

**9<sup>th</sup> NATIONAL CIVIL ENGINEERING SYMPOSIUM, 2014 (U.P. ACES)  
CHALLENGE OF ROAD CONGESTION: INNOVATING TO ADDRESS  
THE APPALLING PROBLEM ON TRAFFIC  
SEPTEMBER 11 & 12, 2014, 1:10 P.M. TO 1:40 P.M.  
UNIVERSITY THEATER, UP DILIMAN, QUEZON CITY**

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE ORGANIZER OF THIS FORUM FOR INVITING ME TO SPEAK ON A SUBJECT THAT IS CLOSE TO EVERYBODY'S HEART BUT CAN'T SEEM TO FIND A SOLUTION IN ANYBODY'S BRAIN. THIS IN SPITE OF THE UNDISPUTED FINDINGS OF JICA THAT WE ARE LITERALLY THROWING AWAY BILLIONS OF PESOS IN THE TRAFFIC JAMS THAT ENGULF US ON A DAILY BASIS.

IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT ONLY A FOOL WOULD ACCEPT TO SPEAK AT THIS TIME OF THE DAY BECAUSE THE INCLINATION IS TO SLEEP RATHER THAN LISTEN. BUT I AM A LAWYER AND SO I HAVE BEEN CALLED WORSE. MORE SO BECAUSE I CAN'T SEEM TO TURN DOWN A REAL CHALLENGE AND I AM HERE TO TRY TO KEEP YOU AWAKE. HOWEVER, IF YOU DECIDE THAT SLEEP WOULD BE A BETTER OPTION THEN I MUST ASK FOR A FAVOR. PLEASE DON'T SNORE AS YOU MAY WAKE THE PERSON BESIDE YOU. UP TO NOW I STILL CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHY A LAWYER WOULD BE ASKED TO SPEAK BEFORE ENGINEERS AND ENGINEERING STUDENTS ABOUT TRAFFIC. IF THE ORGANIZERS FEEL, AT ANYTIME, THE INVITATION WAS WRONGLY SENT, PLEASE SIGNAL ME AND I WILL BE MORE THAN WILLING TO PACK UP MY THINGS AND GO HOME. THEN AGAIN I MAY GET STUCK IN THE NOW FAMOUS KATIPUNAN TRAFFIC.

THE SOLUTION, IF THERE IS ONE, TO TRAFFIC IS MOST OF THE TIME PLACE SPECIFIC. THAT IS WHY EVERYONE, AND ANYONE WHO HAS BEEN IN ANY OF OUR TRAFFIC JAMS CAN ONLY CONCLUDE THAT EVEN OUR TRAFFIC IS "MORE FUN IN THE PHILIPPINES." EVERYONE AND ANYONE CAN AND WILL HAVE A SUGGESTION, A PROPOSAL, A JOKE, OR A SOLUTION. IF YOU ARE SHARP ENOUGH TO CARE OR LISTEN SOME COMMENTS SEEM TO MAKE MORE SENSE THAN THOSE WHOM WE PAY TO MAKE SENSE OF OUR TRAFFIC WHICH, AT BEST, CAN BE DESCRIBED AS CHAOTIC.

MIND YOU, I AM NOT TALKING ABOUT TRAFFIC JAMS BECAUSE THAT IS BEST DESCRIBED BY MY WIFE, WHO IS A PSYCHOLOGIST, AS DOWNRIGHT "SUICIDAL."

SO TODAY, I WOULD LIKE TO INTRODUCE TO YOU THE BASICS OF PROVIDING A SOLUTION TO MOST PROBLEMS. HOWEVER, IT IS, IN MY MIND, DIRECTLY, AND APPROPRIATELY APPLICABLE TO TRAFFIC. MIND YOU, THIS IS NOT MINE. IT IS CULLED FROM STUDIES BY EXPERTS THAT HAVE SUCCESSFULLY APPLIED IT IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD WHERE IT HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN VARYING DEGREES. SO HOLD ON TO YOUR SEATS!!

NO.1. "SHOOT ALL THE TRAFFIC MANAGERS." WRONG!!! BUT KEEP IT AT THE BACK OF YOUR MINDS FOR IMPLEMENTATION AS A LAST RESORT WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS. AND DO NOT HESITATE BECAUSE YOU THINK YOU WOULD BE WASTING BULLETS.

HOWEVER, ALL LEVITY ASIDE, THE SOLUTION TO MOST PROBLEMS IS THE PROPER AND STRICT ADHERENCE TO THE PRINCIPLE OF THE THREE "Es". THEY ARE EQUALLY IMPORTANT AND FAILURE IN ONE PROBABLY MEANS ONLY PARTIAL SUCCESS.

