

OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY
News and Information Bureau

PRESS BRIEFING OF PRESS SECRETARY TRIXIE CRUZ-ANGELES
AUGUST 5, 2022 (1:05 P.M. - 1:39 P.M.)

SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Magandang tanghali. Ngayong araw na ito, kayo po ay ia-address ni Secretary of the Interior and Local Government Benhur Abalos.

Habang hinihintay po natin siya, ipapahayag ko lang po na nag-Cabinet meeting kami kaninang umaga. Nagprisinta po ng mga plano at programa ang Department of Agrarian Reform at saka ang Department of Energy. Nag-status report din po ang DSWD at saka ang Housing, kasama ang ating bagong Kalihim, tungkol doon sa mga efforts during the earthquake and after, lalung-lalo na ukol sa housing. Sila na po ang magpapahayag ng mga detalye tungkol dito.

Kung mayroon po kayong mga katanungan sa akin.

MARICEL HALILI/TV-5: Hi, ma'am. Magandang hapon po.

SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Magandang hapon.

MARICEL HALILI/TV-5: Ma'am, napag-usapan po ba kanina sa Cabinet meeting iyong tungkol po sa US and China tension? Was it mentioned? Did the President say about it? Did he give any directive?

SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Hindi po siya kasama sa agenda kanina.

MARICEL HALILI/TV-5: But did the President give his comment about it? Did he mention anything?

SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Ma'am, kapag tungkol sa international relations parati po tayong nag-iingat. Ngunit suffice it to say, na minu-monitor po ng matindi ang sitwasyon. Wala po tayong reaksiyon o statement ukol doon.

MARICEL HALILI/TV-5: Ma'am, last na lang po, other issue po. Ma'am, pakilinaw po iyong status ng PEZA, because DG Charito Plaza said she will not acknowledge the appointed OIC appointed by the Trade Secretary, kasi PEZA daw po is not considered a GOCC therefore, it is not covered by MC 1 and MC 3; it's a government instrumentality. That was her explanation. So, ano po ang estado po ng PEZA, covered po ba siya?

SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Wala pa po kasing statement ang ating Pangulo tungkol diyan; kapag mayroon na po ay itatalakay po natin.

MARICEL HALILI/TV-5: Sige, salamat po.

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA-7: Ma'am, may we get the Palace statement on the 6.4 inflation rate for the month of July?

SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Bago pa lang po iyan. Sorry, hindi din po natalakay kanina pero ilalabas namin as soon as may statement po tayo. Although, I understand na ang maglalabas po ng statement tungkol dito ay ang DOF.

VANZ FERNANDEZ/POLICE FILES: Good afternoon, ma'am.

SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Magandang hapon.

VANZ FERNANDEZ/POLICE FILES: With the recent oath-taking of the new PNP Chief Police Lieutenant General Azurin, what are President Marcos marching orders for the new Chief PNP or does it have any new changes to the internal operational policies of the Philippines National Police and did the President move towards ordering the new PNP Chief to take a harsher or easier approach in regard to tackling internal peace and security issues; any reaction on this?

SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: One, we don't normally react. Okay, there are no marching orders that we know of. The primary mandate of the PNP is to keep order. So, peace and order ang kanilang primary na mandato. Pagkatapos niyan ay sila din po ang primary executors, they execute the law, they enforce the law. So beyond that, the President has not made any other specific orders.

Paalala ko lang po, bahagi din naman po sa peace and order program ng Presidente iyong continuity. So, whatever it was that has already been there from the past administration, if it works, we continue that program.

PIA GUTIERREZ/ABS-CBN: Ma'am, magpa-follow up lang po, iyong sa question ni Maricel tungkol po doon sa PEZA. Habang ongoing po itong issue ng leadership sa PEZA, sino po ang kinikilalang OIC ng Malacañang?

SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Ang kinikilala natin will be kung ano iyong angkop under MC 1 and 3.

