

**Office of the Press Secretary**

**Presidential News Desk**

**INTERVIEW WITH**

**PRESIDENT FERDINAND ROMUALDEZ MARCOS JR.**

**BY TV HOST/ACTRESS TONI GONZAGA**

[Aired on ALLTV | 13 September 2022]

**MS. TONI GONZAGA:** Mga kababayan, isa pong malaking karangalan na makasama natin ngayong araw ang ikalabimpitong Pangulo ng Republika ng Pilipinas, His Excellency President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. Hello po, Mr. President.

**PRESIDENT FERDINAND ROMUALDEZ MARCOS JR.:** Hello. Hello, Toni, and nice to see you once again in this setting.

**MS. GONZAGA:** It's nice to see you again.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Iba na 'yung ating setting ngayon.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Iba na. Exactly a year ago we did this interview. Our first sit-down —

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** It was about a year ago. That's right, yes.

**MS. GONZAGA:** — sa inyong tahanan. Ngayon, nandito na tayo sa bago niyong tahanan for the next six years.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Well, this is where we live and work now eh ganoon talaga.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Your home and your workplace. But this is also your old home. You lived here for 20 years.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** It is. I think it's an advantage for me kasi parang alam ko na ito. Lahat ng — alam ko 'yung... Kung minsan nga 'yung security ko nawawala dahil kung saan-saan ako dumadaan, alam ko 'yung pasikot-sikot dito sa Palasyo. Noong nakatira kami dito ang father ko ang pangulo.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Pero ngayon kayo na po.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Iyon na nga eh.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Sa pagbabalik niyo sa Malacañang kayo na ang Pangulo.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Ganoon na nga ang nangyari pero iba `yung pakiramdam.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Ano po `yung pakiramdam?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** It's very hard to describe because...

**MS. GONZAGA:** So many memories.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Yes you have those memories but memories as a child, memory watching your father work. Now it's you that's working, it's you — this is the office that you work in and these are the people that you work with.

So it's very much playing a familiar role but you never played it before. I was never president before. But I watched my father for a very long time so "ah ganyan ang presidente."

**MS. GONZAGA:** When you hear the word "president" attached to your first name, how does that make you feel?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Again, it's very hard to describe. Noong sa umpisa siyempre noong sinasabi "President Marcos" sa isip ko si President Marcos tatay ko 'yung tinutukoy nila? "Mr. President", hinanap ko si Mr. President kung sino 'yung kinakausap nila.

But I guess you just get used to it kasi nandiyan ang trabaho and that's the way the work is done. You have many decisions to make. There's much study to do. Marami kang kailangan... So that keeps you busy so hindi mo na iniisip 'yun.

Pero pagka kung minsan mayroon pa ring ano lalo na pagka mga ambassador, "*Ladies and gentlemen, the President of the Republic of the Philippines...*" Iyong parang "uy, ako 'yun."

**MS. GONZAGA:** Kayo na 'yun.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Ako pala 'yun.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Alam niyo may sinabi 'yung mother ninyo, our former First Lady Imelda Marcos, she said that: "*The presidency is destiny.*" When you were growing up, naramdaman niyo ba that you will become the president of the country?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Well, ang naririnig ko noong bata ako and I was still very young, I am talking about single-digit young, you know I'm talking about eight years old, seven years old. And I think I've described it before because my father was so dominant in the political arena.

Ako naman sinasabi ko hindi na ako papasok diyan. In fact, umiiwas talaga ako sa pulitika eh. Well, circumstances are what they are, I ended up here. Para sa akin hindi 'yung ano eh "*gusto kong maging presidente kahit na anong mangyari basta 'yan lang ang gagawin ko sa buong buhay ko magpi-presidente ako.*" It was never like that.

It was really more like well nandito na ako, napunta na ako sa pulitika. Iyon. Sabi ko eh nandito na tayo eh. Sabi ko sa sarili ko pagbutihan mo na lang.

Just keep going, just keep going as far as you can take it until we reached the presidency.

**MS. GONZAGA:** The presidency.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Natatawa ako kung minsan I see the commentary "*pinagplanuhan nila ng taon-taon ito, it's a long-term plan.*"

**MS. GONZAGA:** The truth is?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** I'd like to talk to them and say you know you give us too much credit. If only you knew all the stumbling blocks that came in our way, all the mistakes that we made.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Sinasabi po nila everything that happens in your life is a preparation to where you're going to be in the next chapter. What do you think prepared you for the presidency?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** I think if ever anything prepared me for not only being governor or congressman or a senator, but being President, I don't know if I'm completely prepared but I have some preparation you know that

I can put in my belt and that's just watching my father. Watching what he did.

I lived in this house, I was with him. It's like going to masterclass. How is this done? How do you run a country?

