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MALACAÑANG PRESS BRIEFING
OF PALACE PRESS OFFICER AND PCO UNDERSECRETARY CLAIRE CASTRO
WITH DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY DOMINIC XAVIER IMPERIAL
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PCO USEC. CASTRO: Magandang umaga, Malacañang Press Corps. Welcome sa ating press briefing ngayong araw. Simulan natin sa good news na hatid ng administrasyon ni Pangulong Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. sa Bagong Pilipinas.

Pinipilahan pa rin at binabalik-balikan ng ating mga kababayan ang bente pesos kada kilong bigas sa mga Kadiwa ng Pangulo, mapa-Metro Manila o Pangasinan. Hiling ng ilan nating kababayan, sana magkaroon ng marami pang Kadiwa ang Pangulo na mas malapit sa kanilang lugar para mas madali itong mapuntahan lalo na ng mga senior citizen. Laking pasasalamat din ng mga mamimili dahil ang dating inaasam lang na murang bigas, abot-kaya na nila ngayon.

Alinsunod sa direktiba ng Pangulo, palalawigin pa ng Agriculture Department ang 20 pesos per kilo rice program sa iba't ibang bahagi ng bansa. Magkakaroon din ng Phase 2 sa July at Phase 3 naman sa September. Panoorin po natin ito:

[VTR]

Isa pang good news: Nahalal bilang pangulo ng ika-78 session ng World Health Assembly sa Geneva, Switzerland si Health Secretary Teodoro J. Herbosa. Ang WHA ang pinakamataas na decision-making body ng World Health Organization na tumatalakay sa mga isyung pangkalusugan ng mundo. Ito ang unang pagkakataon na naging WHA president ang Pilipinas. Bilang pangulo, pamumunuan ni Herbosa ang sesyon na nagsimula noong May 19 at magtatapos sa May 27.

Nito lamang Martes, naipasa sa pagpupulong ang kauna-unahang "Pandemic Agreement" matapos ang tatlong taong negosasyon na paigtingin ng 194 WHO member-states. Nakapaloob sa kasunduan ang pantay na access sa life-saving pandemic related products at mga mekanismo para mapigilan, mapaghandaan at matugunan ang susunod na pandemya.

Samantala, tinanaw ni Pangulong Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. ang WHA presidency bilang pagkilala sa adhikain ng Pilipinas na isulong ang world health. Paggunita rin ito sa kontribyusyon ng Pinoy healthcare workers na matapos ang COVID-19 pandemic. Dagdag ng Pangulo, pagkakataon din ang WHA presidency para maipakita sa mundo ang pagbibigay-halaga ng Pilipinas sa kalusugan. Tumutugma rin aniya ang mga polisiya ng bansa sa mga minumungkahing solusyon sa paglutas ng health issues ng mundo. Narito po ang video:

[VTR]

Samantala, nakatakda namang dumalo si Pangulong Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. sa 46th ASEAN Summit sa Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia mula May 26 hanggang 27. Para bigyan tayo ng detalye sa

mga magiging aktibidad ng Pangulo roon, makakasama natin si Department of Foreign Affairs Deputy Assistant Secretary Dominic Xavier Imperial. Good morning, sir.

DFA DEPUTY ASEC. IMPERIAL: Maraming salamat, Usec. Claire, and magandang umaga po sa inyong lahat.

As mentioned by Usec. Claire, the President will be participating in the 46th ASEAN Summit in the 2nd ASEAN-GCC Summit in the ASEAN-GCC-China Summit, all happening in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 26 and 27 May. The President will be joined by leaders of other ASEAN member-states and various dialogue partners at the invitation of Malaysian Prime Minister Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim who serves as this year's ASEAN chair under the theme "Inclusivity and Sustainability."

The summit is a mechanism for leaders to provide policy-direction for ASEAN, build consensus of matters of mutual interest and exchange views on key regional and international issues. The President is expected to attend nine leaders'-level engagements – six of these will be held on May 26 and these are some of the meetings that will be attended by the President: So, there is the Plenary Session and the Retreat Session of the 46th ASEAN Summit; and then, there will be three leaders' interface meetings with the parliamentarians with the ASEAN Business Advisory Council and also the representatives from ASEAN youth; and finally, on that day, there will be a signing ceremony of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on ASEAN 2045.

