

**Presidential Communications Operations Office  
News and Information Bureau**

**AMBUSH INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENTIAL SPOKESPERSON AND  
CHIEF PRESIDENTIAL LEGAL COUNSEL SECRETARY SALVADOR PANELO  
OCTOBER 30, 2019  
MALACAÑAN**

**SEC. PANELO:** [Recording starts] Wala pa, sabi niya hindi raw natanggap pero... ayan. Nakalagay, in Bicol ha: “*May offer tabi sa imo si PRRD na mag Drug Czar ka for 6 months, will you accept?*” In Filipino: “*O may offer si Presidente sa’yo for 6 months na maging drug czar ka, tatanggapin mo ba?*”

**Q:** Sabi ni VP Leni, “bakit daw ipapasa sa kaniya? Ibig sabihin daw dahil ipapasa sa kaniya, may failure talaga, dahil hindi ipapasa sa kaniya kung walang failure,” anong reaksiyon ninyo?

**SEC. PANELO:** Hindi. Kasi sabi niya, ‘di ba sabi niya “failure iyong drug war, tapos hindi pala, hindi raw failure, ineffective talaga ang drug war,” so kung sa paningin niya failure iyon, eh kay Presidente hindi failure, kaya he was saying, “*Kung failure pala, o sige ibibigay ko sa’yo ang drug czar para ipakita mo, baka mayroon kang mas magaling na method*” – pagkakataon niya ito.

You know VP Leni, very rare and very good opportunity for you to show to everyone na you are not just good at criticizing. Since you’re criticizing that’s ineffective, then the President is giving you the chance to show that indeed it is ineffective and yours is effective – so this is your chance, show us.

**Q:** Sir sabi niya kung seryoso raw iyong offer, bakit mo dinadaan sa text.

**SEC. PANELO:** Eh unang-una, iyong text hindi iyon—I was not even offering her. Kumbaga that’s just a head start or parang scoop: “*O, mayroong offer si Presidente, tatanggapin mo ba?*” Magkaibigan kami eh, parang advance notice ko sa kaniya iyon para to give her time to think bago lumabas sa press.

**Q:** Sir, napadala na po ba iyong letter?

**SEC. PANELO:** Ay wala sa akin iyon, kay Presidente iyon. Eh kung ayaw na niyang tanggapin, for all you know, baka si Presidente, iyong hinihingi niya na... ano ba ‘yun, ilang year ang sabi niya, three years? Baka biglang kagatin ni Presidente iyong suggestion na iyon, baka ibigay bigla iyong maging drug czar for... until the end of his term without relief.

**Q:** Sir from your end, parang you were courteous ‘di ba sa—regarding—

**SEC. PANELO:** Yes. Oo nga, between friends, binibigyan kita ng head start – “O, may offer si Presidente, tatanggapin mo ba?”

**Q:** Sir sa tingin mo, sa pakiramdam mo parang medyo nabastusan ka? Hindi man lang siya nag—

**SEC. PANELO:** O hindi, hindi naman puwedeng mabastusan kasi dati naman kaming nagte-text.

**Q:** Sir, dati pa po kayong nagte-text?

**SEC. PANELO:** Oo, magkaibigan kami eh. We grew up to the same...

**Q:** How do you feel about it sir na hindi ka niya sinagot?

**SEC. PANELO:** Baka naman hindi niya nabasa kasi sabi ninyo nakalagay delivered, hindi read.

**Q:** [inaudible]

**SEC. PANELO:** Eh baka naman busy siya.

**Q:** Sec., ito iyong quote niya ha: “I don’t want to pay attention to it because I don’t know how serious he is,” What’s your take on that?

**SEC. PANELO:** I already telling her na the President is serious. The fact that he said that in the national television and he said that he will write her through the Executive Secretary – speaks of seriousness in the tone of his offer.

**Q:** Tapos ito pa iyong sabi niya, Sec.: “For me, the pressing and important problems in the country should not be dealt with by being insensitive and insulting others. It’s difficult to pick a fight as it will only prolong this exchange.”