**MS. GONZAGA:** Speaking about your father, noong nag-oath taking kayo ang ginamit niyong Bible was the same Bible your father used.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Ah 'yung sa aking ama. Hinanap namin 'yun. We wanted very much to go back to tradition. And we thought that it's time we have to come back to our touchstone.

Okay this is the presidency. This is how we do it. This is how it goes. Ito 'yung tradition ng ating — ng Pilipinas. Respetuhin natin 'yang tradition na 'yan. Siguro in my old age I'm getting superstitious.

**MS. GONZAGA:** So before the inauguration, let's go back to the day noong May 9 when the votes were coming in and you were seeing the numbers hanggang sa nag-reach siya ng 31 million votes. You made history as the first president na nagkaroon ng pinakamataas na boto sa kasaysayan ng eleksyon ng mga pangulo, 58.77 percent.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** I know that's remarkable. I was all shocked. Of course we're always studying the surveys, we're always looking at the figures. They were saying it looks good, it looks like it's going to be okay.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Did you expect the 31 million?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** I didn't allow myself to do that. All through the campaign I said "you relax, you're not gonna win yet."

**MS. GONZAGA:** Kahit na you're number one sa lahat ng surveys?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Oo, survey pa lang 'yan. Hindi pa boto 'yan. Ganoon ako lagi eh. Kahit na maganda 'yung numero, kahit na maganda ang response ng tao sabi ko hindi pa, wala pa 'yung eleksyon.

So when we were watching the figures, I said well so far it makes sense and I kept telling — "congratulations". Sabi ko "hindi huwag muna mag-congratulations" until our own canvassers were saying ang natira ngayon na boto is 12 million. Kahit mapunta lahat sa kalaban 'yan, panalo ka pa rin.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Kahit pagsama-samahin 'yung boto ng kalaban ninyo.



**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Oo, kahit na sa... Doon, that was the only point na

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**MS. GONZAGA:** Naramdaman niyo, ito na 'yun.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** — na sabi ko, mukhang panalo tayo.

**MS. GONZAGA:** What made you cry when you won?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Actually it was the reaction of all our supporters that it was so, so deeply felt that — God — you know, it's something that we cannot take lightly. You were there during the campaign.

**MS. GONZAGA:** I cried that night.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** I think, I think everyone —

**MS. GONZAGA:** Everyone cried, all of your supporters cried.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Even some of these tough guys na mga kaibigan, mga kaklase ko mga tough guy?

**MS. GONZAGA:** They cried.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Sabi ko matatanda na talaga kayo, iyak kayo nang iyak.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Did you have a special moment with the family where you all hugged each other after you won and they cried? The kids, Tita Liza?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** I think there were very, very, very many of those special moments. One of the best moments that we had during that evening when we were watching the count was I didn't expect it kasi natapos na si — naproklama na si Sandro in Ilocos. I didn't know this.

So later in the evening, I think about nine or ten, he walks into the place panalo rin. And that was like a big — I said "Great!" We all did okay. But again it always comes on this vote, this kind of support. Embedded nga in that is the hope of people "please do something good."

And the thought that kept going into my head, paikot-ikot sa aking pag-iisip, I said, we better do well. These people are counting on you. All of these

people went out of their way to give you their vote. The most valuable thing that they can give you is trust.

We must remember that measure of support comes with a measure of hope and trust and we cannot betray that. So we have to work very, very hard, and we have to get it right.

**MS. GONZAGA:** The message of your campaign was unity.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Yeah.

**MS. GONZAGA:** And it resonated to 31 million Filipinos. Why do you think it did?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** I think that people could see that this kind of nitpicking and bringing people down, that crab mentality that we talked about that sometimes Filipinos have, that it was enough time for that, that's enough already.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Was it also because you think that our country was divided?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Yes.

**MS. GONZAGA:** In a lot of ways?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Yes.

**MS. GONZAGA:** What divided our country?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Politics. We lost sight in many ways of the national interest and we only talked about partisan interest. Pinaglalaban lang natin “yung sa partido ko,” “yung sa kandidato ko,” “yung sa gusto ko,” doon sa... Hindi natin iniisip `yung ano `yung para sa Pilipinas?

Kahit medyo malugi ka pero maganda sa Pilipinas, okay `yun, walang problema `yun. We have to start thinking that way. Even if it costs you, even if it's hard, even if people don't understand. Eh ganyan naman talaga ang pulitika eh.

`Yan ang leader eh. Eh hindi naman lahat makakaunawa doon sa iyong ginagawa. Mayroon diyang element na kahit anong sabihin mo hindi naman tama kasi nasa kabila sila, so `yun ang trabaho nila they oppose.

