie Datu	AFP Deputy Chief of Staff	73	Chairman, AFP Educational Benefit System Office
Antonio Romero	AFP Deputy Chief of Staff	74	Undersecretary of National Defense
Cardozo Luna	AFP Deputy Chief of Staff	75	Ambassador to the Netherlands
Romeo Tolentino	Army Commander	74	Chief Executive Officer, Philippine National Oil Company Alternative Fuels Corporation
Guillermo Wong	Navy Commander	69	Ambassador to Vietnam
Ernesto de Leon	Navy Commander	72	Ambassador to Australia
Mateo Mayuga	Navy Commander	73	Undersecretary, National Defense
Leandoro Mendoza	PNP Chief	69	Secretary of Transportation and Communication
Hermogenes Ebdane	PNP Chief	70	Secretary of Public Works and Highways
Edgar Aglipay	PNP Chief	71	Chairman, Philippine Retirement Authority
Arturo Lomibao	PNP Chief	72	Administrator, National Irrigation Administration
Oscar Calderon	PNP Chief	73	Director, Bureau of Corrections
Avelino Razon	PNP Chief	74	Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process
Roy Kyamko	Com. of Unified Command	ROTC	Undersecretary, Energy
Alfonso Dagudag	Com. of Unified Command	ROTC	Head of Task Force Sagip Kalikasan
Pedro Cabuay	Com. of Unified Command	ROTC	Director General, National Intelligence Coordinating Agency
Alberto Braganza	Com. of Unified Command	ROTC	Chief of Regulation Division, Bureau of Immigration
Edilberto Adan	Com. of Unified Command	72	Executive Director, Visiting Forces Agreement Commission
Tirso Danga	Com. of Unified Command	75	Special Assistant to the National Security Adviser

Sources: *Philippine Daily Inquirer* [various issues]

4.2. *Some pitfalls*

These appointments had the following intentions and effects. First, Arroyo created an incentive for officers to support the administration by rewarding them with appointments. If supporting the administration is sure to bring some immediate or future reward (for example, appointments to top posts and promotions), then the officers have an incentive for supporting it rather than defecting from it. Second, Arroyo attempted to ensure her administration's stability by giving important posts to loyal and trusted officers and by taking advantage of the horizontal fraternal ties among classes of PMA graduates. But if maneuvering appointments helped consolidate military support for the Arroyo administration, it also sowed discontent among many officers.

As discussed earlier, officers from the PMA class of 1970 who contributed to the advent of the Arroyo administration were appointed to and occupied many top posts. In contrast, members of the senior PMA class of 1969 cried foul over these appointments, concerned that they might be eased out [*Business World* 15 March 2001]. Moreover, it was pointed out that the rise of officers from the PMA class of 1978 led to discontent among members of the more senior PMA class of 1977 [*Business World* 23 December 2008].

Appointing many officers from a particular class is almost sure to create discontent among officers from other classes, leading to conflict between classes or producing serious cracks in the entire officer corps.

Moreover, giving posts as reward might demoralize and sow discontent among officers. One army officer said the chief executive must not treat command posts as rewards to be handed out; other retired and active-duty officers noted that this practice might weaken the chain of command, as it interferes with internal system set in place to insulate the military and the police from politically motivated decisions [Gloria 2002a: 20-21].

Objections to the “revolving door” policy were strongest among middle-ranking and young officers. They criticized this as spoiling the continuity of the implementation of the security policy and the AFP modernization program, politicizing the AFP, and frustrating because it falls back to the Martial Law practice in which young and competent officers could not get promoted due to cronyism [PDI 3 September 2002, 27 April 2002]. Officers roundly condemned as “obscene” the appointment of a general who was retiring in two days as AFP chief of staff because it destroyed and encouraged dissent within the AFP [PDI 5 September 2002]. Arroyo’s “revolving door” policy was even cited as a factor in the supposed revived attempt to mount a coup against her administration [PDI 9 November 2002]. This was, in fact, singled out by participants in the July 2003 incident [Trillanes IV 2004: 18]. Although discontent over the president’s maneuvering of personnel affairs does not necessarily immediately provoke a coup, there is little doubt that it has a destabilizing effect on civil-military relations.