And then, there will be three more meetings that the President will be participating in the following day and these are the 16th Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area Summit or the BIMP-EAGA Summit which the President himself will be chairing; and then, there's also the 2nd ASEAN-Gulf Cooperation Council Summit; and finally, the ASEAN-GCC-China Summit.

Now, in all these engagements, the President will continue to uphold and promote Philippine interests in ASEAN such as deepening security and stability in the region, economic cooperation and broadening engagement with dialogue partners.

Furthermore, the President will continue to underscore the Philippines' sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction in accordance with international law including the 1982 UNCLOS and the 2016 arbitral award.

Meanwhile, the leaders are also expected to discuss various global issues that impact the region and beyond – these include the situation in Myanmar, the United States new tariffs policy and other geopolitical and geoeconomic challenges that affect the region.

To date, there are 22 outcome documents that are expected to be issued during these summits – some will be adopted and some will be noted by the leaders. And, just a few of these outcome documents include the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the ASEAN Vision 2045, the Joint Statement of the 2nd ASEAN-Gulf Cooperation Council Summit and the Joint Statement of the ASEAN-GCC-China Summit.

Finally, the President will possibly have a number of bilateral meetings with his counterparts at the sidelines of the summits. I'll stop there and happy to answer po iyong mga katanungan ninyo.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: Good morning, sir. Sir, iyong bilateral meetings of the President, kaninong mga heads of state ito?

DFA DEPUTY ASEC. IMPERIAL: We are still in the process of confirming but we are hearing of possible bilateral engagements with Lao, with Kuwait and also with Vietnam.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: So, tatlo so far.

DFA DEPUTY ASEC. IMPERIAL: So far.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: Okay. And, who among the cabinet officials will join the President in his trip to ASEAN?

DFA DEPUTY ASEC. IMPERIAL: Well, as of today, what we have in the delegation… of course, he will be joined by the Secretary of Foreign Affairs and I understand since there will be focus on the economic as well, so the Secretary of Department of Trade and Industry is also joining.

TRISTAN NODALO/NEWSWATCH: Hi, sir, good morning. Sir, you've mentioned that the President is expected to raise the issues of Philippine sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction. Last ASEAN-China meeting, na-bring up din po iyong para mapabilis iyong Code of Conduct. So, ano pong iba or at least ipu-push pa ng President when it comes to ma-finalize iyong Code of Conduct nang madalian?

DFA DEPUTY ASEC. IMPERIAL: Yes. So, just to refresh everyone, back in 2023 the foreign ministers of ASEAN, they agreed to fast track the discussions on the COC and this is what we are backing on during the summits. The President certainly will push for it. He will raise this with the leaders of the ASEAN. And going back to that statement, it's a reaffirmation of concluding it hopefully among ASEAN and China in three years since 2023, so we're looking at 2026, next year.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7: Sir, good morning. You said that there will be at least 22 documents to be adopted, among them the Kuala Lumpur Declaration and many others. What specific documents are of specific importance to the Philippines?

DFA DEPUTY ASEC. IMPERIAL: One of them, of course, would be the joint statement, because this will be agreed upon by the leaders. So, we are looking at the joint statement of the ASEAN leaders, joint statement also with GCC and China leaders. I cannot give you the details because these are still being negotiated. But certainly, it will cover the three pillars in ASEAN, so we're looking at peace and security, perhaps on maritime cooperation, and then there's also the economic cooperation. We're all familiar with the usual discussions on, for example, digital transformation within ASEAN, so those things will be covered. I understand there will be something about artificial intelligence. And on the socio-cultural, the people-to-people ties and, of course, looking at climate change, that will be part of the discussions. So, those are the broad topics that I can share as of the moment.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7: Any trade agreements that are expected to be finalized especially in the context of the US tariffs?

DFA DEPUTY ASEC. IMPERIAL: No trade agreements will be finalized, but certainly this will be a topic during the summit.

ACE ROMERO/PHILSTAR: Good morning po. You mentioned that one of the topics to be discussed is iyong US tariffs. Ano po particular iyong mga lines o kaya iyong mga ipu-push ng ating Pangulo with regard to this, given na malaki iyong nakikitang impact nito sa global economy?

