

## Revisiting Raul Roco and Nene Pimentel (Part II) - MabuhayRadio

Written by Bobby Reyes

Tuesday, 24 July 2007 01:16 - Last Updated Monday, 16 February 2009 11:24

---

### *Part II of a Three-part Series*

This series continues with the author's first-person narrative of how the 2004 presidential bids of Raul Roco and Nene Pimentel probably fizzled out in 2000 and 2002, respectively.

In June 2001, then Senate President Pimentel was the guest speaker at the Philippine Independence Grand Ball of which our Media Breakfast Club (MBC) cosponsored. Manong Nene treated my kin and supporters and me like family.

In the meantime, Senator Pimentel, a fellow Atenean, and I were exchanging e-mails and I was telling him about my many ideas for reforming, nay, "reinventing" the country. He kept informing me also about his proposals for the Federal Republic system of government, the absentee voting and the Dual-Citizenship bills.

I stopped sending Mr. Roco any e-mail because nobody cared to reply to me. By the way, my e-mails to Mr. Roco did not bounce, so I assumed that his office staff was able to read all my previous correspondence.

Written by Bobby Reyes

Tuesday, 24 July 2007 01:16 - Last Updated Monday, 16 February 2009 11:24

---

On the other hand, Senator Pimentel sent me his own unsolicited e-mails from time to time. Like when he visited Legazpi City in my home region of Bicolandia. He told me in a short e-mail about his trip to Albay and that he was sorry that he could not proceed to my home province.

In April 2002, Senator Pimentel was with a bipartisan panel that came to the Philippine Consulate General for consultation with the community about the absentee-voting bill. At that meeting, the then chairman of the National Federation of Filipino-American National Associations (NaFFAA) lambasted me at the open forum for being a "fake" community leader, a pretender and he warned the visiting Filipino legislators not to mind me. (Then presiding officer, Senator Ed Angara, ruled the NaFFAA chairman "out of order.") At that time, it was public knowledge that I invited the delegates who would still be in Los Angeles to an MBC meeting the next day and to a reception in the evening at the residence of Dr. Carlos Paredes-Manlapaz, the Ilocano National Association president. Dr. Manlapaz and I co-chaired the reception at his home. Only Senator Pimentel and Congressman Salacnib Baterina (First District, Ilocos Sur) attended both receptions. Senator Pimentel advised me that public figures have to bear unprovoked insults most of the time. He said that I should just continue with my community work that he was hearing about.

Mr. Roco at the Rotary Club In June 2002, Ernie Delfin, then the highest-ranked Filipino-American officer of the Rotary Club of Cerritos, CA, asked the MBC to cosponsor a luncheon reception for visiting Education Secretary Roco. Knowing that I personally knew Mr. Roco, I was asked by the Rotarians to introduce him. I did and I thought I did well. In fact, Romeo P. Borje, the dean of Filipino-American columnists, quoted my introduction of Mr. Roco, whom I described as the "hot, hot, hot – because of his home region's fondness for the pepper – Filipino public official who was destined for higher positions." After the luncheon and the photo ops, I asked Mr. Roco in the Bicol dialect if he needed me for anything in the Philippines. He replied that he was busy attending to the education problems in the country and that he would soon contact me. He never did contact me. I told some close friends in July 2002 that it would be impossible for Mr. Roco to win the Philippine presidency because he did not listen to me in 2000 about doing the homework and organizing properly his supporters. While probably my statement bordered on arrogance, the turn of events would prove me absolutely right.

### The Pimentel's Senatorial Line-up

In the meantime, I kept on exchanging more ideas over the Internet with Senator Pimentel.

## Revisiting Raul Roco and Nene Pimentel (Part II) - MabuhayRadio

Written by Bobby Reyes

Tuesday, 24 July 2007 01:16 - Last Updated Monday, 16 February 2009 11:24

---

When he arrived in Los Angeles in June 2003, he sent me an e-mail as soon as he arrived from San Francisco and even left a message in my cellular phone. When he and I finally were able to talk over the phone, he accepted immediately his fifth appearance in an MBC-sponsored event. The day he was to leave for Washington, DC, his brother-in-law phoned me and said that Nene wanted me to represent the Overseas Filipinos in the senatorial slate and that I should forget running for governor of Sorsogon. He said that perhaps the country would need my ideas more. When Senator Pimentel returned to Los Angeles from Washington, DC, we began the process of discussing the composition of the senate slate. Then Camarines Sur Vice Governor Imelda Papin was in town that week. I invited Ms. Papin to speak at the MBC and to join me and Senator Pimentel for lunch after the meeting. And so the historic meeting happened. Senator Pimentel accepted my idea of a Papin senatorial candidacy, as we needed a woman, especially one who has filed a sexual-harassment case (an action that could be argued in defense of womanhood). I said also that having two Bicolnons in his PDP-Laban senatorial slate would make a good argument why Mr. Pimentel would do well in the Bicol Region even if Mr. Roco and incumbent Sen. Greg Honasan, who is my distant cousin, would run for the presidency.

In the third quarter of 2003, Senator Pimentel named me as his spokesman to the Overseas Filipinos. I had, therefore, to cut my ties with the Roco Camp. I told Senator Pimentel that it would be better if I could be named the executive director of the PDP-Laban and begin reorganizing the party chapters for the 2004 presidential election. He said that he would discuss it with the party leaders but nothing came out of my suggestion.

The Pimentel Camp believed that I could be a major asset to a presidential campaign for the following reasons: I am a grandson-in-law of Sen. Isabelo "Don Belong" de los Reyes of Vigan, Ilocos, who was the founder of both the Philippine Independent Church and the Philippine labor movement. I considered also the Leyte-Samar region as my adopted second region – after Bicolandia. I have the linkages with Region VIII, having been elected as the first non-Samarnon or non-Leyteno chairman of the Board of the Leyte-Samar Association (LSA), Inc., of Los Angeles, CA, in December 2000. I joined the LSA in 1994. Then I was at home in Cebu City, where my father earned his law degree and where my half-sister was born and resides. Three of my uncles also married Cebuanas, aside from the fact that one of Don Belong's son was married to a Cebuana and his family operates one of the biggest optical clinics in Cebu. I had been also a member of the Cebu Brotherhood, Inc. (CBI) of Los Angeles since 1993. ***(Editor's Note: Bobby Reyes became the first non-Cebuano member of the CBI Board of Directors in February 2008, after he co-chaired the annual Sinulog Festival in Los Angeles in January 2008. He served again as the Sinulog Festival co-chair in January 2009.)***

## Revisiting Raul Roco and Nene Pimentel (Part II) - MabuhayRadio

Written by Bobby Reyes

Tuesday, 24 July 2007 01:16 - Last Updated Monday, 16 February 2009 11:24

---

I told my friends, especially fellow Bicolnons, Ateneans and Bedans, that it would still be painful emotionally on my part to campaign against Mr. Roco. But I believe that Senator Pimentel would make a better President than all the present presidential aspirants, including President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, whose husband, Mike, was my classmate in several subjects at the Ateneo de Manila College of Law. The time has come for me to choose the interest of the country over friendship (with Mr. Roco), over kinship (with Senator Honasan, if he runs) and over collegiate camaraderie (with President Arroyo's husband).

To be continued . . .

[Joomla SEO powered by JoomSEF](#)