Arroyo’s manipulation of the AFP’s personnel affairs may have helped secure her administration, but it has also led to a paradoxical situation. Appointments intended to obtain the support of the AFP top brass to consolidate civil-military relations have generated discontent in the AFP, giving rise to a situation that could lead to government destabilization. This paradoxical situation, combined with the waning credibility of Arroyo’s second term, weakened civil-military relations and led to political turmoil.

4.3. Alleged electoral fraud and manipulating appointments

a) Alleged fraud in presidential election and the AFP officers

President Arroyo won her second term in an election held in May 2004. The most important factor that influenced her maneuvering of AFP personnel affairs on her second term was engendered by her alleged involvement in electoral fraud.

In June 2005, a wiretapped conversation between a man believed to be Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano and a woman believed to be President Arroyo, which was recorded during the election period, was made public. The tapes implied that Arroyo and Garcillano were conspiring to engineer the outcome of the 2004 election in Arroyo’s favor in several precincts in Mindanao. The exposé also cited AFP officers Hermogenes Esperon, who was assigned to ensure honest, orderly and peaceful elections; Roy Kyamko and Gabriel Habacon, who were involved in the alleged electoral fraud; and Marines officer Francisco Gudani, who was perceived to be uncooperative or working for the opposition [PDI 4 July

2005].

The Senate immediately set up a committee to investigate the allegation and attempted to summon the persons suspected to be involved in the alleged fraud. For her part, Arroyo issued Executive Order (EO) 464, which prohibits officials of the executive department, the AFP and the PNP from appearing before Senate or congressional hearings without approval from the president. This was an obvious move to block the investigation. The Senate demanded that officers allegedly involved attend the hearing. However, Esperon, Habacon, Kyamko, Tirso Danga, Marlu Quevedo, and others involved refused to attend on the ground of the EO. Meanwhile, Gudani, who was perceived to be uncooperative to administration or working for the opposition during the election, and his deputy Alexander Balutan testified at the Senate hearing against Arroyo. Defying the EO and the AFP's chain of command, Gudani and Balutan admitted to the allegations [*PDI* 16 May 2004; 29 September 2005].

b) Appointment as reward and punishment

Since the allegation of cheating in the election was revealed in June 2005, which resulted in the steady decline of the Arroyo presidency's legitimacy, movements plotting to topple the administration gained momentum. In the AFP, middle-ranking and young officers were demoralized, their discontent rapidly growing. It was reported that officers were being recruited to mount a coup attempt by elements seeking to unseat Arroyo [*PDI* 9 September 2005]. At this critical juncture, how did Arroyo maneuver the personnel affairs of the AFP?

After the election in May 2004, both Gudani and Balutan were relieved of their command posts in the 1st Marine Brigade and were transferred to posts in the PMA with no units to command. On the other hand, officers suspected of being involved in the alleged election fraud for Arroyo's victory were appointed to important posts and/or got promoted.

In September 2005, on the day after Gudani and Balutan testified at the Senate hearing, they were removed from the post at the PMA and were prosecuted for violating the EO. On the other hand, officers who refused to testify at the hearing were appointed to several prominent posts during their tour of duty, even getting posts in government agencies after retirement (Table 5). Esperon rose to become the AFP chief of staff and after retirement served as Arroyo's close aide by being appointed as secretary of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process and secretary of the Presidential Management Staff. Habacon was appointed commander of the Southern Unified Command, a post almost as important as that of Army commander because of its troop strength. Kyamko and Danga were treated in a similar fashion (Table 5). Among the sixteen generals those who retired when they were commanding officers of the Unified Commands during the Arroyo presidency, only six, including Kyamko and Danga, were appointed to posts in government agencies following retirement (as of May 2009). Considering the fact that reemployment rate was low even for high ranking generals, it was quite obvious that Kyamko and Danga were treated favorably by president.