**SEC. PANELO:** In the first place, it was not insulting. It was in fact a very kind gesture from the President that she will be given the venue and the avenue to show, as I said, her mettle.

**Q:** If she does not accept the offer sir, what does it say about Vice President Robredo?

**SEC. PANELO:** Well, it means that she may not be able to tackle the job. It means that she might be afraid that if she fails, then she will realize that ‘mali naman pala iyong mga criticism niya.’

**Q:** Do you think she’s afraid?

**SEC. PANELO:** Hindi natin malaman. But let us wait for the President's response. I said baka kagatin ni Presidente iyong suggestion nila. Hindi ba ang suggestion nila eh more than 6 months, 3 years – baka kagatin ni Presidente iyon, mataranta siya.

**Q:** May sinabi na po ba si Mr. President sir na kakagatin niya iyong 3 years?

**SEC. PANELO:** Hindi. Baka... Sinasabi ko, mamaya kinagat iyon eh.

**Q:** Sir sabi ni Presidente 6 months, para sa kaniya 6 months. Sa Senate, okay sir na bakit hindi na lang daw gawin ni Presidente na DDB Chair si VP Leni or Philippine—o Presidential—

**SEC. PANELO:** Alam mo kapag sinabing drug czar, ibig sabihin under sa iyo lahat ng mga ahensiyang tungkol sa drugs, 'di siya ang bossing doon. Kasi now, iyong commission that the President will create is in the Office of the President. PDEA and the PNP are all under the Office of the President. Eh kung lalagyan mo ng super body iyon—parang ano 'yan eh, akin to the commission created by President Ramos appointing the former President Erap then to be the crime czar, kaya very effective si Presidente. In fact, that was a jumpstart for her to become President. For all we know, if she takes the job and she becomes effective - that will draw her to the presidency of the land. Like I said, it's a very good opportunity for her.

**Q:** Sir, is six months enough for Vice President Robredo to prove her..?

**SEC. PANELO:** Ano iyon, for all we know, [unclear]. Kasi kung mayroon kang mas effective, six months matagal na iyon. Eh lalo na kapag kinagat ni Presidente iyong suggestion ng oposisyon eh, o 'di lalo na.

**Q:** What makes you say na possible kagatin iyong three years?

**SEC. PANELO:** Let's see. Tingnan natin, baka bukas mayroon na siyang statement. Baka sa makalawa mayroon na...

**Q:** Pero, mayroon na bang binanggit sa inyo si Presidente na—

**SEC. PANELO:** Wala pa. I am just—that's an educated guess.

**Q:** Have you talked to the President, sir, regarding this?

**SEC. PANELO:** Not yet.

**Q:** Iyong three years na sinasabi mo is pagiging anti-drug czar, not the presidency, ha.

**SEC. PANELO:** Hindi – drug czar.

**Q:** So, categorically you are positive or you believe that it is possible that the Vice President might accept the role as a—or the challenge as a drug czar?

**SEC. PANELO:** Iyong Vice President?

**Q:** Yes.

**SEC. PANELO:** Nasa kaniya iyon. But if we are speaking of possibilities, then possibilities are unlimited.

**Q:** Eh Sec., para matapos na iyong debate whether serious or not, bakit hindi pa kasi sulatan?

**SEC. PANELO:** O malay mo baka biglang may darating na sulat bukas o sa makalawa.

**Q:** Pero sir as of now, wala pa po talagang sulat na pinapadala kay Vice President?

**SEC. PANELO:** Wala, wala – baka in the making. Kaya... siguro we will friendly advice the Vice President – there might be a forthcoming—

**Q:** Pero sir, magpapadala po ba talaga ng sulat?

**SEC. PANELO:** Knowing the President, when he says something, he does it.

**Q:** Sec., ano ba ang gusto ng Pangulo na maging partisipasyon or pakikiisa ni VP Leni sa anti-drug campaign?

**SEC. PANELO:** Hindi. Kasi nga alam mo, kasi si Presidente, you criticize then, there must be something in your criticism that is better than what he is doing. So he is humbling himself, “*O sige na nga bibigay ko na sa’yo. Tingnan natin, baka naman mas magaling ka nga talaga sa akin.*”

**Q:** So, ini-expect ba ng Presidente eh huwag magsalita, tumulong na lang. Ganoon ba iyon?

**SEC. PANELO:** Hindi. ‘Pag magki-criticize ka kasi, dapat constructive. Now if it’s really constructive, then you accept the offer.