PIA GUTIERREZ/ABS-CBN: At ito po ay si?

SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Kung sino po iyong OIC.

PIA GUTIERREZ/ABS-CBN: So, sino po ito, ma'am? Was it OIC Panga or si ano pa rin po si Director General Charito Plaza?

SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Ma'am, like we said ia-apply natin iyong MC 1 and 3 at titingnan natin iyong interpretation ng ahensiya. So, right now, I still have to find that out but we have been strictly implementing MC 1 and 3.

PIA GUTIERREZ/ABS-CBN: So, ibig sabihin, ma'am, kung sino po iyong niri-recognize ng PEZA? So, this is Deputy Director General Panga, tama po ba?

SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: We will have to see, ma'am. I'll have to get back to you on that one. But we're firm on recognizing under MC 1 and 3.

PIA GUTIERREZ/ABS-CBN: Yes, ma'am. On the matter po noong MC 1 and 3, can we clarify po talaga if PEZA is covered under this Memorandum Circular?

SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Tulad ng sinabi ko, bago po kasi itong development na ito. Ibibigay ko iyong impormasyon as soon as I get it.

PIA GUTIERREZ/ABS-CBN: Pero what is Malacañang doing po to clarify the matter?

SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Ma'am, since bago nga po iyong development, most likely, once it has reached the Office of the President or the Executive Secretary, it will be submitted with the studies and recommendations.

PIA GUTIERREZ/ABS-CBN: Kasi I understand, si Miss Plaza has asked ES to clarify the matter. When do we expect po a clarification coming from Malacañang?

SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: It will be subjected to the usual procedures. Once received, the Office of the Executive Secretary will immediately act on it, either by studying the matter and referring it to Deputy Legal; or if the answer is clear already, then they will simply make the recommendations right away.

PIA GUTIERREZ/ABS-CBN: Salamat po.

VINCE LOPEZ/MANILA STANDARD: Ma'am, good afternoon po.

SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Magandang hapon.

VINCE LOPEZ/MANILA STANDARD: Puwede pong makakuha ng information regarding po sa meeting ninyo yesterday with the NDRRMC, MMDA and Phivolcs-DOST regarding po sa disaster resiliency ng ating bansa?

SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Kahapon, ang pinag-usapan primarily ay iyong responses during the earthquake at may kaunting evaluations. Hindi pa po ganoon kalaliman, kung hindi diniskas [discussed] natin how the things are and how they can be made better, taking suggestions from the other agencies. Since hindi pa po final iyong mga pagbabago ng mga procedures, iyon pa lang po ang napag-uusapan.

Ang contribution namin po doon ay kilalanin po iyong need for communications lalung-lalo na doon sa mga lugar kung saan napapatid iyong ating mga cell signals, so ginawa nating 'of primary concern' din po iyon.

VINCE LOPEZ/MANILA STANDARD: Thank you po, ma'am.

NEL MARIBOJOC/UNTV: Ma'am, natalakay po ba iyong 2023 national budget sa Cabinet meeting or mapapaaga iyong submission sa Congress?

SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Tapos na po iyong pagtatalakay in the last Cabinet meeting kung saan nagprisinta ang DBM. Binibigyan po kami lahat ng pagkakataon to fine-tune iyong mga approved na budget, kung mayroon kaming mga gustong pagbabago at kung kakayanin; last Wednesday po iyong aming deadline.

So ang gagawin niyan is aayusin ng DBM pursuant to that kung kakayanin, and then may submission po. And then the submission, yes, will be on time.

ALVIN BALTAZAR/RADYO PILIPINAS: Secretary, magandang hapon po. Secretary, what do we expect tomorrow doon sa pagkikita ni President Marcos and Secretary of State Blinken?

SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Wala po talagang published na agenda. So pati kami, we will find out about it if the President decides to address the issue after the meeting.

ASEC-DESIGNATE DE VERA: Last question before Secretary Abalos? Yes, Ivan Mayrina, GMA 7!

