

Francisco Tatad 2
Date of Interview: November 11, 2009

JSPS Philippine Technocracy Project
Transcript of Interview

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November 11, 2009

9:00-12:00pm

Third World Studies Center Office

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Diliman, Quezon City

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Research assistance for the interview was provided for by Ms Mary Ann Joy Quirapas and Mr. Christopher Nex Benas. The transcript of the interview was edited by Professor Laura L. Samson and Mr. Arnie Trinidad.

PADERANGA: The relationship of [Juan Ponce] Enrile and Estelito Mendoza is very interesting.

TATAD: I think [Ferdinand] Marcos appreciated [Juan Ponce] Enrile. He had already made a name in the big corporate law firms...Enrile is a corporate lawyer. He would probably tell you... [if interviewed] that he was instrumental in putting the American plantations in Mindanao. He had that reputation and he boasted that with his training in taxation in Harvard University, I think. So he could speak...[substantively] about these issues. He is not shy in claiming authority in areas that he thinks he has authority. As regards Estelito Mendoza, Marcos recognized the talent of Estelito Mendoza early on. At that time, the Justice Secretary was [Jose] Abad Santos, the former dean of the UP College of Law who was highly respected by the President. Sometimes I would hear the conversation between Marcos and Abad Santos. President Marcos would call him Dean not Secretary, "Dean, can we do this?" "Mr. President, we could not do this." No arguments and then when Estelito Mendoza became the [Solicitor General] ... "Will you study this?" Mendoza would come up with a formula. He was the Solicitor General (SolGen) and Abad Santos was the Secretary of Justice... The time came when Marcos decided to do his Valentine Day massacre at the Luneta when he fired so many people. I was writing the speech. He was giving me names. "You would be firing so many people, have you notified them or are we going to notify them at all? I think it is better to notify them." "No need." He would sack everyone... "Okay. I think it is a good idea to appoint." "Like who?" "Estelito Mendoza, a cabinet member..." "That's good... okay put that in..." So that was how it happened, Estelito Mendoza became the SolGen from being a cabinet member... To continue, during that Luneta speech, we saw how the people being fired reacted. There was one important cabinet member, who was about to clap but when his name was called his hands just froze in the air.

PADERANGA: This was in 1974, it was early martial law.

KATAYAMA: I am very curious about it, what was the background of that Valentine Massacre?

TATAD: There were some proposals for reorganization at all levels and then the idea won and they went up. It was the first time that we had the phrase, "notoriously undesirable." They had to formulate the standards for getting rid of certain people. Alex [Alejandro] Melchor was tasked to come up with the names... the group under Alex, I think Jo [Jose] Almonte was part of that.

KATAYAMA: It was a very surprising move...

TATAD: But that carried the seeds of destruction...

KATAYAMA: So with that, [Ferdinand] Marcos succeeded in consolidating his power base.

TATAD: That was the intent but it probably created the wedge between one block and another. That was the beginning of the rift between [Juan] Ponce Enrile and Alex [Alejandro] Melchor. Alex was a technocrat and he was the Executive Secretary. Ponce Enrile was the Defense person, a very important position.

PADERANGA: I think Melchor was the author of the...

TATAD: I think he was blamed for everything.

PADERANGA: And then Enrile stayed in office...

TATAD: Eventually. It took sometime because Alex [Alejandro Melchor] was a technocrat. He was seen to be close to the external actors...

PADERANGA: Was that true, was he really close to the Americans?

TATAD: There were maybe some basis to that but I do not know what his relationship was with them... First of all he did not speak Filipino. His father was an admirer of [first name] Ricarte and he was close to Japan. His father was an engineer. He was supposed to have been credited for building and creating the pontoon bridge. Alex [Alejandro Melchor] followed his father's course as an engineer. He was bright. He went to Annapolis and he could talk to Americans in a way Americans wanted to be talked to. He was probably hired because of that. He was seen as a good connection to the Americans but then he was fired because of that as well, especially when the relation with Washington was no longer that good. The relationship that was an asset before became a liability.

What year was this when he was effectively marginalized? 1976? Or 1978? After the Valentine Massacre.

KATAYAMA: It took a long time, after Aquino...

TATAD: After [Benigno Jr.] Aquino was assassinated, he was still there...[Ferdinand] Marcos was in control... He could manage these things...

KATAYAMA: But all these times, [Alejandro] Melchor's position was really Asian Development Bank (ADB) Executive Secretary.

TATAD: I am not sure if all these times he was with ADB. The clearest thing was that there was a pillar...He was closer to Cesar [Virata] than to all the other technocrats. They were trying to organize these groups around him in order to pursue election policies and programs.

KATAYAMA: What do you consider the most important characteristic or secret of Mr. Marcos in his personal management [style]? As you suggested... he succeeded in controlling them, how did he manage? What was his uniqueness in terms of his personal management skills?

