

## **PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE**

### **PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK**

#### **PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.**

#### **AT THE KAPIHAN WITH THE MEDIA**

[Held at Four Seasons Hotel, Prague, Czech Republic]

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Good morning. Good morning, everyone.

The official part of the visit has come to an end and we just had our very last meeting, just now, doon kami galing.

We have ended the series of meetings with business groups. But equally importantly the connections between the Czech Republic and the Philippines are more than, at least **I**, myself, **that** I expected.

Marami pala talaga tayong puwedeng gawin. Kasi hindi natin, kung minsan, ako, I'll have to admit, hindi ko nalalaman kung gaano na kagaling ang kanilang mga industriya.

Especially when it comes to electronics; especially, when it comes to cyber. All of these things, marunong na masyado sila. And very willing naman sila pumunta sa Pilipinas at tumulong sa atin, at mag-invest, at makapag-produce.

So, I was, I think that considering that it has only been a very short visit, we had many good discussions with the President, President Pavel. At he has wide a experience in NATO. So, 'yung geopolitical dito sa Central Europe, Eastern Europe, marami kaming napag-usapan.

Tinatanong naman niya sa akin 'yung sitwasyon doon sa region natin; Indo-Pacific, South China Sea, all of that.

So, again, it is of course different, but there are very distinct parallels to the Czech Republic's position vis-à-vis the Ukraine war and the Philippines' position vis-à-vis the problems and the challenges that we're facing in the South China Sea, **the** West Philippine Sea.

So, that was a very fertile area of discussion and it was good to be able to talk together with the, if you remember, together with the Chancellor Scholz as well in Berlin.

**Maraming** – it is good to hear from those leaders who **are** on the ground. How they feel, what their plans are, **kung** among gagawin nila.

It is also important for them to know what we are doing, what our plans are, what our positions are, to define them very clearly para naman maliwanag ang usapan, alam nila 'yung ginagawa natin, alam natin 'yung iniisip din nila.

So, in that regard this has been very useful.

Of course, we continue to look for investments, we continue to invite people to come into the Philippines and to make a serious capital investments, and I think that, although, mayroon tayong, pag-dating dito may agenda na. Ito 'yung mga area na pag-uusapan natin but sa usapan naparami 'yung listahan.

We discovered many other things that have potential. Hindi ko sasasabihin na siguradong mangyayari pero may potential na puwede talagang mag-partner sa Czech Republic at saka ang Pilipinas.

So, I'm very happy to say that the little time **we** spent here in Prague has been quite productive. The, and of course it is really a real pleasure to be in this city. It's such a beautiful city. I think you've seen it, it's like walking around a fairytale town.

So, all to the good. **Thank you.**

So, let's open the floor.

**Q:** Good morning, Mr. President. Sir, may we know po 'yung target po ng government, target outcome or target po nating ma-accomplish sa pag-bisita po ng Czech agri officials sa Pilipinas next week?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Well, they're going next week. In fact, wala dito sa ngayon si Secretary Laurel, Kiko, Secretary Kiko, together with the two governors na kasama natin, Governor Rodito and Governor Susan.

Pumunta sila sa cattle and dairy farm para tingnan kung ano 'yung mga puwedeng applicable dito sa atin.

Now, the meeting, the delegation, rather, from the Ministry of Agriculture of Czech Republic was supposed to come later pa this year pero dahil nga dito sa bisitang 'to, napaaga na at darating ata sila next week na.

And ang ano natin diyan, ang interes natin diyan is of course the trade in meat products. Sila, meron silang exportation ng beef, and they, ang sabi sa akin ni Secretary Kiko kanina, they have technologies para--- to make - 'yung gamot para pagandahin ang lagay ng mga inaalagaan nilang livestock.

They are even close to, they have an Avian flu vaccine, **they're** coming close to developing a Swine flu vaccine. So, 'yun ang tinitingnan natin. Not only will we procure kung sakali, but hopefully we'll produce it locally. Para mayroon tayong sariling source natin.

