

**Presidential Communications Operations Office  
News and Information Bureau**

**PRESS BRIEFING OF PRESIDENTIAL SPOKESPERSON SECRETARY HARRY ROQUE  
FEBRUARY 5, 2018 (11:40 A.M. – 12:18 P.M.)**

**ROCKY IGNACIO/PTV:** Good morning, Malacañang Press Corps. Happy Monday. Welcome back sa Press Briefing Room dito sa New Executive Building. Today, we have Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Good Monday morning to everyone. Good Monday morning to the rest of the country.

Let me begin with good news – Starting next month, travel time from Manila to Cavite will be reduced to 35 minutes. The Intramuros Administration, the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission and the Municipality of Noveleta launched a boat transport system that will link Noveleta, Cavite with Intramuros, Manila. The ferry boat service is expected to shorten travel time from the current land travel of 2 hours accommodating 100 passengers.

More good news – The continuing Agrarian Reform Program under the administration of Presidente Duterte, granted a 128 Boholano farmers individual certificates of land ownership. The CLOAs distributed last January, covers around a 103.5 hectares in various municipalities in Bohol, including the town of Carmen, Catigbian, Getafe, Danao, Pilar, San Miguel, Sierra Bullones and Guindulman.

Now, let me answer questions given to me last—yesterday, Sunday. Question on the Chinese cartels as top source of shabu in the Philippines – well, it is because this that the Philippines and China entered into bilateral agreements during President Duterte’s state visit to China 2 years ago. And these were: one, a Memorandum of Understanding on the Protocol on Cooperation between the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency and the Narcotics Control Bureau of the Ministry of Public Security of China. The MOU stipulates both countries to enhance their exchange of intelligence know-how and technology sharing on fighting drug crimes, preventive education and rehabilitation facilities. Let me point out that the 6.4 billion shabu seized, was because of information given by Chinese drug agencies.

Now, there was also question on the statement that the government is the biggest endo employer. The government is addressing the issue of contractualization in the government service. The Civil Service Commission, the Department of Budget and Management and the Commission on Audit have issued a Joint Circular directing government agencies to review their structure and identify their much needed manpower. Under this Joint Circular, those under existing Job Order, Contract of Services and Memorandum of Agreement will only be renewed until December 31, 2018. The Joint Circular provides the creation of permanent positions. The qualified Job Order and Contract of Service workers may be absorbed by the agency to fill vacant positions.

I was also asked to comment on the statement of Congressman Casilao, that the NPA may retaliate by arresting members of the Philippine government peace panels. We’d like to underscore first that the arrest of Mr. Baylosis was pursuant to a lawful arrest order. Now as such, we should allow the legal process to proceed so that our justice system can take its due course. He will have to defend himself in court as required by law, and he will have to prove that he is innocent of the criminal charges lodged against him. The JASIG does not have any binding effect now that the government has decided to terminate with the peace talks.

Curiously, it appears that Congressman Casilao appears to be privy to information from inside the New People’s Army. And to me, he sounded like he was speaking on behalf of the NPA with his warning, that government negotiators may also be arrested by the NPA – that will be crime; that would be kidnapping, if not, a violation also of the IHL Law because combatants will be apprehending innocent civilians. The peace negotiators are not combatants – I underscore that fact, and they’re not facing any arrest warrants

and only Philippine law enforcement agencies and the NPA have the power to effect these arrests. So, the NPA has absolutely no legal basis to arrest members of the government peace panel. It is criminal, it is a war crime. It is the NPA that refused to follow the rule of law.

Having said that, the President is committed to ensuring the safety of the government's peace panel, and our security forces are ready to perform their mandate at all times. The NPA and the NDF are really serious and sincere in pursuing peaceful means to end their decades-long conflict with government, threats of retaliation, real or not, are detrimental to the course and will serve no purpose. We reiterate our call to the NPA fighters on the ground to lay down their arms and return to the fold of the law.

Okay, questions...

**NESTOR CORRALES/INQUIRER:** Good morning, Sec.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Yes, Nestor... good morning.