IVAN MAYRINA/GMA7: Ma'am, on the Taiwan situation. Ano ho ang utos ng Pangulo patungkol sa sitwasyon ng Filipino community doon should the tension escalate into actual violent conflict?

SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Sa ngayon po, mino-monitor natin ang sitwasyon. So magri-react na lang po tayo matapos ang masusing pag-aaral at saka subject to the information that we get from that monitoring. Before that, the President will not yet issue a statement. Tingnan po natin kung ano iyong mga pangyayari. Nag-iingat po tayo dito sa mga ganitong klaseng sitwasyon.

ASEC-DESIGNATE DE VERA: I think we can still accommodate one more question; any other question from Malacañang Press Corps? Maricel Halili, TV 5.

MARICEL HALILI/TV5: Ma'am, sorry, ipa-follow up ko lang po iyong sa inflation kanina. I understand that you will still have to prepare a statement about that. But is this something that you have already expected, iyong 6.4 inflation, nag-increase pa rin po siya despite the fact na nagkaroon ng rollback sa prices ng petroleum in the past few weeks? So is this something that you've already expected, ma'am?

SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: I understand that these were projected even before, given the inputs due to the international events that have led to the increase in the prices of petroleum. So all of these had been factored and in fact, was even mentioned in the State-of-the-Nation of the President.

So, yes, it's part of it. We have expected this. So we'll just wait until it evens out, and the details of which should be asked of the DOF.

ASEC-DESIGNATE DE VERA: Any more question, while waiting for Secretary Abalos?

SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Okay, padating na po si Secretary Abalos, may questions pa po ba? Naubos natin iyong tanong ninyo.

Q: [OFF MIC]

SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Showbiz? Naku, mahina kasi ako sa showbiz eh.

MODERATOR: We have Tuesday Niu from DZBB, ma'am.

TUESDAY NIU/DZBB: Ma'am, tungkol lang po doon sa social pension for senior citizens. Sabi po kasi ng National Commission for Senior Citizens, most likely next year pa po matatanggap ng mga beneficiaries iyong 1,000 pesos dahil wala pa raw fund for this year. But can the government, parang in a form of ayuda para sa taong ito, mabigyan din iyong senior citizens para lang mapunuan iyong dapat na pondo nilang matatanggap ngayong taon?

SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Ma'am, theoretical po kasi iyong tanong ninyo eh, "kaya ba kung ano?" So titingnan po natin. But it was not intended to be executed this year kasi tapos na nga po iyong budget. In fact, tapos na iyong budget for 2023. So titingnan po natin kung paano maipagkakasya iyong ano. But we have to, since it's a law, it will be executed.

Pinakikilala po natin iyong ating napakasipag na Kalihim ng Department of the Interior and Local Government, Benhur Abalos.

DILG SEC. ABALOS, JR: Magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat at sa lahat po ng nakikinig ngayong hapon na ito.

Okay, I just want to report that last week, about seven days ago, there were about 100 Abu Sayyaf who surrendered in Jolo, Sulu. And yesterday, or two days ago, about 50 NPA rebel returnees also surrendered to the fold of the government.

I'm going to show to you pictures. The pictures being shown now, when I'm in white, those are taken in Cagayan de Oro. Iyan, the weapons are being destroyed. We made sure that some of these firearms are destroyed. Iyan hawak-hawak ko iyong nasira. So, these are rebel returnees and this is of course, because of our program in the E-CLIP – the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program, this task force. Of course, kasama natin dito ang kapulisyahan, kasama natin dito ang ating mga kasama sa gobyerno, si Governor Roque of Bukidnon, ang DILG family at ang NICA.