And in the end, kasi naman, matagal ko nang natutunan 'tong leksyon na ito eh: performance is the best politics. 'Pag maganda ang nagawa mo, kahit anong sabihin nila, nagawa mo eh.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Your work will speak for itself?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Yes. At saka hindi nila makukuha sa'yo 'yan. Alam ng tao. Even wala kang placard na sinasabi na "ako ang gumawa nitong project na ito," "ako ang gumawa ng magandang ano na ito." Alam ng tao eh kung sinong nagdala ng improvement doon sa kanilang buhay.

That's the most important thing. At saka walang — nobody can take that from you.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Let's talk about the SONA. What was that experience like for you? Giving your first State of the Nation Address.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** I've been to SONAs, as a congressman, as a senator. Nanunuod ako, so I know exactly how it goes. It's the same thing like here, being here in the Palace, I know how things go.

But then I'm not sitting as governor and watching it or sitting as a congressman and watching the SONA. I'm the one standing there making the State of the Nation Address.

Again, go back to tradition and the State of the Nation Address is a report to the people about how we are doing. What it was was really a look forward and to say that this is what we are doing.

And that's why some people were saying, "Why did you go into so much detail?" Because people have to know what our plans are. "Hindi naman nila naintindihan 'yan." Hindi na bale. Those potential investors that we are trying to bring into the Philippines, the financial analysts. And the most important priority of the people right now, even of the government right now, is the economy.

So 'yun ang inuna ko. And so, yeah, how does that feel? Well, actually making the speech is okay. But writing that speech, I wrote — it took us a full week of writing. But what I really wanted to present was a plan.

Everything is part of a whole. And the one thing that I also asked, that I also wanted to get across is that I know that people have been sacrificing for two years. We will do this. We are not asking you. Nagsakripisyo na kayo.

We will do this to help you. The government is not asking anything from its people. It's the government now that will provide to the people kasi talagang alam naman namin naghihirap na kayo, matagal na kayong naghihirap.

Kaya't kami muna, patrabahuhin niyo kami. Ayusin natin 'yan.

**MS. GONZAGA:** The war on drugs, hinanap po nila 'yun sa SONA.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Yeah.

**MS. GONZAGA:** It was not tackled.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** No. I didn't because I had already explained it and I think it's of an internal matter. The war on drugs will continue but we have to do it in a different way. Until we formulate fully our policies, hindi pa natin masasabi because we are...

Even as we speak, there are a working group putting together... They knew war on drugs. We are looking more for in the upstream, upstream of the problem, the prevention. Turuan natin 'yung mga bata: "Huwag kayong papasok sa ganyan. Wala kayong aabutin diyan. Karamihan ng pumasok

diyan, either nakakulong na o patay na. So ba't niyo gugustuhin 'yun hindi ba?"

So all of that. And those who are already involved o naadik na, we should treat them. We're trying to... In fact, right now, we are trying to formulate how, what is the latest and what's the best way for the rehabilitation.

These are all being formulated. And then even on the enforcement side... But I'd like to formulate that one, that will take another whole SONA just to explain.

**MS. GONZAGA:** What about the death penalty? Ano po ang stand niyo sa death penalty?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Death penalty is a tough one because there is a practical issue and a moral issue involved. And the question is, does society have the right to kill its own people? And that's a tough one to get around. But...



And as a practical matter, does the death penalty, actually, does it discourage people from committing heinous crimes? And I think the data, not only from the Philippines but from other countries shows that we have to be very stringent about applying the law.

**MS. GONZAGA:** You said something really nice about the creative industry in your SONA. And alam naman po nating lahat na marami sa aking kasamahan sa industriya ay very vocal na against you.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Oo.

**MS. GONZAGA:** What is your reaction to that?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** That's their opinion. But again, it's clear that the creative industry is an important part of our culture, even of our image and look abroad.

If you go around Asia, and you go to the hotels, you go to the bars, ang tumutugtog laging Pilipino `di ba? We have somehow a special affinity to the performing arts.

And that's... And I've seen many of my friends in the creative — na creatives, two and a half years walang concert, walang trabaho. I'm not only talking about the performers. I'm talking about the caterer, the driver, the crew. Walang trabaho ito for the last two and a half years, eh ang laking asset.

Now, we're going to talk about tourism. Secretary Christina Frasco `yun ang kanyang talagang thinking eh. Sabi niya, let's make the Filipino brand important and to be well-known. And she's absolutely right.

Part of that brand is our culture. And it's not something that's going to be too hard. The Filipino brand is attractive. The Filipino brand is singular, is unique.

**MS. GONZAGA:** What for you is our Filipino brand?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Grace. If I have to describe it in one word, it's grace. Filipinos are so gracious. That's why I thought it would be an important part of the SONA.

