



Republic of the Philippines
Senate, Pasay City

Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

Chair, Committee on Foreign Relations; Committee on Energy, Joint Congressional Power Commission, and Legislative Oversight on Visiting Forces Agreement
Vice-Chair, Committee on Finance; Member, Commission on Appointments

RUSH

23 April 2008

Speaker Prospero Nograles
Fax 931-6437

Dear Speaker Nograles:

This is to respectfully appeal for priority in the House calendar for the enclosed draft Joint Resolution Creating a Congressional Commission on National Territory that I filed in the Senate. My son, party-list Rep. Narciso D. Santiago III, has recently filed a counterpart resolution in the House.

Pursuant to President Arroyo's directive, as chair of the Senate committee on foreign relations, I am going to shelve the two bills on archipelagic baselines, consisting of Senate Bill No. 1467 and House Bill No. 1202. Instead, this week I shall hold a public hearing on my resolution, and sponsor it immediately on the Senate floor.

I believe that the two bills are sincere and honest, but they approach the national territorial problems piecemeal. These bills should be accorded the benefit of a comprehensive and strategic examination of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as to its full impact on our territorial situation which suffers from internal contradictions between UNCLOS and the Treaty of Paris.

Although the Philippines is a geographical archipelago, it is not necessarily an archipelagic state under the UNCLOS. We have to be wary of declaring the Philippines as an archipelagic state, because then we would adopt certain features which would violate the Philippine constitutional provision on the national territory.

The Treaty of Paris is the basis for the Philippine baseline law, aka R.A. No. 3046, and R.A. No. 5446. Our baseline law accordingly provides: