

**APIHAN WITH THE MEDIA
IN SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, USA**

[18 November 2023]

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Good afternoon.

So, that was – today was the second session which was held around noontime today in San Francisco. It was the last session of the APEC 2023 hosted by the United States.

I think that it was a very successful meeting in that... The many of the major economies of the world were represented here and there was a very noticeable concurrence amongst different countries – big, small, rich, not so rich – as to what are the ways to move forward.

We talked about climate change, we talked about AI, we talked about food security, energy security, and what each of us – what part each of us can play in facing those challenges that the new world economy has brought us.

So, I once again, as I said in my remarks earlier, I commend the chairmanship and the hosting of APEC 2023 by the US as they were able to provide for us a forum in which a good deal of important work was done in these past two days.

Q: Good afternoon, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Good afternoon.

Q: May we have details on your meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping? Did you have specific agreements on how to ease the tensions in the South China Sea?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Well, actually, what it was is I requested a meeting with President Xi. And I simply, once again, voiced to him my concern of some of the incidents that were happening between Chinese vessels and Philippine vessels, culminating in an actual collision, as we have seen before.

And hopefully to find ways to avoid that and have ways to move forward from this situation. Essentially, we tried to come up with mechanisms to lower the tensions in South China Sea.

And that's essentially the message that we spoke of to each other, that we were in agreement that the problems that we have in South China Sea, with

China, should not be the defining element of our relationship. But nonetheless, the problems remain and it is something that we will need to continue to communicate to find ways to avoid such incidents.

And of course, as ever, whenever this issue comes up, I always bring up the plight of our fishermen. And I asked that we go back to the situation where both Chinese and Filipino fishermen were fishing together in these waters. And so, I think the point was well taken by President Xi.

Q: Good afternoon, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Good afternoon.

Q: Sir, we understand that it was well taken by the Chinese President Xi Jinping. But what is the potential impact of your meeting with the Chinese President considering that there are different Chinese narratives that have been released even after seeing all those incidents happening in the West Philippine Sea. Do you think this will somehow refrain them from changing the narratives?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: We really should view this as a work in progress. It's a process. There is no one thing that we will do that will solve all the problems. We have to continue to communicate. We have to continue to be candid with one another and to be sincere in our desire to keep the peace. And I think that sincerity exists for all parties involved.

I do not think anybody wants to go to war. And so that is something that – is the premise actually to everything – all the discussions that we have been having. How to maintain the peace so that the sea lanes and the airways over the South China Sea are open and continued to be the important gateway to Asia as it is today.

So, hindi 'yung bigla tayong mayroong napag-usapan, may napag-agree-han, tapos na lahat 'yan. It's a process. It's a process and this is part of the process. Now, it's an important part of the process because nakausap ko ng face-to-face si President Xi and that always makes a difference.

Thank you.

Q: Hi, sir, magandang hapon po.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Hi.

Q: Sir, makikibalita lang po what happened with your meeting with Elon Musk? Did it push through?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: No, no, nagkasakit. He fell ill. He was supposed to come here to San Francisco. Marami siyang ka-meeting dapat dito pero binalitaan kami nagkasakit nga.

Kaya wala muna, which is a missed opportunity. I was really looking forward to it. But we'll find ways again to...

Because have much to discuss with him in terms of the technologies that we would like for Tesla, for example, to bring to the Philippines specifically battery technology, even the manufacture of fully electric vehicles. All of these things that we are hoping to be part of in the future.

Well, the leader in the industry is Elon Musk, and so that's why we wanted to see him. So, we still want to see him and so we will find an opportunity to do that as soon as we can.

Q: Sir, follow-up. How about sir the other bilateral meetings 'yung kay Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Peru?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: With? With?

Q: Justin Trudeau did it push through?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: We didn't... Hindi na natuloy because what happened was the session yesterday ran very late. I think we came out of there one hour behind schedule. So some of the bilateral meetings... In fact, the bilateral meeting with President Xi Jinping was supposed to be yesterday. But because it ran so long, we ran out of time kaya ang nangyari kaninang umaga na lang 'yung aming naging ano – hindi na natuloy.

Ang naging bilateral ko today was with Peru. The President of Peru – she was able to find time for us to have a quick chat.

But that was... It was certainly important because Peru is the next chairman of the – and host of APEC 2024. So, pinag-usapan namin kung ano 'yung mga dapat pag-usapan during their APEC, if we have any suggestions.

I actually met the present President in the previous APEC kasi Philippines, Peru magkatabi kami. She was Vice President then. And two months more or less after 'di ba, she became President. So, magkakilala na kami.

Only because my wife and I, the First Lady and I, were the only two people in the table who had some Spanish. Wala siyang kausap. Kami na lang ang nakausap. Iyong baluktot kong Kastila at saka 'yung magandang Kastila ni First Lady nagamit din namin dito sa ano, dito sa... So, it was really – it was really to see she is starting already to canvass ideas for the Peruvian hosting of the 2024 APEC.

Q: Good afternoon, sir.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Good afternoon.

Q: Sir, with regards to Maharlika, what do you say to the notions that the IRR of the Maharlika was relaxed allegedly to...

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Was?

Q: Relaxed.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Why relaxed?

Q: Due to notions to accommodate Mr. Consing? The revision, sir, of the IRR.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: I don't know where we relaxed anything. Quite the contrary, hinigpitan natin.

What happened between the last – the IRR – the first draft – no, the first last draft of the IRR, the differences were only the powers of the board. More or less there are several – there are couple of other things but basically it was the powers of the board that we changed.

Dahil it was... Paulit-ulit ko ngang sinasabi, I do not want political forces to interfere with financial decisions of the investment fund. And so there were powers, there were authorities that were being still granted to the government side.

Kaya sinabi ko, hindi, let the board decide. The board has to be the one to decide, even the choice of people, even the structural organization we try – as much as possible. Ngayon, siyempre may interest ang gobyerno 'yan so the government of course has to be involved. But as much as possible, on the day-to-day workings of the fund, we leave it to the board, we leave it to the managers.

I'm a little surprised that the characterization of the changes that we made – which were not that many by the way. There were maybe six or seven major changes in terms of again, powers and authorities of the – essentially the board.

Marami kaming binalik sa board ng fund na the original was giving those powers to the executive side, to the President, to the Department of Finance, to the Finance Secretary that we thought should belong to the board.

Q: Sir, 'yung nagiging concern po ng public is you have the power daw po to accept and reject board nominees. Iyon po 'yung kini-criticize under the revised IRR kaya nagkakaroon po ng notion na ganoon, sir.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Well, we hold the controlling interest, we are government. It's like think of a corporation, 'yung pinakamalaking kapital – the one with the largest capital interest is the one that has the most votes. So, that's what happens.

Ganoon lang naman kasimple 'yan. It's not really an unusual arrangement. It's a perfectly proportional arrangement.

Q: Hi sir, good afternoon. Sir, while you are here in San Francisco, nagkaroon ng malakas na lindol sa Mindanao. Ano po 'yung inyong directives sa mga government agencies?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Well, I'm happy to be able to say that the government agencies do not need directives from me anymore. They know what to do.

Ang ano ko na lang sa kanila nagre-report sila sa akin kung ano ba talagang nangyari and what are the initial reports. The initial reports are there is a 6.8 earthquake off Sarangani, which is a pretty powerful earthquake.

However, so far I think we have reported two casualties and the damage to infrastructure, to buildings is – as you would expect but it is actually less than we had hoped – than we had feared rather. It's less than we had feared.

So, as you can imagine these are all very preliminary. Hindi naman... In the major cities, hindi nawala ang kuryente, hindi nawala ang communication, hindi naman naapektuhan ang serbisyo ng bawat LGU.

