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MALACAÑANG PRESS BRIEFING OF PALACE PRESS OFFICER AND UNDERSECRETARY ATTY. CLAIRE CASTRO
February 24, 2025 [2:13 P.M – 2:26 P.M.]

PCO ASEC. DE VERA: Magandang umaga, Malacañang Press Corps. Welcome sa ating press briefing ngayong araw, February 24.

Makakasama natin si Palace Press Officer at PCO Undersecretary Atty. Claire Castro para magbigay-linaw kaugnay sa mga alegasyon sa gold reserves. Usec. Castro?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Yes, as of now, may pronouncement ang BSP, baka puwede nating pakinggan at madinig din nila.

PCO ASEC. DE VERA: We will be projecting the statement po from BSP.

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Okay. This is the statement of BSP:

The country's gross international reserves or GIR, including gold, are held and managed solely by the BSP for the foreign exchange requirements of the country. When BSP sells gold, the proceeds revert to and stay within the GIR.

Last year, GIR rose to $106.3 billion from 103.8 in 2023. Similar to other central banks, BSP maintains a portion of its reserves in gold as part of the country's GIR mostly to hedge against offset, movements in the market price of other assets. It buys or sells gold to maintain an optimum level for this purpose – not too big, not too small. Gold prices tend to move in the opposite direction of other assets.

Therefore, Central Bank holds some gold as a hedge against huge declines in other assets in the reserves. However, gold prices can be volatile, earns little interest and has storage cost, so central banks don't want to hold too much.

So, iyan po ang statement ng BSP. At handa na po tayong sumagot sa inyong mga katanungan.

PCO ASEC. DE VERA: We're now opening the floor for questions from our Malacañang media friends. First question, Maricel Halili/News 5.

MARICEL HALILI/NEWS5: Ma'am, just a clarification: So, ibig sabihin, hands off si Presidente doon sa gold reserves? Kasi PRRD mentioned or is accusing the Marcos family of stealing and selling the country's gold eh. Just so it's clear.

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Okay. Hindi ba ito campaign joke ulit ni dating Pangulong Duterte? Hindi pa ba tayo nasanay doon sa jet ski promise niya? Na noong naniwala tayo halos sa mga sumuporta sa kaniya ay tinawag tayong "stupid". So, kapag naniwala ba tayo ulit sa sinasabi niyang ito eh baka mapagkamalan niya tayo ulit at tawagin tayong stupid.

But anyway, we will take this seriously para naman hindi magkaroon ng fake news lalo na doon sa mga taong nakikinig sa kaniya at maaaring naniniwala pa. Itong isyu na ito, October 2024 nasagot na ito. Ang nagtataka lang ako, bakit paulit-ulit na bini-bring up ni dating Pangulong Duterte. Wala ba siyang mga economic experts na magsasabi sa kaniya kung ano ba talaga ang regular activities ng BSP?

Ayon sa BSP, ang pagbibenta ng gold is just a regular activity. Why? To pump up the economy. Even at the time of former President Duterte, trabaho na ito ng BSP – hindi niya ba alam iyon?

Okay. Now, sinabi nga dito, ang pagbibenta ng gold, kung mataas ang presyo, dapat ibenta. Sinabi rin ng BSP, hindi puwede silang mag-hold that much of a gold. Okay? Now, ang nakakapagtaka lang tayo, nagtataka lang tayo, bakit hindi ito alam ng dating Pangulo. Siguro bago siya magbigay ng ganitong klaseng intriga—mapapansin ninyo sa kaniyang mga statements, hindi naman detailed. Anong proof niya, again, as a lawyer – he is a lawyer, he became a fiscal – alam niya kung papaano magkuha ng ebidensiya 'no, to get the truth. Bakit sa kaniya, parang wala siyang ebidensiya, laging paintriga. All we want here is evidence. Ipakita niya kung si PBBM o ang Pangulo ang nag-utos para magbenta ng gold reserves.

Samantalang sinabi rin ng BSP, solely and managed ito 'no. Solely managed by the BSP, so paano magkakaroon dito ng hand or pakikialam ang Pangulo?

CHONA YU/PEOPLE'S JOURNAL: Ma'am, when you said you will take this seriously, what do you mean by that? Will the government file charges against the former President?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Hindi naman po. Sasagutin lang namin iyong mga joke na lagi niyang sinasabi. Since tayo ay sumasagot dito nang seryoso, baka sa susunod sasabihin na naman ng mga supporters niya, "Hindi ninyo na naman kilala si dating Pangulong Duterte, puro joke iyan." So, ito bang mga sinasabi niya during sa kanilang rallies or campaign rallies, joke ba or seryoso? We have to know that.

CHONA YU/PEOPLE'S JOURNAL: And also, ma'am, would you know under the Marcos administration kung ilan na pong gold ang naibenta?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: As of now, wala tayong records pero sabi nga nila, according to BSP, kukunin namin ito kung inyo pong iri-require at aalamin po natin kung maibibigay po sa atin ng BSP ang records na ito. Pero ang sabi nga po nila, mas tumaas pa po ang GIR natin to 106.3 billion dollars. So ibig sabihin, hindi tayo, wala tayong problema sa gold reserves natin. So, that's fake news. Ang sinasabi nila ay fake news or mas formal na word – disinformation.