**MS. GONZAGA:** So what can the Filipinos expect from a Bongbong Marcos presidency?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** We can expect that the Philippines will finally begin to emerge from the difficulties that we have been going through in the past two and a half years, we continue to go through up to now.

But I think there really is a very grand opportunity. We just got some economic statistics yesterday and today. I really am going to work very hard on the economy and that is based very much on agriculture. So 'yan ang tinatrabaho ko ngayon.

The normalization of the business of government. The way that the government will run will be fully explained and hopefully understood by people. So that again, they can, they know the part that they can play. If

they're private investors, they know what is interesting to them, they know how to get it done.

Now, even not investors but ordinary people, they want to get a business permit, they need to get a license, they need to get accreditation, we'll keep it simple.

Hopefully, if our digitalization actually becomes as successful as we hope it will be, people can do this. We will have a better coverage for internet and people can do most of these functions or most of these chores really as what they are at home.

We'll modernize the functions of government. We'll make it easier for people to work with government, both ordinary citizens and also the big shots, the investors that want to put a business here in the Philippines.

**MS. GONZAGA:** What kind of president do you want to be for the country?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Transformative. That we have transformed the government into something that is well attuned and ready and well-positioned for all that is going to come.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Speaking about your government, how do you choose the members of your Cabinet? Ano 'yung mga qualifications na hinahanap niyo sa isang secretary?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Ang Cabinet level is really capability. Sino ba talaga 'yung pinakamagaling na makuha natin? I mean they're — and I have said this before. I think I told you this before, one of the hardest things that you get these very successful people.

Kaya magaling, kaya successful eh, sinasama sa gobyerno. Eh they're doing well, you know, maayos 'yung buhay nila. Hindi sila...

**MS. GONZAGA:** Private sila.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Private lang sila then you ask them to join government. So the only way that we can — that we have been able to get all of these really, some very brilliant people to join the Cabinet has been — have been really invoked love of country.

At a certain level in government, you need technocrats. You need advice, technical advice. You don't need political advice. Well, you get political advice from somewhere else.

But when it comes to the actual running, the technical nuts and bolts of running the government, the economy especially, you really need technical advice.

One of my simplest criteria is: Who knows more than me about this subject?

**MS. GONZAGA:** Para po sa inyo, why is your VP Sara Duterte qualified to be the DepEd Secretary?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Because she feels very strongly about it and as a government worker, as an administrator, she's really very competent.

I've seen her work. She works very hard and she's very methodical in the way she does things. She doesn't leave things out and she's very patient.

But she's also quite forceful. And the Department of Education is not an easy job to put together, especially since we decided that she — that the face-to-face will go on in the next — in this upcoming, in this semester.

That's not an easy job because we are transforming the entire educational system from what it was during pandemic back.

And I think kaya ni Inday `yun eh. The word that I keep using when I talk about VP Inday is “forthright”. Basta kung anong sabihin niya, gagawin niya.

And that’s why malakas ang loob ko sa kanya na `pag sinabi niya, “Hindi ito, tatabahuhin ko ito.” I talked to her and I say, “What do you need? How is it going?” “Kailangan ko ng ganito, patulong doon sa ganyan.” So we’ll do it.

And she’s at her heart. I don’t know — she’ll get mad at me because I’m getting personal. But sa puso niya she’s a mom. She’s really a mom. When you scratch Sara, you find a mother inside. And that’s the best motivation for me because she’s doing...

Let’s just say, she’s just doing this for her children. That’s good enough because she wants the best for her children and she wants the best for all children. And she’s always had that advocacy anyway.

**MS. GONZAGA:** You appointed yourself Mr. President as the Secretary of Agriculture. Ano po ang plano niyo sa sektor na `yun ng gobyerno?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** It is such a big job and the agricultural sector is so important that I thought symbolically maipakita ko no it's that important to me, ako na 'yung humawak.

**MS. GONZAGA:** This is the priority?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** This is a priority in this administration. Hangga't maayos ito, ito 'yung gagawin, ito 'yung — hindi namin titigilan ito, number one. And number two, it's just, over the years, we have to — we really have to reorganize the entire value chain system of our agricultural production.

Again, hindi — ang ending talaga nitong lahat is cheap or at least affordable food for everybody, na may bigas lahat, na may ulam lahat hindi ba, na mayroon tayong fisheries, mayroon tayo hog raiser, mayroon tayong broiler production, pati itlog pinag-uusapan natin.

In fact, I'm — maybe I can say it now, I'm going to initiate in our — at least for the government workers, the rice allowance. Nagbibigay part of the suweldo, ang pagbayad is in rice para nakakatiyak tayo everybody, every family will have rice.



And this will be bought by the government from the government para makamamura tayong and the people do not have to buy at the market price.