**NESTOR CORRALES/INQUIRER:** Good morning, sir. Sir, just on the South China Sea. An Inquirer story published today shows that China is almost done with its militarization of the 7 reefs claimed by the Philippines in the disputed waterway; photos shown taken from June to December last year. Sir, what will be the next move of the government since China continues to be aggressive in the disputed sea despite talks of non-militarization and self-restraint?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Again, I'd like to say that the question is misleading and I will speak closely so that we understand each other. Those islands were reclaimed during even the time of the former administration. They were complete in fact during the time of the previous administration, and I think whether or not we like it, they intended to use them as military bases.

So, what do you want us to say? All that we could do is to extract a promise from China not to reclaim any new artificial islands. But what you featured in your newspaper today, are old reclaimed islands that were there even before the Duterte administration came to office.

If the Aquino administration was not able to do anything about these artificial islands, what they want us to do? We cannot declare war – not only is it illegal, but it is also contrary—but it's also, because it's impossible for us to declare war at this point.

If you have suggestions on what to do, let me know.

**NESTOR CORRALES/INQUIRER:** But Secretary Lorenzana sir had earlier said, that China had promised not to militarize any of its existing man-made islands.

**SEC. ROQUE:** I only speak for the President. I don't speak for other members of the Cabinet. Please ask him yourself.

**PHILIP TUBEZA/INQUIRER:** Sir good morning, follow up lang po. Will the government file a formal protest considering that these are 7 reefs claimed by Manila, and now turned into island fortresses by China?

**SEC. ROQUE:** In the first place, it did not happen overnight. I think the previous administration must have filed also a protest, when it became apparent that they were going to be used as military bases. So you know when I saw the headline, yes, it's a fact perhaps, but is that news? I don't think so. I think the moment that they start the reclamation, they declared that they will use it—they will have military facilities into the islands.

**PHILIP TUBEZA/INQUIRER:** Sir, one analyst is saying that this shows, iyong construction, it shows that China would soon have de facto control of that area of the West Philippine Sea. And then sabi po ni

Associate Justice Carpio, he's saying that this could mean the Philippines is losing 80% of our exclusive economic zone in that area or 40% noong fishing grounds natin.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Well, I do not know how to react that – that appears to be speculative. I don't think there's been an instance when China has curtailed freedom of navigation despite the fact that they have weapons in these reclaimed islands. So to me, I can't answer on a speculative question. We hope not – because after all, all countries that our duty are under obligation to refrain from the use of force, that is illegal under international law.

**PHILIP TUBEZA/INQUIRER:** Last question, sir. Nabanggit din po ni Associate Justice Carpio that to rely on the good faith of China would be like relying the good faith of a thief just trying to get into your house. And doing so, it would mean like you're in fantasy land, not in touch with reality and that's not real politic—

**SEC. ROQUE:** This is a democracy, he's entitled to his opinion. But I would expect that next time, we would read his opinion in the form of a court decision – because that's the function of the judicial branch of government.

**PHILIP TUBEZA/INQUIRER:** Thank you, sir.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Or as I said, he could run an elective, legislative position if he wants to make policy for government.

**INA ANDOLONG/CNN PHILIPPINES:** Hi Sir, just to be clear about it. Are you saying that you are trusting China's word that under President Duterte's watch they're—they have—or China has not made any progress in its effort to militarize further—

**SEC. ROQUE:** I didn't say that.

**INA/CNN PHILIPPINES:** But is that—

**SEC. ROQUE:** We're relying on the promise of China not to reclaim new artificial islands and not to make further reclamations.

**INA/CNN PHILIPPINES:** How about any effort to militarize disputed islands?

**SEC. ROQUE:** As I said this militarization, if you can call it militarization, did not happen during the Duterte administration alone. It's been long militarized and the question is, 'What can we do? What did the past administration do and what can we do?'

**INA/CNN PHILIPPINES:** But during—

**SEC. ROQUE:** We could—right now the posture of the President is maintain close ties so they wouldn't have any reason to use those arms in those islands.

**INA/CNN PHILIPPINES:** What you're saying, sir, is that during the previous administration nga nag-umpisa ito. But how about during President Duterte's watch? Do you have a guarantee from China that they are not expanding further any militarization efforts?