PCO ASEC. DALE DE VERA: Next question please. Do you still have questions from our media friends? Pia Gutierrez, ABS-CBN.

PIA GUTIERREZ/ABS-CBN: Hi, ma'am. Good afternoon. Ma'am, in responding sa sagot ninyo kanina regarding iyong naunang statement ni dating Pangulong Duterte, si former Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Atty. Salvador Panelo said that it's actually the government/the Marcos administration that's the biggest spreader of fake news and I quote iyong sinabi niya kanina sa ANC, "It's funny because it's the government the huge… the huge corporation of fake news. For instance, when the police assaulted the KOJC they were saying the police were not armed, they say there were no blanks in the bicam report which was the basis of the enrolled bill that was signed into law." Your comment lang po.

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: So, si Atty. Panelo iyong nagsabi na big spreader ng fake news? Unang-una, ang usapan dito ay about the gold reserves, bakit kailangan baguhin, nagda-divert ba sila? Iyong issue tungkol sa KOJC nasa korte na ito, kung mayroon mang kasuhan dito, sa korte ito. Ang pinag-uusapan natin dito iyong sinabi ni dating Pangulong Duterte patungkol sa gold reserves na walang anumang basehan.

PCO ASEC. DALE DE VERA: Thank you, Usec. Do you have more questions from MPC? Cleizl Pardilla, PTV 4.

CLEIZL PARDILLA/PTV 4: Good afternoon po, Attorney. Sa Mandaue rin po sinabi po ni former President Duterte na bumalik na po iyong droga sa Davao, Cebu and Manila. Marami na ring mga tambay ang na-holdap at mga nasasaksak. Reaction po dito.

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Davao, including Davao City? Okay, kung Davao City ang pinag-uusapan natin, sino ba ang mayor ng Davao City? 'Di ba iyong anak niya? Si Mayor Baste Duterte. So, ang ibig bang sabihin noon ay napaka-inefficient ng anak niya. Again, ulitin natin, nasaan ang data patungkol dito? At tandaan natin, noong panahon niya – at least ngayon may record kung may namamatay – noong panahon niya, mayroon bang nari-record doon sa mga biglang nawawalang mga tao? Tanong lang natin iyon. So, dapat iyon siguro alamin din niya. Pero as of now, sabi nga natin, anak niya ang namumuno sa Davao City, bakit ganoon ang kaniyang lungsod.

PCO ASEC. DALE DE VERA: Ivan Mayrina, GMA 7.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA 7: Usec., kakapanumpa ninyo pa lamang po ngayong araw na ito as Undersecretary and Palace Press Officer and you come out with guns blazing. Ito na ho ba ang magiging communication stance ng administrasyong Marcos starting today?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Siguro ganito lang po talaga ako. When it is for the truth, ilalaban natin iyan. Hindi tayo magsasagawa ng anumang fake news. Basta kaya maalab ang damdamin natin sa pagsasalita is because we know we are fighting for the truth.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA 7: Do you think it has come to a point that the administration needs to take this firmer stance against fake news because it has already gone to worrisome levels?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Yes, we have to fight for that, we have to fight against fake news. Otherwise, iyong mga tao na naniniwala sa kanila maiba nag isip nila, maiba ang diskarte nila. It is our obligation specially tayo mga taga-media dapat nating iparating sa taumbayan ano ba ang katotohanan. Iwasan natin iyong mga intriga na walang basehan. As of now kasi puro intriga eh. Puro intriga ang pinapasak, pinapasok sa utak natin at nakakasira ito sa bansa, sa ekonomiya, hindi po ba?

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA 7: Thank you.

PCO ASEC. DALE DE VERA: Maricel Halili, News 5.

MARICEL HALILI/NEWS 5: Hi, ma'am. Good afternoon once again. Ma'am, just so mas maintindihan po namin iyong mandate ninyo, are you also considered as the presidential spokesperson?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: I am not a spokesperson because the President will be speaking for himself. Okay, ang mandato ko is to explain, to expound anuman ang pronouncements, direktiba ng Palasyo and Pangulo; but I will not consider myself as a spokesperson.

MARICEL HALILI/NEWS 5: Ano po ba ang difference ng Press Officer sa spokesperson and Press Briefer?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Okay. May mga pagkakataon po kasi na kapag… magkakaroon po kasi if I'm not mistaken magkakaroon mismo ang Pangulo ng once a month na presscon. So, siya po talaga iyong… kung anuman iyong kaniyang nais sabihin, sa kaniya po manggagaling. Ako is more on the pag-explain, pag-expound at kung may kaunting gap doon tayo papasok.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA 7: Ma'am, sorry but of course whatever you tell us in press briefings would have to have the authority of the President?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Of course. Yes, sir.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA 7: Thank you.

PCO ASEC. DALE DE VERA: I think we don't have any more questions, Usec. This is where we end our press briefing for this afternoon. Thank you very much, Usec. Castro, and the Malacañang Press Corps. Good afternoon.

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Thank you po.

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