

DECEMBER 7, 1975

POOL REPORT #4

The Presidential Party left Malacanang Palace at 8:08 a. m. , thirteen minutes behind schedule. It was a nice morning, and along the route to the harbor a few people stood and watched without waving. On the bridge across the river near the San Miguel brewery was a large sign saying "bon voyage His Excellency President and Mrs. Gerald R. Ford."

At the Manila Harbor South Port, National Customs Police were lined up saluting as the motorcade swept up to the docks. President Marcos held Mrs. Ford, who was wearing a pinkish dress, by the arm to help her down the slanting, red carpet covered gangplank onto the Presidential yacht, the Ang Pangulo (The President). Ford followed, wearing a blue suit.

They went to the rear deck of the vessel where a band was playing. Twelve, four person tables were set with crystal and china, covered with brightly floral patterned tablecloths and decorated with flower centerpieces, and potted plants lined the rails around this open air breakfast room.

Kissinger had originally appeared in a business suit for the day's outing but when he saw that others were wearing barong tagalogs, the national shirt, he changed into one himself. "You can't go barong in this," he quipped to a reporter. Scowcroft wore an ordinary business shirt opened at the neck.

Shouting across the widening gap of water as the yacht pulled away from the dock backwards at 8:24 a. m. , pooler Pierre Salinger relayed the following information:

Mrs. Marcos told the President (or maybe she told Kissinger--it was not clear) that it is "good to have friends, even if they are far away and small." She introduced the Philippines' finance secretary, Cesar Virata, explaining that "he's not very old, he got those gray hairs worrying about the financial problems of our country." Virata is a technocrat member of Marcos' cabinet. Mrs. Marcos was quoted by Salinger as telling Kissinger that "it's time you paid some attention to us." Referring to the fact the Philippines has more than seven thousand islands, she jested that she would give him an island "for one vote supporting us in the United Nations."

Marcos was overheard telling foreign secretary Carlos Romulo, who was wearing a nautical cap, that "you look like an admiral." Two PT boats, each with four, fifty-calibre machine guns mounted on the deck, were seen circling about before the yacht pulled out, as if waiting to escort it to Corredior, but as the yacht backed around and started forward, the PT boats could not be seen and it was not clear whether they were an escort.

H. Bradsher/Washington Star

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