

Written by Bobby M. Reyes

Saturday, 19 March 2011 14:20 -

Part IV of the Series, “Filipino Armageddon”

{xtypo_quote} As if you're waiting for a mishap to happen **naman**. If we stay positive, ask God's forgiveness and change people's bad ways I know everyone will be spared. – Virgie Novenario-Atienza {/xtypo_quote}

Thus, Virgie Novanario-Atienza, a New Jersey-based granddaughter of Filipino revolutionary hero Don Belong de los Reyes, posted in the Facebook, after she read Part III of this series.

This writer replied to Ms. Virgie, who is a first cousin of his wife, Cenry de los Reyes: “While we can ask God to spare us from any calamity, the Almighty helps those who help themselves. You can read the suggested ways in Part 4 of my series on how we can mitigate the disastrous effects of the Big One, if it comes in our lifetime. Thanks for reading my essays, Bobby.”

This series started with this writer’s assertion, if not a fearless forecast, that “ [A 9.0-Magnitude Quake Will Destroy Metro Manila and Kill At Least 5.53-million Inhabitants Even Without a](#)

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Tsunami Following It

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Metro Manila has been lucky so far in avoiding a big quake (and as stated in Part III), the last time a temblor’s epicenter was in its Eastern Valley Fault was in 1771. Prior to that year, another quake’s epicenter was located in the National Capitol Region (NCR) in 1658. One-hundred thirteen years elapsed between 1658 and 1771. Yes, 240 years have passed between 1771 and this year. That is too long a time and pressure builds up in the earth’s faults as the years go by. Whether we like it or not, a time will come when the pressure steadily building up in the NCR ’s faults will just be released, like steam is released in a pressure cooker. The Big One can come any day now. It can come today. Or tomorrow. Or 20 or 30 years from now.

A Filipino Version of “The Manhattan Project”

Here are again the suggested ways that the Filipino people and their government can do to prepare with the urgency of a Filipino version of “The Manhattan Project” for the coming of the Big One (as discussed primarily in this article, [RP Must Undertake Earthquake-Education and Retrofitting Programs In View of Recent Quake-caused Disasters](#)):
[](#)

1.0 The people must not wait for their government, especially the local-government units (LGU), to implement “Earthquake Education and Preparedness Program” (E2P2).

1.1 As done in California and other states in the United States, the Philippines must undertake a crash “E2P2” with public-and-private schools, parishes or congregations and business firms grabbing the initiative and organizing themselves further by establishing local emergency shelters complete with survival gears and first-aid (medical) provisions.

1.2 The schools, parishes and congregations (SPC) must organize also their own volunteer fire brigades, search-and-rescue and/or disaster-emergency teams, so as not to rely on national-government agencies (NGA) or LGU to help them when disaster strikes. In the first place, the NGA and/or the LGU may not be able also to respond immediately as a catastrophic earthquake will virtually render most roads and bridges impassable.

1.3 The SPC and private firms must conduct quarterly drills, so as to make perfect their local-evacuation plans and the E2P2.

2.0 The tenants of edifices, as may be assisted by LGU or NGA inspectors, must engage

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the services of structural engineers to inspect all buildings and infrastructures, identify the so-called “brittle buildings,” whether owned by private landlords or public entities and recommend ways and means to reduce the risks. This step will naturally include a review of architectural-design records and on-site inspections, if not testing of structural components.

2.1 Doing the building inspection and retrofitting programs will minimize damage and destruction when and if a strong earthquake or other natural disaster hits the homeland. The recommended programs can make the edifices and people working or living in them have better odds of surviving massive quakes or other natural calamities.

2.2 There should be a law that mandates the diversion of the office or apartment rentals to an “Inspection-and-Retrofitting Fund” when the building owners refuse to participate in the said activity.

2.3 The Philippine government and the private sector must tap local and Overseas-Filipino research scientists, engineers, educators, and the civil service to bridge the many gaps between earthquake research, emergency management, and the general public’s training and capability – before it is too late.

2.4 When estimates for retrofitting programs may be more-costly than in constructing new edifices, then a proposed consortium of public-and-private owners and the insurance industry may devise ways and means of funding the replacement of the “brittle buildings” with new

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quake-resistant edifices that are built with the latest state-of-the-art designs and construction methods.

2.5 There should be a new law that mandates the use of carbon-fiber meshes in wrapping concrete columns and walls, so as to hold them when the building is shaken during earthquakes or typhoons.

3.0 Funding the E2P2 and the Building Inspection-and-Retrofitting Program (BIRP).

3.1 The public must force the national policy-and-decision makers to use entirely the congressional pork-barrel expenditures of more-than PHPesos 32-billion (spelled with a “B” and worth about US\$800-million @ \$1:PHP 40) per annum to be used exclusively for the E2P2 and the BIRP. Doing this suggestion will boost the Philippine economy and in a matter of 10 years, the expenditure of 320-billion pesos will dramatically change the survival chance of people living in the NCR and other urban centers of the country.

3.1.1 The country’s college and high-school students must lead the public in forcing the end of the congressional pork barrel and using the funds instead for the E2P2 and the BIRP.

3.2 The recommended fund of PHPesos 32-billion per year can be increased by levying owners of private buildings, which will be replaced with quake-resistant edifices, with mandatory contributions to the said fund.

3.3 The Overseas-Filipino communities may be persuaded to buy bonds for the said E2P2 and the BIRP. There will be more incentives for the Filipino expatriates if the assistance of multinational and multilateral agencies is secured in form of grants or outright assistance in technology and/or equipment.

3.4 There should be a crash program to build first earthquake-proof new homes at more-secure (elevated) sites for the families of the NCR's (and other urban center's) police, fire and military personnel. Why? As had happened in New Orleans, LA, during the Hurricane Katrina tragedy, many of the so-called “First Responders” resigned at the height of the emergency, as they had to take care first of their own families. By securing the safety and comfort of the families of the “First Responders” will allow them to concentrate in doing their jobs for the security and safety of the general public.

4.0 There are other steps in generating more funding (for instance by cutting down on government waste and devoting the savings to the E2P2 and BIRP) and mechanisms that would balance the technical issues with the need to generate a political will among the people and their leaders (political issues).

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4.1 Perhaps the President of the Philippines must convene a more-representative type of a National Emergency Calamity Council (NECC), which will be tasked to coordinate with the private sector, including representatives from churches, congregations, landlords and business owners.

4.2 The NECC can then proceed to make operational the suggestions in this series with the urgency of a Filipino version of “The Manhattan Project.”

(To be continued . . .)

To view Part I, please click this link: [A 9.0-Magnitude Quake Will Destroy Metro Manila and Kill At Least 5.53-million Inhabitants Even Without a Tsunami Following It](#)

To read Part II, please go to: [How and Why a 9.0-magnitude Quake May Wipe Out Metro Manila and Cause 5.530-million Deaths](#)

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Here is Part III: [Mother Nature Has Spared Metro Manila of Big Quake As It Has Been the Epicenter Only in 1658 and 1771](#)

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