PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
News and Information Bureau

MALACAÑANG PRESS BRIEFING OF PALACE PRESS OFFICER AND PCO UNDERSECRETARY CLAIRE CASTRO WITH DEPARTMENT OF MIGRANT WORKERS SECRETARY HANS LEO CACDAC AND SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR INVESTMENT AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS SECRETARY FREDERICK GO
JULY 10, 2025 [11:31 A.M. – 12:32 P.M.]

PCO USEC. CASTRO: Magandang araw, Malacañang Press Corps.

Walang kulay ng pulitika ang paglilingkod sa bayan. Muling binigyang-katiyakan ni Pangulong Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. ang mga local government officials sa patuloy na suporta ng national government sa lahat ng mga programa ng lokal na pamahalaan anuman ang kanilang political colors, dahil sa Pangulo, aksiyon ang kailangan at ‘di pamumulitika.

[Technical problem] mga local government officials, binigyang-diin ng Pangulo na hindi malilihis sa tamang landas ang bayan kapag ang pundasyong serbisyo ay pagtutulungan ng lahat at pagmamahal sa bayan. Ang nasabing pagtitipon ay nagpapatunay lamang na serbisyo sa taumbayan at kapakanan ng mga Pilipino ang pangunahing hangarin ng Pangulo.

[VTR]

Transparency and accountability, isinusulong sa gobyerno. Pinuri ni Budget Secretary Mina Pangandaman ang hakbang ng DILG na pagtibayin ang open and participatory governance sa mga LGUs sa pamamagitan ng kanilang nilabas na Memorandum Circular No. 2025-065. Nilalayon ng nasabing memorandum na palakasin ang epekto ng open governance values sa mga LGU at maging ehemplo sila sa pagsusulong ng mga reporma na ikabubuti ng kanilang komunidad.

Ayon sa kalihim, mahalaga ang kooperasyon ng mga LGU dahil sila ang mismong makakahikayat sa kanilang mga nasasakupan na makilahok sa mga programa ng gobyerno at makamit ang ninanais na pagbabago. Dagdag pa ng kalihim, isa itong hakbang upang masiguro na lahat ng serbisyo ng pamahalaan ay makakarating sa mga mamamayan sa city o barangay level man. Mas mabilis, mas maayos, at mas kapaki-pakinabang na serbisyo para sa mga Pilipino – ito ang gustong makita ni Pangulong Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. sa lahat ng lebel ng gobyerno.

[VTR]

Ngayong umaga ay makakasama natin si Migrant Workers Secretary Hans Leo Cacdac upang magbigay ng updates sa mga Pilipinong tripulante na naipit sa gulo sa Red Sea. Magandang umaga, Secretary.

DMW SEC. CACDAC: Salamat, Usec., and it’s good to be here po.

Unang-una, ang update natin is, of course, iyong standing directive ng ating mahal na Pangulo na gawin ang lahat para mabigyan ng ganap na proteksiyon ang ating mga OFWs at lalo na ang ating mga marinong Pilipino at ang kanilang mga pamilya. So, bunsod nito, iyong update natin sa dalawang barko na inatake sa Red Sea ng mga Houthis.

At iyong una ay noong Linggo inatake iyong MV Magic Seas at ligtas ang labimpitong tripulante ng MV Magic Seas and they are slated to come home tomorrow, July 11. So, we can just provide iyong necessary flight details nito kung gusto ninyong at least ma-update dito sa kanilang pag-uwi sa airport. And then, of course, we will provide the necessary as directed by the President, the necessary whole-of-government assistance sa mga nanumbalik na tripulante ng MV Magic Seas.

Pangalawa, itong MV Eternity C na inatake noong tumatawid ang huling oras ng July 7 until the early hours, midnight ng July 8. At ito ay isang barko, ang MV Eternity C isang barko, bulk carrier na galing sa Egypt at nagpatuloy sa Berbera, Somalia at nag-unload ng kaniyang cargo doon sa Berbera, Somalia at patuloy sana sa Jeddah, Saudi Arabia; at papunta sa Jeddah, Saudi Arabia sa bandang kanlurang ng Hudaydah, Yemen, 50 nautical miles ay nagkaroon ng attack ang mga Houthi forces doon sa barko. Reported na may mga iba't ibang armas, mayroong missile na tumama sa barko, mayroong mga rocket propelled grenades na hawak ang mga Houthis at may mga skiffs, nakasakay sila sa mga skiffs, sa mga maliliit na barko at pinaligiran iyong MV Eternity C.

Kahapon ng umaga ay nagkaroon tayo ng pagpupulong together with the families kasi ang number one directive ng Pangulo sa DMW ay gawin ang lahat para mabigyan ng tulong, proteksiyon, "*Take care of the families.*" ang sabi ng ating Pangulo. Kaya't kahapon, it was the second meeting actually with the families, nagpulong na kami the day before, but kahapon ng umaga, nakipagpulong kami together with the manning agency and the ship owner at noong umaga ng mga alas otso hanggang alas nuwebe, nalaman natin na may rescue efforts underway.