So, so far, so far it looks like despite the strength of the earthquake, mukha namang na – hindi masyadong naging malaki ang damage at so far the

casualty rate at two, of course, every casualty is a tragedy. But, so far, those – that the number has stayed at two since very early this morning.

Q: Sir, do you personally see the need to cut short your trip here in the US to oversee 'yung government response natin doon?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Well, if there is something that needs to be done that cannot be done by anybody but myself, I will go home.

But as I said, alam na nila ang gagawin eh. That's my whole point is that we tried to organize the government in such a way that – these are standard operating procedures already. You don't have to question on what do we do next? Nakasulat na lahat 'yan.

Number one, before it arrives, ito 'yung gagawin mo 'pag bagyo; 'pag nagka-lindol, ito 'yung gagawin ninyo. Alam na nila 'yung gagawin nila.

And that's why I say the contact that I have had with the NDRRMC, with the DSWD, with all of the local governments – ah with the DILG, have been for them to report to me. Ano 'yung latest ninyo? 'Yung police nagre-report din sa atin.

And we are getting good reports and I'm – fairly accurate reports because hindi talaga bumagsak ang communication system. Maybe in the isolated areas, but in general, their communication system stayed up, power stayed on, water is still running.

So, I think – I hope hanggang diyan na lang. But we'll keep looking and seeing and determine, and asses what the damage really has been. 6.8 is a strong, strong earthquake.

Q: Hi, good afternoon again, Mr. President. I would just like to ask how significant is your visit to Honolulu, Hawaii now that you are already the President considering that, of course, the place has a connotation as place of your family's exile. Do you think this is coming in full circle now that you are already visiting as the President of the Philippines?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: No, no, I have no feeling like that. Despite the circumstances of our enforced stay in Hawaii, Hawaii is – the Hawaii and Hawaiians are – it's a great place to be.

And then, we made very many friends. Siyempre malungkot kami dahil hindi kami makauwi but that doesn't detract from how kind we were treated, the hospitality that we were afforded.

No, this is really just another part – and I try to go to as many of the Filipino communities I possibly can. And pauwi na nga, it would be silly not to come

from the West Coast and going back to Manila na hindi tayo dadaan sa Hawaii.

Now, of course, Honolulu and Hawaii in general have different dimension also because nga that was the time that we were in exile. But that dimension is not some kind of, I don't know, full circle. No, it's not like that.

It's just I really want to go and see my old friends. These were the people who looked after us after '86. These were the people who fed us. They brought us clothes. They brought food. Kung hindi sa kanila, I don't know what would have happened to us.

And of course, so they occupy a special place in my heart. 'Yung iba wala na kasi '86 was a while back and some of them have passed on. But still, many of them are still there. And I'm already in touch with them saying, "I'm coming, I'm coming. You better show up because I want to see you after so many years."

So, yes, of course, it's different in that sense. But it's just a kind of a revisiting and just visiting with really old friends that – who shared our difficult times together and helped lighten the load, I have to say, helped lighten the load for us in the time of exile.

Q: Just one last follow-up, Mr. President. Have you forgiven the people who ousted your father from power and have caused your exile?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: I don't need to forgive them. I never blamed them for... Ganoon ang – that's how things happen. If they truly believed what they were – hindi na...

I think siguro by now – I hope by now you have realized hindi ako namemersonal. They don't need my forgiveness. If they want it, I will give it to them.

But I don't need to...They don't need my forgiveness. If this is what they believe that they should do, then hindi lang nagpareho 'yung aming pag-iisip o paniniwala. Eh ipaglalaban ko 'yung aking paniniwala. Pinaglaban nila 'yung kanilang paniniwala. Eh ganyan ang naging resulta, eh 'di ganyan. *[laughs]* It's life. That's what life – well, at least my life, that's what it's like, that's what it's about.

Q: Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Thank you. Salamat sa inyo.

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