**SEC. ROQUE:** That's what I'm saying that as far as building new artificial islands - I'm talking very closely so there will be no miscommunication - and making further reclamations that is the one that is subject to the obligatiOn of good faith.

But our position is everything found on this islands we're already there when the President took over. So let's not talk of a militarization that happened under the Duterte administration, if there is such a

militarization which China denies. But what I'll just say that the intent to use or to station military hardware has always been there even before the entry of the Duterte administration.

**INA/CNN PHILIPPINES:** Sir, when you say relying on China's good faith. Does this—I mean, does this still not go with any maybe monitoring system to actually—

**SEC. ROQUE:** I think pretty much that's what we can do. Who says we are not monitoring? I get briefings and I can tell you we know what ships are plying where. We know about the work. But the question is, 'What can you do?' You can protest and I think there is a protest already filed even before. What else can be done? Well we'll continue relying not only the principle on good faith; we also continue to rely on the general prohibition on the use of force which is found under international law. And we expect that China being not just a member of the United Nations but also a permanent member of the Security Council will adhere to the prohibition on the use of force.

**INA/CNN PHILIPPINES:** Lastly sir. Sabi ninyo you get briefings, you monitor. Again, just to be sure about this. Based on the briefings, walang bago under—

**SEC. ROQUE:** No new reclamations.

**INA/CNN PHILIPPINES:** Duterte's—

**SEC. ROQUE:** No artificial islands, no new artificial islands.

**INA/CNN PHILIPPINES:** Thank you sir.

**Q:** In an interview last week, sir, former Senate President Pimentel Jr., mentioned that he will propose to include Sabah as part of the country's territory under federalism. He said we will contest our claim over Sabah but in a friendly manner. What's the Palace stand on that?

**SEC. ROQUE:** The Palace has not made any pronouncement that the charter should be redrafted in a manner that would give up any Philippine territory. The language of the Constitution be it '35, '73 and '87 provides for definition of national territory, that's not one of the parts of the Constitution that the Palace seeks to amend or revise.

**Q:** Malaysia responded sir in a statement they said, 'It does not recognize and will not entertain any claims by any party on Sabah.'

**SEC. ROQUE:** Unfortunately, I don't speak for Malaysia.

**Q:** I just need your reaction.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Well my answer is: there's a definition of Philippine territory in all our Constitutions, it includes territory by reason of historic title.

**Q:** Okay sir, thank you.

**PIA RANADA/RAPPLER:** Sir, last week the President was saying that he wants the Lumads in Mindanao to move out of their ancestral lands and he would provide temporary shelter and stipend for them. Sir, may we know if this statement was an order? Is this a suggestion?

**SEC. ROQUE:** I don't think. I read the transcript. I was not physically in Davao because he asked me to attend on his behalf, the event in the Ilocos Norte. I do not read in the transcript that he asked them to move. What I read is he will ask investors to come in and my reading of that is because you need to encourage economic activity in the Lumad's territory. Now having said that, there's nothing inconsistent with that position, with the provision of the ancestral domains law because the Lumad communities could

allow economic activity to take place in their territory. And of course, it is subject to whatever terms and condition that they may impose.

**PIA RANADA/RAPPLER:** Sir, that's one part of the speech but in another part, he says in Bisaya, *'We'll start now and tomorrow I have something for you, prepare yourself for relocation.'* Some IPs thought of it as an order and we're in fact insulted by the remark and we had an Igorot leader who's also UN Special Rapporteur on right of indigenous peoples – Vicky Tauli-Corpuz saying that its tantamount to ethnocide, that their territories are linked to their cultures and identities and the President does not seem to understand the concept of how IPs view their lands?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Again, that's exact same rapporteur that was responsible for the statement of the President. It's the exact same Filipina rapporteur who said that the government is violating the rights of Lumad. And the President's reaction to that is the ones violating the rights of the Lumads are the NPA because they are forcibly conscripting the Lumads into the NPA. In fact the statistics is something like 80% of them are already conscripted by the NPAs and they have no choice because they do it under point... the barrel of a gun. That's why the solution of the President is to create an economic opportunities in the Lumads area, because generally poverty reduction will empower the individuals, the Lumad communities and will drive away the members of the NPA in the first place when there is increased progress.