TATAD: I suppose in every regime or management there is the divide-and-rule technique. [Ferdinand] Marcos maintained enough close relations with everyone so that individually he could assure each one that they enjoyed his confidence. He was also never intimidated by the superior intelligence of these people, so they were free to come out... He also tried to become familiar with the details of the operations of everyone. He knew what you knew and knew what you were... doing. He knew many things; it was unsafe to bluff your way through. You needed to argue. He seldom praised his people but it was enough if he agreed with you.

PADERANGA: Did he have any parallel lines with the departments or did he have any parallel ways to get information from departments?

TATAD: I would say yes...

KATAYAMA: So what were they? Who were these informants?

TATAD: He was an intelligence officer in the war. His intelligence gathering ability was not impeded by the presidency. That was one... from all sources, he had cross-checks.

PADERANGA: So he was very effective until his health started to deteriorate... and that would be in 1983?

TATAD: Yes... I think 1982. I was no longer with the Cabinet. I left the Cabinet in 1980. He started getting sick. I wrote about his kidney transplant in my column. I could not remember the exact date. I was the one who exposed his transplant. In 1982, I was in Harvard. Ninoy [Benigno Jr.] Aquino and I talked about it that time. Ninoy was saying that "Our mutual friend wrote me to say that Marcos is sick." "You know Ninoy, even before you left, [Ferdinand] Marcos was already getting sick but I hope you are not going to anchor your program on the state of Marcos's health." He got so angry. "I am not crazy. I am not going to the Philippines to campaign against Marcos. You cannot bring him down unless the economy collapses." That was Ninoy's assessment in July 1982.

KATAYAMA: How did your contact with Ninoy [Benigno Jr.] start?

TATAD: I was a newspaper man before while he was already in politics. I may have told you the story in the previous interview. This had to do with my appointment as Minister of Information. I

was writing a column for the *Manila Bulletin* and at the same time reporting the international developments from the foreign office. One time, I wrote this column in defense of Imelda [Marcos]. Ninoy [Benigno Aquino Jr.] was attacking the Cultural Center of the Philippines Project (CCP) of [Imelda] Marcos. I wrote in my column that Imelda was doing something for the arts which nobody else had done. But I also wrote that Ninoy was asking these questions about the corporate structure of the Cultural Center and these were questions that needed to be answered. The next day I got a lengthy telegram from Ninoy from Davao thanking and congratulating me for this column, but even before that we had occasional contacts already...

KATAYAMA: After Ninoy [Benigno Aquino Jr.] left for the United States?

TATAD: After he left for the United States, I left the Cabinet. But during the time I was with the Cabinet and Ninoy [Benigno Aquino Jr.] was still in the Philippines, the one time he was brought to Malacañang, he was escorted by Colonel Fidel Ramos who was to become Major General Ramos later. I do not know if he was brought to Malacañang because of his request, or it was upon the orders of [Ferdinand] Marcos, maybe upon his request. I received them in the office of Marcos. And Lupita Concio [now Aquino-Kashiwahara] who was living in the same village where I lived in La Vista, came to me to convey messages for Marcos when Ninoy was staging his hunger strike. So I served as the channel of their appeals and petitions, especially when... Ninoy was reaching the “critical and irreversible” stage. I was the one talking to [President Ferdinand] Marcos about it. The Aquino family was worried that since he was not taking any food, he could reach the irreversible stage and would just die. Marcos said that there was no danger to that because he was eating. He was taking fructose and taking sugar... Anyway, I left the Cabinet in 1980 and he already had the state commandos in the US so during my first visit to the US (United States), I was invited to speak to the Asian Society. I met Heherson Alvarez and Ernesto Maceda and they asked me if I wanted to go to Boston, Massachusetts. I said that I had no intention of going to Boston. I had left the Cabinet and was... critical of Marcos but I had decided to stay in the Philippines. I did not have the same status as them who were fighting Marcos from a safe distance. I would be coming home. I left the Cabinet to oppose Marcos; I did not think that I held an inferior rank. These guys were not cabinet members so why should I put myself under the wings of people less in stature? That was going inside my mind. So I did not see Ninoy in 1980 or 1981. In 1982, I had a short course in Harvard University Institute of International Development and quite by accident we saw each other at the Bookstore. “I heard about you being here. How come you never called?” I said that the professor put me as the head of our group so I did not have the time; I had to read even on Sundays. “Sorry, I do not have your phone number.” And then he exploded. <laughs> That was my only conversation with him. From that conversation, I began to have certain doubts about his original role. He mentioned that a dentist wrote him that Marcos was already sick so I told him that I hope he would not anchor his political plans on the state of health of Marcos. “No. I am not going back there, I know that you could not bring down Marcos unless that economy collapses.” I think that was a very

