

DATELINE PHILIPPINES

MILF wants Roxas in peace team if talks are to resume

KORONADAL CITY – The Moro Islamic Liberation Front on September 4 said President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo should name Senator Mar Roxas head of the

government peace team if she decides to reconstitute it.

Roxas is one of the stern critics of the aborted memorandum of agreement on ancestral domain (MOA-AD).

In a statement, which was also posted on the MILF website www.luwaran.com, Khaled Musa, MILF deputy information chief, said Roxas could prove to be the best government negotiator "in view of his fanatical opposition" to the signing of the MOA-AD.

"He (Roxas) is the most fitting man for the job. So he can articulate the interests of the settlers and mining companies across the negotiating table. By this, the MILF negotiators can discuss with him openly," Musa said.

Mohagher Iqbal, MILF chief

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Arroyo may stay beyond 2010 in parliamentary gov't – Nograles

MANILA – Speaker Prospero Nograles has acknowledged that President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo might continue her stay in power beyond 2010 under a parliamentary form of government, but was quick to add that it would be "anybody's ball game."

"If we adopt a parliamentary system of government, I think everybody is qualified to run, ... even former president Fidel Ramos can run, [former president] Corason Aquino can run, [former president] Joseph Estrada can run . . ." Nograles said at the forum of the Manila Overseas Press Club last September 3.

But Nograles said that the elections by then would be "anybody's ball game."

"As you know after 2010, you cannot be sure who will be the Prime Minister or who will be the President under a parliamentary

form of government. It is really anybody's ballgame. You cannot be sure, you mean to say, just because you were a former president or whoever you are you are assured [of power]. I believe nobody is really sure of anything when it comes to elections," Nograles said.

Nograles dispelled speculations that the amendment to the Constitution was being initiated to extend the term of office of the President.

While it is possible, Nograles said it was "not probable because in the committee on constitutional amendments, there is nothing, no bill or resolution or piece of paper that seeks to extend the term of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo."

Side-by-side with efforts to consult the public on Charter change, the House committee on



Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo constitutional amendments will go on full gear in tackling bills calling for the amendment of the Constitution.

House committee on constitutional amendments chairman Representative Victor Ortega said the committee has scheduled a hearing on September 9.

He said the committee has been meeting regularly to discuss the various proposals for Charter change.

Nograles said that "there is no better time than now" to discuss Charter change to finally resolve the issue.

"At least if we discuss it now ... the people who are running for president in 2010 know that their term limits may be cut short because of Charter change. ... at least they know what they are facing when they file their certificates of candidacy," he said.

Despite criticisms for the revival of Charter change, Nograles said that "in my watch, I think I will bite the bullet."

He said postponing discussions on it would not help the country.

Last month, Arroyo signaled the revival of Charter change by saying she favored federalism to resolve the bloody Moro war for self-rule in Mindanao.

Then Press Secretary Jesus Duraza said Arroyo was supporting a Senate resolution introduced by Minority Floor Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. seeking to turn the two chambers of Congress into a constituent assembly to amend the 1987 Constitution and adopt a federal system of government. (Inquirer.net)

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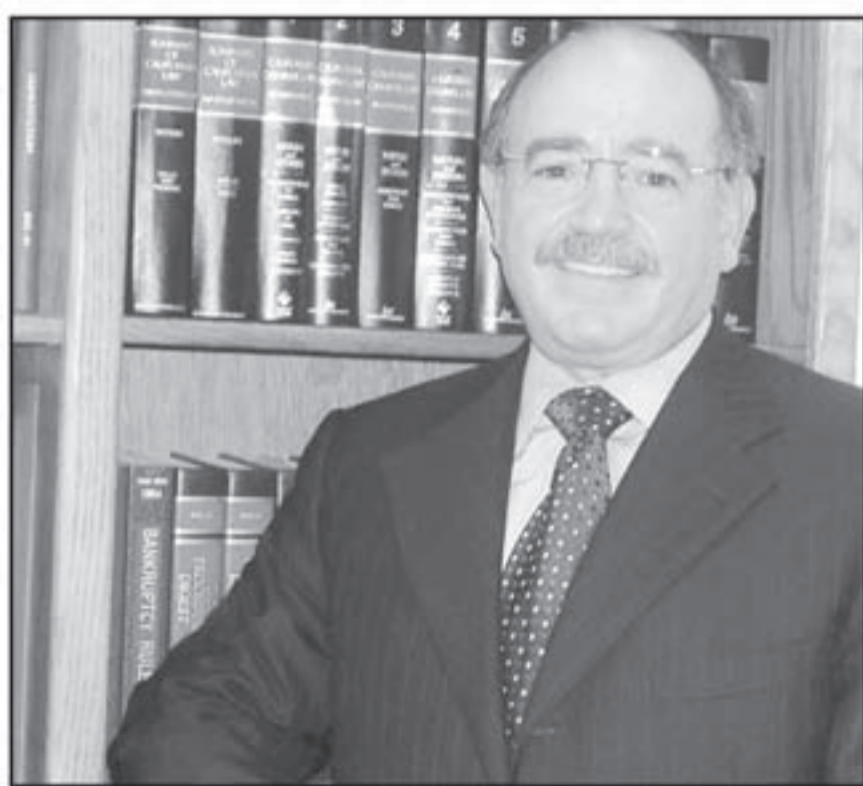
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