PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS OFFICE
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AMBUSH INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENTIAL SPOKESPERSON SALVADOR PANELO
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SEC. PANELO: [RECORDING START] … we never interfere with the decision of the court; the court will always decide on the basis of the evidence.

Q: A-appeal pa po ba ang government?

SEC. PANELO: That's for the SolGen to decide; we will not preempt.

Q: The Palace is not bothered considering na ito iyong fourth case *[unclear]*

SEC. PANELO: Any government is concerned with any case filed by it against perceived transgressors of law. But in the final analysis it's the court that always decide whether there's a case or not against the accused.

Q: Sir, is the government not concerned kasi pang-apat na nga siyang na dismiss… so mahina po ba iyong build up ng kaso?

SEC. PANELO: From what I gather not this particular case that is dismissed; but the last one, it was dismissed because the documents or original documents were not presented.

Q: So looking forwards, sir, iyong puwedeng magawa ng—

SEC. PANELO: We have to—with respect to original documents, they are saying that they were lost but I read some accounts that they are still with [unclear]. And even assuming that they are lost, the rules of court provide for procedure [unclear]. You can still introduce copies of the original documents. You have to prove first that there was loss, and the court would allow it.

You must remember that this case is prosecuted prior to the administration. Meaning, you can't blame the present lawyers for that.

Q: But assuming sir that there were lapses in how government lawyers handled the case, can we make them accountable kasi pang-apat na siyang forfeiture case na natalo tayo? Is there any way to make them accountable?

SEC. PANELO: If there are no documents to be presented how can you make the lawyers to be accountable for that?

Q: You think, sir—are you confident sir that due process was exercised before the decision was handed down by the court?

SEC. PANELO: Which one, with respect to—

Q: Itong latest case, the Sandiganbayan.

SEC. PANELO: Well, we always consider that all courts will observe due process because that is precisely what a Constitution tells everyone – the lawyers, the courts.

Q: Sir, last night, the Senate passed a bill on a separate facility for heinous crime convicts pero wala dun sir sa mga nakalista na considered as heinous crime 'yung drug traffickers, drug trafficking, sir. Your comment?

SEC. PANELO: That was passed without—

Q: Wala sir 'yung drug trafficking dun sa considered as heinous crimes. Ang nandoon sir, treason, rape, piracy—

SEC. PANELO: Sa House lang yata 'yun.

Q: Sa Senate, sir.

SEC. PANELO: Ang House—what about the House, wala pa?

Q: Wala pa po.

SEC. PANELO: I think the House—from what I gathered before, the House included that. Anyway, there's still a Bicameral Committee, they will be discussing that.

Q: Pero sir does the Palace want drug-related crimes to be included as heinous crimes?

SEC. PANELO: It should be.

Q: Bakit po?

SEC. PANELO: Bakit? It's the most dreaded, evil that has descended on all cities of the world. It has caused dysfunctional families, it has destroyed families, it's—

Q: More than the other crimes, sir? It's the most dreaded?

SEC. PANELO: If it's not more than, it's equally the same.

Q: Sir, dun sa Maynilad lang sir—Maynilad, Manila Water.

SEC. PANELO: Yes?

Q: Ano pong status talaga, sir? 'Yung extension is it revoked?

SEC. PANELO: Well, according to the MWSS, the Board passed a resolution revoking the extension.

Q: The extension, hindi 'yung resolution before the revocation? May mga sinasabing *[unclear]*Palace perspective, wala ng extension, correct?

SEC. PANELO: The issue was it was extended prior to its maturity, right?

Q: Correct.

SEC. PANELO: And according to MWSS, they revoked the extension. So, it means that the original expiration would now be applied.

Q: So, twenty twenty…

SEC. PANELO: Two.

Q: Two?

SEC. PANELO: Yes.

Q: So, sir kasi apparently nakaka-affect sa loans nung dalawang bangko 'yung status nung revocation. So, ngayon ang sinasabi nila, it is non-extended and right now you are saying it's not going to be extended, it's going to affect their CAPEX in—'yung loans nila, meaning malulugi?

SEC. PANELO: I do think the concessionaires lost in this business venture. They have profited so much out of this concessionaire agreements that is precisely why this Government is complaining because of the onerous provisions. They didn't file income tax, they were in control on the rates. So, how can you even say that they lost?

Q: So, nothing to resolve as far as the Palace is concerned. *[unclear]*correct?

SEC. PANELO: There is nothing to what?

Q: To resolve anymore. Eh, kasi sinasabi nila they're willing to work with MWSS as far as 'yung mga onerous provisions are concerned.

SEC. PANELO: Well, as far as the President is concerned, these onerous provisions must go.

Q: With respect to the contracts that will expire 2022?

SEC. PANELO: Yes!

Q: What happens after 2022?

SEC. PANELO: Then there will be a new contract. The original concessionaires will be the same people running it or if there are better proposals, there will be biddings, of course.

Q: Sir, haharapin pa ba ni President iyong water concessionaires? Kasi last time, he gave different statements on this. Una, ang sabi niya he wants to talk to them and sabi niya recently lang, kay General Salamat na lang sila makipag-usap. So, what's the final decision?

SEC. PANELO: Then his latest statement would be the one operative.

Q: So, he will no longer meet with the water concessionaires?

SEC. PANELO: That is what he said.

Q: Sir, soundbite lang. Will he meet—will he still meet—is he interested in meeting the executives of the MWSS—Ay! Maynilad and Manila Water?

SEC. PANELO: That particular matter I have to ask the President. But with respect his last comment, I suppose that was his last statement and we have to abide by it unless he changes his mind.

MPC: Thank you.

SEC. PANELO: Thank you.

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Source: PCOO-NIB (News and Information Bureau-Data Processing Center)