Table 5. Careers of officers allegedly involved in electoral fraud

Name	Post in May 2004 election	Alleged involvement in electoral fraud	Senate hearings	Carrer after May elections (<Rt.>= after retirement, Sec.= Secretary, Dir.= Director, Com.= commander, UC= Unified Command, ID= Infantry Division)
Hermogenes Esperon	Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations / Deputy commander of Task Force HOPE (Honest, Orderly and Peaceful Elections)	Mentioned in the wiretapped conversation. Allegedly involved in electoral fraud.	Refused to attend	Com. 7th ID→Com. Special Operation Command→Army Chief→AFP Chief of Staff <Rt.> Adviser of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process →Secretary of Presidential Management Staff
Gabriel Habacon	Com. Army 1st ID	Mentioned in the wiretapped conversation. Allegedly involved in electoral fraud.	Refused to attend	Com. Southern UC
Roy Kyamko	Com. Southern UC	Mentioned in the wiretapped conversation. Allegedly involved in electoral fraud.	Refused to attend	<Rt.> Undersecretary of National Anti-Smuggling Task Force →Undersecretary of Energy
Tirso Danga	Chief of the Intelligence Service of the AFP	Allegedly involved in wiretapping.	Refused to attend	Deputy chief of staff for intelligence →Com. Western UC <Rt.> Special assistant to National Security Adviser
Marlu Quevedo	Deputy chief of the Intelligence Service of the AFP	Allegedly involved in wiretapping.	Refused to attend	Chief of the Intelligence Service of the AFP <Rt.> Assistant to National Security Adviser
Francisco Gudani	Com. 1st Marine Brigade	Perceived to be uncooperative to the electoral fraud.	Testified at the hearing against Arroyo.	Transferred to post in the PMA after May 2004 elections →removed from the PMA → prosecuted for defying the EO
Alexander Balutan	Deputy Com. 1st Marine Brigade	Perceived to be uncooperative to the electoral fraud.	Testified at the hearing against Arroyo.	Transferred to post in the PMA after May 2004 elections →removed from the PMA → instructor in the Marines →prosecuted for defying the EO

Sources: Gloria [2005b: 11], Gloria [2006: 16], *Philippine Daily Inquirer* [various issues]

As seen above, Arroyo treated officers who refused to attend the hearings favorably while ignoring officers who attended the hearings and testified against her. It seems reasonable to suppose that presidential power on appointments were used as a tool to reward loyalty and punish unfaithfulness to the president.

c) Growing discontent among officers

The growing demoralization and discontent in the ranks of the AFP did not keep Arroyo from dishing out or withholding more favors.

In August 2005, Esperon was appointed commander of the Army following the appointment of Generoso Senga as AFP chief of staff. It can be recalled that Esperon was one of the generals suspected of being involved in alleged electoral fraud. In reaction to this, a group of young officers issued a statement denouncing Arroyo and warning of the growing division and mistrust in the AFP. It's said that despite his alleged involvement in electoral fraud Esperon was not investigated, relieved, or suspended; worse, the president even rewarded him with a position most sought after by Army men [*PDI* 15 August 2005]. Similarly, demoralization among officers of the Marines was significant. As stated earlier, two such officers had been relieved of their posts because of their testimony at the hearing. Some of officers floated the idea of the Marine corps going on a mass leave to protest the fate of their fellow-Marines. A senior Army officer

pointed out that this move in the Marines would be sure to spill over to Army units [Gloria 2005a: 10-11].

Succeeding appointments by Arroyo further irritated disgruntled officers. Arroyo appointed Habacon Southern Unified Command chief and Danga Western Unified Command chief, even as both had come under suspicion of electoral fraud. Moreover, both placed 20th and 26th, respectively, on the list of seniority among major generals, meaning that they were not the most senior officers for the posts. Remarks such as the following became commonplace: “Arroyo is trying to ensconce her faithful generals in key positions in order to ensure that the AFP will always be her private army” and “The Arroyo administration has repeatedly humiliated the AFP” [PDI 11 September 2005; *Manila Standard* 12 September 2005].

