The Philippine government counts another victory in its fight against corruption as it received from the United States (US) government the second tranche of the proceeds of the forfeited assets of former Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Comptroller Major General Carlos Garcia.

The United States Ambassador to the Philippines Philip Goldberg led the delegation of US officials during the turnover of the US Treasury check in the amount of $1,384,940.28 to the Philippine government, represented by Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales.

U.S. officials stated that the $1.3M check represents the net proceeds resulting from the sale of real property in Manhattan, New York (a condominium unit at The Trump Tower along Park Avenue) and the funds from two accounts maintained in Citibank, New York, which assets were traced by investigators of the US Department of Homeland Security to be part of the laundered properties of Garcia.

During the turnover ceremony held at the Office of the Ombudsman, Ambassador Goldberg remarked that "battling public corruption is a challenge that all countries face, including the United States. Meeting that challenge is vitally important to ensure public confidence in the honesty and integrity of public servants. Since retiring from the Supreme Court to serve as the Ombudsman, Justice Morales has been tireless in the investigation and prosecution of public corruption cases. The United States is very pleased to be able to assist Ombudsman Morales and her office whenever possible."

In January 2012, the United States government through then US Ambassador to the Philippines Harry Thomas, Jr. initially turned over to the Office of the Ombudsman $100,000, representing cash seized by U.S. Customs authorities from the two sons of General Garcia upon their entry in California in December 2003, which seizure triggered the investigations into the transactions entered into by General Garcia.

In her remarks, Ombudsman Morales thanked the U.S. government for its vigilant effort in recovering the subject assets.

"This milestone in asset recovery sends the message across that raiders of public coffers can no longer hide their unexplained wealth; they cannot hide their dummy bank accounts, wherever located; and they cannot hide from the long arm of the law. Ombudsman Morales stated.

It will be recalled that the Office of the Ombudsman filed criminal cases of perjury, money laundering and plunder against Garcia who eventually was convicted of perjury by the Sandiganbayan. In the last two criminal cases, Garcia pleaded to the lesser offenses of Indirect Bribery and Facilitating Money Laundering, which plea bargaining is the subject of review by the Supreme Court. Meanwhile, forfeiture proceedings are pending with the Sandiganbayan.