



MEDIA RELEASE
(March 16, 2006)

FROM: Dr. Ana Maria L. Tabunda
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RE: Pulse Asia's March 2006 Nationwide Survey
Most Beneficial and Most Inimical Political Scenarios,
and Best Person to Lead the Philippines at Present

Pulse Asia is pleased to share with you some findings from the March 2006 *Ulat ng Bayan* national survey on ***Most Beneficial and Most Inimical Political Scenarios, and Best Person to Lead the Philippines at Present***. In the interest of disseminating information relating to Filipino perceptions, opinions, sentiments, and attitudes relating to current developments here and abroad, we request you to assist us in helping inform the public.

Based on a multistage probability sample of 1,200 representative adults 18 years old and above, Pulse Asia's nationwide survey has a $\pm 3\%$ error margin at the 95% confidence level. Subnational estimates for each of the geographic areas covered in the survey (i.e., Metro Manila, the rest of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao) have a $\pm 6\%$ error margin, also at 95% confidence level. **Face-to-face** field interviews for this project were conducted from February 18 to March 4, 2006. (Those interested in further technical details concerning the surveys' questionnaires and sampling design may request Pulse Asia in writing for fuller details, including copies of the pre-tested questions actually used.)

Topping the headlines during the survey period were President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's declaration of a state of emergency on 24 February 2006 (and its eventual lifting a week later), the arrests of some individuals (including one party-list representative in Congress) and the issuance of guidelines for the media in connection with the declaration of a state of emergency, the various rallies held in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of EDSA People Power I and protest actions against Proclamation 1017, renewed calls for the President's resignation, the standoff at the Marines Headquarters in Fort Bonifacio, the continued rescue and recovery operations in Leyte, and the fluctuations in the value of the local currency vis-à-vis the American dollar arising in part from the political turmoil in the country.

The surveys sampling design and questionnaire are the full responsibility of Pulse Asia's pool of academic experts and no religious, political, economic or any other form of partisanship has been allowed to influence the survey design, the findings generated by the actual surveys or the subsequent analyses of survey findings.

Pulse Asia undertakes *Ulat ng Bayan* surveys on its own without any party singularly commissioning the research effort.

**Pulse Asia's March 2006 *Ulat ng Bayan* Survey:
Media Release on Alternative Political Scenarios and
Best and Worst Persons to Lead the Country Now
16 March 2006**

Majority of Filipinos continue to consider the President's resignation as being most beneficial to the national interest now

Nearly six in ten Filipinos (59%) are of the opinion that a scenario wherein President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo resigns from office is in the best interest of the country and its people. An additional 6% opt for the forcible removal of the President from office – either by a coup or through the intervention of a foreign government that will install its Filipino allies in power – bringing up to 65% the percentage of Filipinos who think it best that the President discontinue from office (*Table 1A*).

Across the country's geographic areas and socio-economic classes, the sentiment that it is best that the President resign is most pronounced in Metro Manila (67%) and is least pronounced in the rest of Luzon (55%). Even in the Visayas, a majority now thinks it best that the President resign (59%, from 47% in October 2005) (*Table 1A*).

TABLE 1A
MOST BENEFICIAL POLITICAL SCENARIO
October 2005 and March 2006 / Philippines
(Column Percent)

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	LOCATION					CLASS		
	RP	NCR	BAL			ABC	D	E
LUZ			VIS	MIN				
<u>PRESIDENT ARROYO RESIGNS</u>								
March 2006	59	67	55	59	62	57	58	62
October 2005	58	64	60	47	61	62	60	55
President Arroyo resigns and a special presidential election is held								
March 2006	16	19	15	15	18	18	16	16
October 2005	17	18	19	5	22	19	18	15
President Arroyo resigns and Vice President Noli De Castro becomes President								
March 2006	14	13	12	18	16	9	13	19
October 2005	12	13	11	14	10	7	11	13
President Arroyo and Vice-President De Castro resign and the Senate President temporarily takes over while preparing for a special elections for president and vice-president								
March 2006	12	17	12	8	13	13	12	12
October 2005	11	13	10	12	8	15	11	9
President Arroyo resigns and she is replaced by a temporary group or "junta" that will govern and also immediately prepare for electing either a new president or prime minister								
March 2006	10	12	9	10	9	13	10	8
October 2005	11	15	11	12	8	14	11	10
President Arroyo resigns and Vice President de Castro temporarily leads while preparing for a new government under a new Constitution								
March 2006	7	6	7	8	6	4	7	7
October 2005	8	5	9	3	13	6	8	8

Q188. Sa inyong opinyon, alin sa mga sumusunod na pangyayari ang makapagsisilbi ng pinakamalaki sa pambansang interes ng mga Pilipino sa ngayon?