I KNOW THAT BY THE LOOK IN YOUR FACES YOU CANNOT WAIT FOR WHAT THE THREE Es ARE SO PLEASE WAKE UP NOW OR YOU WILL MISS OUT THEY ARE:

EDUCATION  
ENFORCEMENT AND  
ENGINEERING

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT ANYONE WHO GETS BEHIND THE WHEEL OF ANY VEHICLE MUST BE EDUCATED. I DO NOT MEAN FORMAL SCHOOLING AS WE CAN ALL SEE THAT EVEN ONE WITH A PHD CAN BE A REALLY LOUSY DRIVER. IN ADDITION, THAT PERSON CAN BE TOTALLY UNAWARE OF HOW TO CONDUCT HIMSELF OR HERSELF

WHILE DRIVING. IN OTHER WORDS WHEN I SAY A PERSON IS AN EDUCATED DRIVER, I MEAN THAT HE OR SHE KNOWS THE BASIC RUDIMENTS OF DRIVING E.G.

- (1) SPEED LIMIT
- (2) NO SWERVING
- (3) STAYING IN THE RIGHT LANE
- (4) USE OF PROPER SIGNAL LIGHTS
- (5) WHERE TO STOP AND WHERE NOT TO STOP
- (6) WHERE NOT TO PARK  
ETC., ETC., ETC.

HOWEVER, IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO KNOW!

THE EDUCATED DRIVER MUST HAVE THE WILL AND THE COMMITMENT TO FOLLOW NOT ONLY THE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS BUT ALSO THE BASIC RULES ON COURTESY AND ETIQUETTE WHILE HE OR SHE IS BEHIND THE WHEEL. IN ADDITION, IT IS INCUMBENT UPON THE DRIVER OF A VEHICLE TO SEE TO IT THAT THE VEHICLE IS WELL MAINTAINED AND THAT IT IS "ROAD WORTHY". IN FACT, I BELIEVE THAT MOST MAJOR ACCIDENTS ARE CAUSED BY, "NAWALAN PO NG PRENO", "SUMABOG HO YUNG GULONG" OR SOME KIND OF MECHANICAL FAILURE. AND IT IS CLEARLY VISIBLE THAT IF YOU LOOK CAREFULLY, YOU WILL FIND THAT MOST HEAVY VEHICLES HAVE TIRES THAT HAVE NO OR VERY THIN TREADS AND ARE AS BALD AS YOUR SPEAKER.

BEFORE I LEAVE THE MATTER OF "EDUCATION," CAN ALL OF THOSE WHO HAVE A DRIVER'S LICENSE IN THE AUDIENCE RAISE THEIR RIGHT HAND PLEASE?

(Q ON "CONTROL" OVER VEHICLE")

ENFORCEMENT – ONCE UPON A TIME MANY YEARS AGO – PROBABLY BEFORE MANY OF YOU WERE EVEN BORN, THERE EXISTED IN THE PHILIPPINES A PERSON WHOM WE CALLED A "POLICEMAN" WHO ARRESTED CRIMINALS, HELPED PEOPLE IN DISTRESS, AND ALSO ISSUED TICKETS TO TRAFFIC VIOLATORS. TODAY, WE HAVE TRAFFIC ENFORCERS, AND TRAFFIC AIDES WHO DISAPPEAR AT THE FIRST DROP OF RAIN OR WHO ALSO ARE NOWHERE TO BE FOUND. WHEN IT IS TOO HOT OF COURSE WE HAVE TRAFFIC LIGHTS THAT DON'T SEEM TO MAKE SENSE AND ARE SOMETIME OPERATED BY AN INVISIBLE PERSON WHO GOT HIS TRAINING IN A SCHOOL IN CLARO M. RECTO. APOLOGIES TO THE LATE SENATOR WHO PROBABLY CAN BE CALLED THE BEST PRESIDENT WE NEVER HAD.

WE ALSO HAVE KOTONG COPS, HULIDAP COPS, ETC. ETC. SO THE QUESTION IS ALWAYS INVARIABLY ASKED: "WHY ARE FILIPINO DRIVERS DISCIPLINED INSIDE CLARK, INSIDE SUBIC, INSIDE THE OLD CAMP JOHN HAY, AND OTHER PLACES AROUND THE WORLD WHERE

ENFORCEMENT IS TAKEN SERIOUSLY AND APPLIED ALMOST WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOR. THERE ARE MANY REASONS WHY ENFORCEMENT IN THIS COUNTRY IS NOTHING MORE THAN A FARCE. BUT LET ME SHARE WITH YOU A STORY THAT TO ME WILL GO A LONG WAY IN ELIMINATING THIS PROBLEM BUT NO ONE SEEMS TO BE REALLY INTERESTED IN SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING.

