

GMA, Nograles fare badly in polls

By JESS DIAZ

Filipinos appear generally satisfied with most of President Arroyo's programs, although they don't like or trust her, according to a Social Weather Stations (SWS) survey commissioned by an ally of the President.

In another SWS survey, Speaker Prospero

Nograles received the lowest mark for any Speaker since the SWS began regular monitoring in 1990.

The nationwide SWS survey commissioned by Quezon Rep. Danilo Suarez showed that two in three Filipinos, or 67 percent, were dissatisfied

with Mrs. Arroyo, while only 17 percent were satisfied.

Suarez, chair of the House oversight committee, told reporters yesterday that the survey he commissioned cost him P2 million.

The survey was conducted last July 13-17 and had 1,200 respondents.

"I can't understand it. Our people are satisfied with her programs, but she remains highly unpopular," Suarez, a staunch ally of Mrs. Arroyo and one of her favorite companions on her trips abroad, said.

When asked why, in his view, the President is unpopular, he said, "It's the media. The rated programs have been hitting her, and she has been getting bad press."

The President has been receiving negative trust and satisfaction ratings in SWS and Pulse Asia surveys.

The Quezon congressman said he commissioned the survey to check whether the President is really unpopular and to determine if his committee's positive report about her programs jibes with people's sentiments.

"I am happy that our report jibes with what the people feel about these programs," he said.

The SWS poll showed that 52 percent of respondents were satisfied with government efforts to reduce electricity rates, while 38 percent were dissatisfied.

In the area of fighting terrorism, 47 percent were satisfied, while 32 percent were dissatisfied. A larger 50 percent were satisfied with how the administration fights criminality, with 33 percent dissatisfied.

The other programs and their satisfaction ratings were: helping the poor, 54 percent; implementing housing projects, 52 percent; lowering water rates, 52 percent; reduction of mobile phone rates, 51 percent; making medicine prices affordable, 47 percent; collection of taxes, 43 percent; protecting the environment and natural resources, 35 percent; helping victims of natural disasters, 67 percent; repair of major roads, 70 percent; and installation of traffic signs along roads, 70 percent.

However, high dissatisfaction marks were recorded for some major programs. Exactly half of respondents, for instance, were dissatisfied with government efforts to eradicate graft and corruption.

A larger 56 percent of the people were not happy with the way the administration fights inflation, while 53 percent thought the national leadership does not keep its promises.

Some 52 percent were of the view that the administration failed to ensure that no family would ever go hungry.

In contrast with Mrs. Arroyo's 17-percent satisfaction and 67-percent dissatisfaction ratings, De Castro received a satisfaction rating of 58 percent, with 28 percent dissatisfied.

A larger 71 percent were satisfied with Villar, while a much larger 75 percent were satisfied with Sen. Francis Escudero. The two are widely believed to be eyeing the presidency in 2010.

Nograles received a dissatisfaction rating of 41 percent, with 25 percent satisfied; while 37 percent were satisfied with Local Government Secretary Ronaldo Puno, with 32 percent dissatisfied.

Suarez had his name and that of his friend House Minority Leader Ronaldo Zamora included in the survey. Some 30 percent were satisfied with the Quezon congressman, 22 percent were dissatisfied, while 29 percent did not know him.

Asked if he is running for senator in 2010, Suarez gave a negative answer.

As for Zamora, 27 percent were satisfied with him, 30 percent dissatisfied, and 24 percent did not know him.

Suarez also had several government institutions covered in the survey. Mrs. Arroyo's Cabinet received

negative rating, with 41 percent dissatisfied and 33 percent satisfied.

The Department of Finance, Bureau of Internal Revenue, Bureau of Customs, and Court of Tax Appeals all got negative ratings.

On the other hand, the Senate and the Supreme Court received positive marks (47 percent satisfied and 32 percent dissatisfied for the Senate, and 43 percent satisfied and 35 percent dissatisfied for the high court).

In the case of the House of Representatives, some 38 percent were dissatisfied with its performance, while 37 percent were satisfied.

Lowest rating ever

SWS said Speaker Nograles received the lowest net satisfaction rating for any House speaker since it began regular monitoring in 1990.

Nograles' net rating went from net -12 in March to -15 in June with 18 percent satisfied and 34 percent dissatisfied, SWS said.

Vice President Noli de Castro's satisfaction rating dipped while it barely changed for Senate President Manuel Villar Jr.

De Castro's net satisfaction rating fell by 10 percentage points in the second quarter of this year after hitting an all-time high last March, SWS said yesterday.

Still, 60 percent of the 1,200 respondents said they were satisfied with De Castro's performance while 23 percent said they weren't for a net rating of +37, according to the Second Quarter 2008 Social Weather Survey.

The survey was fielded from June 27 to 30 using face-to-face interviews with 1,200 adults divided into random samples of 300 each in Metro Manila, the balance of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

The net satisfaction rating is the difference between the percentage of satisfied and unsatisfied responses.

The non-commissioned survey also found 66 percent satisfied and 14 percent dissatisfied with the performance of Villar, or a net rating of +52.

On the other hand, the net satisfaction of Chief Justice Reynato Puno remained neutral, barely changing from +2 in March to +3 (30 percent satisfied and 27 percent dissatisfied) in June.

Meanwhile, the SWS said satisfaction with top government institutions "hardly changed" in the last three months.

The June 2008 survey found 51 percent satisfied and 24 percent dissatisfied with the performance of the Senate, or a net +27, same as in March 2008.

Net satisfaction with the Senate has been at double-digit positive since mid-2006, ranging from +14 to +32, SWS said.

The survey also showed 37 percent satisfied and 27 percent dissatisfied with the House of Representatives, or net +10, up slightly from neutral +3 and +8 in the previous two quarters, the survey firm said.

It found 36 percent satisfied and 30 percent dissatisfied with the performance of the Supreme Court, or net +6, hardly changing from the neutral +5 in December and +9 in March. It used to be at double-digit positive from November 2006 to September 2007, ranging from +12 to +24, the SWS said.

The latest survey found 27 percent satisfied and 36 percent dissatisfied with the Cabinet, or net -9, barely changing from the negative -10 in March. The Cabinet has been receiving negative to neutral scores, ranging from -10 to +1, since Aug. 2005, the SWS said.

Though still at the negative level, Malacañang welcomed the small improvement in the Cabinet's rating.

Press Secretary Jesus Dureza said the SWS survey was a good development and might even be the start of a trend in favor of the administration.

"It may not be substantial but if the rating of the Cabinet went up, it can serve as an impetus to work more," Dureza said.

- With Helen Flores, Marvin Sy, Aurea Calica