TABLE 1B
MOST BENEFICIAL POLITICAL SCENARIO
 October 2005 and March 2006 / Philippines
 (Column Percent)

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	LOCATION					CLASS		
	RP	NCR	BAL LUZ	VIS	MIN	ABC	D	E
<u>PRESIDENT ARROYO CONTINUES</u>								
March 2006	34	30	35	38	32	41	34	32
October 2005	35	32	35	43	31	36	35	35
The Arroyo administration continues until it completes its mandated term under the Constitution								
March 2006	23	19	23	25	25	28	24	21
October 2005	24	18	27	29	19	27	24	25
The Arroyo administration continues and at the same time the Constitution is changed to have a parliamentary government that will take over the Arroyo administration before 2010								
March 2006	11	10	12	13	7	14	10	11
October 2005	11	14	8	14	12	9	11	11
<u>A COUP TAKES PLACE</u>								
March 2006	4	3	6	1	5	3	4	4
October 2005	4	3	3	7	6	2	4	7
A coup takes place against the Arroyo admin. where the military and the police forces decide which group of politicians govern								
March 2006	3	2	5	0	4	2	3	3
October 2005	3	2	2	5	5	2	3	5
A coup takes place where the military and the police themselves directly wield political power								
March 2006	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
October 2005	1	0	1	2	1	0	1	2
A foreign government gets involved in the nation's politics and installs in power their Filipino allies								
March 2006	2	0	2	1	2	0	2	2
October 2005	2	1	3	3	1	0	2	3

Q188. *Sa inyong opinyon, alin sa mga sumusunod na pangyayari ang makapagsisilbi ng pinakamalaki sa pambansang interes ng mga Pilipino sa ngayon?*

As in October 2005, there is no consensus among the 59% opting for the resignation of President Arroyo as to the selection of her replacement. Thirty eight percent (38%) of Filipinos essentially think it best that special elections be held, be it immediately or eventually, to elect either a new president (16%), a president and a vice president (12%), or possibly a prime minister (10%). Twenty one percent (21%) favor Vice-President Noli de Castro's assuming

leadership of the country, either permanently as President for the remainder of President Arroyo's term (14%), or temporarily while preparations are made for a new government under a new constitution (7%) (See Table 1A).

Survey findings further indicate that the issuance of Proclamation 1017 may have served to reverse a possible decline in the percentage of Filipinos who think that the President's resignation is the most beneficial political scenario for the country at present. The proportion who chose the resignation option is larger among those who were interviewed after the declaration of a state of emergency (61%) than among those who were interviewed prior to 24 February 2006 (53%). [At the time President Arroyo declared a state of national emergency, Pulse Asia had completed about a quarter (22.5%) of the interviews for the present survey while the bulk of the survey interviews (77.5%) were done after Proclamation 1017 had been issued.] (Table 2)

TABLE 2
MOST BENEFICIAL POLITICAL SCENARIO

February 18 - March 4, 2006 / Philippines
(Column Percent)

Most Beneficial Political Scenario	TOTAL (Feb 18 - Mar 4)	BEFORE PP1017 (Feb 18 - 23)	DURING PP1017 (Feb 24 - Mar 4)
<u>PRESIDENT ARROYO RESIGNS</u>	59	53	61
A Special Presidential election is held...	16	14	17
V.P. De Castro becomes President...	14	13	15
Senate President takes over...	12	11	13
Junta will take over...	10	7	11
New govt under a new Constitution...	7	8	6
<u>PRESIDENT ARROYO CONTINUES</u>	34	36	34
President Arroyo continues...	23	22	24
The Constitution is changed...	11	14	10
<u>A COUP TAKES PLACE</u>	4	6	4
Military and the police decide who will govern...	3	4	3
Military and the police to wield political power...	1	2	1
<u>A foreign govt gets involved...</u>	2	4	1

On the other hand, for 34% of Filipinos, President Arroyo's continued stay in office is the most beneficial political scenario --- with those in the best-off socio-economic Class ABC being most supportive of this view (41%) and those in Metro Manila being least inclined to think so (30%). However, only 23% of Filipinos are in favor of the Arroyo administration's finishing its constitutionally-mandated term until 2010. Eleven percent (11%) would like the President to stay in office while the 1987 Constitution is being amended to pave the way for a shift to a parliamentary system of government that would be set up before 2010 (See Table 1B).