**Q:** Isn’t this like a bait sir, na parang damage dito, damage din doon?

**SEC. PANELO:** No, bakit naman? If you accept it, then it’s good. As I said, if I were in her shoes I know, I will grab at the opportunity para I will know the realities on the ground.

**Q:** Sec., on another topic, kumusta ang health ng Pangulo? May payo na ba ang doktor kung papayagan siyang magtungo ng Chile or wala?

**SEC. PANELO:** Hindi. Okay na iyong sa Bangkok eh 'di ba? Kapag okay iyong Bangkok baka iyong ibang—hindi pa, wala pang...

**Q:** Sir may ano na siya, time kailan siya bibisita ng puntod, bukas ba 'to? Confirmed na bukas?

**SEC. PANELO:** I think so, yes.

**Q:** What time, sir?

**SEC. PANELO:** Baka siya...bago umalis.

**Q:** Hapon ba sir, after lunch?

**SEC. PANELO:** Hindi ko alam, basta bago siya umalis.

**Q:** Ano ang pinaka-latest na advice ng doktor niya?

**SEC. PANELO:** Hindi ko alam. Hindi ko pa siya nakakausap tungkol sa latest na (unclear).

**Q:** Sir, iyong pag-iikot sa quake-affected areas nasa schedule ni Presidente?

**Q:** Dadalaw po ba siya bago mag-Thailand, sir?

**SEC. PANELO:** Hindi ko alam. Hindi ko siya nakausap kasi—

**Q:** Sir, iyong committee to protect the journalist, iyong ranking nila ng impunity pagdating sa killings ng journalists, number five ang Pilipinas. Can you comment on this with 41 unsolved cases?

**SEC. PANELO:** Gaya ng sinabi ko noon pa, hindi natin alam kasi kung kaya pinatay ang journalist in relation to his job as a journalist, or it could be other personal motivation.

**Q:** Sir, included doon sa 41 iyong mga Maguindanao massacre victims na until now wala pa ring hustisya sa pagpatay sa kanila.

**SEC. PANELO:** Even assuming na kasama iyon, iyong pagpatay sa mga journalists o hindi naman dahil mga journalists sila, baka nadamay lang sila sa labanan ng mga pulitika diyan.

**Q:** So, you disagree na may culture of impunity sa Pilipinas?

**SEC. PANELO:** With respect to the journalists? I don't think so.

**Q:** Because iyon nga sabi n'yo nga—'yung legal process ba natin gumagalaw?

**SEC. PANELO:** Oo gumagalaw, kasi ‘di ba iyong mga nagpapatay naman kapag mayroon silang ebidensiya (unclear) nila.

**Q:** Any message sa mga uuwi sa mga lalawigan? Sa mga magtutungo sa mga sementeryo? (unclear) generally peaceful.

**SEC. PANELO:** Well, the usual advice of course is, be very careful on their travels para hindi na kayo mahirapan sa pagdalaw sa mga puntod. Habang maaga pumunta na kayo. Gaya ko pupunta na ako mamaya.

**Q:** Sir, on another topic lang. ‘Yung app sir na Waze, sabi Metro Man—

**SEC. PANELO:** Waze?

**Q:** Waze, sir. Manila daw po ang worst city to drive in sa buong mundo?

**SEC. PANELO:** Eh kung minsan naman iyong Waze is way to social waste.

**Q:** Pero sir, do you agree?

**SEC. PANELO:** When I use it lalo akong napatagal. Marunong pa ako sa Waze sa mga lugar.

**Q:** Pero sir, do you agree? Ano masasabi ninyo, sir, na ni-rank tayo na ang Manila ang worst city to drive in.

**SEC. PANELO:** Ay... hindi ko alam, we have to ask not in mockery.

**Q:** What did you use, as a Secretary or as an ordinary citizen?

**SEC. PANELO:** But ako twice ko lang ginamit lalo akong natagalan eh. Magaling pa ako sa Waze.

**Q:** No, sir. ‘Yung sinabi nila sir na tayo ang worst city—Ang Manila?

**Q:** Sa tingin mo bilang mamamayang Filipino, totoo ba iyan?

**SEC. PANELO:** You have to—kasi before you can say that you have to go to other countries that are listed to be worst traffic countries, so—para you can compare otherwise—