Now, we don't want to put the rice producers out of business. On the contrary, what's going to happen is magkakaroon ng demand kasi bibili nang marami 'yung gobyerno eh. And then we will talk to other corporations.

Marami naman diyan sa malalaking korporasyon mayroon na silang rice allowance eh. So we will institutionalize it. So at the very least, mayroon tayong ganon. This is life and death and the people are living very close to the subsistence level.

And we have to pull ourselves out of that. They should not be at the subsistence level. They should not be spending 60, 70, 80 percent of their income on food. That's far, far, far too much. They have nothing left for anything else.

They cannot send their children to school. They cannot pay for the electricity, the water. All of these things that they need to pay for. So that's really the scope of the problem. And that's the way I see it.

**MS. GONZAGA:** We were talking about the rice. Isa po `yan sa diniscuss (discuss) ninyo nung campaign na ang aspiration niyo ay maibaba ito sa 20 pesos, hindi ho ba?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** There's a way to do it but it will take a while. We have to return NFA to its old function, not so much importation but really the buying.

And then even — even actually now we can already do it but it's a little short-term. We sell the buffer stock that they have in NFA. We can sell it at 20 pesos. But that's not really realistic. We have to bring the actual price down.

And that's why I am hoping that at the end of all that we are doing — and when I said the end, I'm not talking about tomorrow, I'm talking about, maybe hopefully, if we do it right, then in a couple of three years that will get there.

Mabuo natin `yung value chain and we'll make savings at every step, we might — and then the world market will slowly be better, we might just make it to 20 pesos. But it's a long road there. It's not gonna be easy.

**MS. GONZAGA:** But is it possible?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Everything is possible. You just have to be — just have to work very hard at it and be clever about it and come up with new ideas and be creative about what are the things that you are able to do.

That's why in my view, I talk about transforming our economy, not recovery. Because I don't want to recover the economy to what it was in 2019. I want to transform the economy to be ready for the shocks, the difficulties that we will face from 2022.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Speaking of the economy, the inflation is 6.4 and it affected everything.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Ang taas. We've actually done, in terms of monetary policy, we've done all right in the Philippines. Ang problema is something that's called imported — imported inflation.

Because the inflation that was suffered by whatever project — sabihin bibili tayo fertilizer, doon sa pinanggalingan niya, tumaas ang presyo ng natural gas, tumaas ang presyo ng ammonia, all of the elements that go into it.

'Pag binili mo ngayon 'yung fertilizer na 'yun, naisama mo na doon 'yung inflation niya. Eh ganoon na ang mundo ngayon eh, very interconnected na ang mundo. You cannot deal anymore without talking to other countries, to trading with other countries, to getting supply from other countries.

In agriculture specifically, we have not yet reached that level of production na masasabi na hindi na natin kailangan mag-import. 'Yun ang mga bago. That's why I'm talking — I always talk about transformation.

This is the new world we live in. So, we just have to pay very close attention to what's happening around us and what we do in response.

**MS. GONZAGA:** We're still living in the pandemic. Wala pa rin po tayong Secretary sa Department of Health. Ano po ang masasabi niyo diyan?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** We have to remember that the DOH is not about COVID alone. It's about public health in general. So that's another side of it and it's as important as COVID is. We have the dengue rates are climbing. We have the second highest HIV rate of infection in the world.

**MS. GONZAGA:** In the world.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** TB is coming back. These are things that we have to attend to.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Monkeypox.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Well, 'yung monkeypox alam mo, as best as I can determine, it's still — we're okay. We had one case, gumaling na, umuwi na. We talked yesterday with some of the Health department. We talked about acquisition already of the monkeypox vaccine.

There are many other elements to the DOH. That's why until we finalize the structure of what — we just have to keep it functioning and finalize the structure and then actually I'm hoping and I'm thinking that the person who is helping us, the consultants from there, the consultants that are helping us, putting the new structure of the DOH together, diyan manggagaling 'yung ating bagong secretary.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Ano po ang plano ng gobyerno natin ngayon sa COVID situation ng ating bansa? Kasi sa ibang bansa hindi na sila nagma-mask.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Well, dumadami na naman `yung cases natin. So `yun talaga `yung sa booster ang aming gagawin. In fact, we will put together — we're trying to put together now a PR campaign, especially since `yung mga bata babalik na sa eskwela. We're trying to put together a campaign na mag-booster na kayong lahat, mag-booster na lahat.

Pagka nagawa natin ito, itong last na ito na nakapag-booster ang karamihan, tapos na siguro tayo. Okay na siguro... Ito na naman ako. *[laughter]* Sinabi ko na, mamalasin na naman tayo doon sa sinabi ko.

Pero siguro palagay ko kasi `yung mga bagong variant ng Omicron, pagka nag-booster tayo, fully immunized na tayo. Kaya't hinihikayat...

