

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

The Signs of The Times

PAGE A1 ◀

term of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. One Congressman, Nueva Ecija Rep. Eduardo Nonato Joson, described it as "gang raping" the constitution. The Jesuit law expert Fr. Joaquin Bernas, echoed the solon's view in interview, as he admonished the Filipino people to "be enraged" with what some describes as another legal travesty back in the country.

The "ConAss" is just one of the three constitutional options considered in so far as the history of charter change campaigns in the Philippines is concerned. At least in the post-Marcos and Aquino eras, charter change became part of the more controversial agenda of various presidencies.

There was one in the time of President Fidel Ramos, and later on after him, during the short-lived term of deposed President Joseph Estrada. Arroyo, now almost done serving her term after being elected as a sitting President in 2004, has had the charter change train running all throughout her term. In her terms alone, the main pipeline had been the House of Representatives, where she enjoys partisanship of the majority.

The adoption of HR 1109 follows the narrative of conspicuous

events. A few days ago, before she flew to her state visits, Arroyo convened her party Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi), in its auspicious merger with Partido Lakas ng Tao (Lakas) and Christian-Muslim Democrats (CMD). This had been in the light of the upcoming presidential elections in 2004.

Many of the figures appearing in both the Pulse Asia and Social Weather Stations survey have come out to voice their candidacy and advocacies. The automation too of the national elections had been fast tracked, and curiously, only one bidder, the consortium led by automation trailblazer Smartmatic and Total Information Management System.

At the height of the sex video scandals and the various issues that had been lined up for resolution like the extension of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program, observers noted the expediency of the congressmen, in what is described in Philippine media today as "railroading".

It is not surprising. While we all keep our eyes shut, it is known fact that two of the president's sons are sitting solons—Rep. Mickey Arroyo of Pampanga and Rep. Diosdado "Dato" Arroyo of Camarines Sur, have been ac-

tively soliciting signatures for charter change. Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte, a stalwart of Kampi, meanwhile initially supported the resolution, only to back out while congress was in session.

The Internet is slowly becoming a very potent platform for discussing issues, and in the much recent brouhaha on the additional duties on imported books, manifestos and articles on the web helped bolster the government's decision to withdraw the tax duties imposed by the Bureau of Customs.

This time, cybercitizen Filipinos will surely wield their pens on Congress and we must expect the barrage of writings that would come out of the World Wide Web. In the night the House passed HR 1109, netizens gave blow by blow accounts in real time, beating TV coverage that usually sign off at 12. And what's more, they have been "covering" the whole thing for a very long time.

"Paano na ang Pilipinas makaahon kong mismo ang mga mambabatas ay magugulo, at wala nang inatupag kundi ang sarili nila?" asks "limr22" at the ABS-CBN online news portal which featured an article on how the Senate would block the

moves done by the lower house. "Ang daming dapat bigyan pansin pero ano ang ginawa nila wala?"

And despite the pledge of four assurances by the proponents of the resolution—which includes among others the exclusion of the discussion of term extensions for all elected officials, including the president and the vice president—some of the readers following this event share the fears of minority Cong. Roilo Golez of Parañaque.

Blogs have also been written as the news ran its course. Explainer and Inquirer columnist Manuel L. Quezon III in his blog www.quezon.ph, hit the newest development and also did a roll call of all the notable reportage done on the charter change. "But I'm operating from a particular point of view, which is that it seems more likely to me that the President and her people are more interested in consolidat-

ing their ranks going into 2010, and solving the problem of what happens after 2010, by making whoever is elected president irrelevant," he writes.

Makati Cong. Teddy Boy Locsin meanwhile made a hilarious press statement that had become an important read the day after the passage of HR 1109. "This is a resolution calling for the convening of the Lower House of Congress as a constituent assembly the day before it adjourns. This is like sending out an invitation to a party on no date, for no stated occasion, while announcing that the host is leaving for a long vacation abroad," he wrote in his statement titled "Throwing a Party for No Reason and Inviting Only the Host. Locsin added: "This resolution mocks the House and holds it up to ridicule. If anything, it is a fit subject not of a vote but an ethics investigation of the proponents of this measure for inviting the contempt of the

nation upon our House. This is a venture which can be described by only one word that politeness forbids me to say."