( SEATTLE POLICE STORY)

-CONCLUSION! – BETTER PAY =  
BETTER COPS = BETTER TRAFFIC

IN MY OWN EXPERIMENT INSIDE THE TOLLWAY WHEN I WAS WITH PNCC MANY YEARS AGO, I ACHIEVED A MODICUM OF SUCCESS BY SHEER RELENTLESSNESS IN ENFORCEMENT WITHIN THE TOLLWAYS. WE REACHED AN ALL TIME HIGH OF APPREHENDING 1000 MOTORISTS A DAY WHICH RECORD HAS NOT EVEN BEEN CLOSELY THREATENED. IN ADDITION, WE RAN THINGS ACCORDING TO THE BOOK, AND WITHIN A YEAR, I PAID THE ULTIMATE PRICE, I HAD TO RESIGN BUT WITH ADMIRATION FROM EVEN MY FRIENDS WHO WERE PART OF THOSE WHO WERE APPREHENDED FOR ONE VIOLATION OR THE OTHER. PARDON PLEASE THE LITTLE ADVERTISEMENT.

( STORY OF LEONY GONZALEZ)

IN MY MIND, THIS E IS THE MOST IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT CAN BE EDUCATIONAL AND A DISCIPLINED POPULATION OF DRIVERS CAN BE ACCOMMODATED IN SPACE THAT NORMALLY WOULD BE INADEQUATE. SEE FOR YOURSELF THE SOMETIMES IRRATIONAL FLOW OF TRAFFIC ALONG THE TOLLWAYS AND YOU WILL SEE WHAT I MEAN. PICTURE THE 4 LANE HIGHWAY WHERE YOU HAVE A SLOW POKE OCCUPYING THE OVERTAKING LANE, THEN YOU HAVE A TRUCK NEXT TO THAT SLOW MOVING VEHICLE AND THEN YOU HAVE ALL OF THESE CARS THAT HAVE TO OVERTAKE USING THE RIGHT-MOST LANE. SO YOU HAVE GOOD AND ADEQUATE ENGINEERING BUT NO ENFORCEMENT AND

CHAOTIC IS STILL THE EFFECT. MY EXPERIENCE SUPPORTS THE SUPERIORITY OF THIS VERY IMPORTANT “E”.

ENGINEERING – MOST OF YOU, IF NOT ALL OF YOU, WILL PROBABLY DISAGREE WITH ME MAYBE EVEN LYNCH ME IF I SAY THAT THE LEAST IMPORTANT OF THE 3 Es IS THIS E. MIND YOU I DID NOT SAY, NOT IMPORTANT, I SAID LEAST IMPORTANT BUT NEEDED NEVERTHELESS. I CANNOT OVEREMPHASIZE THE FACT THAT ROADS, BRIDGES, SIDEWALKS, TRAFFIC LIGHTS, PEDESTRIAN LANES, BIKE LANES, INTERSECTIONS, MUST ALL BE WELL PLANNED, WELL DESIGNED, AND WELL BUILT.

I REALLY DO NOT HAVE THE TIME TO ELABORATE MORE IN DETAIL ABOUT THE NEED FOR GOOD ENGINEERING BUT YOU ARE ALL ENGINEERS OR STUDENTS THEREOF SO I PRESUME YOU ADEQUATELY UNDERSTAND THE NEED AND ITS PROPER PLACE IN THE 3 Es. SUFFICE IT TO SAY THAT POT HOLES, BASKETBALL COURTS IN THE STREETS, PARKING IN PROHIBITED PLACES, STOPPING ANYWHERE AND THEN SCRATCHING

YOUR HEAD AND SAYING “BOSS NAGMAMADALI LANG HO, PASENSYA NA LANG, OR “KILALA MO BA AKO?” OR KILALA KO SI MAYOR OR SI CHAIRMAN OR SI WHATEVER” HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO PLACE IN ANY SYSTEM IF YOU NEED TO FIND A SOLUTION TO THIS MESS SOMEONE HAS DESCRIBED AS THE “GATES OF HELL.”

LASTLY, I READ IN THE PAPERS THAT WE, IN THE PHILIPPINES, HAVE ADDED TO THE 3 Es. IS IT ANOTHER E? NO! IT IS SIMPLY TO PUT SOMEONE IN CHARGE WHO UNDERSTANDS THE 3 Es AND HAS THE BALLS, (PARDON THE FRENCH) TO PUT ALL THESE IN PLACE AND IMPLEMENT, IMPLEMENT, IMPLEMENT. BEFORE I CLOSE THEN, LET ME SHARE WITH YOU AN ENGINEERING MARVEL THAT WILL BE COMPLETED IN 30 MONTHS AND WILL PROVIDE THE ANSWER TO EDSA’s IMAGE AS THE LARGEST PARKING LOT IN THE WORLD.

( PRESENT S3 AND C6)