Appointments of Habacon and Danga further strained the situation. A retired general turned senator said the appointments were fanning discontent that could eventually lead to a rerun of the July 2003 coup, while a group of young officers predicted the downfall of the Arroyo administration, stating that “we cannot postpone this any longer because the country is bleeding profusely as a result of unbridled corruption and insatiable greed for power of Ms. Arroyo and her crooked followers” [PDI 23 January 2006].

d) Coup attempt, again

On 24 February 2006 President Arroyo declared a state of emergency, claiming that the government foiled an alleged coup attempt against the administration and found similar actions under way in other military bases around the country. She then ordered the arrest of Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim, commander of the Scout Rangers, and the investigation of Marine Col. Ariel Querubin for their alleged involvement in the attempt. The attempted coup was allegedly carried out in collusion with a segment of the AFP officers, leftist forces and anti-Arroyo politicians and organizations. Lim, the alleged coup mastermind, and Querubin reportedly tried to persuade Senga to withdraw support from the administration, but Senga along with Esperon rejected Lim’s overtures [PDI 5 March 2006].

Just as the appointment of Habacon and the “punishment” of Gudani and Balutan were among the issues raised by disgruntled junior officers who mounted a coup attempt on 24 February [PDI 27 August 2006], it could be pointed out that Arroyo’s maneuvering of military appointments constituted part of the motivation of coup participants and became a propaganda tool for coup instigators.

This time around, the AFP top brass did not defect. When Arroyo most needed support of the AFP top brass, or when the loyalty of ranking generals came under the greatest test, the generals did not fail her. The loyalty of Esperon, a trusted Arroyo officer, was especially firm. During the early stage of the Arroyo administration, Esperon was commander of Presidential Security Group. In the administration’s second term, he was commander of the Army 7th Infantry Division and commander of the Army Special Operations Command, which were crucial units in deterring coups. He was appointed Army commander afterward. Then, four months after the attempted coup in 2006, he was appointed AFP chief of staff. Under Esperon’s supervision, the AFP top brass kept a tight rein over the officer corp. As stated earlier, the terms of office of the AFP Chiefs of Staff were generally short during the Arroyo administration. On the other hand,

Esperon held the post for 22 months, which was a relatively long term. Together with 11 months of his stint as Army commander, the second-highest post in the AFP, he held the highest post for 33 months during the Arroyo administration. Moreover, his tour of duty as the chief of staff was extended by Arroyo before his appointment to a government post.

4.4 Rise of PMA class of 1978 and the presidential election

After another failed coup attempt in November 2007, no similar uprisings or disturbances happened again until today. Civil-military relations seem to have been stabilized. This can be attributed to several things, for example, successful efforts in military reform, and that officers have grown weary of a coup or they have realized that people do not support a coup, and so on. In addition, it can be pointed out that Arroyo's maneuvering of the appointments worked. In the last phase of the Arroyo presidency, the relationship between Arroyo and the AFP officer corps got much closer because of the appointments of officers from PMA class of 1978, which adopted Arroyo as honorable classmate, to top posts. A key figure of that PMA class was Delfin Bangit.

Bangit worked as an aide-de-camp of Arroyo when she was vice president, and during the Arroyo presidency Bangit steadily advanced his career. He went on to hold several important posts such as commander of Presidential Security Group, chief of the AFP Intelligence Service, commander of the Army 2nd Infantry Division and commander of the Southern Luzon Unified Command—all of which are units guarding the president or deployed near the capital. In May 2009, he was appointed Army commander, bypassing many officers from senior PMA classes of 1976 and 1977. Then in March 2010, Bangit was appointed AFP chief of staff. This was said to be his ultimate “reward for his loyalty.”