DFA DEPUTY ASEC. IMPERIAL: So, regarding the US unilateral tariffs, I'd like to go back to what the economic ministers did a few weeks back, which they issued a joint statement among ASEAN regarding the unilateral tariffs. And gusto ko lang po i-stress doon iyong magiging action ng ASEAN member-states which is, of course, they're concerned but at the same time, the region will not do a retaliatory measure. Instead, palalaganapin po natin iyong maigting na more on bilateral and also multilateral engagement with the US para po maging maganda iyong kalabasan ng discussions na iyon.

As you may recall, we have a team that went to Washington, D.C. earlier. I understand it was led by Secretary Go and also by DTI Secretary Roque. So, they were there to discuss this bilaterally with the United States. But under the ASEAN framework, mayroon din po tayong discussions on that, the details of which though still being discussed and negotiated and, hopefully, we'll be able to come up with something in more detail after the summit. But definitely, nasa agenda ng ASEAN iyan, and the President is also looking very much into it.

ACE ROMERO/PHILSTAR: So, iyong mga nabanggit po ninyo, iyong additional engagements, iyong no retaliation, more dialogue with the US, ito po ay inaasahan nating susuportahan ng Pangulo sa kaniyang engagement sa ASEAN?

DFA DEPUTY ASEC. IMPERIAL: Yes. So, the way to see it is mayroon tayong ginagawang bilateral discussion with the United States. And under the ASEAN framework naman, the President is very supportive of those non-retaliatory measures, instead, we are going to do something na iyong it will be beneficial to all the ASEAN member-states as a whole.

ALVIN BALTAZAR/RADYO PILIPINAS: Sir, good morning. Is there a chance for the President to meet with the Filipino community?

DFA DEPUTY ASEC. IMPERIAL: I have no information about the meeting on the Filipino community in Malaysia. But happy to share that information in case we have confirmation.

ALVIN BALTAZAR/RADYO PILIPINAS: Just to give us an idea, sir, ano ba ang profile ng ating mga Filipinos sa Malaysia?

DFA DEPUTY ASEC. IMPERIAL: So, we have around 200,000 Filipino nationals in Malaysia, and varied po iyong kanilang profile. So, we have professionals. We also have non-professionals in the field of services, for example. And many of them also are spread out in Malaysia so, yeah, that's the …what we have for Malaysia in … our Filipinos in Malaysia.

TRISTAN NODALO/NEWS WATCH: Hi, sir, ako po ulit. Sir, may reports din na lumalabas na it's expected din na mag-vote ang ASEAN for Timor-Leste's membership. May ganoon po ba, sir, na part ng ASEAN Summit? And if yes, ano po ang magiging position ng Philippine government because last time, may issue with Arnie Teves and Timor-Leste and ASEAN?

DFA DEPUTY ASEC. IMPERIAL: The Timor-Leste accession to the ASEAN is certainly in the agenda. So, kasama po siya sa magiging discussion ng leaders natin. And we are following, actually, a roadmap. There's a roadmap for Timor-Leste to be able to accede to the ASEAN, and we are following that.

And as regards naman po doon sa case ni Teves, it's actually a DOJ matter so I'm not able to comment on that. But certainly, we are supportive of Timor-Leste joining the ASEAN.

ACE ROMERO/PHILSTAR: In a recent phone conversation with Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar, nabanggit po na pag-uusapan din iyong sa Myanmar, iyong sa ceasefire, ano po iyong mababanggit kaya ng Pangulo with regard to the Myanmar situation given that the topic was raised during the previous conversation with the Malaysian leader?

DFA DEPUTY ASEC. IMPERIAL: Well, as you know, the Philippines will be the incoming chair of ASEAN next year, so ang napag-usapan po nila is really how Malaysia, as the current chair, and the Philippines, as the incoming chair, will be able to work together para magkaroon ng progress doon sa nangyayari sa Myanmar.

So, that's the general discussion but hoping we'll be able to share more details as the two leaders meet in Malaysia.

ACE ROMERO/PHILSTAR: So, will he express support for the ceasefire na pinanawagan ng Malaysian government?

DFA DEPUTY ASEC. IMPERIAL: Yes. So, that's part of the agenda also of the President, to call for more or to deepen iyong cooperation on the ceasefire within Myanmar.

