

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

**INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENTIAL SPOKESPERSON HARRY ROQUE  
BY PIA HONTIVEROS, NEWS NIGHT – CNN PHILIPPINES  
April 5, 2018 (6:09 – 6:21 P.M.)**

**SEC. ROQUE:** (recording starts)... He is a cabinet member. He has the rank of a Secretary by the designation as Deputy Executive Secretary—Senior Deputy Executive Secretary. The appointment paper was signed today and the way I understood it is that he will assume the position right away. Now the President also asked me to announce that the next Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines is Lieutenant General Carlito Galvez. And he will take his oath together with General Albayalde on April 14.

**PIA:** April—wow, okay. Two big announcements! So first let's go—sir, punta muna tayo kay Galvez ha, kasi kumbaga mas bago iyon eh dahil may tsismis na about Guevarra. Carlito Galvez in the last appointment noong pinili po si General Rey Leonardo Guerrero, nabanggit na po iyong pangalan kasi ni Carlito Galvez, ano. And now, in other words para bang na-by—hindi naman bypass, no he was passed over. What made the President choose Carlito Galvez? Was it Marawi? Was it the 5 months war in Marawi?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Well that must be—he actually did not give me any reason. He just asked me to announce but I supposed that's also one of the reasons.

**PIA:** Alright. So April 14 Carlito Galvez, he is also—If I'm not mistaken class '85—

**SEC. ROQUE:** '85, class '85.

**PIA:** '85, he is Western Mindanao Command Chief, very much visible during the five months war from May to October last year in Marawi. Very visible soldier, soldier-soldier like many call him. So right you were saying you don't—there is no explanation given as to why the choice is Carlito Galvez for Chief of Staff. Why not the others? There was word about Bautista and other two or three other officers?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Well Pia the instruction was just to announce now the appointment of Secretary Guevarra and soon to be Chief of Staff Galvez.

**PIA:** Alright, Menardo Guevarra sir, as DOJ Secretary. Sabi po ninyo today lang po napirmahan ni Presidente ang kaniyang appointment papers. What time was that sir?

**SEC. ROQUE:** I have the pleasure of being present as appointment paper was being signed. It must have been about five minutes ago.

**PIA:** Five minutes ago, so after the speech?

**SEC. ROQUE:** After the first speech – there was an earlier speech – we went to the anteroom before going to the current engagement that he has right now with the rice traders.

**PIA:** Alright! And Menardo Guevarra chosen because... I mean apart from you have already said—

**SEC. ROQUE:** Well, he has been serving the Palace: the Office of the President as Senior Deputy Executive Secretary with the rank of cabinet; and his proven competence as a lawyer; and proven integrity. The President said that he chose someone who is a person of integrity for one of the most sensitive departments in the bureaucracy.

**PIA:** Sir, can we talk more about Oscar Albayalde, Ode Albayalde is the new Chief PNP. Earlier the President was saying that he was talking about the possible—the contenders now for Chief PNP. Kausap niya iyong mga taga Davao, tapos sabi daw ni Presidente, binanggit niya iyong pangalan ni Ode Albayalde tapos medyo... Ay medyo istrikto iyon biglang sabi ni Presidente, eh ‘di iyon ang pipiliin niya. Can you give us a little bit more background as to why the choice of Albayalde for Chief PNP?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Well I know he has been head of the National Capital Region-PNP and he is also a very visible in the war against drug. I’ve had the benefit of having a long conversation with him on the war on drugs. He seems to be on top actually of the war on drugs as well as the war on terrorism.

**PIA:** Alright. Sir, can we talk about April 14? That is a Saturday. Why is that the date—so in other words ang mangyayari noon dalawang change of command ceremonies, one in Aguinaldo from General Rey Leonardo Guerrero to General Carlito Galvez and another in Camp Crame from General Dela Rosa to General Albayalde. Why the choice of that date and how are you going to manage that?

**SEC. ROQUE:** I have no idea but they will be taking the oath at the same time.

**PIA:** Sir, same time? Same—hindi naman po same place ‘no?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Iyon same time and same venue. It’s not an unusual that new members of the Cabinet take their oath together. I took my oath together with Secretary Duque—

**PIA:** Ah okay.

**SEC. ROQUE:** And Secretary Año—

**PIA:** Sir, I’m sorry. Well I was referring to the turn over from General Guerrero to General Galvez and General Dela Rosa to General Albayalde because there is a change of command ceremony that the military and police practice as tradition?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Well I think they will be separate. That will be separate but the instruction given was the two of them can take their oath on April 14. So the change of command could take place on separate date.

**PIA:** Sir, can we talk about Vit Aguirre. When did he submit that resignation letter? Last night we were talking about it and you said wala pa. I remember you said, kausap po ninyo si ES Bingbong Medialdea at wala pa raw iyong resignation letter. Ano po iyong nangyari?