And what is important here is ito; ito namang isang picture na ito, aanuhin ko lang, this one are the Abu Sayyaf, I think, this is the biggest or the largest number of Abu Sayyaf who surrendered so far – one hundred of them. And even the firearms, kumpleto po sa firearms po iyan. Talagang

diyan natin makikita ang talagang samahan ng government: Si Sakur Tan, si Governor Sakur Tan ang nakasama natin diyan, siya iyong naka-asul; of course, last week pa iyan, kaya kasama ko po si General Vic Danao of the PNP; and not only that, kasama rin natin ang iba't ibang ahensiya ng government.

What is important in this program is that surrendering is just one day. But what is important is, after surrendering and that is what, sabi ko nga, wars are just not won by guns, it is won by heart, especially now that we have a very caring government under the Ferdinand Marcos Administration and we will make sure of that. After this, basic things will be provided and what is important of course is our economy para naman maramdaman ito ng ating mga kababayan.

So, I just want to report. After this, I have gone to the province of Lamitan, this was last week. You know this is because of the Yumol case that happened there. I just want to make sure that I had a meeting with the different agencies of government, with the police and also with the members of the City, mga empleyado ng City Hall at mga tao roon to make sure that it will be very peaceful in Lamitan, in Basilan.

Okay? Can we turn on the other, ipakita naman natin iyong buy-bust natin na drugs. Can we show it, Marge?

Okay, I am just waiting for the slides 'no. And this time also, this was also last week, sunud-sunod. After this, pagkagaling namin doon sa Abra, ng Pangulo, I went straight to San Fernando, Pampanga, where again, our Philippine National Police had, this year to my mind, one of the biggest buy-bust operations – in the amount of 480 million, methamphetamine.

I am just waiting for the pictures for the slides, so habang wala pa, itong Enhanced Comprehensive Integration Program of the government, which si E-CLIP, this is particularly for the rebel returnees. In this case, iyong nakita ninyo kanina, nandiyan na iyong mga kasamahan natin dito sa NPA and of course sa ating mga kapatid sa Abu Sayyaf 'no. So, when they return, they will receive immediate assistance, livelihood assistance and then another reintegration assistance and firearms remuneration, iyong mga sinu-surrender nilang mga armas.

Plus, of course, some halfway house construction; at to make sure also for their safety, babantayan din namin sila; at of course iyong iba pang mga tulong ng mga ibang ahensiya ng gobyerno.

What is important in this kind of program, mukhang diri-diretso na dahil I have been receiving a lot of invitations. This week, pupunta naman ako sa isang lugar and there might be another batch of surrenderee. At sana sunud-sunod na ito, para ang tunay na kapayapaan ay maramdaman na ng bawat isa.

So, this is my report, on behalf of the DILG, it's the rebel surrenderees, the one in Lamitan, and of course the drug buy-bust. Marge, do we have the slides for the buy-bust? May technical difficulty? Mamaya ko na lang ipapakita, okay? Sige, thank you.

TUESDAY NIU/DZBB: Good afternoon, Secretary Abalos, sir. With this surrendering of 100 Abu Sayyaf Group na sinasabi po ninyo, ano po ang implication nito? Puwede ba nating sabihin na sa mga susunod na panahon o at least itong taon na ito, wala na tayong dapat na asahan na pag-atake ng mga ASG diyan sa Mindanao area?

DILG SEC. ABALOS: Well, ang masasabi ko lang is that, right now, this is the biggest batch of surrenderees. Of course, mayroon pa namang Abu Sayyaf diyan, pero malaki na ang kinahina. I was informed, talagang napakalaki na ng kinahina. Napakaganda po ng Sulu, they've got one of the most pristine beaches I have ever seen. Napakaganda ng lupa, ready for agriculture, nakahanda na, lalo na ngayon ang Secretary of Agriculture, walang iba kung hindi iyong ating Presidente – I'm sure. So, ito ay parang inihahanda na for economic progress. Of course, if there is peace, sunud-sunod na po ito.

