

'GMA at center of gov't anomalies'

By RAINIER ALLAN RONDA

A group of former government executives said President Arroyo is "at the center" of anomalies and cover-up involving administration officials and that her failure to carry out reforms within seven days as set by the group has shattered her moral authority to govern.

"We conclude that President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo refuses to serve the people's demand for truth about a matter of great public interest. We see in this refusal, despite ample chances and many sound reasons, a clear basis for our people to find her complicit with and in fact at the center of the corruption and cover-up of the

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GMA at center

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NBN-ZTE deal," a statement of the Former Senior Government Officials or FSGO said.

The group earlier called on Mrs. Arroyo to show her sincerity in fighting corruption by implementing a set of reforms including ordering the suspension of officials implicated in the national broadband network (NBN) controversy.

The officials that FSGO wants suspended are Transportation and Communications Secretary Leandro Men-

dóza, Assistant Secretary Lorenzo Formoso III, and Commission on Higher Education Chairman Romulo Neri.

"We express our loss of confidence in her. As a consequence, we question not only her moral authority to govern, but also her ability to govern given the mounting garbage of lies and obfuscation that she is constrained to build to cover up the increasing stench of corruption in her admin-

istration," FOSG said.

"For our part, we pledge to use our combined knowledge, capabilities and influence to help as many of our people understand the issues and explain the known facts surrounding the many instances of corruption and encourage them to act in accordance with the dictates of their conscience," the FSGO statement read by former Civil Service Commission chair Karina Constantino-David at the Club Filipino said.

"We shall work with other sectors to put forward and apply other measures to make our other democratic institutions work better in preventing, exposing and punishing corruption at any level of our government starting at the very top," FSGO said.

"We ask those directly appointed by the President if they believe, in their heart of hearts, that they are keeping faith with their signed oath to defend and protect the nation's Constitution and its laws in the face of blatant, shameless corruption and violation of individual rights," it added.

"We ask those in the civil

service and foreign service to examine their conscience to discern if their continued service in this administration is not in fact helping prop up a regime that, at best, abets large-scale corruption, lies, and cover-up, and at worst, is a party to them," it pointed out.

"We believe the Supreme Court or the Senate must do their respective duties to serve the truth, but the President has a greater obligation," FSGO said.

"She has the greatest stake in the Senate investigation coming out with the truth, or the people will conclude she hides behind lies and uses the power of her office to smother the truth," FSGO stressed.

Rumor monger

Malacañang called FSGO "rumor mongers" and that its allegations against the President were "irresponsible and sweeping" and not based on proof.

"The statement of the 'ex-men' is irresponsible and sweeping. It is easy to point a finger but where is the proof?" Deputy presidential spokesperson Lorelei Fajardo said.

She said that as former Cabinet members, FSGO should have been more responsible in their statements.

"From respected government officials, now they have simply become rumor mongers. What a sad turn of events," she said.

She added that the FSGO is barking up the wrong tree as it should be focusing its efforts on the Senate which is investigating the NBN-ZTE deal controversy.

Fajardo noted that the Senate should just have accepted the solution offered by Chief Justice Reynato Puno on the issue of executive privilege raised by Neri.

"Unfortunately the Senate has taken a stonewalling stance and refused to heed the proposal of the SC," she said.

Fajardo pointed out that Neri would have appeared before the Senate to testify had the Puno proposal been accepted.

"The President has rescinded Executive Order 464 and Memorandum Circular 108 and it was refused. The ball is in the hands of the Senate and the ex-men should ask the Senate to play ball," she said.

"We only wonder why they insist on making it appear that the President has not done her share in the search for truth," she added.

- Whh Non Alquitran and Marvin Sy