It is not ethnocide. He is not forcibly removing them from ancestral domains, let's not claim a monopoly of knowledge of what the Lumad communities' problems are. The President has been a long time resident of Mindanao. He has said that in the BBL, he will seek a correction of the historical injustice which includes the historical injustice being committed to Lumads, because in the previous BBL they were not consulted on the BBL and they were themselves classified as Moros.

So that is not the intention of the President. What he meant perhaps by reclamation is if their investors coming in. Physical relocation but it doesn't mean that they will be expelled from their ancestral domains. Ancestral domains tend to be huge, they are not like limited to 100 square meters.

**PIA/RAPPLER:** So sir what's going to happen now? Will he consult with the IPs who he wants to move out of certain lands? What's going to happen?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Of course, the IPs will be consulted, that's the provision of the law. They will have to decide if they will allow foreign investors in to begin with, he look at the law. So when the President has a suggestion, it means it will take place within the context of the law, because as I said, he's a lawyer.

**PIA/RAPPLER:** And they can refuse the plan?

**SEC. ROQUE:** They can refuse if they don't want, certainly.

**ROSE NOVENARIO/HATAW:** Hi good morning sir.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Yes, sir.

**ROSE/HATAW:** Sir, ano po iyong assurance ng Duterte administration... na mabibigyan ba ng proteksiyon iyong human rights ng mga Lumad sa pagpasok po ng investors at anong klase pong cooperation iyong isusulong ng Palasyo para po sa ganoong hakbang ng administrasyon?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Uulitin ko po. Ang mga Lumads kung ayaw nilang magpapasok ng mga investors, nasa sa kanila iyon. Ang gagawin lang ng Presidente kung nais nilang magkaroon ng mas malakihang pag-unlad doon sa mga ancestral domains ng mga Lumad, iyan tutulongan iyan na humanap ng mga investors sa mga lugar na iyan.

Pero kung ayaw nila, hindi sila mapipilit. Dahil sa batas naman ay kontrolado nila iyong mga teritoryo nila na classified as ancestral domains. So anong guarantee? Iyong batas ang naggagarantiya na kung ayaw pumayag ng mga Lumads, hindi mangyayari.

**ROSE/HATAW:** Halimbawa po na magkaroon po ng—hindi po siguro maiiwasan na magkaroon ng mga protesta. Ano po iyong assurance na hindi naman kumbaga maba-violate iyong kanilang human rights, pag nagprotesta po sila?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Alam mo may doctrine kasi iyan kung ano iyong mangyayari doon dapat may informed consent iyong mga indigenous members. So kung ayaw nila, ayaw nila. So doon lang sa area na may pumapayag. Pero siguro walang magkakaroon ng unanimous decision dahil masusunod dapat iyong kagustuhan ng mayorya. Alam mo hindi lang naman sa Pilipinas may Lumad; all over naman may Lumads - sa Canada, sa Estados Unidos at nagdedesisyon sila bilang isang komunidad.

**ROSE/HATAW:** Okay po.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Mukha na namang Congressman si Deo.

**DEO DE GUZMAN:** Monday, sir. Monday.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Monday, oo.

**DEO DE GUZMAN:** Good news, Monday.

**DEO DE GUZMAN/RMN:** Sir, question lang. NPA rebel o si Joma Sison po, warned the government na he would ask the NPA to continue the attacks on the government and kill one soldier per day until the government wants to talk to them peace.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Alam mo wala namang pagbabago sa posisyon ng NPA, nag-uusap na nga ng kapayapaan tina-target pa rin nila ang kasundaluhan, so ano ang bago doon? Walang bago doon!