Ngayon, noong bandang—so binigyang-daan namin ang rescue efforts 'no, bigyan ng puwang, bigyan ng panahon para maisagawa ito. Noong bandang lagpas ng tanghali ay nakatanggap na kami ng ulat na lumubog iyong barko ng MV Eternity C and at that time, kumpirmado na ito ng ating manning agent at shipowner at pati iyong ating defense attaché na kaugnayan din natin ano sa Bahrain. Iyong defense attaché naman natin sa Bahrain nakaugnay sa United Kingdom Maritime Trade Organization (UKMTO) at kumpirmado ang paglubog gawa noong matinding tama nito sa barko. Tinamaan ang engine room at ang bridge at ang communications ng barko kaya't nahirapan talaga tayo, walang komunikasyon with the crew onboard throughout the time na nandoon sila, nalaman natin na inatake sila until ito nga, iyong rescue mission na isinagawa.

At ang nadatnan ng rescue team doon ay mayroong limang tripulante in the water kaya't sila'y naligtas. Ngayon, ang MV Eternity C has 22 seafarers, 21 Filipino seafarers with the captain 'no so 21 lahat, ang kapitan ay Pinoy at iyong isa ay foreign national, so 22. Ngayon, with the rescue of the five ay 16 sa ngayon ang inaantabayanan pa rin natin kung ano ang kinaratnan. Mayroon pa ring search operation as far as we know, at patuloy ang paghahanap sa kanila.

Bukod sa lima, mayroong isang nahanap na Indian armed guard so anim – limang Filipino seafarers and one Indian armed guard. At iyong limang nasagip na tripulante ay papunta ngayon sa isang destinasyon na hindi ko babanggitin for security reasons, hindi ko rin babanggitin kung paano sila makakarating doon at gaano katagal – again, for security reasons so pagpasensiyahan ninyo na. But rest assured, once there will be an opportunity to get in touch with them, we will of course do all we can to provide the necessary assistance and starting with the medical and physical and mental health assistance that we can provide to them. And of course, to find out some details about what happened, particularly iyong kinahinatnan ng labing-anim at iyong mga napapaulat sa international media na apat na nasawi.

Sa ngayon, mayroon kaming impormasyon sa tatlong nasawi through the UKMTO pero, again, this too is subject to confirmation kaya't mahalagang makausap namin ang mga limang tripulante pero siyempre bibigyan pa natin sila ng espasyo o puwang 'no, ayaw naman natin silang madaliin o biglang kuwestiyunin ng mga detalye. So, when they arrive at their destination, we will make sure that they go through the necessary protocols, medical protocols and, of course, time to rest and give them the adequate basic needs before we ask them. So, there will be 'give and take' some adequate time that is necessary bago natin sila makadaupang-palad at makausap.

Lastly, we have already commenced our personal visits to the families, kasi itong last two days, virtual ang aming meetings with all of the families. Rest assured we have touched base with all the families. We know them to the extent that we know their personal circumstances and we have engaged them in communications. And as of last night, we have started our personal visits to each of the families and have assured them of the President's directive to take care of them at gawin ang lahat hanggang sa makatulong kami nang ganap sa kanila. So, that's it.

TRISTAN NODALO/NEWSWATCH PLUS: Hi, sir. Good morning po. Sir, bale po lima iyong na-rescue, 16 iyong unaccounted for pero tatlo po, may reported na tatlo na fatality pero hindi pa—

DMW SEC. CACDAC: Kinu-confirm pa natin ito. It is just the information that we know from the UKMTO through our defense attaché.

TRISTAN NODALO/NEWSWATCH PLUS: Sino, sir, ang nakikipagtulungan sa Pilipinas, or at least have we tapped any other country to help us in the search and rescue operations dito po sa mga seafarers?

DMW SEC. CACDAC: Sa ngayon, ang nagsasagawa ng rescue operation is the maritime security team that had been engaged by the ship owner. Of course, we know that the … we have tapped the UKMTO and other international naval forces to help us monitor the situation.

TRISTAN NODALO/NEWSWATCH PLUS: Last na lang po on my part. May liability din po ba tayong tinitingnan doon sa ship owner kasi ang alam ko may memorandum na rin po ang DMW na huwag sana ngang bumiyahe na sa Red Sea?

DMW SEC. CACDAC: Yes, we are not happy, of course, with the way things turned out in terms of pinabiyahe iyong mga tripulante sa high-risk zone. Currently, suspendido ang license ng manning agency at ang principal nito bilang paunang pagpataw natin ng regulatory measure; but there will be an investigation to take place.

Napakahigpit ng ating regulatory requirements, reportorial requirements prior to boarding for any Filipino seafarer to any ship that will traverse the Red Sea or Gulf of Aden; mayroon pang kailangang i-submit na risk assessment; mayroon pang requirement ng armed guard at maritime security escort. And our initial investigation reveals that these were all not observed. At hindi lamang iyon, dalawang beses nag-traverse sa Red Sea. Kasi kung iti-trace mo iyong ruta niya ng Egypt to Somalia, that's one, okay, that's one turn or one crossing across Red Sea; and then, bumalik ng Jeda so a second one, so at least two counts of violations of our rules and regulations.

But again, the most important thing at this stage would be the rescue of our seafarers, and this must be undertaken immediately, as soon as possible.

CLEIZL PARDILLA/PEOPLE'S TELEVISION: Good morning po, Secretary. Secretary, aside from the suspension, what other sanctions could the vessel owner may face po?

DMW SEC. CACDAC: Well, we will get to the point where we will consider other possible legal action. Of course, what I have been referring to are the administrative cases, administrative remedies that we have. But, of course, we will look at other types of remedies that are available, civil and criminal remedies. But, again, that will be saved for another day. Sa ngayon, mamarapatin muna nating bigyan ng puwang o espasyo iyong pagligtas sa ating mga tripulante.