In general, there is no change in the sentiments of the Filipino people regarding the most beneficial political scenario as the figures cited here do not differ significantly from those recorded in October 2005 (See Table 1A and 1B).

A big plurality of Filipinos says a coup is most inimical to the national interest at present

Four in ten Filipinos (40%) consider a coup against the national administration as being most inimical to the interest of the country and its people --- a sentiment that is most pronounced in Class ABC (48%) and in the Visayas (49%). The national figure is made up of the 22% who say a coup wherein the military and police get to decide who governs is not in the country's best interest at present and the 18% who are of the opinion that a coup wherein the military and police directly exercise political power themselves is most inimical to the national interest (*Table 3A*).

TABLE 3A
MOST INIMICAL POLITICAL SCENARIO
 October 2005 and March 2006 / Philippines
 (Column Percent)

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	LOCATION					CLASS		
	BAL					ABC	D	E
	RP	NCR	LUZ	VIS	MIN			
<u>A COUP TAKES PLACE</u>								
March 2006	40	44	34	49	41	48	40	38
October 2005	40	38	40	46	38	39	39	42
A coup takes place against the Arroyo admin. where the military and the police forces decide which group of politicians govern								
March 2006	22	22	19	27	24	25	22	22
October 2005	22	25	20	25	22	25	21	24
A coup takes place where the military and the police themselves directly wield political power								
March 2006	18	22	15	22	17	23	18	15
October 2005	18	14	19	21	16	14	18	19

Q189. Sa inyong opinyon, alin sa mga sumusunod na pangyayari ang makapagsisilbi ng pinakamalaki sa pambansang interes ng mga Pilipino sa ngayon?

On the other hand, 29% of Filipinos think that exit scenarios involving the President's resignation is most inimical to the national interest --- with 32% to 34% of those in the rest of Luzon, the Visayas, and the poorest socio-economic Class E expressing this sentiment. To about one in five Filipinos (19%), the opposite is true --- the President's continued stay in office is the most inimical political scenario at present. Across the country's geographic areas and socio-economic classes, this sentiment is most pronounced in Metro Manila (26%). (*See Table 3B and 3C*)

As for foreign intervention in the political affairs of the Philippines, it is a scenario considered by 12% of Filipinos as the most inimical political scenario at present (*See Table 3C*).

TABLE 3B
MOST INIMICAL POLITICAL SCENARIO
 October 2005 and March 2006 / Philippines
 (Column Percent)

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	LOCATION					CLASS		
	RP	NCR	BAL LUZ	VIS	MIN	ABC	D	E
<u>PRESIDENT ARROYO RESIGNS</u>								
March 2006	29	19	34	33	22	22	28	32
October 2005	28	31	26	32	26	30	30	24
President Arroyo resigns and she is replaced by a temporary group or “junta” that will govern and also immediately prepare for electing either a new president or prime minister								
March 2006	9	5	12	11	6	8	9	11
October 2005	8	6	7	11	8	9	9	6
President Arroyo and Vice-President De Castro resign and the Senate President temporarily takes over while preparing for a special elections for president and vice-president								
March 2006	5	3	4	7	5	2	5	6
October 2005	7	9	6	7	5	5	5	9
President Arroyo resigns and a special presidential election is held								
March 2006	5	5	7	6	3	4	6	5
October 2005	5	5	5	7	5	5	6	4
President Arroyo resigns and Vice President Noli De Castro becomes President								
March 2006	5	6	7	5	3	7	5	6
October 2005	4	4	3	4	4	5	4	4
President Arroyo resigns and Vice President de Castro temporarily leads while preparing for a new government under a new Constitution								
March 2006	4	1	4	4	4	1	3	5
October 2005	4	7	4	4	3	6	6	2

Q189. Sa inyong opinyon, alin sa mga sumusunod na pangyayari ang makapagsisilbi ng pinakamalaki sa pambansang interes ng mga Pilipino sa ngayon?