**DEO/RMN:** So hindi po tayo luluhod doon sa kagustuhan nila?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Bakit kami luluhod, ano ba ang akala niya sa Hukbong Sandatahan, hindi natin sila kaya? Manuod siya, ayaw ng Presidente sana na dumanak ng dugo, pero wag niyang tatakutin iyong gobyerno na parang kontrolado nila ang teritoryo ng Pilipinas. Kung ang gobyerno nga ay nakipag-usap ng kapayapaan dahil naniniwala sila na lahat ng Pilipino ay dapat mabuhay ng mapayapa, pero dahil ayaw nga nila.

Nakipag-usap na nga ng kapayapaan, binigyan na nga sila ng free passes, pinadadala pa sila sa Norway, all expenses paid, patuloy pa rin ang pagpapatay nila ng sundalo. Anong mangyari sa atin diyan? So go ahead, make all the threats he want.

**DEO/RMN:** No follow up na doon sir. Another issue, Senator Trillanes filed a resolution in the Senate asking for an investigation doon sa ill-gotten daw ni Presidente. Any reaction on that?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Lumang tugtugin, lumang balita para nang sirang plaka.

**DEO/RMN:** Sir, sakaling magtuloy iyong investigation. Will the executive department cooperate with that investigation?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Wala pong tinatago. Ang tanong, anung dokumento ang hawak ni Senator Trillanes, eh wala naman siyang authenticated documents. Sinabi na nga ng AMLC hindi galing sa kanila ang dokumento at mali-mali ang datos na hawak-hawak ni Senator Trillanes.

**ROSE/HATAW:** Sir good morning po ulit. Sir, meron po bang nakikitang parang scenario ang Malacañang na niluluto iyong oposisyon na tungkol po sa pagpa-file ng resolution ni Senator Trillanes sa Senado sa pag-imbetiga ng ano, like iyong katulad po ng Erap-like impeachment na may pagtanggì iyong kampo halimbawa po ni Erap na buksan iyong envelope iyong mga ganoon po. Eh sa bahagi po ni Presidente, hindi siya—halimbawa kung hindi magbibigay ng kanyang waiver para po buksan, parang may ganoon po ba, at si ODO Carandang po ba ay posibleng maging parang Chavit Singson, noong panahon ng Erap impeachment?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Well, unang-una hindi ko alam kung ano ang plano nila, ang alam ko lang hindi sila makaantay ng 21022, kaya gumagawa silang hakbang para mapabilis. Pero ang maisasagot ko diyan, gawin nila lahat ng gawin nila. Pero ang Presidente, as the survey's show has unprecedented approval rating from the people. So mag-ingat sila habang pinipilit nilang tanggalin sa posisyon ang Presidente, magagalit sa kanila ang taumbayan, baka ang people power laban sa kanila, hindi laban kay Presidente.

**ROSE/HATAW:** Pati po iyong kay Mayor Inday Sara po?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Lumang balita na naman iyan, hindi ba? Eleksyon pa iyan eh, isa at kalahating taon na wala naman siyang nabibigay na authenticated document, alangan naman kami ang magbigay ng dokumento, para pruwebahan ang kanyang mga alegasyon na hindi naman totoo. By now, he has had the time. Kung talagang may katotohanan iyan, dapat napruwebahan na niya, may authenticated documents siya, wala! Pareho pa ring mga dokumento ang sinasabi niya!

**ROSE/HATAW:** So walang bago.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Walang bago, kaya nga nagtataka nga ako na nababalita pa iyan, dahil hindi na balita iyan talaga.

**HENRY URI/DZRH:** Magandang nagla-lagablab na umaga, Secretary.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Ay magandang naglalagablab na umaga, Henry.

**HENRY/DZRH:** Sa passport lang po, maski sa amin marami ang nagrereklamo hanggang ngayon, ang dami pang nahihirapang kumuha ng passport. Nabanggit ninyo noong huling itanong ko ito sa inyo na mayroon kayong gagawing hakbang tungkol sa bagay na ito. Ano na po ang latest?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Tootoo po iyon, nung isang lingo may itinalagang tao si SFA na makipag-usap sa atin, hindi naman sumipot. Ang alam ko po ngayon ay nasa abroad si Secretary Cayetano, so ipu-pursue ko po itong bagay na ito dahil pati po sa Kongreso naimbestigahan na namin iyan at wala talagang linaw.