**Q:** So, sa tingin mo hindi pa ganoon ang Pilipinas?

**SEC. PANELO:** Hindi sa hindi pa ganoon ang Pilipinas – wala akong basis magsalita whether worst or not, kasi wala aking basis, halimbawa, ano ba ‘yung iba na countries na nakapunta na ako?

**Q:** Jakarta, Bogota.

**SEC. PANELO:** Hindi pa ako (unclear).

**Q:** Tel Aviv, sir?

**SEC. PANELO:** Huh?

**Q:** Tel Aviv, sir?

**SEC. PANELO:** Hindi rin, hindi pa ako napunta ng Tel Aviv.

**Q:** Pero sir, how would you describe the traffic situation in Manila?

**Q:** Pero sir, does it paint us a bad picture?

**SEC. PANELO:** Ay talaga namang ‘di ba, lahat tayo nagrereklamo sa traffic situation? Hindi tayo nakakarating sa oras, unless naglalaan tayo ng allowance na two to three hours, ang hirap sumakay ng mga ordinaryong tao, nakikita natin may mga pumipila, pagdating pa ng sasakyan pa makikipag-unahan pa.

**Q:** Bearable ba sir ‘yung traffic?

**SEC. PANELO:** Kumbaga, wala kang choice. Kasi kung—may choice ka ba kung nahihirapan kang sumakay.

**Q:** Sir, November na in a few days, ang promise ni Presidente—

**SEC. PANELO:** Remember ninyo sa Bacolod – nag-tricycle ako kasi wala kaming masakyan.

**Q:** But you said be creative?

**SEC. PANELO:** Huh?

**Q:** You said be creative.

**SEC. PANELO:** Exactly, instead of walking eh ‘di nag-tricycle ako. Medyo malayo-layo, tatlong kilometer, ang kuwento ng driver ng tricycle.

**Q:** Sir, November in a few days, ang promise ni Presidente, Cubao to Makati in five minutes by December—

**SEC. PANELO:** Oo ba. Eh ‘pag nagawa na iyong mga project natin [indistinct voices]

**Q:** [unclear]

**Q:** By December ang promise niya eh.

**SEC. PANELO:** Wala naman yata siyang sinabing taon.

**Q:** Mayroon.

**SEC. PANELO:** Hindi, iyong sinabi ninyo, on the assumption na iyong mga projects matatapos on time.

**Q:** So, binabawi sir ng Palasyo iyon?

**SEC. PANELO:** That’s sincerely. That was said on the basis of the projects being done on time, wala siyang binabawi.

**Q:** December?

**SEC. PANELO:** Subject to the conditions of obtaining at the time it was made.

**Q:** Sir, Ping Lacson, will the government or the President asks for emergency powers for the water crisis?

**SEC. PANELO:** Wala siyang sinabi pero ‘di ba sinabi ni Presidente—‘di ba under the law, in times of national emergency, public utilities can be taken over by the government.

**Q:** So, no declaration ng emergency powers? Wala pang decision?

**SEC. PANELO:** Wala pang sinasabi.

**Q:** Nasaan ang Presidente ngayon?

**SEC. PANELO:** Ang alam ko, kagabi nandito siya eh.

**Q:** Anong chances na pupunta siya sa mga lugar na—

**SEC. PANELO:** Palagay ko uuwi na iyon para to visit the grave.

**Q:** And the victims of—

**SEC. PANELO:** Wala akong alam na may lakad siya ngayon.



**Q:** [unclear]

**SEC. PANELO:** Baka bisitahin niya, knowing him.

**Q:** Sir, a few months ago, when asked if how the President can achieve ‘yung five-minute travel, you said—

**SEC. PANELO:** Five-minute?

**Q:** Five-minute travel. You said, surprise, ‘he has something on his sleeves,’ so, ibig sabihin sir, wala naman pala?

**SEC. PANELO:** Kung iyong mga projects na he has in mind that’s why he said that, ‘pag natapos ‘yun mangyayari nga ‘yun.