TABLE 3C
MOST INIMICAL POLITICAL SCENARIO
 October 2005 and March 2006 / Philippines
 (Column Percent)

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	LOCATION					CLASS		
	RP	NCR	LUZ	VIS	MIN	ABC	D	E
<u>PRESIDENT ARROYO CONTINUES</u>								
March 2006	19	26	21	7	20	19	19	19
October 2005	21	21	25	9	23	21	20	22
The Arroyo administration continues until it completes its mandated term under the Constitution								
March 2006	11	16	12	3	12	12	11	10
October 2005	12	7	18	3	12	8	12	13
The Arroyo administration continues and at the same time the Constitution is changed to have a parliamentary government that will take over the Arroyo administration before 2010								
March 2006	8	11	10	4	8	7	8	9
October 2005	9	14	7	6	11	13	8	9
A foreign government gets involved in the nation's politics and installs in power their Filipino allies								
March 2006	12	10	10	11	17	12	12	11
October 2005	11	9	9	13	13	9	10	11

Q189. Sa inyong opinyon, alin sa mga sumusunod na pangyayari ang makapagsisilbi ng pinakamalaki sa pambansang interes ng mga Pilipino sa ngayon?

Again, there is no change in the sentiments of the Filipino people regarding the most inimical political scenario as the figures cited here do not differ significantly from those recorded in October 2005. In particular, reports of an aborted coup attempt against the Arroyo administration during the survey period apparently did not influence the public to be any more or any less averse to military coup d'états.

There is still a lack of consensus regarding the best and worst persons to lead the country at present

Filipinos still have not made up their minds on the matter of who is the best person to lead the Philippines now with Vice-President Noli de Castro being favored by 23%, former President Joseph Estrada being preferred by 17%, and Senator Panfilo Lacson being supported by 13%. And despite President Arroyo's remark made before the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines (FOCAP) on 21 February 2006 that she is the best person to lead the country (i.e., during the transition to a parliamentary system of government), only 11% of Filipinos presently consider her to be the best person to lead the country --- the same percentage citing the name of Ms. Susan Roces. On the other hand, 9% of Filipinos are of the opinion that not one of those included in the list of 11 individuals may be considered as the best person to lead the country now --- down from 18% in October 2005 (*Table 4*).

TABLE 4
BEST PERSON TO LEAD THE COUNTRY NOW
 October 2005 and March 2006 / Philippines
 (Column Percent / Single Response)

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<u>PUBLIC FIGURES</u> (Base: Total Interviews, 100%)	<u>RP</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>				<u>CLASS</u>		
		<u>NCR</u>	<u>LUZ</u>	<u>VIS</u>	<u>MIN</u>	<u>ABC</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>E</u>
Noli "Kabayan" DE CASTRO								
March 2006	23	10	21	30	29	10	24	24
October 2005	19	10	15	32	23	7	19	23
Joseph "Erap" ESTRADA								
March 2006	17	13	18	10	23	2	15	25
October 2005	14	12	16	7	17	10	11	20
Panfilo "Ping" LACSON								
March 2006	13	26	15	8	8	25	14	10
October 2005	13	21	16	6	10	16	14	11
Gloria Macapagal-ARROYO								
March 2006	11	15	8	16	9	23	11	8
October 2005	12	8	11	23	8	12	13	10
Susan ROCES								
March 2006	11	5	16	7	10	4	10	15
October 2005	8	8	11	2	8	6	6	13
Hilario DAVIDE, Jr.								
March 2006	6	5	3	12	5	5	8	2
October 2005	4	6	1	11	2	8	4	3

Q190. Sa kasalukuyang katayuan ng Pilipinas, sino sa mga sumusunod ang pinakagusto ninyong mamuno sa bansa?

TABLE 4
BEST PERSON TO LEAD THE COUNTRY NOW
 October 2005 and March 2006 / Philippines
 (Column Percent / Single Response)