**MS. GONZAGA:** Puwede nang maging optional `yung mask, parang ibang bansa?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Puwedeng maging optional ang mask.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Kapag na-roll out nang tama ang booster nationwide?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Eh alam naman natin, atin-atin lang, `pag sinabi mong optional hindi na isusuot `yan eh. Kaya doon — gusto natin paabutin

doon. And other — we watched the other countries, mukhang kaya namang abutin. Pero `yun lang talaga kailangan nating hikayatin ang ating mga kababayan na magpa-booster na kayo.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Kanina po we were talking about appointments sa inyong secretary, a lot of people were asking, why did you put Enrile as your Chief Legal Counsel? Kasi po sa history hindi ho ba, they were saying that he betrayed your father.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Well...

**MS. GONZAGA:** What is your relationship po with — ?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** He's like my uncle. I call him Tito Johnny. And I have called him that since I was a child. Since 1986, ilang beses na kami nag-uusap. Put it this way, he is brilliant. I mean simple lang. He is one of the maybe what — three best lawyers that I know in the Philippines.

So as a legal adviser, he certainly fits the bill. He certainly fills the bill. So that's not a problem. Ang dami nang nangyari since '86.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Did you talk about that, the two of you?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** All the time. All the time. And we talk about it in terms of... I did that interview.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Yes, in your vlog.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Yeah, in my vlog with him. And I kept asking, if you did this, why didn't you become president? 'Di ba nandiyan ka na eh, sana ikaw naging presidente. Kasi iniisip ko mas magaling ka naman doon sa ano eh, doon sa mga iba. Sana ikaw na lang ang pumalit.

And he said, that wasn't the point. The point was something else. He has explained it. So we have talked about it so often.

And for me, it didn't seem to be an attack really on my father because also I was privy to their conversations noong nandoon siya Crame na — ako ang may hawak ng telepono nung dad ko eh, so naririnig ko lahat ng usapan nila.

So hindi ganoon talaga na, "*Hindi kayo — kayo pababagsakin namin kayo.*" Hindi ganoon eh. Hindi ganoon. Hindi ganoon ang pagkatrato niya. I think he felt that he was really defending the country in some way.



Anyway, whatever it is, we have discussed it sufficiently that we are happy to be with one another and happy to work with one another.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Why do you trust him?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** I don't see any reason for him to betray me. The times are just too different for us to be able to say that you know babalik siya sa ganoon. And also you see, time of life na rin niya eh.

**MS. GONZAGA:** He's 98 years old.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** He's 98 years old. So I guess he just wants to keep working, watching it from my side. Parang natural progression `yung napunta siya sa — nabalik siya dito sa Palasyo as the Presidential Legal Adviser. But I guess from someone who is watching from the outside, it's a little bit...

**MS. GONZAGA:** `Yun ang question. Weird.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** "Ba't kaya sa lahat ng ano, `yan?"

**MS. GONZAGA:** Siya.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Kasi siya ang pinakamagaling.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Let's talk about some issues.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Sure.

**MS. GONZAGA:** You issued a statement where you said that you have no plans in rejoining the ICC.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Yeah.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Why?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** I don't see any reason why we should. The ICC very simply is supposed to take action when a country no longer has a functioning judiciary, has no longer some — the organs of state, the police, et cetera.

And that has nothing. That condition does not exist in the Philippines. So I do not see why — what role ICC is going to play here in the Philippines.

Think about it. We will allow them to come in and investigate and then tell us who to arrest. Mag-iimbestiga sila rito, tutulongan natin sila mag-imbestiga. O bakit natin — pagkatapos ng imbestigasyon, sasabihin ikulong ninyo si ganito, ikulong ninyo si ganyan.

**MS. GONZAGA:** What will make you change your mind?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** To join the ICC? There is no need for them to come into the Philippines. Maybe if the whole system collapses. If the judiciary — kung magkagiyera tayo dito. Walang judiciary, walang gobyerno na talagang gumagana, walang pulis, walang ano. Then 'yun kailangan natin sila.

The alleged crimes were all committed in the Philippines. They were all committed by Filipinos. Why will we need a foreigner to tell us how to deal with it? I don't think we do. I don't think we need.

We were just talking about one of the most brilliant lawyers in the world that I know, si JPE. You need people to replace him? They're better than him? I don't think so.

**MS. GONZAGA:** What can you say about the human rights advocates condemning your decision about the ICC?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** I do not see why it's a violation of human rights. It is a question of jurisdiction and sovereignty.

The accusations are crimes against human rights, but nonetheless the method by which we apply and enforce that law is what is really in question in when we join or not join the ICC.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Do you think there is a chance for ABS-CBN to get its franchise under the Marcos administration?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Again, I don't change my — I have not changed my position ever. The question about the ABS-CBN franchise is really about some of the violations, some of the problems that they have encountered during the hearings and in the investigation in the House of Representatives.