Some netizens have gone as far as renaming the House of Representatives into "Bastusang Pambansa", signing up shout outs on their social networking site profiles and publishing hate messages against their respective congressmen. The signs of the times are at work today, especially at the World Wide Web, where Filipinos are very much engaged and opinionated. To say the least, their legions are the feistiest we have seen in recent times. A lot of bloggers are writing about major national issues, and not just the ConAss. Discussions are still unfolding and a "silent majority", at least in the net is making its presence felt. Overseas voters too are watching, and are most probably awaiting the resolution to this resolution. ■

Japan apologizes for Bataan Death March

PAGE A1 ◀

Japanese Ambassador to the United States, Ichiro Fujisaki, spoke at the 64th reunion of the American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor in San Antonio on Monday, June 1 and offered an apology to veterans and their

families, many Filipino veterans felt like it was too late.

"It's too late for me and it's too late for them. That's 67 years ago," said Franco Arcebal, a Filipino WWII veteran, and vice-president of membership for the American Coalition of Filipino Veterans. "Although we accept the apology, it came too late. How come they apologize now? It's terrible... they should have done this about 25 years after the war."

During his speech, Fujisaki said that the Japanese people must look into the past to learn from the lessons of history.

"We extend a heartfelt apology [from] our country for having caused tremendous damage and suffering to many people, including prisoners of war, those who have undergone tragic experiences in the Bataan Peninsula, in Corregidor Island in the Philippines and other places," said Fujisaki. "Ladies and gentlemen, taking this opportunity, I would like to express my deepest condolences to all those who have

lost their lives in the war, and after the war, and their family members."

According to the Associated Press, about 73 surviving Bataan Death March veterans of the Army and former Army Air Corps were in attendance and welcomed the apology.

AP added that Fujisaki's six-minute speech received a standing ovation afterwards.

"Well, we finally got the apology that we wanted," said retired Tech Sgt. Joe Alexander of San Antonio, a two-time former commander of ADBC told the AP. Asked how he felt, Alexander said he felt chills go through his body. "Now we can rest at ease. We're satisfied."

Whether skeptical or accepting, many veterans are resigned to the fact that this will probably be the only apology they'll ever hear from the Japanese for the Bataan Death March.

"This is about as candid an apology as anybody's going to get," added Paul Ropp, a retired Air Force Reserve lieutenant colonel. (Joseph Pimentel)

Cebu Philippines Travel

447 Sutter St., Suite 703 Phil. Consulate Bldg. San Francisco, CA 94108

LIMITED PROMO

HIGH SEASON PAL \$598
June 1 - July 31

LOW SEASON \$415
August - October

Now Accepting US Domestic Booking

Instant Passport/Dual Citizen Pictures
(415) 788-1324

(415) 362-6669 • (415) 823-7555

Inquire: PAL/KE/N/W/JAL/EVA/CHINA/CATHAY/ASIANA

*Servicing: Passport Picture/Passport Renewal
*Fares/Flights subject to change without notice.
*CST 2045826-50 • Email: NARDSCPT@AOL.COM
*Tickets delivered by *PO certified mail
EXCLUSIVE OF TAXES • RESTRICTIONS APPLY

PROFESSIONAL LAW CORPORATION

LAZARO LAW GROUP

IMMIGRATION FAMILY BUSINESS CIVIL LAW

IMMIGRATION

- Green card or lawful permanent resident
- Marriage to U.S. Citizens
- Defense against removal from U.S.
- Work visas
- Investor's visa

HOME OWNER'S DEFENSE

- Foreclosure litigation
- Notice of Default
- Missed Mortgage payments

FAMILY LAW

- Divorce
- Property Division

We speak Tagalog

Att. JOHNSON LAZARO

SAN FRANCISCO OFFICE
605 Market St. Ste. 605 San Francisco, CA 94106
415.278.9577

NEWARK/FREMONT/UNION CITY OFFICE
28899 Balentine Drive, Ste. 200, Newark, CA 94560
510.438.6866

For more information, please visit our website:
www.lazarolaw.com

BAY AREA COLLEGE OF NURSING

2004

WANT A SUCCESSFUL CAREER IN HEALTHCARE?