CLEIZL PARDILLA/PEOPLE'S TELEVISION: Sir, one last follow-up. Based po on the initial information, kumusta po iyong kalusugan, health condition po ng lima? And when does the government plan to bring them home?

DMW SEC. CACDAC: Tinanong namin ito kahapon doon sa ship owner at doon sa maritime security firm. At ang sagot nila, they are in good condition. None of them have serious physical injury or illness. Of course, it is safe to say, they may have some physical stress with what they went through.

But anyway, as I said, there will be medical protocols that will be given to them. Kaya nga sabi ko kanina, medyo huwag natin madaliin iyong panahon na tatanungin pa natin sila kasi, 'di ba, kung ano iyong nangyari. Huwag natin madaliin masyado iyong part na iyon kasi once they are given the proper treatment on shore, then there will be protocols that will have to be—let's give them time and space with the protocols that have to be undertaken.

MARICEL HALILI/NEWS5: Sir, magandang umaga. Just one quick follow-up lang, sir. Ano po iyong nakarating sa inyo na information about the chances of survival doon sa mga hinahanap pa na mga tripulanteng Pinoy considering the challenges doon sa rescue efforts?

DMW SEC. CACDAC: Well, we are fully aware of the, at least, two statements that have come out. The first, of course, is the Houthi statement that they have "several" Eternity C crew; and second is the statement of the United States that they denounced this particular action of taking in the crew as a kidnapping action. But in either case, we are still yet to confirm for ourselves whether indeed the Houthis have the rest of the crew. So, this is something that is yet subject to confirmation and we are working closely with Sec. Tess Lazaro and the DFA along these lines.

EDEN SANTOS/NET25: Good morning po, Sec. Ito pong pangyayari na ito, hindi naman po siya magiging reason para po magpatupad po tayo ng pansamantalang ipagbawal muna iyong pagbiyahe ng ating mga Pinoy seafarers especially po doon sa mga delikadong ruta?

DMW SEC. CACDAC: Well, sa ngayon, naghihigpit na kasi tayo in the sense that February 2024 in the sense that mayroong regulatory measures, iyong binanggit ko kanina: One is all ship owners are asked or should divert their ships away from the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. And in fairness, more than 50% many flags have already diverted their voyages, and we are thankful to these flags. However, there are those who still choose to traverse the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. And minsan kasi ang nature ng seafaring is maaaring pag-alis sa Pilipinas ng tripulante, hindi Red Sea ang pupuntahan but it may happen that their port of call is …let's say, their voyage is, let's say, less than two or three months, still within a nine-month contract and doon, after the two or three months in another port of call, malalaman nilang pupunta pala ng Red Sea.

So, sitwasyon na ganito, again, reportorial requirement, risk assessments, iri-report dapat ng ship owner at ng manning agent na may ganoon silang isasakay na mga tripulante papuntang Red Sea; risk assessment reports, evaluation that they need to submit; armed guards on board; maritime escorts on board.

And we are so strict in terms of compliance with these requirements kaya't iyon pa rin talaga ang pinanghahawakan natin ngayon and, of course, iyong right to refuse sailing. If there is a freedom to navigate on the part of ship owners, there is a corresponding right to refuse sailing on the part of the seafarers.

Sa DMW pinadali na natin, nag-issue tayo ng department order, pinadali na natin iyong exercise ng right na iyan: one is in writing – may form, downloadable, dapat ibigay ng mga manning agencies sa mga tripulante, kung hindi ibigay offense iyon; second is verbal – puwedeng may mga hotlines na naka-prescribe doon sa department order, tatawag lang iyong mga tripulante natin or email – puwede nila itong gawin on their own without going through the manning agent kasi nga baka may kaunting takot sila.

And then when they exercise the right to refuse sailing, they are entitled two months compensation and free repatriation and no discrimination – ibig sabihin, hindi sila mamamarkahan o ma-blacklist o anupaman and in fact, we know of cases higit kumulang mga tatlong daan ang nag-exercise ng right to refuse sailing sa nakaraan. And we know for sure na hindi sila naba-blacklist o nadi-discriminate – ibig sabihin, nari-reassign sila sa ibang lugar.

EDEN SANTOS/NET25: Quick follow up lang po, were you informed po, ang DMW, na dadaan pala po iyong barko sa Red Sea?

DMW SEC. CACDAC: Itong barko na ito?

EDEN SANTOS/NET25: Opo.

DMW SEC. CACDAC: Initial findings, hindi. And as I said, they did it twice in one voyage which is the first time I've seen that happened, so iyon, on two counts mayroon nang paglabag. But again, there will be a more formal investigation kaya sinuspend namin kaagad because of this. But there will be a more formal investigation that could, if found liable, possibly mete out a more permanent penalty.

ALVIN BALTAZAR/RADYO PILIPINAS: Secretary, good morning po. Secretary, just to give us an idea, gaano ba ka-risky iyong ruta ng Gulf of Aden at saka Red Sea?

DMW SEC. CACDAC: Well, ang huling malubhang kaso natin dito was June 2024. We have had of course the 17 hostaged seafarers na nakalaya early this year noong Enero but that case began with an abduction in November 2023. We have had another set of serious cases – apat ang nasawi. June 2024 was the last serious case and we have not seen any harm inflicted upon our seafarers since that time. So, I could very well say that the regulatory measures were working up to the point of these two.