PCO ASEC. DE VERA: Do we have more questions for Deputy Assistant Secretary Imperial?

JOJO MONTEMAYOR/MALAYA: Sir, regarding doon po sa Myanmar. Sir, ano po ang magiging position ng Philippines doon sa pagtanggap ng … iyong junta leader ng Myanmar sa ASEAN?

DFA DEPUTY ASEC. IMPERIAL: So, under the ASEAN framework, of course, the way we work is non-interference and those some other principles under the ASEAN and under the TAC. So, kung anuman po iyong magiging decision ng current na junta ngayon sa Myanmar that is acceptable to ASEAN, then we will welcome that. So, that would be also the position of the President.

JOJO MONTEMAYOR/MALAYA: Sir, how about iyong sa humanitarian situation po sa Myanmar?

DFA DEPUTY ASEC. IMPERIAL: On that, I understand, there are ongoing discussions with the various groups in Myanmar. As you know, when the earthquake hit a few weeks back in Myanmar, ang talaga pong naging focus there was the humanitarian assistance for the country, so all the ASEAN member-states, including the Philippines, of course, nagbigay po tayo ng tulong sa Myanmar. And iyong framework po na iyon ng ASEAN, that's what we utilized to be able to reach the hardest part sa loob ng Myanmar to send the assistance.

JOJO MONTEMAYOR/MALAYA: Sir, isa pang issue, sir, regarding the GCC Summit at saka iyong China-ASEAN-GCC, sir, ano iyong magiging policy for building relations with the GCC countries, including Russia?

DFA DEPUTY ASEC. IMPERIAL: Of course, the reason why we're having this summit is we really want to improve and deepen the cooperation between the two regions – so it's ASEAN and GCC. As for the ASEAN-GCC-China, there is a—this is a, of course, an initiative of Malaysia to hold ASEAN-GCC-China Summit being the chair this year. And for Malaysia, they want to … under their chairship, they want to be able to harness iyong potential na cooperation, bringing together

not just the GCC and ASEAN but also China. We're looking at more, I believe, on more economic cooperation among those things.

PCO ASEC. DE VERA: Thank you, Deputy Assistant Secretary Imperial. Usec. Claire?

PCO USEC. CASTRO: Thank you very much, Deputy Assistant Secretary Dominic.

DFA DEPUTY ASEC. IMPERIAL: Thank you, ma'am.

PCO USEC. CASTRO: At bago po ang ating question and answer, narito po ang isang mahalagang anunsiyo mula sa ating Pangulo. It's time to realign government with the people's expectations. President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., has called for the courtesy resignation of all Cabinet Secretaries in a decisive move to recalibrate his administration following the results of the recent elections. "This is not business as usual," the President said. *"The people have spoken and they expect results, not politics, not excuses. We hear them and we will act."*

The request for courtesy resignations is aimed at giving the President the elbow room to evaluate the performance of each department and determine who will continue to serve in line with his administration's recalibrated priorities. This is not about personalities – it's about performance, alignment and urgency. Those who have delivered and continue to deliver will be recognized, but we cannot afford to be complacent. The time for comfort zones is over. This step marks a clear transition from the early phase of governance to a more focused and performance-driven approach.

The President emphasized that while many have served with dedication and professionalism, the evolving needs of the country require a renewed alignment, faster execution and a results-first mindset.

Government services will remain uninterrupted during this transition and the President reiterated that stability, continuity and meritocracy will guide the formation of his leadership team moving forward.

With his bold reset, the Marcos administration signals a new face – sharper, faster and fully focused on the people's most pressing needs.

So, hindi na po natin siguro ikakagulat ang pagtawag po ng courtesy resignation ng Pangulo sa kaniyang mga cabinet secretaries, heads of agencies with cabinet rank, other heads of agencies and presidential advisers and assistants.

Handa na po tayong tumugon sa inyong mga katanungan.

KRIZEL INSIGNE/IBC 13: Hello po, Usec. How will this call for courtesy resignation affect the ongoing projects and programs of the administration po?