So, those are the kinds of areas that we're looking at. It's really in terms of trade dahil we don't grow the same products, we do not have seasons like they have here in the Czech Republic. But in terms of livestock, I think maraming, marami tayong makukuhang bagong technology.

**Q:** Sir, good morning. We noticed that in your business forums in Berlin and now in Prague, you've made a pitch for, to cover their support for the resumption of FTA negotiations between the Philippines...?

PBBM: For the?

**Q:** FTA. The Free Trade Union...

PBBM: Yes. Oo.

**Q:** I believe that you probably talked about it in your bilateral meetings with their officials. May we know how the discussions went? And what was their response? Were they receptive **to your call** for our bid for the FTA **with the EU**? Thank you.

PBBM: Absolutely, they, we always bring it up especially when we, basta't when we're in the EU, nababanggit natin na yung FTA, kailangan nang maituloy at matapos na.

Because it really is, it becomes important because we're talking about partnerships and joint ventures, **sa** G2G, and PPP, whatever.

The FTA will give it a structure, kaya't even the private corporations, either they hope that it'll be finalize already. Although the ASG plus, na-extend na tayo. So, that is a big---that is also malaking tulong 'yan.

It really, as I said it becomes important because they, everybody knows what the rules are. Both from the European side and from the Philippines side.

That's essentially what the trade agreement is about. And so that hopefully, that will provide us a structure to encourage more investment in the Philippines.

Q: Sir, sorry, can we just follow-up on that? With your talks with officials here in Prague and Berlin, what was perhaps the strongest words of support that you got for our bid to resume the FTA?

PBBM: What was the strongest...?

Q: What was the strongest words of support that you got from officials here **in Prague** as wanting to resume the FTA?

PBBM: Well, you know, they--when you talk about the FTA with the EU, it is they're consistent in their positioning and they say that yes, we are very much in favor of that.

And yes, walang, parang sa, you know this is part of the focus that EU is bringing on ASEAN and the Indo-Pacific, at least economically.

Well, also in other senses, but they, talagang ang tingin talaga sa region natin magiging driver ulit ng world economy and that's really what we are trying to be part of.

So, that's why I think EU has shown a particular interest in ASEAN, in Asia, in Indo-Pacific.

So, kasama lahat 'yan, they are part **and parcel** of that.

So, it is the common EU position. So, it is not surprising that we both, each countries that are member states of the EU are, have a consistent view on the matter.

Thank you.

**Q:** Good afternoon, Mr. President. Sir, China National Offshore Corporation made an oilfield discovery with a volume of 100 million tons in the South China Sea. So, what's your take on this and may plano po ba ang Philippines to revive 'yung joint exploration natin with China following that discovery po?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** [Laughs] Well, look, once again the sovereignty, and the sovereign rights, and our territorial jurisdiction remains a key in all of these talks.

And we cannot, we cannot, at any point somehow compromise the territorial integrity of the Philippines.

So that is going to be the main principle behind any kind of talks that we might have. So depending on **the** areas that we are talking about, that will come into play.

So let me leave it at that. That is the guiding principle that I'm following whenever it comes to all of these things.

**Q:** Sir, on related matter din po. Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang earlier said that the Philippines should stop using **the** South China Sea to instigate dispute in the region. What's your take on this? This came from, **following your statement** in Germany, last time, about South China Sea. Thank you.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Well, I don't know of any instance where the Philippines has instigated anything, at any point, both verbally, or militarily, or diplomatically.

We were busy, we are busy, we have been busy with running the country and making the best life **for** Filipinos.

We did not begin all of these problems. All of these commotion has not been caused by the Philippines. So, I don't know what they are referring to.

**Q:** Good afternoon, Mr. President. Since we have the Senate President and Speaker, may I **direct** the question to them?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Sure.

**Q:** Senate President and Speaker, may I ask you about an update on the bills pushing for economic charter change? Are you on track to pass these bills?

**SENATE PRESIDENT ZUBIRI:** Yes, we are, with Senator Angara. We have about three more hearings left and then we'll be taking it up in plenary and hopefully putting it to the vote.