We have observed na we are at least seeking the help of political and security experts, DFA and the DND as to analyze or tell us kung gaano kaiba o kalubha itong bagong method ng pag-atake. Of course, we know na may mga skiffs, may mga RPGs, may ballistic missiles but we want to know the intensity and the tenor of the Houthi side with respect to these particular attacks.

The reason why I'm bringing this out is because magiging related iyan sa pagpataw natin nang mas mahigpit pang measures. So, we will have to discuss this over with the DFA and DND.

ALVIN BALTAZAR/RADYO PILIPINAS: Secretary, one last question on my part. Sabi ninyo may directive si Pangulong Marcos na ibigay iyong assistance doon sa mga pamilya. Specifically, ano iyong mga form of assistance na ipaparating?

DMW SEC. CACDAC: Sa ngayon the most important and immediate from them, at least iyong kanilang sinasabi sa amin is iyong rescue, iyong safety – understandably 'di ba. At this stage, iyong safety and kanilang pag-rescue would be first and foremost.

There will be a proper time to provide all the necessary at nasabi na rin namin sa kanila ito, there will be a proper time to provide all the necessary assistance that we can provide – financial, humanitarian assistance, medical and psychosocial counselling and other forms of assistance that we provide through the whole-of-government inter-agency effort na inatasan ng Pangulo – DOH, DSWD, TESDA and of course the DFA is there.

PCO USEC. CASTRO: Thank you, Sec. Hans.

DMW SEC. CACDAC: Maraming salamat.

PCO USEC. CASTRO: Bago po tayo mag-start, okay. Makakasama rin po natin si Secretary Frederick Go para sa ibang mga usapin patungkol sa US tariff.

SAPIEA SEC. GO: Hi. Good morning, everyone. We are in receipt of the United States latest reciprocal tariff for the Philippines. We are concerned that the US has decided to impose a 20 percent tariff on Philippine exports. The fact remains however that the 20 percent rate is the second lowest among all reciprocal tariffs that the US has imposed on the region – the lowest being the 10 percent of Singapore.

But more importantly than all of these, we remain committed to continuing negotiations with the United States in good faith to pursue a bilateral comprehensive economic agreement or, if possible, an FTA.

So, myself together with DTI Secretary Cris Roque and Undersecretary Perry Rodolfo and Undersecretary Allan Gepty will be flying to the United States next week – this is actually a scheduled trip to the United States even before today's announcement 'no. So, there will be meetings next week amongst the trade representatives ng Amerika po at ng Pilipinas.

And lastly, I just wanted to say that of course the economic team, the DTI will continue to advance key economic reforms to sustain a competitive and investor-friendly business environment and to try to build more trade relationships with other countries all over the world to create more market opportunities for our business enterprises dito po sa Pilipinas. Thank you.

SAM MEDENILLA/BUSINESSMIRROR: Good morning, sir. Sir, itatanong lang po namin kung iyon po bang 20 percent tariff will cover all imported Filipino goods sa US or mayroon pa rin pong magiging exemption o magiging blanket po ba iyong 20 percent tariff?

SAPIEA SEC. GO: The normal interpretation of the reciprocal tariffs is buong bansa po ito pero ang ginawa po ng Amerika ay mayroon din silang mga specific tariffs for specific products, so those are still live and those still continue to exist. Although, hindi po tayo masyadong affected noon because it covers mostly aluminum, steel – mga ganoong klaseng produkto na hindi naman natin ini-export sa Amerika.

SAM MEDENILLA/BUSINESSMIRROR: Iyong semiconductor and electronics po kaya?

SAPIEA SEC. GO: Very good question. Our number one export sa Amerika ay semiconductors and electronics 'no. And as of today, a very, very large of that is exempted from the reciprocal tariffs. So, although nag-a-announce ang…may mga feelers po galing sa Amerika na they are studying this whether they will continue to keep them tariff-free or lalagyan po nila ng tariffs. Pero ang good news po sa atin sa ngayon ay karamihan ng ating exports ng semiconductors ay hindi covered ng tariffs.

SAM MEDENILLA/BUSINESSMIRROR: Tapos, last na lang po for my part. Aside po from doon sa scheduled talks po nila sa US next week, mayroong other measures pa po ba na i-implement iyong government para po either mapababa or matanggal iyong tariff? Is the government considering a talk between President Marcos and Donald Trump regarding the issue?

SAPIEA SEC. GO: I will not comment on the last one kasi hindi po ako iyon. Pero at our level, the purpose talaga ng trip ay para harap-harapan nang mag-negotiate kasi ang nangyari po after my last trip parang nag-e-exchange last ng email eh, so parang hindi masyadong…I think, face-to-face meeting is far more effective.

CHLOE HUFANA/BUSINESS WORLD: Good morning, Sec. Sir, last Monday, Usec. Claire said we were in a good position regarding the negotiations, But suddenly itinaas po iyong tariff. What do you think went wrong?

SAPIEA SEC. GO: I think there is some posturing here. I don't think I can comment further. But we will go there next week and we will try to bring this down if we can. But what I was trying to say in my statement earlier is more important than trying to bring down the reciprocal tariffs, kasi very ano lang po ito, maliit lang na bagay ito eh. Ang mas malaking bagay is if we can sign a Free Trade Agreement or an FTA or a bilateral comprehensive economic partnership agreement.