PCO USEC. CASTRO: Maliwanag din po ang sinabi ng Pangulo, hindi po maaapektuhan kung anuman po ang pending at existing projects habang ito ay may transition. At tuluy-tuloy lamang po ang pagtatrabaho ng mga cabinet secretaries at ng mga tao sa gobyerno. At mas maganda po itong mapakita rin ng ating mga heads of agencies, cabinet secretaries na sila ay naaayon sa goal ng Pangulo, ipakita nila na sila ay dapat na manatili bilang parte ng administrasyon ng ating Pangulo. Sabi nga natin, walang puwang ang tamad at korap sa administrasyon ni Pangulong Marcos Jr.

ACE ROMERO/PHILIPPINE STAR: Usec., nabanggit sa statement na it's something that has got to do with the election results. Ano po ba iyong resulta ng eleksiyon na mukhang hindi yata natuwa ang Pangulo at nag-trigger ng ganitong call for resignation?

PCO USEC. CASTRO: Aminado ang Pangulo na kulang; sa kaniyang paningin, nakulangan siguro ang taumbayan sa naging performance ng gobyerno kaya hindi nila nakuha iyong pinaka-target na numero especially sa Senado. Pero kahit ano pa man iyan, kung anuman ang maging resulta ganito pa rin dapat ang gawin ng ating Pangulo – mas mapabilis pa rin ang performance ng administrasyon – iyon din po talaga ang nais ng ating Pangulo.

ACE ROMERO/PHILIPPINE STAR: Referring to 12-0 po iyong number na sinasabi ninyong target?

PCO USEC. CASTRO: Yeah, mas maganda po.

ACE ROMERO/PHILIPPINE STAR: So, kailan po namin malalaman iyong magiging resulta noong inyong review sa performance? Kailan malalaman [kung] sino po iyong mari-retain at sino po iyong aalisin na sa Cabinet?

PCO USEC. CASTRO: Kung mapapansin ninyo po sa bawat salita ng Pangulo ang gusto niya ay mabilisan. So, asahan ninyo po ang mas mabilis na aksiyon dito. Hintayin na lang po natin dahil kaka-announce lamang po nito kahapon.

ACE ROMERO/PHILIPPINE STAR: Salamat po.

ALVIN BALTAZAR/RADYO PILIPINAS: Usec., I believe doon sa part ng courtesy resignation na iniutos ng Pangulo ay rebyuhin iyong kanilang performance. Ang tanong ko, Usec., sinu-sino iyong bubuo doon sa review committee, ano iyong composition nila, sinu-sino sila?

PCO USEC. CASTRO: Ibibigay na lang po namin ang detalye patungkol dito at ibabato namin ang katanungan na iyan sa Office of the Executive Secretary.

ALVIN BALTAZAR/RADYO PILIPINAS: Usec., follow up na lang. Doon sa mga nagbigay ng resignation hindi namin nakita iyong Office of the Solicitor General. Kahit mayroon na, please enlighten us, kasama ba ang Office of the Solicitor General sa miyembro ng gabinete ng administrasyon?

PCO USEC. CASTRO: Opo, kasama po ang Office of the Solicitor General na kailangang mag-submit ng courtesy resignation.

JEAN MANGALUZ/PHIL. STAR.COM: Good morning. What are the metrics? We know that we he actions from his cabinet secretaries but some of their agencies are for long term actions? So, ano iyong metrics na tinitingnan ng Pangulo?

PCO USEC. CASTRO: Unang-una, kung gaano nga ba kabilis ang kanilang performance at kung may issue ba tungkol sa korapsyon – importante po iyan. So, hindi lamang performance ito, titingnan din po nila kung nagkakaroon ba ng issue tungkol sa anomalya sa kanilang pagha-handle ng kanilang agency.

JEAN MANGALUZ/PHIL. STAR.COM: There are reports that this shakeup is targeted towards specific secretaries, how true is this?

PCO USEC. CASTRO: We have no update on that if there is really a target secretary regarding this request for courtesy resignation. There is none, as of the moment.

TRISTAN NODALO/NEWSWATCH: Hello po, Usec. Good morning. Ma'am, ito po bang desisyon ng Pangulo is also one way of showing na, 'di ba iyong nabanggit niya sa podcast niya he wants to be respected pero nasabi niya baka mas gusto niyang feared ang next na approach niya. And then si Senator-Elect Ping Lacson sabi kailangan ng Pangulo ng bastonero sa government para talagang matakot. But ito po ba ay pagpapakita ng Pangulo na hindi niya kailangan ng bastonero because siya kaya niya pong mag-act noong sarili niya or mag-decide?