**Q:** So, when can the five-minute travel be possible sir, anong taon, sir?

**SEC. PANELO:** Are you saying all projects he has in mind.

**Q:** Sir, any reaction. Trending ngayon sa social media. May ibinibenta sa Amazon na Halloween mask na mukha ni President Duterte - \$32 each?

**SEC. PANELO:** That means he has right! Can you imagine trending all over..?

**Q:** [unclear]

**Q:** Hindi ba kayo offended na associated siyang panakot, parang ganun?

**SEC. PANELO:** Hindi. Talagang tinatakot niya iyong mga criminal eh.

**Q:** Sir, it’s intended for criminals only?

**Q:** Flattered ba kayo, sir? Flattered po ba kayo na ganun? Flattered kayo?

**SEC. PANELO:** Hindi ba ganiyan naman ang tingin, kapag daw ikaw ay nagiging topic ng blog sa ginagawa mo, niloloko ka or binu-bully ka, ibig sabihin, you have a right otherwise hindi ka papansinin.

**Q:** Sir, tama ba number mo kay Leni?

**SEC. PANELO:** I think so kasi iyong—I remember noong September... third week of September, I was in Daraga, I celebrate my birthday with somebody also, friend invited her. And I always invite her. And the year before that, she went when I invited her. She dropped by.

**Q:** And you exchanged numbers, sir?

**SEC. PANELO:** Hindi. Bakit naman may tinapay ako. And then during the turnover ceremony sa ano... sa AFP Chief-of-Staff, nakita ko siya doon eh. Nandoon ba kayo noon?

**Q:** Yes.

**SEC. PANELO:** ‘Di ba lumapit ako sa kaniya and then ang sabi ko sa kaniya, “VP!” Sabi ko, “Hindi ka pumunta sa party ko? Hindi, alam mo nakapunta ako noon nakaalis ka na eh.” Sabi ko, “Tinext kita eh.” “Ay, hindi ko natanggap iyan ah.”

**Q:** May number ba kayo, sir sa kaniya?

**Q:** ‘Di ba may number ka na?

**SEC. PANELO:** Sabi niya sa akin, “Hindi ba bago na number ko?” “Ay siya nga pala.”

**Q:** Sir, may number kayo sa kaniya?

**SEC. PANELO:** May number. Kaya nga inano ko na...ni-record ko na iyong bago niyang number. Doon, I made sure na *[indistinct voices]*.

**Q:** *[unclear]*

**SEC. PANELO:** Eh kasi nakalagay doon sa...’di ba nakalagay doon VP Leni Robredo ‘latest’. Eh, mayroon ako noong dati.

**Q:** Sir, hindi ninyo feel iniisnab kayo?

**SEC. PANELO:** Hindi. Baka hindi niya—alam mo, sabi niya nga kung walang red baka hindi pa niya nabasa.

**Q:** Does she have your number, sir?

**SEC. PANELO:** ‘Di ba dapat nakalagay red ‘ika mo?

**Q:** Kapag sent ‘yun – sent.

**SEC. PANELO:** So, ayang tingnan mo old number niya eh. *[indistinct voices]* ‘yan dati niya.

**Q:** Sir, pa-ring.

**Q:** Sir, pa-call.

Q: [unclear]

[phone ringing]

**SEC. PANELO:** Kasi, kung hindi ito sa kaniya, 'di ba may sasagot din – wrong number. Baka tulog o baka busy.

Q: Ayaw kang sagutin, sir?

**SEC. PANELO:** Hindi, baka busy. Ako rin kung minsan—Baka naka-silent mode. Okay?

Q: Okay, sir. Thank you po.

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