

More telecom execs summoned on P2M 'bribe'

BY PETER TABINGO

THE Sandiganbayan First Division has summoned four more officials of the Philippine Communication Satellite Corp. (Philcomsat) and Philippine Overseas Telecommunications Corp. (POTC) to explain the alleged disbursement of P2 million for the graft court.

The officials are Luis Lokin, Henry Locsin and Sikini Labastilla, directors of POTC and Philcomsat, and Virgilio Santos, external auditor of Philcomsat Holdings Corp. The summons was served last July 20.

Santos prepared Philcomsat's expense report that was submitted to the Senate as part of an inquiry into allegations that appointees of the Presidential Commission on Good Government on the Philcomsat board were using the firm as a "milking cow."

The expense report included the item "9/23/05 cash for Sandiganbayan, tro, potc-philcomsat case—P2,000,000" which was taken as payment for an injunction order issued by the graft court in Civil Case No. 0198 on Sept. 23, 2005 stopping the election of offic-

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ers by the PHC's stockholders.

The Sandiganbayan justices said the expense report was a slur on its integrity and summoned PHC president Manuel Nieto, PHC director Philip Brodett and PHC assistant vice president and accountant Johnny Tan to submit a written explanation on where the fund really went.

The three officials were warned that they will be held in contempt of court if their explanation is unsatisfactory.

Nieto's lawyer, Manuel Lazaro, has said he may not be able to present his 91-year-old client as he has been diagnosed for symptoms of Alzheimer's disease.

He said "some cruel, heartless, and vicious persons" took advantage of Nieto's condition and "caused him to sign documents that are questionable, if not unlawful."