Bangit was certainly not alone, as other officers from the PMA class of 1978 were appointed to top positions. In the personnel reshuffling in May and November 2009, Reynaldo Mapagu, Roland Detabali and Ralph Villanueva, all from the PMA class of 1978, were appointed commanders of the National Capital Region, Southern Luzon and Central Unified Command, respectively. Following Bangit's appointment as AFP chief in March 2010, Mapagu was appointed Army commander, again bypassing several officers from the PMA classes of 1976 and 1977. As of April 2010, many top brass and important posts were occupied by the officers from PMA class of 1978 class, such as those of the AFP chief of staff, Army commander, Air Force commander, 3 out of 7 commanding posts of Unified Commands, 6 out of 10 commanding posts of Army Infantry Divisions, Marine commander and chief of the AFP Intelligence Service. It was an unusual situation in which members of the class that was not the most senior among active-duty officers occupied majority of the top posts. To be sure, the situation reflected a close connection between Arroyo and officers from PMA class of 1978.

These appointments gave rise to speculations that Arroyo, who was finishing her term in June 2010, was attempting a palace coup, the postponement of elections in May 2010 or massive electoral fraud in collusion with the AFP, all with the intention to continue to wield power, and hence her appointment of

officers from PMA class of 1978 to top military posts [*PDI* 14 September 2009, 22 December 2009, 10 March 2010]. The unhampered rise of members of the PMA class of 1978 led to deeper discontent among AFP officers, especially those from the PMA classes of 1976 and 1977, who had been bypassed [*PDI* 17 March 2010].

The practice of a PMA class adopting a particular politician as classmate cannot but form a personal and mutually dependent relationship between both parties. In such a setting, political intent would easily infiltrate decisions regarding appointments and promotions of AFP officers over which politicians, including the president, exercise various degrees of power. Although the kind of political intent involved in the practice of adoption is not easily demonstrable, the case of the last phase of the Arroyo presidency suggests that it could lead to various, and often unsavory, speculations. Almost certainly, too, it could lead to the maneuvering of appointments, which would distort norms in the AFP such as seniority and the merit system, as well as result in cracks or discontent in the AFP.

5. Conclusion

President Arroyo's maneuvering of the AFP's personnel affairs showed how she worked on building a good relationship with the AFP by appointing officers who seemed loyal to her to the top posts. Thus some of her appointments were politically motivated. Although most of her appointments had been carried out based on a merit system, it is undeniable that priority had been given to a general's loyalty to the president especially when it came to appointments to top posts [*PDI* 25 January 2006].

What shaped such Arroyo's maneuvering were institutional, customary, and political-contextual factors examined in Sections 1, 2, and 3 of this paper, as well as the president's personal qualities. Since the Arroyo administration was embedded in the political context examined in Section 1, her handling of the AFP's personnel affairs was strongly influenced by her political will at the very outset. In a situation where priority was given to the loyalty of officers, a personal relationship of mutual dependence between politicians and officers became an influential factor in the president's maneuvering of the appointments. This manipulation became possible because of the presidential power over the AFP's personnel affairs. At the same time, this power or exercise made possible the development of renewed loyalty and the reproduction of loyalty-reward relationships.

Under these circumstances, the infiltration of politics into the personnel affairs of the AFP tended to intensify, which then led to a paradoxical situation. To consolidate civil-military relations, the president appointed officers who were personally close to her, with definite political intentions. In turn this caused discontent among officers, who were then more vulnerable to coup instigators those who seek to overthrow the government. To counter this, president worked on tightening her grip on the AFP by appointing officers close to her to important posts. But it could be a vicious cycle, as such manipulation has had the effect of sowing even greater discontent among officers, and hence generating a situation in which the president has

needed to further consolidate civil-military relations through questionable appointments.

Characteristics of civil-military relations demonstrated in this paper are not distinctive of the Arroyo administration. Institutional, customary, and political-contextual factors examined in Sections 1, 2, and 3, which shape civil-military relations, are not likely to disappear. Thus, appointments of AFP officers based on personal relationship or loyalty take place whoever the president is, in varying degrees, with the effect of politicizing civil-military relations. These situations in the Philippines illustrate that civilian control paradoxically politicizes civil-military relations. As Samuel Huntington pointed out, “Future problems in civil-military relations in new democracies are likely to come not from the military but from the civilian side of the equation” [Huntington 1996: 11]. These phenomenons cannot be ignored when studying civil-military relations in democratizing countries such as the Philippines.

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