And so long as those are attended to and those are resolved, then there's no reason actually for the Committee on Franchises in the House to deny them a franchise.

Again, my view and my opinion and my position is that so long as all of those issues that were brought up during the hearings and investigation in the House of Representatives have been attended to and have been resolved. I know that the suspicion is that it is always because of the political positions that they took which is against PRRD.

The actual technical reasons are these — the issues that were found during the hearings in the House.

**MS. GONZAGA:** What about renaming the airport from NAIA to Manila International Airport?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Good question.

**MS. GONZAGA:** What is your take on that?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** I haven't actually thought about it. Well, we are known around the world as MIA, Manila International Airport.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Are you in favor of renaming the airport?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** I have no strong feelings about it. I mean if people want to rename the airport and if we get public support for it, then yes go ahead. If not, then no. I mean it's really not a...

**MS. GONZAGA:** A priority?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** It's... No, not at all. Not at all.

**MS. GONZAGA:** What about the 203 billion estate tax that they keep discussing in the news, on paper?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Well, we are actually encouraging that this finally be resolved because I don't want to make a legal opinion for which I am not qualified. But rather to say that in our — we were never allowed to argue because when this case came out, we were all in the United States.

So when it was the time for us to answer, we had no chance to answer because we were nakakulong in Hickam Air Force Base in Hawaii.

Now we are all here, open the case and let us argue it. So that all of the things that we should have been able to say in 1987, '88, '89 that we were not able to say...

**MS. GONZAGA:** What did you want to say noong '86, '87, '88, '89?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Iisa-isahin namin talaga `yung sinasabi nilang property kasi hindi maliwanag ang pag-aari ng mga property na sinasabi amin. Sinasabi namin hindi amin `yan. Huwag niyo kami tina-tax diyan.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Paano ho sila nag-come up nung 203 billion na figure?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Hindi ko alam. Basta't pinagsama-sama lang nila kung ano-anong property. Eh `yung karamihan doon, hindi talaga — wala kaming kinalaman doon.

In fact, pumirma na ako, ilang beses na akong pumirma ng quit claim na tinatawag. Kung talagang gusto niyo, kunin niyo. Hindi amin `yan eh.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Every time I watch the news and every time I see an article about you, they always write `yung "the son of the late dictator." When you hear that, how does that make you feel? Does it affect you?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** No, because I know they're wrong. How many times have I been here in this room where he was in consultation with different groups? Ang diktador hindi nagkokonsulta. Ang diktador sinasabi na lang niya — sinasabi, "ito `yung gagawin niyo sa ayaw niyo at sa gusto ninyo."

How many times have I watched caucuses here, have I watched meetings in this hall? That in different industries talagang kinakausap niya. Ora-orada `yan. Talagang paanong gagawin natin? Ano ba talagang gusto ninyo? Then you know how...

So there was more consultation in his time than there have been in many following administrations. In fact, I would venture to say in most of the following administrations to my dad. There was less consultation with groups, ordinary people, farmer groups, for example, than in my father's time.

Because I know that everything he did, he did with consultation with whoever. No matter what the system of government was. That's why for me you can say what you want, that's your opinion. You're wrong.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Does it hurt you?



**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** No.

**MS. GONZAGA:** When you hear that accusation against your father?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** No. It would hurt me if they were right, but they're wrong. So...

**MS. GONZAGA:** Martial law. What is your take on that? Kasi can I tell you what I learned in school? *[laughter]*

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Oh what did you learn in school?

**MS. GONZAGA:** What was taught to us about martial law is that your father wanted to stay in power that's why he declared martial law.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Martial law was declared because of the wars — the two wars we were fighting on two fronts.

**MS. GONZAGA:** That is?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** And that is the, in the countryside, the NPA, CPP-NPA was fomenting revolution. They wanted to bring down the government through violent means. The government had to defend itself.

The second front was the secessionist movement down in the South led by MNLF and Chairman Nur Misuari at the time. He started that uprising, the secessionist movement.

And that eventually turned into violence and essentially war that was even supported... That's the reason that my mother went to Libya because Libya was supporting the separatist movements here in the Philippines.

**MS. GONZAGA:** In the Philippines? During that time?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Sure. Those were the dangers and the perils that the country was facing. Most people do not realize, I'd say the rebels — ang tawag namin rebelde eh. The communist rebels, how close they came to Manila and how close they came to large urban centers and slowly gained control.

And that's why it was necessary to — in my father's view at the time — to declare martial law kasi may giyera na talaga eh.

