

# Palace sees nothing wrong with distribution of infrastructure projects

by MARVIN SY  
Philtar.com

Malacañang sees nothing wrong with the distribution of infrastructure projects across the country under the national budget as long as these are not tarnished with issues of graft and corruption.

In a radio interview, acting Executive Secretary Cerge Remonde said there should be no issue about which congressional districts would benefit from the budgets for infrastructure projects, be it the allies or enemies of the President.

Remonde stressed that there should always be a presumption of regularity in the processes of the government and until proof is presented confirming any irregularities, no malice should be imputed on the budgetary alignments.

He noted that the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism's report on infrastructure projects of the administration for the last three years of the term of

President Arroyo clearly showed that both allies and foes of the administration received funds for their districts' projects.

"There is nothing wrong if we pour in infrastructure projects in the various districts. Some of the districts happen to be those of the President's sons but it was also noted that the others were from the opposition," he said.

"What would be wrong is if there were anomalies, if there was graft and corruption in the projects," he added.

Remonde defended the administration's thrust to line up a lot of infrastructure projects this year and in 2010 as legacy of the President and to pump prime the economy.

The President has vowed to aggressively implement infrastructure projects across the country, particularly in provinces that form part of the super regions.

"I think you will agree with me that the building of roads and

bridges and other infrastructure projects, this is what is really needed by our provinces," he said.

Remonde acknowledged that the members of Congress should not have any role in the implementation of the projects and that the assumption should be that there is no irregularity in the assignment of projects to various districts.

He cited the case of the President's son Diosdado "Dato" Arroyo of Camarines Sur, which the PCIJ noted received 86 public works contracts worth P342.65 million in the first 15 months of his term as congressman.

"So maybe that is good for the people of that district in Camarines Sur they got the son of the President as their congressman and they got all those projects. But let's face it, that province is also considered as one of the poorest provinces in the country," he said.

# Senator commends Journey's lead singer

Gordon: Pineda typifies successful global Filipino

SENATOR Richard Gordon commended Arnel Pineda, the Filipino lead singer of an American rock band Journey, last April 30 for exemplifying the international success of the Filipino.

Gordon, chairman of the Senate tourism committee, filed Senate Resolution 1039, which commends Pineda's achievements and exhorts his talents that inspired national pride and personified the success of the Global Filipino.

"Arnel Pineda is an inspiration to many Filipinos, a man who triumphed not only in singing competitions, but against hardship and adversity, through hard work and with full faith in his talents and capabilities," he said in a statement.

Pineda rose from obscurity to international fame by believing in himself and his talent. When his mother passed away when he was 12 years old, his family became heavily indebted and led him to the streets to fend for himself for years.

He had to quit school and help his father by collecting glass bottles, newspapers, and scrap metal and selling them to recyclers, even as he took on

odd jobs, like cleaning scrap metal and docked ships.

The hard and trying times pushed Pineda to pursue his dream so that, at the age of 40, after singing with different bands in the Philippines and Hong Kong, he was discovered by the lead guitarist, Neal Schon, of Journey.

Journey's first album produced with Pineda as the lead singer, *Revelation*, debuted at No. 5 in the Billboard Top 200 album charts in the week following its release and achieved platinum status by October 1, 2008.

"Arnel is a good example of how Filipinos should face challenges in life. He used his talent and strived hard to achieve his dream. He has become a renowned singer and has brought pride and honor for our nation," Gordon said. (*Inquirer.net*)



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