Ang pagkakasabi sa akin, talagang heavily, halos hindi ko lang masabi iyong number, pero mababang-mababa na po 'no. So, I'm sure diridiretso and sa ating mga kapatid naman na nasa NPA naman 'no, ito ho, diridiretso na rin. Sana naman sa mga nanunood o nakikinig ngayon, at kung may kakilala kayo o mga member ng NPA, sana pag-isipan nating maigi, ito ang gobyerno, ito ay makikinig, ito ay gagawa ng paraan para naman lahat ng programa ay maibigay sa atin. Kaya there is no more reason para humawak pa tayo ng armas laban sa gobyerno. I'm sure sa tamang pagtutulongan, talagang magiging very, very successful po ito.

EVELYN QUIROZ/PILIPINO MIRROR: Good afternoon, Secretary Abalos.

DILG SEC. ABALOS: Yes, Evelyn?

EVELYN QUIROZ/PILIPINO MIRROR: In relation po doon sa na-mention ninyo na big [drug] bust po sa San Fernando, Pampanga, may nai-file na po ba kayong kaso against doon sa mga involved? And matitiyak ninyo, kasi po noong mga nakaraang Administrasyon, marami pong mga drug bust na actually mas malaki pa ho dito, pero wala na ho. Pagkatapos na mahuli sila, hindi na natin nalaman kung nag-file na – hindi ho ba, ano po talaga iyong direksyon natin dito?

DILG SEC. ABALOS: Maraming salamat for that question, Evelyn.

Naniniwala ako na the true success of any buy-bust is the conviction of the accused. That is why nag-benchmarking ako sa DILG, I've asked the police to provide me cases – where they are right now; how many are pending; how many arrests were made, and how many convictions?

For me, convictions are very, very important. We have made an inter-agency task force together with Secretary Boying Remulla. Remember, when it comes to criminal cases, ang una pong pupuntahan ng kababayan natin ay ang kapulisan at ang unang haharap ay ang imbestigador. So, ang imbestigador ang gagawa ng demanda para sa iyo.

Remember, medyo kumplikado iyan – why? Dapat may “working knowledge” siya ng Criminal Law because dapat ilagay mo lahat ng elements of a crime, kung anong isinusumbong. Isang element ang mawala ay puwedeng ma-dismiss ang kaso.

So, with this, we've made a program with the good Secretary for a mentorship program. We will try to assess the capacity of our investigators, try to help them, give incentives. And even for the new police, magkakaroon kami, probably an aptitude test to see who could be investigators because they are very, very material in this case.

Number two, when it comes to drug cases, most of these are being dismissed on a technicality because of Article 21 – ano ang sinasabi ng Article 21? Once there is an arrest of this evidence, it must be witnessed by two persons – a barangay official or a member of the media or a representative from the Department of Justice. Karamihan ng kaso, isa lang ang testigo – ang barangay; ano ang nangyayari? Nadi-dismiss ang kaso maski gaano kalaki, gaano kahirap.

In Mandaluyong, what my wife did, Mayor Menchie, she hired one employee, assigned the employee to the Department of Justice. Ang trabaho niya lang ay mag-witness sa lahat ng drug bust at tumestigo. And you know what, wala na kaming dismissal of cases base on technicality because of this one gesture of an LGU. That is why I requested the League of Cities, Mayors; the League of Provincial Governors and of course, the League of Municipalities na baka pupuwedeng gawin nila iyon.

Huwag na nating hintayin na maamyendahan ang batas, let's work within the law. We have to fill-in the gaps. Kung may gap na ganito, punuan na lang natin. Kaya nga nananawagan ako sa ating mga alkalde, local chief executives, baka puwedeng gawin ninyo – just to hire.

Okay, another issue about this. When it comes to hearing, iyong pulis, na-reassign sa ibang lugar; iyong pulis, na-promote at kung tatawagin na siya ngayon sa hearing—Kung walang testigo, tandaan ninyo iyan, puwedeng ma-dismiss or puwede na sabihin na, “the right to speedy trial,” hindi ba, kung diri-diretso.