Dito po talagang makakahingi rin po tayo galing sa Amerika ng specific tariff concession. For example for our coconut industry, kasi kung nagni-negotiate lang po tayo, example maibaba natin from 20 percent to 10 percent, mayroon pa ring 10 percent tariff ang coconut industry natin. Pero kung sobrang mahalaga ang coconut exports natin, in a bilateral negotiation, we can negotiate for say dropping that to, say zero percent because these are the industries that are important to us.

For me, our objective talaga is a bilateral economic partnership agreement, which the USTR has told us that this is a possibility.

CHLOE HUFANA/BUSINESS WORLD: Sir, next week pupunta po kayo sa US, will we recalibrate our strategy from our earlier strategy, anu-anong specific points ang ating papalitan or i-improve in order to get what you were saying, iyong bilateral economic partnership?

SAPIEA SEC. GO: I think for us kasi very clearly, the discussion on the reciprocal tariff is just parang stage one eh. There is still a stage two, which is the bilateral partnership agreement that we seek and to us, ever since it's very clear that this is the more important thing for us.

CHLOE HUFANA/BUSINESS WORLD: And last na siguro, sir. Vietnam just managed to lower their tariffs to 20 percent, but unlike Vietnam, we are not an exporting country, sir. So how will this affect our competitiveness in the US market?

SAPIEA SEC. GO: Actually, Vietnam has two tariffs, two tariff lines; we only have one tariff line, which is the 20 percent. Vietnam has two, its 20 percent for all goods and 40 for all transshipment. So I think that the true tariff rate of Vietnam is somewhere between 20 to 40 percent, right? Let's say 30 percent, pinili ko lang po iyong gitna. But they have two tariff lines, we only have one. So, I think we are still more competitive than Vietnam in that regard.

But you have to also note in exchange kung based on the reports, Vietnam gave zero percent tariff for all goods from the United States, kapag ginawa po natin iyan dito ay marami rin pong magrireklamo na industriya na pinoprotektahan natin dito sa bansa natin. So in exchange for getting 20 percent and 40 percent, they (Vietnam) gave zero percent on everything, hindi naman yata natin puwedeng gawin iyon.

CHLOE HUFANA/BUSINESS WORLD: Dahil nabanggit mo iyong mga pinuprotektahan nating industriya, may meeting po ba tayo with the stakeholders in the following weeks?

SAPIEA SEC. GO: Hindi na po, I think we have already done all of that in the past exercise, so we know all their positions already.

ALEXIS ROMERO/PHIL. STAR: Good morning, Sec. Since natanong ang competitiveness, iyong overall economic impact, if 20 percent, assuming hindi natin iyon nabago, ano po iyong – you mentioned before iyong 17 minimal, iyong 20 po kaya?

SAPIEA SEC. GO: Kino-compute po iyan ngayon ng NEDA. Ang sabi po ng NEDA sa akin ay they will try to come out with that number before the end of the day. Kasi when we try to compute the effect on our economy of our tariff rate, we have to take it in consideration with the rest of the countries. Hindi lang po iyong numero natin ang ina-analyze nila, it has to be in relation to the tariff rates of all our competitive set.

ALEXIS ROMERO/PHIL. STAR: Doon sa letter ni President Trump, parang ini-imply niya na puwedeng tumaas, puwedeng bumaba. Now, if you adjust yours, puwede naming ibaba, kasama po ba sa options natin iyong adjusting downwards or talagang we are going to push for a free trade or a bilateral deal lang?

SAPIEA SEC. GO: Good question, hindi po, talagang may stage one, may stage two pa rin ito. So, when we go there, we will be negotiating what we can offer for the reciprocal tariffs and sana, hopefully we can go into the stage 2 discussion of the bilateral agreement; pero ang primary objective ay iyong stage one pa rin.

MARIZ UMALI/GMA INTEGRATED NEWS: Hi, Sir, good noon. How confident are we that we were able to lower the tariff, considering that initially it is supposed to be at 17 and now it had been moved to 20 percent, and you mentioned something about posturing, how confident are we that after your talks with them this will at least soften a bit?

SAPIEA SEC. GO: It's a very difficult for me to answer that question po, we will do our best.

MARIZ UMALI/GMA INTEGRATED NEWS: Sir, can you just enlighten us about what exactly are the products covered by this 20 percent [tariff]? You mentioned that at least one of the top export products that we have, which is the semiconductor or electronics is exempted from it, what are now covered by the 20 percent tariff?

SAPIEA SEC. GO: Based on the rules all exports are covered by the 20 percent tariff, but America has sector-specific tariffs and sector-specific exemptions. So, it has nothing to do with us. So, the semiconductors that I'm talking about that are exempted, it's not because of us, it's because America chose to exempt certain semi-conductor sectors because they deemed it important to their, for example supply chain or deemed it important to their national security. So, they exempted certain semiconductor categories and fortunately, suwerte tayo, that a lot of those that they exempt are actually our semiconductor exports to the United States. So, the rest of the products are subject to the 20 percent export tariff.

MARIZ UMALI/GMA INTEGRATED NEWS: And considering that the US is a top destination of Philippine exports last year, it has reached 12.14 billion dollars or 17 percent of our total merchandise exports of the country. How do you assess the effect of this 20 percent US tariff hike on our economy, considering—this is just a follow-up on what Ace already asked—that there are some economists who are saying that there is already a possible..?

