

# The PCGG must go

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**T**HERE are so many factors that justify the abolition of the Presidential Commission on Good Government, created by an executive order of President Cory Aquino.

It should not pain President PNoy, son of Cory, to stop the abuses of the agency created with all honest intentions by his mother.

First thing to consider is whether or not the main objective of the PCGG has been accomplished. The agency placed under sequestration so many companies suspected to be owned by friends of Ferdinand Marcos.

The first duty is to make sure that the assets of these firms are not dissipated, encumbered, sold or touched in anyway by anybody.

The record shows that many sequestered firms have been bled dry. And who did the bleeding? Officials of the PCGG themselves, including so-called fiscal agents. There have been cases of what is described as fraud. One case involves the former chairman itself, Camilo Sabio, brother of a justice of the Court of Appeals.

Take the case of Philippine Overseas Telecommunications Satellite Corp., mother company of Philippine Communications Satellite Corp. (Philcomsat).

Ferdinand Marcos saw the prospects of the project. He required the National Development Company to provide the seed money.

Philcomsat is the only company I know that paid its major investor, the NDC more than five times its investments.

True, the private investors were friends of Marcos including Manuel Nieto, former ambassador to Spain, Juan Ponce Enrile, and the late Potenciano Ilusorio.

True too is that Marcos had some investments in the project through two companies held by Jose Y. Campos.

Campos surrendered the companies to the PCGG claiming he was fronting for Marcos.

After the companies – POTC and Philcomsat – were sequestered they were bled. The P800 million invested in a non-sequestered company, Philcomsat Holdings, is all gone.

PHC could not have missed making money if it had stayed its charted course which was or is to invest the funds in the money market. It went to other projects that turned sour.

In fact, the looting was so glaring and, the officers of the company were able to create personal accounts using company funds. The looters roam free to this day.

It is time to ask the PCGG how much it has raised from sale of sequestered companies the proceeds of which should be used to finance the land reform program.

Reports come sporadically. There is need to compare the amount collected to the extent of expenses in running the PCGG. Is it possible that the agency spent more than it collected? Let the PCGG answer the question.

The PCGG has been in existence for the past 25 years. It filed cases

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upon cases in the Sandigan. It has won very few of such cases.

The others pending resolution are not pursued with vigor.

We have to know how many cases have been filed. How many have been won? How many are pending and for how long? How much has been recovered from the so-called cronies of Marcos?

President Aquino can abolish the PCGG and transfer its functions to the Office of the Ombudsman. After all the agency and the Ombudsman have identical functions except that the PCGG was created for the specific purposes of going after the so-called cronies of Ferdinand Marcos.

We might say the agency is a result of class legislation made possible through an executive order.

The other sad part in the creation of the PCGG is it fomented hatred for Marcos and his family while the need of the hour is to recover stolen wealth, jail the crooks and as a result unite the nation.

The PCGG has not come close to that objective. On the contrary, its infamy is spreading far and wide. How does one explain the case of Camilo Sabio who is alleged to have taken money that belonged to the state?

Four presidents have come and gone. None of them ever succeeded in getting the PCGG to do its job. On the contrary, some PCGG officials may have lined their pockets thick while they continue to prevent the sequestered companies from growing and helping the economy.

This is economic sabotage. Yet, we continue to hate Marcos. The man is dead. As Brutus said in Julius Caesar, "the evil that men do lives after them. The good is oft interred with their bones." So let it be with Marcos but recover whatever he stole from the country's coffers.