So, I will be requesting the Supreme Court, dahil mayroong body rin dito, if it's possible na magkaroon ng online hearing in the event iyong kapulisan ay nasa malayong lugar, let's say nasa Mindanao at nasa ano, baka pupuwedeng online hearing na lang dahil maraming kumplikasyon.

So, these are the things we are doing right now. We are trying to benchmark on things; anong mga gaps dito; anong mga dapat gawin po natin dito.

Again, what is important is not the number of cases; what is important is the quality of cases filed; and not the arrest but rather the conviction. At iyon po ang drive namin dito sa DILG at sa PNP, of course, in cooperation with the Department of Justice.

VINCE LOPEZ/MANILA STANDARD: Sir, good afternoon po.

DILG SEC. ABALOS: Yes, Vince?

VINCE LOPEZ/MANILA STANDARD: Sir, will the government intensify its anti-illegal drugs campaign particularly in Metro Manila following the accomplishments of the DILG on the San Fernando, Pampanga drug bust?

DILG SEC. ABALOS: Well, yes. We will surely intensify the war on drugs. But you know, for me, it's not just the police who should move on this. It is one thing that everyone should act on this. Parang may isang puno, 'di ba? Ang puno, may sanga. Putol ka nang putol ng sanga, baka mamaya may tumubo. Kung gusto mong tanggalin ang puno, tanggalin mo ang ugat ng puno.

Ang sanga ay ang mga pusher; ang mga pulis natin ay inaalay ang buhay. Kailangan talagang putulin nang putulin dahil lalaki ang sangang iyan. Pero mas maganda siguro kung magtutulongan tayo. Iyong ugat nito which is the community, the school, the family, everyone should help and that is what DILG would like to do.

We will strengthen the Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Council. Go to the grassroots of everything: Poverty; counseling to the youth. We could do a lot of activities together – Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao, mga kabataan. And who could better counsel a kid? Iyon ding kabataan eh. Kung minsan papagalitan ko ang nanay, sasabihin, “Matanda ka na kasi Daddy eh” pero iyong barkada sa barkada – remember, peer pressure is different.

And not only that, the rise of cybercrimes; iba ngayon because of this online. Iba ang naaano ng mga bata, so kailangan palakasin natin ang self-esteem, gumawa tayo ng mga activities for the kids with one theme: Say no to drugs.

So, we're going to do this. Rest assured the police will do its best, together of course with the NBI – sama-sama kami rito. But much more than that, we as a people, as a community on the ground/grassroots – tulungan ninyo rin po kami dito. Let's have this advocacy, palakasin natin, pag-igtingan natin lalo. It could be through sports, culture, arts, singing; it could have themes every month, we could do this 'di ba? As long as the kids will know na, “Oops, pangit pala ‘yan; hindi maganda ‘yan.”

Thank you.

KRIS JOSE/REMATE: Sir, balikan ko lang po iyong sa sumuko na NPA and ASG. Sir, doon po sa 100 na ASG, mayroon po bang leader ng ASG na sumuko na po?

DILG SEC. ABALOS JR.: I'm not so sure about the leaders 'no but I was informed – talaga nagpapasalamat po ako dito sa intel ng PNP, kay Governor Sakur Tan, sa military ha – sa military 'no, tuwang-tuwa dahil – of course DILG – dahil this is the biggest, Kris, the biggest Abu Sayyaf Group that really surrendered; at marami pang iba, I assure you that – sunud-sunod po ito.

But what is important here is to make sure na talaga namang pag-surrender nila, yakapin na natin iyong programa ng gobyerno for them, about livelihood – lahat po ay magawa po natin.

Iyan ang drug buy bust, sa isang gas station iyan na may dumating na kotse. Pakiulit lang. So, iyan, kung makikita ninyo parang naka-tsaa eh. It's a tea, may mga Chinese characters na nakalagay sa loob – that one is about 60 kilos, worth about 408 million street value of the drugs, okay. It's one of the biggest drug haul this year. Thanks of course to the Philippine National Police, to General Dick Danao and his team, and of course the Regional Director of Region III.