SAPIEA SEC. GO: I don't know if you saw it, but I have a copy of the letter to President Prabowo of Indonesia, I also have a copy of the letter to Prime Minister Anwar of Malaysia and a copy of our letter to us, template po ito. So, I would just recommend that if you look at the letter, don't take anything too personally, the letter looks 99 percent identical, ang pinalitan lang nila iyong tariff rate. So ano lang iyan, template lang po iyan, so puwede naman ninyong hanapin sa news, makikita ninyo templated iyong reply. As a matter of fact, nauna kasi sila Indonesia at Malaysia 'di ba, parang two days ago, so may kopya na tayo noon napakita ko na po iyan kay Pangulo at nakita na po ng Pangulo natin iyong letter kay Prabowo at kay Anwar, kina President and Prime Minister. So templated lang po iyan.

MARIZ UMALI/GMA INTEGRATED NEWS: Pero, sir, do we plan to impose retaliatory tariffs?

SAPIEA SEC. GO: I am not aware of any such discussions.

MARIZ UMALI/GMA INTEGRATED NEWS: Tapos, sinabi din, sir doon sa letter, President Trump justified iyong tariffs by citing many years of the Philippines' tariff and non-tariff policies and trade barriers that created what he calls unsustainable trade deficits, is this something that..?

SAPIEA SEC. GO: Template po iyan, makikita mo rin sa letter niya sa lahat ng ibang Pangulo.

MARIZ UMALI/GMA INTEGRATED NEWS: So, ganoon talaga iyong tone niya, sir?

SAPIEA SEC. GO: The letter is exactly the same for everybody.

MARIZ UMALI/GMA INTEGRATED NEWS: Pero is this something that we will also address as well?

SAPIEA SEC. GO: You know, actually, since it's a template I feel it doesn't really apply so much to us. But, of course, mayroon silang mga asks 'no, regarding that, pero siyempre we have own laws, we have our own constitution. We cannot just say come in. We have a lot laws to contend with, we have our own constitution to contend with, we have our own ways of doing business. So, we cannot just lift all the barriers and say you're all, 'di ba. Alam mo na—I think you know what that means 'di ba?

PIA GUTIERREZ/ABS-CBN: Pero, sir, in your negotiation with the USTR, mayroon ba silang specific na concessions na hiningi?

SAPIEA SEC. GO: I think they also have a templated wish list of many, many things.

PIA GUTIERREZ/ABS-CBN: Pero for the Philippine, sir, can you share kung mayroon silang specific especially for us?

SAPIEA SEC. GO: No, I don't think there's anything specific. Because I think all the specific items we were able to address naman eh.

CHLOE HUFANA/BUSINESS WORLD: Last na talaga, sir. Next week po Secretary Rubio, will be in Malaysia to meet with ASEAN ministers, mayroon din po bang Philippine delegation pupunta doon to probably negotiate about the tariff as well?

SAPIEA SEC. GO: So, I'm not ano, but I think you will see clearly that there no such thing as a group negotiation. All the negotiations were bilateral in nature.

CHLOE HUFANA/BUSINESS WORLD: Okay, sir, and ASEAN still stands po na no retaliatory from the bloc?

SAPIEA SEC. GO: I have not heard anything new from the ASEAN.

CHLOE HUFANA/BUSINESS WORLD: Thank you po.

SAPIEA SEC. GO: Thank you, everyone.

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Thank you very much, Secretary Go.

MARIZ UMALI/GMA 7: Ma'am, may we just get the reaction of the Palace with regards to the call of Vice President Sara Duterte for former Senate witness Michael Maurilio to formally file charges, especially after his serious allegations where he said that he was just influenced to testify against the Vice President, against the former President Rodrigo Duterte and Pastor Apollo Quiboloy and part of these allegations is where he mentioned that there are fake witnesses to testify against the former President at the International Criminal Court. Do you think this has to be investigated?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: If there will be a complaint filed by Michael Maurilio, it is better for him to file charges if there are issues regarding alleged fake witnesses. Because through a case, through a trial and through a cross examination, we will know the truth and tulad ng sinabi natin, ang trial ay importante para malaman ang katotohanan kung may anomalya ba. Hindi dapat nadi-dismiss ang kaso lamang through technicalities. So, mas maganda makapag-file ng case si Michael Maurilio para malaman kung siya ba'y nagsasabi ng totoo o hindi.

MARIZ UMALI/GMA 7: Considering the gravity of his allegations, do you think this warrants an investigation, ma'am?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: If he will file a case. If this Michael Maurilio will not file any case, so there's no issue.

MARIZ UMALI/ GMA 7: And one last, ma'am. Do you think this will have any implication at the ongoing case sa the ICC?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: We don't have any hand on the case pending before the ICC, so bahala na po sila doon.

MARIZ UMALI/GMA 7: Thank you, ma'am.