Iyong sinasabi po ni Congressman Zarate ay lumabas din iyan sa Kongreso dahil na kaya nagpunta pa kami sa premises ng UGEC. At iyon nga iyong sinasabi ko, na so far ang malinaw, ang sabi ng COA sa pagbasa nila ng financial statements eh mukhang insolvent daw itong UGEC. Iyon ang sinabi ng COA doon sa pagdinig namin Sa Kamara.

Pero nais ko po talagang madinig sa DFA, kung ano ang gagawin nila dito. Pero ang problema po kasi, iyong UGEC is under PCOO kasi po iyong printing niyan is APO. APO is under PCOO, pero iyong

kontrata naipasok is between PCOO and DFA. So, I will pursue the matter with Secretary Alan and will tell him that his designated representative did not show up in our planned meeting last Tuesday.

**HENRY/DZRH:** Para doon sa mga nahihirapang kumuha ng passport, ano ho ang immediate na puwedeng gawin ng Malacañang dito.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Paumanhin po, pero ang alam ko naman bukod doon sa mga mobile passport vans ay nagbukas na rin po ang Office of Consular Affairs, iyong passport office tuwing Sabado.

**IAN CRUZ/GMA7:** Itatanong ko lang po, si Congressman Alejandro nag-file din siya ng resolution naman sa House, ang gusto naman niyang paimbestigahan iyong mga loans daw ng mga, iyong terms natin sa China, iyong mga loan natin doon?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Hindi na po kailangang mag-file ng resolution diyan, meron po tayong Freedom of Information sa Ehekutibo. Humingi lang sila dito kay Kris Ablan, mabibigyan naman sila ng kopya. Sayang pa ang resources ng Kongreso kung magi-imbetiga, kung iyon lang kailangan nila, sakop po iyan ng FOI sa Ehekutibo.

**IAN/GMA7:** Sir, sa ibang punto pa po, iyong mga dating Secretary ng DOH, nanawagan sila na ipatigil daw iyong pag-o-otopsiya doon sa mga alleged or mga suspected Dengvaxia victims?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Salamat 'no dahil bibigyan ko ng linaw iyan. Kasi mali ata iyong basa ko sa Ilocos 'no. So ito po iyong UP-PGH study, ito na yung klinarify ko sa kanila.

So using the WHO classification for causality assessment of the 14 cases, 9 died of cases not related to dengue or the vaccine, 2 could not be ascertained due to lack of information and 3 were diagnosed as dengue shock. Of the three, the two others who died with dengue shock were considered as vaccine failures based on serologic test, meaning wa epek iyong bakuna, kasi daw wala silang nakitang antibodies.

At iyong isa naman ay namatay after the first dose was administered, namatay siya four days after. So, wala pa masyado ring conclusive evidence, pero totoo na doon sa pag-aaral na ginawa ng PGH, eh 9 iyong walang relasyon, ang isyu kasi is, iyong Dengvaxia daw ba ang naging dahilan para mamamatay sila: 9 walang relasyon; 2 kulang ang impormasyon; 3 posible pero ang finding nga eh; iyong dalawa ay dahil hindi gumana ang vaccine at iyong isa ay namatay naman matapos lamang ang apat na araw matapos mabigyan ng first dose, kasi incubation ng sakit is ten days. So, parang naging teorya is baka naka-incubate na iyong dengue.

So ang sabi ko sa Ilocos Norte medyo good news nga iyan, kasi kahit papano mapapanatag iyong kalooban ng mga magulang at ito namang expert report na ito, ito ay pinag-utos, ni-request ng Department of Health at ako naman, dahil ako ay Palace spokesperson, siyempre sinusuportahan natin iyong posisyon ng administrasyon na hayaan natin iyong mga neutral, impassioned experts to come to their conclusion and they have done so.

**SEC. ROQUE:** However, I've consulted with both Secretary Vit Aguirre and Secretary Duque. We will have an extended meeting before the Cabinet meeting today at 2. But I was told that I should announce that they have rejected the request of the physicians to stop the autopsies. We will proceed with the autopsies because the UP-PGH study itself said that autopsy may have to be conducted on the three, except that, ang sabi ng UP-PGH, kailangan talagang i-autopsy within 24 hours matapos mamatay ang isang suspected case dahil ng Dengvaxia. So huwag patatagalin!