PCO USEC. CASTRO: Bilang Presidente hindi po talaga dapat sinasabi na kailangan ng bastonero. Mismong Presidente mismo ang bastonero at iyan po ay aasahan natin ngayon po na nagsalita ang Pangulo na kinakailangan po nang mas mabilis at malinis na administrasyon – mapapakita po iyan ng Pangulo. Hindi po niya kailangan ng bastonero, siya na mismo po ang bastonero.

TRISTAN NODALO/NEWSWATCH: Siguro na lang po baka sa ibang kritiko ng Pangulo gamitin itong mass resignation or courtesy resignation ng cabinet secretaries, iyong timing po ng desisyon na ito, why is it ito iyong nakita ng Pangulo na best timing to do a revamp of his cabinet secretaries?

PCO USEC. CASTRO: Tandaan po natin noong una pa lamang po ako na-appoint as a Press Officer nabanggit na po natin iyan kung may kinakailangang mga revamp, sabi ko wala pa pong update pero talagang iyan po ang ginawa ng Pangulo – makita at ma-monitor ang trabaho ng kaniyang mga heads of agencies at mga departments. So, hindi lamang po ito ngayon, talaga pong niri-review. Tandaan po natin, marami na ang natatanggal bago pa nagkaroon ng eleksiyon, bago pa nangyari ang eleksiyon.

So, siguro mas naramdaman lang ng Pangulo itong naging eleksiyon na mas kailangan pa nang mas mabilisang pagtatrabaho ang administrasyon para sa taumbayan.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: Usec., magandang umaga. Paglilinaw lang po iyong sinabi ninyo kanina na walang pagtigil doon sa program ng gobyerno. So, ibig sabihin the cabinet secretary will still hold their post until makapag-appoint ng panibago si Presidente?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Yes, mananatili sila sa kanilang posisyon. Siguro ito iyong tamang panahon para ipakita nila na dapat silang manatili sa kanilang posisyon. Pero kapag nakita po talaga ng Pangulo na hindi mo deserve ang iyong posisyon, you will be out.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: Pero, Usec., how frustrated is the President for him to lead into this direction asking all the Cabinet to submit their courtesy resignation and how big a factor is his most recent approval ratings?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Approval ratings ang recent medyo mataas naman, so nakita naman natin na mataas pa rin ang tiwala ng taumbayan sa Pangulo at hindi naman po kasi maganda rin sa parte ng Pangulo, na iisa-isahin niya ang bawat secretary, alamin kung ano ba ang performance mo, kaya dapat lahatan po ito. Para, sabi nga nila, magkaroon ng elbow room ang Pangulo sa pagpili ng tamang leaders na mamumuno sa kaniyang administrasyon.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: Is it right to say that he is frustrated with the performance of some of the cabinet secretaries?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Iyon po ang lumalabas.

EDEN SANTOS NET25: Usec., good morning po. Iyon pong cabinet revamp hindi po ba iyon na layon na ilihis umano iyong sisi sa Pangulo, dahil kung binabanggit ninyo po na iyong performance ng ilang mga cabinet secretaries, since sila po ay nagsisilbing alter ego ng Pangulo, hindi po ba parang sa kaniya rin iyon babalik?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Kaya nga po tatanggalin, para po mas mapaganda pa ng Pangulo ang performance ng kaniyang administrasyon.

EDEN SANTOS NET25: Thank you po.

GILBERT PERDEZ: Good morning po, Usec. Nanawagan po si Senator Koko Pimentel kay Pangulong Marcos na maigi daw na mag-talaga ng mga cabinet members na walang political ambitions at hindi nangangarap na mahalal sa 2028 elections, ano ho ang reaksiyon ng Palasyo dito?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Maganda pong suhestiyon iyan, dapat po kasi nagtatrabaho dito hindi pansarili lamang, hindi pangnegosyo kung hindi para sa taumbayan. Magandang suhestiyon po iyan at malamang po ay kasama rin po iyan sa magiging criteria ng Pangulo sa pagpili ng mga bagong cabinet secretaries.