ALVIN BALTAZAR/RADYO PILIPINAS: Usec., good morning po. survey conducted by PUBLiCUS Asia survey, they conducted a survey from June 27 to 30, it says that approval rating of the President increased to 35% in the second quarter, anong reaksiyon dito ng Palace?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Kung tumaas po ang approval rating ng Pangulo, maganda pong balita iyan. Pero katulad po ng sinabi natin, hindi po tayo dapat nagri-rely lamang sa mga survey; good news, bad news, kung ito man ay tumaas o bumaba ang approval rating ng Pangulo, bakit? Dahil ang nais lamang po ng Pangulo, ay magtrabaho, hindi na po niya—hindi po siya maaapektuhan ng anumang survey. So, maganda po kung tumaas, kung bumaba ay siyempre hindi maganda, pero still hindi po maapektuhan ng anumang numero patungkol sa survey dahil trabaho lamang po ang nais ng Pangulo para sa bansa at para sa taumbayan.

ALVIN BALTAZAR/RADYO PILIPINAS: Thank you po, Usec.

LET NARCISO/DZRH: Good afternoon Usec. Ma'am, has the President decided whether to approve or veto the proposed measure seeking to extend the term of office for barangay and SK official and postponed the BSKE?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Noong tinanong po kanina, wala pa pong natatanggap na enrolled bill. Kapag po natanggap na po pag-aaralan po iyang mabuti para po mapirmahan kung dapat mapirmahan, sang-ayunan kung dapat sang-ayunan.

SAM MEDENILL/BUSINESS MIRROR: Good afternoon, ma'am. On a similar topic po, nakuha na po ba ng Office of President iyong enrolled copy ng Konektadong Pinoy Bill?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Tinanong ko ulit, pangako ko sa iyo, wala pa rin po iyong kopya sa kanila, so hintayin na lang po natin.

SAM MEDENILL/BUSINESS MIRROR: Sige po, thank you po.

ANNE SOBERANO/BOMBO RADYO: Usec., good afternoon. Ang Pilipinas po daw kabilang sa mga bansa sa Southeast Asia na most peaceful countries ngayong 2025, ito po ay ayon sa Global Peace Index, ito po ay isang report pinroduce (produce) ng isang Institute for Economics and Peace, ano po ang reaksiyon dito ng Palasyo?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Muli, magandang balita po iyan. Dahil sa pagsusumikap po ng pamahalaan ng Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr. makikita po natin ang magandang epekto nito. Pero sabi nga po natin, dapat pa pong mas maging maganda ang pagbibigay ng magandang environment, peaceful environment sa ating bansa at mas pag-iigihan pa po, dahil ito po ay isang inspirasyon para sa administrasyon na pagbutihin pa na mas maging maganda pa ang tingin ng ibang bansa sa ating kalagayan dito sa Pilipinas. At iyon nga po, sabi nga natin, hindi titigil ang gobyerno para paigtingin pa ang katahimikan dito sa bansa at mas maganda rin po na makasama natin lahat-lahat pati po ang mainstream media, pati mga social media content creator na mas paigtingin pa natin at ipalabas natin ang good news kung ano iyong ganda ng bansa at medyo iwasan natin iyong negative. Para po ito naman sa bansa natin, iyon lang po.

ANNE SOBERANO/BOMBO RADYO: Usec., dagdag ko lang, ang mga ganitong data paano po ba ito nakakatulong din, bukod po sa peace and order natin, sa isyu pong pang-ekonomiya and investment?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Kapag po kasi nakita po ng karatig-bansa, ng ibang mga foreign nationals na ang bansa natin ay tahimik naman pala. At hindi naman ang nakikita lagi nila na medyo negatibo sa mga news, mas makakaakit po tayo ng mga turista papunta sa ating bansa at ito po ay makakapag-generate ng income. At the same, makakapag-generate din po ng investment. So, ipupursigi po talaga ng pamahalaan na mas pagandahin pa po ang tungkol sa kagandahan at katahimikan ng bansa.

MARICEL HALILI/NEWS5: Usec., magandang tanghali. Usec., in response to your statement na 'Aksiyon hindi bakasyon,' the newly appointment spokesperson of the Office of the Vice President, former Usec. Ruth Castello, mentioned na kapag pinagbatayan naman kasi iyong konstitusyon, hindi naman daw talaga ganoon kadami iyong mai-enumerate na mandato ng OVP and the job of the Vice President is almost the same din naman sa Presidente. So, ano po ba ang gustong makita ng Malacañang na supposedly ay ginagawa ng Bise Presidente?

PCO USEC. ATTY. CASTRO: Hindi naman siguro din kasama sa mandato ng Presidente na laging personal trip o nagbabakasyon. Hindi po natin siya hinahanapan ng anumang trabaho, huwag na lang po niyang pintasan ang pamahalaan dahil ang Pangulo ay nagtatrabaho. Huwag niya po sanang parang ipangalandakan sa buong mundo na ang Pangulo ay walang direksiyon.

Dahil makikita po natin kung saan patungo ang gobyernong ito, kung paano magtrabaho ang Pangulo, lahat halos ay tinutulungan – magsasaka, mangingisda, mga estudyante at marami pang iba. So, kung hindi naman po siya ang magsasalita patungkol sa ginagawa ng Pangulo, hindi naman din po makakarinig ng anumang komento mula sa atin.

MARICEL HALILI/NEWS5: Usec., with the appointment of former Usec. Ruth Castelo, do you see this as, in a way, a battle among spokesperson?

PCO USEC. CASTRO: No, I don't think so. Bakit may battle? It's all about facts, truth, transparency.

TRISTAN NODALO/NEWSWATCH PLUS: Hi, Usec. Siguro medyo related na lang din po doon sa tanong ni Maricel on having … ano po ang maipapayo ninyo na lang doon kay Usec. Castelo bilang spokesperson? And sabi niya rin po, she will not be an attack dog and will just report on sa mga nagagawa ng OVP.