And we're convincing our colleagues on the commission that we have a **[inaudible]** of this measure. But it's on point, we're on track. **We're on track now.**

**SPEAKER ROMUALDEZ:** On the part of the House, **[inaudible]**. The House passed the RBH-7 **on the second reading.**

And we now have also over three-fourths of the House **[inaudible]** **offers** support in the measure and **we're** on track **to pass the same.**

And again, we have followed the lead of the Senate and the **[inaudible]** exact **copy of the Senate resolution. Thank you.**

PBBM: So, that is the legislative state of play as it were.

The Senate is continuing with its hearings. The house has already passed on second reading.

What is more important than all of that, for me, is that it is practically in the same resolution. And that is, that, for me, is the key point in this process. We have arrived at a consensus.

We all knew how this, when this began, how contentious this was. Well, we **seemed** to be going down a common road now between the two Houses of Congress.

So, that's the, that for me is the important thing. Halos pareho, wording lang, according to style na lang 'yung **mga** differences between the version of the House and the version of the Senate.

**Q:** On the part of the House, you believe that it would be passed immediately but on **the** Senate side, although **some were** saying that they will not get the number in terms of the Senators **supporting** the bill.

**SENATE PRESIDENT ZUBIRI:** I was interviewed, **may I answer,** ma'am. Ako na lang siguro, because the House **is ready na.**

Yeah, on our side is there's a bit more challenges. You know there are some Senators that feel that the, our Charter does not need amendments. And that's why we need more time to convince them.

I don't want to move this out in plenary na I'm not comfortable with the numbers. We have to make sure that we convince our colleagues on this issue.

So, that's why we need a bit more time but it's being done, we're not, nothing is wrong. We're still going through the process.

And admittedly, the Senate takes a bit longer when discussing legislation.

When we say time immemorial, alam ni Presidente 'yan. He was with us in the Senate and he was also with us in the House when we were in the House.

So, it takes a little bit more time, but at least the process is there. We are at the bottom of the process. We, me, and together with Sonny Angara, and Senator Loren Legarda – the three authors are in relief that the economic provisions of the Constitution should be amended, particularly these three topics.

And we thank the House for also filing the exact, and passing the exact same resolution. Wala kaming, there's no difference and so if we take it **up**, we approve it then basically **we don't even need** the **bicam**. It's a, we just adopt and the process is over. Thank you.

**SPEAKER ROMUALDEZ:** Mr. President, just to add some context that **it's just** that on the part of the House.

We actually filed and passed the resolutions **[inaudible]** that **was** basically contemplated the **[inaudible]** for economic amendments **to** the Constitution.

I'm saying this for context because we've already gone exhaustively through the process which, **the Senate now** is undergoing.

**It would be the** best time because this is also the second round for us since **we've gone over the** whole process of **[inaudible]** and all deliberations.

Although, since the Senate file RBH-6, and **filed it** a month later than the RBH-7. The house also exhaustively went through the process, conducting hearings from, for 12 hours stretches **per** day.

**[inaudible]** the process and hearing all those pro and against that said measure.

But again, that context is just on part of the House, we have already been through this whole process, which in the Senate is just one point going through for the very first time. Thank you.

**Q:** Hi sir, good afternoon po. Sir, may we just get you reactions sa latest survey po na tumaas po 'yung inyo pong trust ratings? Thank you.

**Q:** Congratulations po.

PBBM: I heard a little about that. Well, of course, it's always good news. Not, you know, we do not conduct policy according to surveys.

It is good that, because I've been talking about this and since the changes that we wanted, that we've been making have been very structural and fundamental changes.

And by their very nature, such structural changes take time to trickle down and for people to feel the actual effects of what we are doing.

And I'm just happy that we are, gotten, we are beginning to get to that point where people are seeing the wisdom of some of the measures that we've undertaken, the policy changes that we've made, the legislations that we have requested from the Congress.

So, I think, I'm hoping that that's what it means.

So, good. Then we will keep going, and work even harder than we have been before.

**Q:** Thank you Mr. President. Thank you, Malacañang Press Corp.

PBBM: Maraming Salamat.

**Q:** Congratulations!

PBBM: Thank you. [applause]

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