

## Government Should Serve the Truth (The FSGO's Manifesto) - MabuhayRadio

Written by Gov. Ben Sanchez

Wednesday, 05 March 2008 13:04 - Last Updated Wednesday, 05 March 2008 13:07

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The man who wrote the introductory letter to the FSGO (acronym for "former senior government officials") statement – Vicente "Ting" Paterno – was the chairman of the Board of Investments when I was one of its governors. It was Mr. Paterno who invited me to join the government and leave the private business sector because at that time he believed that then President Ferdinand Marcos was telling the truth when he sought to reform government.

Mr. Paterno, a Cabinet member during the Marcos regime, left the government in 1980 (long before EDSA) a year after I decided to quit BOI when a presidential crony tried to coax me to approve an export project that was patently overvalued in order to access loan money from a government bank.

Mr. Paterno's clear logic, articulacy and incisive analysis of the situation are clearly stamped in the statement released by the group of at least 71 Former Senior Government Officials (FSGO) who issued the statement below which appeared in all major newspapers today.

Secretary Paterno's holds the honor of graduating "With Distinction" from the Harvard Business School.

Following is a note from ex-Minister Vicente Paterno and the text of the FSGO ad:

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Dear All,

I am member of this group having been a member (1970-1980) of the Marcos cabinet, which I was able to resign from in November 1980; Deputy Executive Secretary for Energy in Pres. Cory's time (March 1986 to February 1987 when I ran for the Senate); and was one of 5 members of the Senior Economic Advisory Council (Cesar Virata, Wash Sycip, Jaime Augusto Zobel, Gaby Singson) to President Estrada which resigned en masse in August 1998.

The former senior government officials (FSGO) 2nd public statement will be published as an advertisement, planned for issue on Wednesday 5th March.

I am not signatory as member of BBC ExCom, but am (to) provide FYI my co-members this copy albeit in a different personality as an FSGO.

Peace!

Ting Paterno

Government Should Serve the Truth

We

are former senior government officials who have served the government in the administrations of Presidents Marcos, Aquino, Ramos, Estrada and Arroyo. Today we see how the institutions of government are being manipulated, weakened, and corrupted. We are committed to help rebuild and strengthen the government institutions in which we worked to serve the public good rather than personal and partisan interests.

Our people can only trust a government that governs with truth. We grant government so much power over our lives, resources and shared future because it governs with truth. When there are serious doubts about government's adherence to truth in matters of vital public interest, no real

peace or substantive unity is possible until such doubts are resolved. We cannot move on without the truth.

We are now in the midst of great disturbance because we doubt the truth behind the NBN-ZTE deal. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo had belatedly cancelled the contract because of reported "anomalies." Hence, most Filipinos reasonably conclude that corruption tainted this deal. For several months now at the hearings of the Senate investigation, we have all seen disturbing glimpses of the truth about alleged corruption that attended the NBN-ZTE deal. We are outraged by what we have seen thus far.

The President said recently: "Ang taumbayan galit sa katiwalian. Ganoon din ako, galit din ako sa katiwalian." We affirm the first sentence. We ask that the second sentence be demonstrated in action. Having belatedly cancelled the contract to show her supposed anger with reported corruption in this deal, the President must now follow through with actions to determine the actual "anomalies" and establish responsibility for these. Otherwise, canceling the contract could be interpreted as an effort to cover up corruption rather than to pin it down and root it out.

Government should serve the truth and the President should act immediately and decisively to enable the truth to emerge. The most credible forum thus far to establish the truth behind the NBN-ZTE controversy is the Senate investigation that has persevered in seeking facts and witnesses. The Senate is a functioning democratic institution that can help the people recognize the truth about this divisive matter. We thus call on the President to cooperate fully with the Senate and stop denigrating it so that its investigation can be completed as soon as possible. In particular, we ask the President to lead in showing government's commitment to the truth by taking the following actions which can reasonably be done within one week:

First, order acting Chair Romulo Neri to resume his testimony before the Senate investigation without any restrictions or limitations;

Second, order the release and delivery to the Senate of all public records pertaining to the NBN-ZTE deal, starting with the minutes of the NEDA Board meetings on the project;

Third, suspend DOTC Secretary Leandro Mendoza and Assistant Secretary Lorenzo Formoso, as the DOTC was the lead agency for this project;

Fourth, suspend DENR Secretary Lito Atienza, PNP Director General Avelino Razon, Deputy Executive Secretary Manuel Gaité, Deputy NAIA Chief Angel Atutubo, Senior Supt. Paul Mascarinas and all those involved in the attempt to prevent Senate witness Jun Lozada from testifying; and

Fifth, order a halt on any further attempts by such agencies as the DOJ, DENR, NBI and BIR to harass Senate witness Jun Lozada and those who are testifying in behalf of the truth.

The Filipino people can make democratic institutions work to fight corruption by even the most powerful people in our midst. We can do this based on the power of reason and the power of

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the people's communal action. We deserve a government that governs with truth.

The President must demonstrate her commitment to the truth through these actions within one week as more and more of our people make their judgment. She must do these or be condemned as complicit with, and in fact, as being at the center of, the lies surrounding the NBN-ZTE deal.

The President must do these or the people will make their judgment and act on the basis of their conviction. # # #

Editor's Notes: Governor Sanchez can be reached at [altez91@gmail.com](mailto:altez91@gmail.com) . He welcomes readers' feedbacks as hearing from readers interest him a lot.

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