Bay Area College of Nursing can help you!

We Offer a Wide Range of Programs:

- LVN (Licensed Vocational Nurse) Program
- Anatomy & Physiology
- CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant) Program
- Training Programs for CNAs
 - Acute Care Program
 - Home Health Aide Program
- Basic Life Support Training (CPR)
- NCLEX-PN Review

CALL NOW!
Registration is ongoing for these classes:

- ★ LVN Evening Class (San Jose Campus) - July 20, 2009
- ★ LVN Evening Class (Daly City Campus) - September 22, 2009
- ★ CNA Weekday Class (Mon-Fri/Daly City Campus) - July 1, 2009
- ★ CNA Weekend Class (Sat-Sun/Daly City Campus) - June 20, 2009
- ★ Acute Care Program (Sat-Sun/Daly City Campus) - June 27, 2009
- ★ Home Health Aide Program (Sat-Sun/Palo Alto Campus) - June 20, 2009
- ★ Anatomy & Physiology (Daly City Campus) - June 22 & 23, 2009
- ★ Anatomy & Physiology (San Jose Campus) - June 16 & July 14, 2009
- ★ Basic Life Support Training/CPR (Daly City Campus) - June 26, 2009

*San Jose is under the jurisdiction of Palo Alto campus

Authorized/Approved by Federal Law (SEVP) to Enroll Non-immigrant Alien Students, M-1 Student Visa

FOUR CAMPUSES TO SERVE YOU:

PALO ALTO 4151 Middlefield Road, Ste. 101 Palo Alto, CA 94303 Tel: (650) 858-6810 Fax: (650) 856-7886 (650) 204-6979	DALY CITY MISSION 6150 Mission Street, Ste. 103 Daly City, CA 94014 Tel: (650) 755-6887/ (650) 755-6888 Fax: (650) 755-6888	SAN JOSE 702 E. Santa Clara St. San Jose, CA 95112 Phone: (408) 280-6888 Fax: (650) 856-7886 (650)204-6979	MILPITAS 1851 McCarthy Blvd. (corner Montague Expressway) Milpitas, CA 95035 Milpitas is under the jurisdiction of BACN Palo Alto
--	---	--	--

Excellence in Healthcare Training is Our Main Thrust!

You can visit us on the web at **www.bayareacollege.net**

Bay Area College of Nursing is fully accredited by the CA Bureau of Vocational Nursing, the CA Department of Consumer Affairs, the CA Department of Public Health, and the Bureau for Private Post Secondary Education.

FREE 20 minutes

when you enroll with **TAWAG NA DIRECT NOW!**

The **No. 1** choice of Filipinos worldwide!

Call Philippines for as low as **10.9¢ a minute**

- Sign up today and get 20 Minutes FREE instantly
- This offer is limited and will expire soon. So Call Now!
- Customer Service-Oriented Company.
- Currently used by over 30,000 Filipinos in the U.S. and Canada.
- Over 9 years of service & growing to our Kababayans.
- 24/7 Customer Service

TAWAG NA DIRECT OFFERS THE LOWEST RATES IN LONG DISTANCE SERVICES. FOR AS LOW AS 11.9 CENTS PER MINUTE. YOU CAN CALL ANY LANDLINE IN THE PHILIPPINES FROM OUR TOLL-FREE ACCESS NUMBERS FROM THE U.S. CANADA AND HAWAII.

Call our toll free number NOW!
1-877-379-6439

PROMO CODE: FASO

Detach this card to get instant savings

Record Your Registered Number Here: Security Code:

HOW TO USE THE SERVICE:

1. Dial: 1-800-680-5054 Listen and follow instructions. To recharge press 2.
2. Enter your registered number. If dialing from unregistered location, then enter your personal security code.
3. Domestic Call: Dial 1+ Area Code + Telephone number

International Call from the U.S.: Dial 011+ Country Code + City Code + Local Number

INSTANT \$3 BONUS
PROMO CODE: FASO

Get \$3 or 20 minutes FREE CALLING TIME when you enroll visit www.mytawagnadirect.com or call 1-800-760-4748