So we are flatly rejecting the call to stop autopsies. We will perform autopsies as they are required, because we need to find the truth.

**IAN CRUZ/GMA7:** Secretary, itong autopsies, gagawin ng UP-PGH not iyong sa PAO kasi doon yata sila mainit versus sa PAO, iyong mga dating DOH secretary?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Alam mo, puwede namang UP-PGH, pupuwede naman iyang NBI. Now, I had a meeting earlier with the NBI Director, and siyempre ang procedure – ako, I was a practicing lawyer also before I join government and I prosecute quite a number of murder cases – the autopsy must be done by a government physician, affiliated either with the public hospital or the NBI.

Of course, you are not barred from introducing pathological results from other sources. But courts very seldom rely on findings not made by government medico-legal officers. And the reason is obvious, as public officers they have taken an oath to uphold the Constitution and the laws of the land. And, of course, the public nature of these institutions will make them independent and neutral on the controversy.

**CHONA YU/RADIO INQUIRER:** Sir, clarification lang doon sa Dengvaxia. Tuloy pero hindi na si PAO or si Erfe ang gagawa? It should be NBI or UP-PGH?

**SEC. ROQUE:** We're not telling anyone to stop what they are doing. We are just saying that we are flatly rejecting the call of the physicians to put an end to the exhumation because the position of the government is we're in search of the truth; we will resort to autopsy when it is needed.

**IAN CRUZ/GMA7:** Sir, ibang topic po. Iyong sa NFA, sir, hindi na raw po nabibigyan iyong mga retailers ng mga rice, ng NFA rice, dahil ang priority daw natin ay siyempre iyong mga biktima ng mga kalamidad. And then, ang nangyayari naman po dahil walang NFA rice sa merkado, tumataas ng P2 to P4 ang mga commercial rice.

**SEC. ROQUE:** I was not authorized to reveal what the President has done. But the President has done a diplomatic initiative to address this. But without authority, I cannot yet announce.

**ACE ROMERO/PHIL. STAR:** Sec. I would just like to clarify your comment in a radio interview last Sunday. Sinabi ninyo, tinanggap na iyong third player sa telco industry. What do you mean by that, iyong tinanggap?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Well, kasi po, in-offer ng Presidente, tinanggap ng Tsina, nag-nominate ang China Telecoms. Ang pagkakaalam ko po, dahil iyan ang ni-nominate ng China Telecoms, tinanggap din natin. Ang hinahanap na lang ay iyong mga partners, at siyempre kailangan mag-comply nga doon sa Constitution.

**ACE ROMERO/PHIL. STAR:** But the DICT said it's open. Iyong pagiging third player is open?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Again, I speak for the President, not the DICT.

**ACE ROMERO/PHIL. STAR:** Okay. Regarding iyong sa sinabi ninyo na baka hindi ma-meet iyong first quarter—

**SEC. ROQUE:** That came from DICT, that's why I'll find out in this afternoon—alam ninyo kasi si Presidente, every time we have a Cabinet meeting, sabi ko na nga sa inyo, Marawi rehabilitation, number one; number two, third telecom player. So we will find out what the update is this afternoon. And

tomorrow, I promise to give you another summary of the Cabinet meeting, the proceedings of the Cabinet meeting.

**ACE ROMERO/ PHIL. STAR:** Pero wala tayong parang idea bakit made-delay, kahit basic info—

**SEC. ROQUE:** I can't remember the reason now, but I promise to give you an update tomorrow after the Cabinet meeting.

**RALPH VILLANUEVA/MANILA TIMES:** Sabi po ni Congressman Alejano noong Sunday, you should familiarize yourself daw po with ano, iyong timeline po ng sa frigate. Kasi sabi niya po, noong September 26, 2016, doon daw po na-finalize iyong contract.

