

PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
News and Information Bureau

PRESS BRIEFING HOSTED OF MS. DAPHNE OSEÑA-PAEZ
WITH DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE (DND) SECRETARY GILBERTO TEODORO,
NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER (NSA) SECRETARY EDUARDO AÑO AND DEPARTMENT OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS (DFA) UNDERSECRETARY MA. THERESA LAZARO
JUNE 24, 2024

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Magandang hapon, Malacañang Press Corps, and welcome sa ating press briefing ngayong hapon, June 24.

We are joined today by the Department of National Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro, National Security Adviser Secretary Eduardo Año, and Department of Foreign Affairs Acting Secretary Ma. Theresa Lazaro to discuss developments related to the resupply mission incident in the Ayungin Shoal involving the Armed Forces of the Philippines and China Coast Guard.

Good afternoon, Secretary Teodoro, Secretary Año and Acting Secretary Lazaro. Let's start with Secretary Teodoro. Sir?

DND SEC. TEODORO: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

We call this press conference today to update you with events from the President's visit to the Western Command of the Armed Forces of the Philippines in Palawan yesterday.

After his talk to the troops, more specifically also to the members of the WESCOM who conducted the RORE mission to Ayungin Shoal last June 17, the President gave his commitment and resolve to support our dedicated and courageous men and women in the Armed Forces in their fight to defend our territory.

As he mentioned in his speech yesterday, and I quote, "History itself can tell that we have never, never in the Philippines, yielded to any foreign power." We owe to our forefathers the duty to keep the freedoms that they fought, bled and died for, and that they presently enjoy. Kailan man ay hindi tayo magpapasupil at magpapaapi kahit sa kaninuman. We would also like to categorically state that our policy in the West Philippine Sea has not changed.

As declared by the President in numerous instances, we will not give up an inch, not even a millimeter of our territory to any foreign power. We will continue to defend our territory and exercise sovereign rights thereon as we see fit. We reiterate that we seek neither permission nor consent from anyone in performing our sworn duties in the West Philippine Sea.

In this regard, we will continue our rotation and resupply missions on a regular basis. The welfare of our troops in the BRP Sierra Madre being a matter of utmost importance. The President has reiterated that we will not publish schedules of any RORE.

We see the latest incident in Ayungin not as a misunderstanding or an accident; it is a deliberate act of the Chinese officialdom to prevent us from completing our mission. After our visit to our troops in Palawan yesterday, where the President personally talked to the troops involved in the RORE, we have now come to the conclusion that it was not a misunderstanding or an accident. We are not downplaying the incident; it was an aggressive and illegal use of force. We, however, continue to find peaceful solutions to this issue as pointed out by the President, and I quote, “We are not in the business to instigate wars. The Philippines is a responsible state, we will continue to exercise our freedoms and rights in support of our national interest in accordance with international law.”

The President was inspired by the bravery and commitment of our soldiers in WESCOM, and they can be assured of the entire support of the Armed Forces and this administration in carrying out their duties to protect our territorial integrity, sovereignty and sovereign rights,

Thank you very much.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Thank you, Secretary Teodoro. We have room for questions starting with Chona Yu, People’s Journal.

CHONA YU/PEOPLE’S JOURNAL: Sir, good afternoon. Sir, during the meet-and-greet kahapon, what is the sentiment ng mga sundalo na naka-meeting kahapon ni Pangulong Marcos sa Palawan?

DND SEC. TEODORO: I can unequivocally state, masasabi ko na mataas ang moral ng ating mga sundalo. Sa harap nitong mga hamon na ito, lalo silang nai-inspire at paiigtingin nila ang pagpapatupad ng kanilang mga duties. At ang bisita ng ating Pangulo kahapon ay nagsemento ng kanilang morale.

Nalaman ni Presidente ang totoong pangyayari. Na-interview niya isa-isa. Nalaman din niya ang kondisyon nila ngayon, some have injuries. Nakahalubilo niya hindi lamang iyong na-injure pati iyong kanilang mga pamilya. At masasabi ko ulit na mataas ang morale ng ating mga kasundaluan.

In this regard, nagpapasalamat din ako sa mga kababayan natin na patuloy ang suporta sa ating Pangulo sa kanyang policies sa West Philippine Sea at sa ating kasundaluan. I would like to take special mention to acknowledge the various business groups like Finex Management Association of the Philippines and the like that issued a statement of support, unequivocal support. And today, I would like to thank the Association of Generals and Flag Officers for issuing a statement fully supporting the trust of this administration and praising, ginawa rin ng ating Pangulo ito, the professionalism and restraint in the face of adversity,

grave adversity by our troops. The President has said that he could not be prouder of each and every Filipino soldier and, I think all of us Filipinos shared that sentiment.

FRANCISCO/PTV 4: Hi, Sec. Senator Francis Tolentino recommends the convening of the National Security Council on how the government should respond in this issue. Will President Marcos convene the National Security Council or at least the EXECOM?

NSA SEC. AÑO? Thank you for your question. At this moment, the situation in Ayungin and the issues in the West Philippine Sea are effectively being managed by the National Maritime Council. In fact, nag-convene na rin iyong National Maritime Council and acting on the direction of the President. So, at this moment, we are not recommending the convening of the National Security Council. However, the President has the discretion to convene the full council or the Executive Committee anytime.

BALTAZAR/RADYO PILIPINAS: Secretary, good afternoon po. Would you like to comment on several vloggers' comments that the government is selling the Philippines to the United States and putting us in the brink of war and such claim, Secretary, might emanate from several developments such as enhanced military and economic agreements as well as political alignment?

DND SEC. TEODORO: All right, let me quote the President, first, "We are not in the business to instigate wars, the Philippines is a responsible state. We will continue to exercise our freedom and rights in support of our national interest in accordance with international law." Now, these allegations playing false squarely within the narrative, pumapasok ito sa naratibo ng Tsina na ginagamit nila itong mga propaganda lines na ito upang hindi natin patatagin ang ating sariling depensa at bumigay tayo sa kanilang agresibong mga galaw sa West Philippine Sea.

Salamat na lang sa ating mga kababayan na nobenta'y singko (95) porsyento sa kanila ay hindi naniniwala sa ganitong mga propaganda at paratang. Sa kabila nito, lalong umiigting ang buong gobyerno sa ilalim ng ating Pangulo at ang Sandatahang Lakas kung saan siya ay Commander-in-Chief na pagtibayin pa ang ating resolve na protektahan ang ating soberanya at ang ating sovereign rights sa West Philippine Sea.

Tayo ay may karapatan diyan na pangalagaan ito para sa ating mga kababayan at walang propaganda ng kahit sino man na sinasabing binebenta natin ang ating mga sarili ay uubra dito. Dahil maliwanag itong mga galaw ng gobyerno na ito ay para sa Pilipino at para sa mga susunod na henerasyon. Kaya hindi ko alam kung saan galing ang mga taong nananakot na ganito.

MS. OSEÑA-PAEZ: Thank you, this all the time we have for today. Thank you for all your questions, Malacañang Press Corps and thank you, Secretary Teodoro, thank you, Secretary Año and Acting Secretary Lazaro. This concludes our Press Briefing. Thank you.

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