PCO USEC. CASTRO: Hindi siya attack dog, definitely, VP Sara does not need any more an attack dog. Hindi niya na po kailangan ang isang attack dog. So, you know what I mean. Okay na po?

Para sa mas mabilis na driver's license renewal, sa administrasyon ni Pangulong Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., hindi na kailangang pumila pa sa LTO ang mga magri-renew ng kanilang driver's license sa ilalim ng online driver's license renewal system ng DOTr.

Kasama sa online application process ang online driver's education program at telemedicine sa pamamagitan ng eGovPH App. Nangangahulugan lamang ito na kaya na ang digital driver's license renewal sa loob lamang ng 15 minutes at may option pa ang mga motorista na ipa-deliver sa kanilang bahay ang kanilang mga lisensiya.

Patunay lamang ang programang ito na sa ilalim ng Marcos administration, hindi imposible ang pagbibigay ng mas mabilis at mas magaan na serbisyo para sa bawat Pilipino sa ilalim ng Bagong Pilipinas.

[VTR]

PCO USEC. CASTRO: At bago po iyan, mayroon lamang po tayong nais liwanagin at ito po ay patungkol sa naging report ng PDEA tungkol sa 4,027 barangays na na-clear sa panahong July 2022 hanggang May 2025. Tandaan po natin, may certain period.

Iyong sinasabi po na 20,000 plus na na-clear na barangay, maliwanag po na iyon po ay as of June 2025. So, maliwanag po na ang binanggit po natin na 4,027, kahit kayo po ay magtanong sa PDEA, iyan po ay galing sa kanila at hindi po ito kung saan lamang hinugot dahil ang pinapatungkulan po natin ay iyong panahon po ni Pangulong Marcos Jr. Kung mayroong 20,000-plus po as of June 2025, iyan po ay total na … sang-ayon sa PDEA ay drug-cleared at hindi lamang po sa panahon ni Pangulong Marcos kung hindi pati po sa nakaraang, sa 'mga nakaraang' administrasyon. Dahil as of October 27, 2003, sinimulan na po itong barangay drug clearing program. Kumbaga ay noon pa po ito ginagawa pero noong 2017 po, nagkaroon na po muli ng bagong data dahil nagkaroon ng mga panibagong guidelines.

So, iyong kapag sinabi po natin na 20,000-plus, hindi po iyon lamang sa panahon ng Pangulong Marcos Jr. Sana po maliwanag tayo doon dahil maliwanag din po iyong pagkakasabi natin sa ating pag-uulat.

At ito naman pong tungkol sa ibinigay po ng PDEA, maliwanag din po na natapos ang report sa pahina 37, at kung mayroon man pong naidagdag na ibang blangko, maliwanag din po na ang tinapos na report na ibinigay ko po sa inyo ay nasa page 37 lang. Kung bakit natin naibigay iyong ibang mga walang laman, dahil ayaw ko pong pagdudahan ninyo ako dahil sa pagkaka-print po, iyong page po nakalagay 37 of 74. So, kung ibibigay ko lamang sa inyo po ay magtatapos sa 37, ito po makikita po kung saan po iyong pinaka-ending. So, dapat dito lang po talaga. So, kung hindi ko po ibibigay lahat, baka pagdudahan ninyo ako na mayroon akong itinagong dokumento. So, lahat pong 74 na papel ay ibinigay ko sa inyo para hindi po kayo magduda.

Ngayon, ang sabi po yata ng Bise Presidente na ito ay fabricated. So, kung siya po ay uuwi na ngayon, maaari naman din po niyang tanungin ang PDEA para sa authenticity ng report na ating ibinigay para mas maliwanag lamang po. Kasi ayaw nating sabihin na itong ibinigay natin ay fake news. Ang mandato nga po natin ay kalabanin ang fake news, kaya po nililinaw ko po sa inyo. So, kung hindi ko po ibibigay sa inyo lahat ang mga pahina, baka sabihin ninyo, in-edit ko pa.

So, muli, kung may panahon po ang Bise Presidente bago po siya pumunta—nasa Netherlands po at after niyang pumunta sa South Korea, kung hindi ako nagkakamali, puwede naman po niya itong tanungin sa PDEA dahil siya naman po ay Bise Presidente para malaman niya kung authentic iyong ibinigay ko sa inyong record.

Okay, may mahalaga pa po tayong isang announcement. We are pleased to announce that President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has appointed Mr. Dave Gomez as Secretary of the Presidential Communications Office, and Atty. Sharon Garin as Secretary of the Department of Energy.

Secretary Gomez brings decades of experience in journalism, government and corporate communications, having served as a senior reporter, director general of the Philippine Information Agency, and communications director at PMFTC Inc. Secretary Dave will ensure clear and truthful government messaging for every Filipino.

Secretary Garin is a lawyer and CPA with extensive public service experience, having served as a multi-term Iloilo representative and DOE undersecretary with a strong background in energy policy and legislation to advance accessible, reliable and sustainable energy for our people.

We look forward to their leadership as we strengthen government communications and secure our country's energy needs under Bagong Pilipinas.

Si Secretary Jay po ay magiging miyembro po ng Board of Directors ng MECO.

At dito na po nagtatapos ang ating press briefing. Magandang araw para sa Bagong Pilipinas.

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