**SEC. ROQUE:** It was today. It was submitted today.

**PIA:** Today. What time was that submitted sir?

**SEC. ROQUE:** He didn't mention the time anymore. But he said that he accepted it as soon as he knew that it was filed with his office.

**PIA:** So it was sent in today. So was there any indication last night in the Cabinet meeting—you know after the Cabinet meeting eh 'di na-release na nga po iyong mga pictures ano. It is just like a very happy Cabinet meeting. All of you singing happy birthday to the President, present him with a cake. And then you had Vit Aguirre and Bebot Bello flanking the President, standing beside him on either side of him. There didn't seem to be any inkling of any problem at that moment?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Well, let's just limit to the information given by the President today that he accepted the resignation and of course he said that it is the most sensitive of the many departments of the bureaucracy and he has said that he needs some—

(PHONE LINE CUT)

**PIA:** Let's speak again to Secretary Roque, sir...

**SEC. ROQUE:** Yes, Pia.

**PIA:** Sir, I wanted to ask. A while ago, noong—well an hour or more ago when the President made that announcement about General Galvez—sorry, no he didn't make that announcement, he was talking about—

**SEC. ROQUE:** No, Albayalde.

**PIA:** Oo, he could not—when he said—after he announced Albayalde, sabi niya – shift siya sa Chief of Staff – sabi niya, “*I'm not yet at liberty to announce.*” Can you tell us why, what was going on behind the scenes?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Well I think as far as Secretary Guevarra is concerned, it was a complete surprise for Secretary Guevarra himself ‘no. Actually...

**PIA:** Sir iyong kay ano, earlier kasi sinabi na nga ni Presidente na he cannot make an announcement about the Chief of Staff, because sabi niya, “*I'm not yet at liberty to do so.*” But now, what happened in that moment in the speech and now that you are announcing it?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Well I guess, he made up his mind in between [laughs]. And he asked me: “go ahead and announce the new Chief of Staff.”

**PIA:** Okay. Anything else you would like to add, sir? Any other surprise announcements you'd like to make now, or are there going to be more?

**SEC. ROQUE:** [Laughs] There is another one.

**PIA:** There's another one.

**SEC. ROQUE:** But, let's wait for the next week please. Too much information [laughs].

**PIA:** Next week pa? Sir naman kagabi sabi ninyo, "*Let's wait na lang. I'll let you know right away,*" kaya lang hindi naman pala kami—sige na Secretary Roque...

**SEC. ROQUE:** [Laughs]

**PIA:** Sige na, please... [laughs]

**SEC. ROQUE:** Unfortunately, I work for a principal—the President and I can't announce unless he tells me to do so.

**PIA:** Uhum... And when are you going to announce that? When are you going to make that?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Very soon.

**PIA:** Very soon. What is very soon? Is that tonight?

**SEC. ROQUE:** The President mentioned, "*Maybe we'll announce it next week.*"

**PIA:** Next week... And it is about what Cabinet portfolio naman?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Of course if I give you the Cabinet portfolio, then you will know who it would be [laughs].

**PIA:** Ano na lang, parang sector na lang. Is it defense and security? Is it economic? Is it the National Food Authority?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Well, I have to honor my principal's orders. And until he tells me to announce, I really can't.

**PIA:** Uhum, okay. But like you said, it's going to be surprise announcement; it's going to be some good news. In other words, this is the President making—taking decisive action on an issue that has been festering for so long, right sir?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Yes. Well in my last interview with you, I mentioned a good news – and that good news was the resumption of the peace talks which originally he did not want to be made public, because he wanted to proceed with the discussion in confidence first. But somehow information leaked, so we went public with it also. So that was I was going to announce that in your program as I promised, except that it would leaked somehow.

**PIA:** Uhum, okay. So, you're not gonna give us any clue whatsoever for this next announcement that you say is going to be made next week. But you're telling us that you're going to be telling us first and you're not giving us any clue whatsoever as to what—I mean, you won't say what Cabinet portfolio. So, it's a Cabinet. Cabinet ba or one of the agencies of government?

**SEC. ROQUE:** [Laughs] It's a line agency. A department, it's a department.

**PIA:** A department...

**SEC. ROQUE:** Yes. But anyway before anything else, I might be next in the chopping block. So, I'll leave you at that [laughs].

**PIA:** [Laughs]. Baka kayo na iyong next. Okay. So wala na pong ano sir, wala na pong—nothing else to add at this moment. What else? Before I let you go, baka kasi mag-slip of the tongue pa kayo eh. Wala na po?

**SEC. ROQUE:** Wala na. Next week na po.

**PIA:** [Laughs] Sige po. Secretary Harry Roque, thank you so much for joining us tonight.

**SEC. ROQUE:** Thank you very much.

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