**SEC. ROQUE:** That's wrong. Ang nirereklamo niya, ang pinuputak niya, disqualified daw iyong Korean company sa Korea. Saan papasok iyan? Ano ba ang proseso ng bidding?

Ako naman kung titingnan ninyo iyong mga Supreme Court decisions on government procurement, lahat iyon ako ang nag-argue. So, ano ba ang mga proseso niiyan? Two envelopes iyan: Una, iyong presyo, iyong specification; number two, iyong mga qualification ng supplier.

Kung sinasabi niya na black listed iyong company na iyan, lalabas at lalabas iyan doon sa second envelope pagdating doon sa tinatawag na post qualification. Kailan ba kinondak (conduct) ang post qualification? Panahon ni Presidente Aquino, 'di ba? Ang ginawa lang ng administrasyon na ito, Agosto, iyong notice of award. Pero everything in the bidding, natapos na iyan during the administration of President Aquino.

Ang sinasabi ko sa inyo, 9184, basahin naman ninyo anong grounds for refusal to issue a notice of award. Ang puwedeng posibilidad lang diyan ay dalawa: patent illegality – obvious na obvious; pangalawa, kung hindi na kinakailangan iyong procurement. Paano naman natin masasabing hindi kailangan ang procurement, may problema nga tayo sa West Philippine Sea. Marami nga dito, sabi nang sabi, militarization of the South China Sea, wala nga tayong frigate! Paano naman natin mapipigil iyong kontrata na kauna-unahang dalawang frigate na may missile capability. So paano mo mai-invoke iyong ground na hindi natin kailangan iyong procurement? Kaya tumuloy nga iyong halos ministerial na notice of award.

So my suggestion to Congressman Alejano, he's my friend, but please don't teach me the law.

**REYMUND TINAZA/BOMBO RADYO:** Sir, pahabol lang doon sa Dengvaxia. Kanina sa hearing sa Kamara, medyo parang nagbago na ang posisyon ng Sanofi at hindi na raw sila magre-reimburse doon sa supposedly unused vaccines na binayaran na ng gobyerno. So parang lumakas yata ang loob nila after ng release ng report ng expert panel.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Huwag po silang lumakas ang loob dahil hindi pa po tapos ang usapin. May VACC complaint na election offense iyong ginawa nila. Mayroong reklamo na hindi sila nag-disclose fully kung ano ang side effect ng bakuna. So hindi po ibig sabihin na iyong finding ng UP-PGH ay nagsasabi na siyam ay walang kinalaman sa Dengvaxia ay wala na silang pananagutan. Marami pa pong posibleng pananagutan! Kapag napatunayan na alam nila iyong side effect, hindi nila dinisclose, naku, napakalaking danyos po ang puwede nilang bayaran; hindi lang iyong full reimbursement.

They must be dreaming if they think they're off the hook. Pinatatapos lang natin ang imbestigasyon. Everyone, please, the investigation is ongoing. Even the UP-PGH study will be forwarded to the NBI, so that they can conclude their investigation. Let us not make any conclusion either way. And I'm also

appealing to even some members of the government, wala pa pong final finding ang NBI, antayin po natin iyan. No one is responsible and yet, no one is off the hook at this stage. Dream on, Sanofi.

**IAN CRUZ/GMA7:** Nabanggit ninyo po, Secretary, may ipa-file nga daw po iyong VACC tungkol dito sa Dengvaxia?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Sinabi naman nila iyon 'di ba – election offense. Sinabi na nila iyong last week. Tinanong na nila ako.

**IAN CRUZ/GMA7:** Pero ngayon daw po iyon, 2 P.M., sir.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Ayun, very good, because I'd like to know the reasons, too. Lahat naman iyan ay maimbestigahan! Sabi ko nga sa'yo, ang Presidente ayaw talagang magpakulong ng kanilang predecessor in office. Pero kung talagang may dahilan, let the law takes it's course. Ang dami na iyan kung may possibility, tatlo na I can think of kaagad.

**Q:** [OFF MIC]

**SEC. ROQUE:** lisa lang naman ang predecessor President, ano ba kayo 'no. Susmaryosep! Tatlong basehan na kung mayroon matapos maimbestigahan.

**#END#**