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<u>PUBLIC FIGURES</u> (Base: Total Interviews, 100%)	<u>LOCATION</u>					<u>CLASS</u>		
	<u>RP</u>	<u>NCR</u>	<u>BAL</u> <u>LUZ</u>	<u>VIS</u>	<u>MIN</u>	<u>ABC</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>E</u>
Eddie "Brother Eddie" VILLANUEVA								
March 2006	4	5	3	3	3	6	4	3
October 2005	2	4	3	2	2	4	2	2
Fidel V. RAMOS								
March 2006	3	2	4	2	3	3	3	3
October 2005	3	2	3	2	6	5	3	3
Rodolfo "Pong" BIAZON								
March 2006	2	4	1	1	2	3	1	2
October 2005	2	3	3	2	1	2	2	2
Renato DE VILLA								
March 2006	1	2	0	1	0	3	1	0
October 2005	1	1	1	1	3	4	1	1
Fortunato ABAT								
March 2006	0.2	0.3	0.3	0	0.3	0	0.2	0.4
October 2005	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.0	0.2	0.6	0.1	0.8
Others								
March 2006	1	1	1	2	0	3	1	0
October 2005	2	1	3	1	1	2	4	0
None								
March 2006	9	11	9	9	7	13	8	8
October 2005	18	23	17	12	20	24	20	11

Q190. Sa kasalukuyang katayuan ng Pilipinas, sino sa mga sumusunod ang pinakagusto ninyong mamuno sa bansa?

But a clearer pattern emerges when the people are asked to name the one who is most unacceptable to lead the country at present: about a third of Filipinos (32%) cite the name of President Arroyo --- with 37% to 39% of those in Metro Manila, in Mindanao, and in Class E expressing this sentiment. The other personalities in the list are cited by at most 11% of Filipinos. (See Table 5).

TABLE 5
PERSON NOT ACCEPTABLE TO THE RESPONDENT
TO LEAD THE NATION

February 18 - March 4, 2006 / Philippines
 (Row Percent)

PERSON NOT ACCEPTABLE TO THE RESPONDENT TO LEAD THE NATION <i>(Base: Total Interviews, 100%)</i>	LOCATION					CLASS		
	RP	NCR	BAL			ABC	D	E
			LUZ	VIS	MIN			
ARROYO, Gloria	32	37	33	17	38	31	28	39
ROCES, Susan	11	15	8	18	7	24	10	9
VILLANUEVA, Eddie "Brother Eddie"	11	10	11	9	11	9	11	9
RAMOS, Fidel "FVR"	10	10	11	8	11	7	10	12
ESTRADA, Joseph "Erap"	7	6	6	13	5	6	9	4
LACSON, Panfilo "Ping"	7	5	5	13	6	3	7	7
ABAT, Fortunato	5	6	6	5	5	3	5	6
DAVIDE, Hilario Jr.	2	1	2	0	3	1	3	1
BIAZON, Rodolfo "Pong"	2	0	2	3	1	0	2	1
DE CASTRO, Noli "Kabayan"	2	4	2	0	1	6	1	1
DE VILLA, Renato	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	2
Others	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
None	11	5	12	14	10	8	12	9

Q191. *Sino naman sa mga sumusunod ang pinaka-hindi ninyo matatanggap na mamuno ng bansa, kahit pa magustuhan siya ng mas nakararaming Pilipino? ONE ANSWER ONLY*

Furthermore, among the incumbent president and two former presidents included in these probes and who were also trust-rated by Pulse Asia in March 2006, it is former President Estrada who enjoys the highest trust rating (48%) --- higher than the figure posted in October 2005 (39%). On the other hand, former President Ramos scores a trust rating of 31% (i.e., 11 percentage points higher than his October 2005 figure of 20%) while only 22% of Filipinos express trust in President Arroyo (i.e., practically unchanged relative to the October 2005 figure of 21%) (*See Table 6*).

As for distrust, President Arroyo is most distrusted by Filipinos (50%), followed by former President Ramos (38%), and former President Estrada (25%). While the distrust ratings of former Presidents Ramos and Estrada decline by 11 and 9 percentage points, respectively, between October 2005 and March 2006, that of President Arroyo remains statistically the same (55% versus 50%) (*See Table 6*).

TABLE 6
COMPARATIVE TRUST RATINGS OF SELECTED PUBLIC FIGURES
 October 2005 and March 2006 / Philippines
 (Row Percent)

Selected Public Figures	Base: Aware					
	Big Trust		Undecided		Small/No Trust	
	Oct <u>05</u>	Mar <u>06</u>	Oct <u>05</u>	Mar <u>06</u>	Oct <u>05</u>	Mar <u>06</u>
President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo	21	22	25	28	55	50
Former President Joseph Estrada	39	48	27	27	34	25
Former President Fidel Ramos	20	31	31	31	49	38

Note: % Big Trust = % Very Big Trust plus % Big Trust ; % Small Trust = % Small Trust plus Very Small Trust