

# Ate Glo elated by *Time* 'debut'

"I think it's a signal honor to be on the cover of *Time* magazine," President Arroyo told Palace reporters yesterday after copies of the magazine were distributed to Cabinet members and presidential advisers.

The Jan. 28 Asian edition of *Time* featured Mrs. Arroyo on its cover with the title, "Iron Lady?" The big question mark clearly indicates the publication's

Turn to Page 13



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# Ate Glo elated From Page 1

doubts on whether Mrs. Arroyo is deserving of that moniker.

The tag "Iron Lady of Asia" was bestowed on Mrs. Arroyo by the London-based newspaper, *The Financial Times*, in its Dec. 26 issue containing its year-end report on world leaders. It put her in the league of other world women leaders, among them British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, the original "Iron Lady."

The President said she was not surprised at all that *Time* was reluctant to call her "Iron Lady."

"Well, time will tell whether the answer is right or wrong," she said. "*Time* has also been quite critical of people power. I did not really expect it to be a praise release."

She hastily pointed out that the *Time* feature was not a "solicited" piece nor paid for by her publicists. "When you accept to have an in-depth story done on you, you surely will expect upsides and downsides, because that's the typical *Time* treatment."

"Overall, I think it's a balanced article," she said.

The six-page article on President Arroyo was written by *Time* correspondent in Manila, Phil Zabrieski, with reports from Nelly Sindayen. The inside story was titled "Power and Gloria" and the subhead read: "She survived her first year — barely. But with coup rumors swirling and US troops landing, Philippine President Gloria Arroyo's toughest days lie ahead."

The interview was arranged by Press Secretary Noel Cabrera and conducted a few days before the President observed her first year in office by embarking on a roadshow of "new town" trips and urban poor visits all over the country.

The article quoted the President describing herself as "an economist with a politician's heart."

"But maybe it's the other way around, her economist's heart shining for foreign investors but leaving another, critical constituency cold: the 32 million people in the Philippines who live below the poverty line," the article stated.

The article further quoted Mrs. Arroyo admitting she is "more cerebral than tactile" to explain why she shuns photo-ops like picking up and hugging a starving child.

"Perhaps, I'll do that," she told *Time*. "But the first thing that goes into my mind is: 'What policy can I put in place so this child will have better nutrition?' You see? Right away, I look for a solution."

The article quoted some Palace officials as saying that "her popularity is solid but prevailing opinion maintains that she is accepted but not liked, disaffected, bereft of that common touch that Erap wielded."