GILBERT PERDEZ: Thank you po.

IRA PANGANIBAN/DZRJ: I was just to going ask, Usec., sabi sweeping, pero there are some cabinet-rank secretaries who have expressed na wala silang balak mag-submit ng courtesy resignation at I know of at least one who says na *'hindi naman ako cabinet secretary, Office of the President ako eh'.* So kasali ba siya, hindi ba siya kasali, ano bang posisyon ng …?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Liwanagin po natin: *All cabinet secretaries, heads of agencies with cabinet rank, other heads of agencies kahit hindi kayo secretary and presidential advisers and assistance.* So kasama po, kung sinuman po iyong binabanggit ninyo po, hindi ko po alam kung sino iyan, pero huwag niya pong—kung magandang performance niya, pero kung siya po ay nasa listahan po, ang kaniyang posisyon ay nasa listahan, huwag po naman sanang magmatigas if ever. At kung maganda naman po ang performance niya, hindi naman po siya matatanggal.

IRA PANGANIBAN/DZRJ: Kung hindi siya magbigay ng courtesy resignation, will he be deemed na courtesy resigned na siya anyway?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Tingnan po natin, hindi ko po alam kung ano po iyong pinanggagalingan ng istorya ninyo, sir.

IRA PANGANIBAN/ DZRJ: Sabihin ko na, si Secretary Gadon, doon sa chat group, sinabi niya hindi siya kasali.

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Sa aking pagkakaalam, presidential adviser siya at ang tawag kanya ay secretary at sa aking pagkakaalam, personally, personally po ay kasama po – sa akin lamang po iyan.

IRA PANGANIBAN/DZRJ: Thank you, ma'am.

HAYDEE SAMPANG/FEBC: Good afternoon, Usec. Paano po natin, sa mga taumbayan po, sa mga karaniwang mamamayan, paano po ito dapat na tanggapin or intindihin po nila iyong pagsa-submit nga po ng courtesy resignation ng lahat ng mga cabinet, baka lang po kasi may impression na unstable tayo, unstable po ang government po natin?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Dapat mas matuwa po ang taumbayan dahil pinapakita po ng Pangulo na, sabi nga natin 'walang puwang sa gobyerno, sa administrasyon ang tamad at ang korap'. Mas maganda po at dapat tanggapin ng taumbayan na mapalitan ang mga ito ng karapat-dapat sa posisyon at iyon naman po ang kagustuhan ng Pangulo. Itong lahat ay para sa bansa at sa taumbayan.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7: Usec., ito pong recalibration ng prayoridad, can you tell us, ano ho kaya ang maaasahan ng mga tao that will come out of this call for a cabinet revamp? Anong mga prayoridad po itutuon ng gobyerno ang kanilang trabaho from here on?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Unang-una po sa infrastructure, dapat po talagang matugunan, mas mabilis po diyan kung anong mga serbisyo sa publiko uunahin niya. Marami po, marami pong puwede – sa edukasyon, infrastructure. So, hindi ko po maiisa-isa iyan, kung puwede pong gawin at gampanan ng Pangulo na mas masaayos ang lahat sa tamang oras at bago matapos ang termino, gagawin po ng Pangulo iyan.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7: At ito ho ba ang panahon na makikita natin, from here on again, iyong sinasabi ng Pangulo na marahil kailangan ng mas mabagsik na pamumuno?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Opo, umpisa lamang ito.

SAM MEDENILLA/BUSINESS MIRROR: Good morning, ma'am. Na-mention po nila earlier na medyo may mga hindi aspect ng past three years na performance iyong administration na hindi satisfied si Pangulo, ano po kayang aspect noon na iyong hindi satisfied si President, security, economy, social welfare?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Okay, sa ngayon po ay wala po tayong pinakadetalye patungkol diyan at magkakaroon pa lamang po iyan ng pag-i-evaluate. Kapag po nagkaroon na po ako ng anumang detalye patungkol po diyan, ibibigay ko po sa inyo kaagad.