I'm sorry, but I have another meeting to go ha.

MODERATOR: Sec, can you still accommodate two more questions?

DILG SEC. ABALOS JR.: O sige, sige. Last two...

ALVIN BALTAZAR/RADYO PILIPINAS: Secretary, magandang hapon po. Tungkol doon po sa ASG at saka sa NPA. Ano po ba in-offer ng pamahalaan na tulong doon sa mga nagsisuko saka ano po iyong nagtulak sa kanila para sumuko sila sa government?

DILG SEC. ABALOS JR.: Well, under our program, we've got an immediate assistance 'no amounting to about P15,000 and we've got a livelihood assistance, we've got a reintegration assistance and of course firearms remuneration – depende sa isu-surrender na baril, kung anong kalibre po ito. And of course 'no, mayroon pa ring mga iba. Mayroong pa ring medical assistance, access to government services, legal assistance, housing and iba pang mga programa ng pamahalaan.

So what is important is to make sure na iyong integration back to the community, to the fold ay talagang maging successful – and that is what we're working right now. Ang surrender isang araw lang iyan eh pero ang problema iyong ngayon, iyong bukas 'no. Kaya nga I told our directors sa baba 'no – interagency ito – talagang tulongan natin, yakapin natin ang mga kababayan natin at mga kapatid natin.

ALVIN BALTAZAR/RADYO PILIPINAS: Secretary, follow up lang po. Ilan na lang po ba iyong puwersa ng NPA at saka ng ASG base sa records ninyo?

DILG SEC. ABALOS JR.: Well, ayaw ko munang sabihin sana rito eh. Pero I assure you, iyong sa Abu Sayyaf, kaunting-kaunti na lang. Okay? Kaunting-kaunti na lang. Ibululong ko na lang sa iyo kung ilan pero ayaw ko munang sabihin on TV. I assure you, kaunting-kaunti na lang.

VANZ FERNANDEZ/POLICE FILES: Good afternoon, sir. The DILG on Thursday, highlighting the success of the whole-of-the-government approach in dealing with armed communist conflicts and touting towards continuing the highly successful policy – does the DILG and the Marcos Administration as a whole have any set expectation of the potential further success of the policy; Is the Philippines on the track to potentially or nullify the armed communist threat within the Marcos Administration from this successful policy?

DILG SEC. ABALOS JR.: Well actually 'no, ang ating Pangulo ay talagang on hand po rito; talagang puso niya. Makikita naman kampanya pa lang eh, ano sinasabi niya: "Sama-sama tayong babangon muli." It is from this theme kaya kami gumagalaw. Sa totoo lang ako, hindi na yata ako nakakauwi ng bahay ko eh, diri-diretso eh 'no, diri-diretso talaga ito. Kasi ganoon kasipag si Presidente, hindi natutulog nga eh. Akala ko noong eleksiyon tapos na eh, iyon pala mas matindi pala noong naging president. Talagang diri-diretso po kami rito.

Well, iyong kaniyang theme going back na sinasabi niyang sama-sama tayong babangon muli – he really takes it to his heart; walang maiiwan po dito. That is why this kind of program – itong

ELCAC, itong E-CLIP talagang itutuloy namin because what is important here is not the act or gesture of surrenderee, what is important is the integration. That they will really feel the government is there for them, as it is for everyone. That is important.

With this, I would like to thank the media ha. Maraming, maraming salamat po and of course Sec. Trixie, thank you so much. Magandang hapon po sa inyo. Thank you.

MODERATOR: Maraming salamat, Interior and Local Government Secretary Benhur Abalos and Press Secretary Trixie Cruz-Angeles.

SEC. CRUZ-ANGELES: Maraming salamat po.

MODERATOR: Maraming salamat, Malacañang Press Corps.

##

--

News and Information Bureau - Transcription Section