**MS. GONZAGA:** That reason, how come that was not discussed to us in school? How come it was not in the news? How come it was not printed on paper? That side of the story.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Because the victors write history, don't they? It is the victors in a conflict that will write the history. The government fell. So the victors wrote this history. And that's what you were — that's what is being taught in school and that's what you heard and learned.

Those reasons were expounded at great length during my father's time. Pero siyempre, nag-polarize na eh. So kalaban na, naging kalaban na eh. So `yung kalaban, sila ang sumusulat ngayon ng history. Ayan ang nangyari, kaya ganyan ang natutunan ng tao.

**MS. GONZAGA:** That's why tinatawag nila ngayon `yung historical revisionism, historical distortion.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Kaya lagi kong — `pag sinasabi nila historical revisionism, sabihin mo, banggitin mo `yung isang halimbawa na may sinabi ako na hindi totoo.

Ngayon, pagkatapos niyong gawin 'yun, marami akong ipapakita na sinabi ninyo na hindi totoo at I will prove it.

So I don't know what historical revision — there's nothing that we say about the... We recognize naman the problems that happened, the abuses that occurred like in any war. All of these things are some things that are already part of history.

**MS. GONZAGA:** So you're not revising history?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** We have no — there's no reason to revise history.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Are you distorting our history?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** How am I distorting?

**MS. GONZAGA:** That is their accusation. The distortion of history. Are you going to change the textbooks?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Only if they're wrong. Factual naman eh. You can check facts. Let's talk about facts, not political opinion.

What are the things that actually did happen? That we can show, we can prove. Tignan ninyo. We have video, we have photographs, we have records. This actually happened, as opposed to “alam mo, balita namin ganito `yung nangyari eh, narinig namin may intel kami na ganoon.”

Naging chismis basically na hindi naman mapatunayan. Lahat ng aming sinasabi kaya naming patunayan. Kaya paano nagiging revision of history? And how do you distort history?

You distort history siguro sasabihin mo these are the actual facts pero ang interpretation `yung spin.

**MS. GONZAGA:** If there’s one thing that I really noticed about you, especially during the campaign, when I would see you backstage, inside the tent, during the preparations, behind the scenes, is that you are so calm. There’s so much calmness parang hindi kayo talaga napipikon. Even your kids say that.

Sabi ng daddy ko, huwag kang mapipikon kasi `pag pikon ka talo ka. What makes you mad? What affects you?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** What really affects me is to see an innocent suffering. 'Pag may nakita akong maliit na bata na nahihirapan, walang makain, may sakit, 'yun. I'm already tearing up just thinking about it. But that really for me...

When I — you're in your car, you're in the traffic light, the kids are selling you things kung ano-ano. I always look and I say, we should be doing better than this.

**MS. GONZAGA:** What is your dream for the Philippines?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Equality. Ang daming mayaman dito, ang daming mahirap. Mas marami ang mahirap.

**MS. GONZAGA:** I remember when we first did our interview. You said na you were eight years old when you first stepped into the Palace, nung naging president 'yung inyong ama. If you were to talk to your eight-year-old self, what would you want to tell that little Bongbong Marcos entering the Palace?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Boy, are you in for a wild ride? *[laughter]* You have no idea what the rest of your life is holding for you. But it's going to be

something amazing. It's going to be something unexpected. There are so many things that happened in my life that were so unexpected.

Yes, that's what I would tell my little self. Prepare yourself because ang daming mangyayari sa buhay mo.

**MS. GONZAGA:** I remember when you won noong May 9, the next day it was posted in your Instagram that you visited your father.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** Yes.

**MS. GONZAGA:** What did you tell him?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** You should be here. You're gonna make me cry.

**MS. GONZAGA:** You told him, "you should be here."

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** You should be here.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Why?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** This is yours. This is not all mine. This is yours. This is your – my mom. This is your good work that brought me here. Don't leave me now.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Yes.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** I'm going to need your help. That was what we talked about. And I spoke to him, I said, it's time for you to rest now. Don't worry we'll be here, we'll continue. I will use everything I learned from you to continue your work.

**MS. GONZAGA:** And you did.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** And I will try.

**MS. GONZAGA:** You're now here.

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** And I will try to continue that.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Congratulations, Mr. President. You did it.



**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** With all of you, everybody's help, you know, I keep reminding every one, this is — no great enterprise is successful because of just one person. It has become a cause for us to unify the country and that's what brought us the success.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Thank you very much, Mr. President. Yey! *[applause]*

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** She did it again. She did it again. She actually did... I don't cry, man. Have you ever seen me cry, HR? Only in front of — when I'm being interviewed by Toni.

**MS. GONZAGA:** Really?

**PRESIDENT MARCOS:** My God, yeah, I'm not a crier. I'm not iyakin. But you start talking about my dad, I get a little bit emotional.

— END —