SAM MEDENILLA/BUSINESS MIRROR: Tapos, ma'am, dati noong nag-start na po iyong administration, naging concurrent po si Pangulo noong Department of Agriculture. May plans po siya na mag-take over siya some cabinet positions?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Ngayon po, wala po dahil ang sabi naman po ng ating Pangulo ay tuluy-tuloy lamang po ang trabaho during this transition, at hintayin na lamang po nila kung sila po ay matatanggal o hindi.

SAM MEDENILLA/BUSINESS MIRROR: Last na lang for my part, ma'am. Na-mention po nila na lahat ng cabinet secretaries na nag-submit ng courtesy resignation, magko-continue pa rin sa

performance ng trabaho nila. Pero 'di ba, regardless kung mag-submit sila ng courtesy resignation or hindi, dati pa naman ay may power ang Pangulo na kung gusto niyang tanggalin iyong cabinet secretary niya, puwede naman niyang gawin iyon, regardless kung may isinambit na resignation letter o wala. Bakit kailangan pong magkaroon ng courtesy resignation?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Para po lahat. Lahat! Ma-realize ng lahat kung sila ba ay nagkulang o hindi.

SAM MEDENILLA/BUSINESS MIRROR: Thank you, ma'am.

CLAY PARDILLA/PTV4: Good morning, Secretary. Other topic po. Can the Palace clarify whether the President is indeed planning to sit in the bicameral conference committee? And how does the Palace view statements of other senators that even if the President is willing, he cannot and should not sit in the bicam as the constitution does not allow it?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Literary, he will not definitely sit during the Bicam meeting. This is just an expression to show to the people that he will keep an eye on the national budget for 2026. So, at least it should be based on the priorities of the government. The budget should base on the priorities of the government and it should prioritize the shovel-ready projects of the government, so iyon lamang po.

ACE ROMERO/PHILIPPINE STAR: So, apparently, iyong sinabi po na uupo si Pangulo sa bicam, tututukan ang ibig sabihin po 'no, tututukan iyong bicam to ensure na iyong priorities ay masusunod at hindi mangled iyong budget? How confident is Malacañang that the next budget process will not experience iyong nangyari noong 2025 wherein you have to meet with cabinet members after the approval of the budget to think of ways on how to fund the programs that were deprived or stripped of funds by some lawmakers? How confident na hindi mangyayari ulit iyon this budget season?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Kaya nga po nagsalita ang Pangulo na tutukan ito.

ACE ROMERO/ PHILIPPINE STAR: Are you optimistic na it won't happen again or mayroon pa rin kayong concerns na baka magkaroon pa rin ng ganoong mga scenario?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: I do not want to answer hypothetical questions. Hindi natin sinasabi na negatibo, but we should always be optimistic.

ACE ROMERO/PHILIPPINE STAR: Salamat po.

RICHBON QUEBEDO/DAILY TRIBUNE: Good afternoon po, Usec. On the topic of sanction imposed by the United States to the International Criminal Court, balikan ko lang po itong sanction ng U.S. 'The United States unequivocally opposes and expects our allies to oppose any ICC actions against the United States, Israel or any other ally of the United States that has not consented to the ICC jurisdiction.' As the Philippines is an ally of the United States, how is the Philippines going to respond in case po maglabas ng warrant of arrest ang ICC through the Interpol sa iba pang involve sa kaso po ni former President Rodrigo Duterte?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Kung ano ang magiging responde pamahalaan, ito naman dapat ay naaayon sa batas. Pero as of the moment, we do not have any update on that. Let's just wait and see.

RICHBON QUEBEDO/ DAILY TRIBUNE Thank you po, Usec.

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: At bago po tayo magtapos, mayroon pa rin po tayong good news: Lalagyan na ng wheelchair lift ang lahat ng EDSA busway station para makatulong po ito sa mga pasahero na may kapansanan o PWDs. Ito ay inanunsiyo ng DOTr ayon na rin sa utos ni Pangulong Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. na pagbutihin ang commuting experience ng publiko. Kaugnay nito, sinabi ng MMDA na walang ginastos ang gobyerno sa mga wheelchair lift dahil ipinakiusap ito ng MMDA sa kontraktor. Panoorin po natin ito:

[VTR]

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: At dito na po nagtatapos ang ating briefing ngayong Huwebes. Maraming salamat, Malacañang Press Corps. At magandang tanghali para sa Bagong Pilipinas.

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