

MEDIA INTERVIEW BY

PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.

FOLLOWING THE ARMY OFFICER CANDIDATE COURSE "GAIGMAT" CLASS 58-2023 GRADUATION CEREMONY

[Held at the Philippine Army Headquarters, Fort Andres Bonifacio in Taguig City | 07 July 2023]

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Good afternoon.

Q: Good afternoon, Mr. President. The proposed Horizon 3 phase of the AFP Modernization Plan requires P500 million. Where are we in this program? And are you planning any big ticket defense procurements – ?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: How are we planning to – ?

Q: How far are we in the Modernization Plan?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Oh, there are several phases to it. We are pretty much coming to the end of the first phase. We will then move on to the next schedule that we have agreed upon, especially from our supply. Where will we acquire the equipment? Where will we acquire the...? Most importantly actually is the training.

So, I have asked our commanders of the AFP and the service commanders, of course, the Chief of Staff na tingnan natin so that we... Because we have to address the present dangers that we have in the – that we are facing in the Philippines.

So, that is I think the best guide for us as to what we will procure. So, kung ano 'yung schedule natin medyo naatras lang nang kaunti because of the pandemic. But now, we are proceeding back to our established schedule.

Hopefully we will catch up and in a year, maybe two, we will already be back to where we were supposed to be at that time before the pandemic.

Q: Good afternoon, sir. Sir, may we have your comment po patungkol sa report ng PSA na tumaas ang bilang ng mga Pilipinong may trabaho batay po sa May 2023 – ?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Tumaas ang – ?

Q: Ang bilang po ng mga Pilipinong may trabaho po batay sa May 2023 Labor Force Survey?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Well, yes this is – ito 'yung una talagang priority sa atin is trabaho. Kaya't lahat naman ng ating ginagawa sa ekonomiya ay para mabigyan ng – hindi lamang 'yung underemployed na klase na trabaho kundi 'yung magandang trabaho na may future, may benefits, lahat 'yan.

Kaya't 'yun ang aming binibilang. Kaya't nakakatuwa naman at dahan-dahan ay umaakyat 'yung numero ng employed dito sa Pilipinas.

Because ang sinimulan namin 17 percent halos ang unemployment rate. Ngayon, mga six percent na lang. Kaya't iyon pa rin, iyon pa rin.

Ang puno't dulo nitong lahat ay trabaho talaga. Kailangan magkaroon ng economic activity para magkaroon ng trabaho ang ating mga kababayan. And slowly, slowly. Hindi naman basta't sinabi natin, mangyayari. Kailangan marami pa tayong kailangan talagang gawin.

The bureaucracy, the economy are complicated systems that need time to adjust to the initiatives that we have introduced in terms of policy, in terms of digitalization, in terms of the new skills and processes that we want to adopt for the issues that have been raised in terms of making the Philippines a more investor-friendly place.

And sometimes 'pag sinabi nating investor lagi nating iniisip foreign investor. Hindi lamang foreign investor, iyong local. Marami namang local na gustong mag-invest. Ayusin lang daw natin muna ang patakbo ng mga departamento. Iyon na nga 'yung ease of doing business na lagi nating nababanggit.

Q: Good afternoon, Mr. President. May we have your thoughts on the "Love the Philippines" tourism campaign video? And as a follow-up diretsuhin ko na, does Secretary Tina Frasco still enjoy your trust and confidence?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Yes, absolutely. No question.

I spoke to her. I have been actually in touch with her since all of this came to the fore. At nakita ko naman mabilis ang galaw niya that she terminated the contracts that were in question. She has also since then put under review all of the other contracts that were in the pipeline.

Kaya't sa aking palagay, she has it under control. She knows what to do. What she has done so far inspires confidence that she will fix the problem and that the campaign of "Love the Philippines" will be as successful as we hope for it to be.

All right? Maraming salamat. Thank you.

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