important statement. I asked him “Have you seen the latest BBC film on the Philippines where they have Pepe [Jose] Diokno?” “Pepe Diokno? BBC?” “Did he give him at least five minutes?” “No. He was the narrator.” I am trying to remember the title of the film, BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) third world thing. These guys, the progressive movements used to write very well. “You should see it.” “Where did you see it?” “I saw it in one of the TV stations here in Harvard.” There was a girl who was coming to my class and she used to sit beside me. She used to work in the Philippines. She said she even talked Filipino. Her name was **Grace Gudal (check name)**. “Grace Gudal? That woman! She holds office next to me.” “And she showed you the film but has not shown it to me.” “That’s how it is! Why don’t you ask Grace?” And then the next day I saw Grace in our class. “I saw Ninoy yesterday, and he was complaining. You are supposed to hold office next to him, but you have not shown him this film.” “No he can’t! Does he not know? He is already passé.” That kept me thinking, “Who is this girl and what does the word passé mean in terms of his possible role in everything?” That was 1982. So when he came home, he was assassinated. I went back to the footage in Taiwan. “I am okay, I am safe. I have a vest.” <laughs> and this book I have by Doy [Salvador] Laurel. There is a portion where Doy reveals that in his last conversation with Ninoy, Ninoy told him, “I have only two years to live.”

PADERANGA: Ninoy [Benigno Aquino Jr.] told Doy [Salvador Laurel] that?

TATAD: Yes. <Mr. Tatad opens the book and searches for the portion of the conversation between Doy Laurel and Ninoy> This was two years ago... How did we get to this part? We are now talking about Ninoy Aquino... Ang layo na ng narating natin [We have gone so far]. Here. <Mr. Tatad reads the paragraph.> “As we were nearing my last visit to Ninoy in Boston, it crossed my mind, (President Corazon Aquino) Cory was cooking in the kitchen... Ninoy suggested that we go outside the house to see his... pet dog. Outside, he confided to me that he had only two more years to live since his heart bypass operation, his days have been numbered. Instead of dying in bed or being run by the taxi cab, he would rather die in his own country meaningfully and with a big splash. And so he is willing to face all of these in his homecoming.” Was he a participant? A passive participant?

KATAYAMA: Was it true that Ninoy wanted to negotiate with (President Ferdinand) Marcos and succeed him?

TATAD: No, he told me he had no such plan because that was his assessment and it was also the assessment of the US (United States) Ambassador at that time. As I heard it from here, there was not any single political organization in the country that could match KBL (Kilusang Bagong Lipunan) during that time. [Ferdinand] Marcos had become so unpredictable, that if he had only one dark suit inside his cabinet and you invited him to dinner, when you specified dark suit only, you could not be sure that he would wear that dark suit. That was how unpredictable Marcos had

become. This was the voice of Stephen Bosworth I heard in a conversation. The “invincibility” of Marcos at that time was concealed by both domestic actors and the external [ones].

KATAYAMA: Among the opposition leaders, who do you think Marcos was most afraid or threatened of?

TATAD: He was not afraid of anyone. The two opposition leaders who were competing for the possibility of challenging Marcos in an election were Ninoy [Benigno Aquino Jr.] and Gerry [Gerardo] Roxas. In my own judgment, I tended to favor Gerry. He was the more sober statesman. Ninoy was rambunctious. He would electrify crowds but he was more of a demagogue than anything else and had no solid programs. But Marcos in my last interview with him in 1987... he never described Ninoy as a rival. He described him as an enemy of the state.

KATAYAMA: What was his basis?

TATAD: Ninoy [Benigno Aquino Jr.] was known to be instrumental in the formation of the CPP (Communist Party of the Philippines), the NPA (New People’s Army) and the MNLF (Moro National Liberation Front) and he was the one who exposed the Jabitah Massacre story on the floor of the Senate. This was the national security project intended to have Filipinos infiltrate Sabah, Malaysia to claim it as Philippine territory. Even before Marcos, [Diosdado] Macapagal already filed the claim. He believed this was part of Philippine territory. In any jurisdiction, in Japan, US, anywhere, if anything like this was being cooked up by the government, any responsible opposition leader who got wind of it would first go to the commander-in-chief or the president and say, “What is this? I want to be briefed.” But Ninoy delivered his speech, which could have brought us to war with Malaysia. We were not prepared for such an eventuality. Because of that, the project had to be terminated. This is speculative on my part.

KATAYAMA: How did [Ferdinand] Marcos deal with other opposition leaders like Jose “Pepe” Diokno?

TATAD: [Jose] Diokno enjoyed his respect. He had a great mind and his nationalism was unquestionable.

KATAYAMA: How about [Jovito] Salonga?

TATAD: Salonga was respected. He was also a legal luminary with some evangelical preaching background, but Marcos was not prone to exaggerate the abilities of others. <laughs>

PADERANGA: The first lady had her own people?

TATAD: Yes. In fact, I told you the story. "So you have become Marcos's not Ma'am's."

TADEM: When you left in 1980, did you feel the tension between [Ferdinand] Marcos and [Juan Ponce] Enrile... ? I mean when did General Fabian Ver come into the picture? When did his conflict with Enrile start?

TATAD: That conflict became more and more pronounced as the President's health became precarious. So long as [Ferdinand] Marcos was in control, that thing was assumed by many people, but it did not seem to affect the decisions on governance. And you know as one of my colleagues was saying, if [Juan] Ponce Enrile was regarded by Marcos as someone who had control over the armed forces he would not be able to sleep. He slept well because he relied more on [Fabian] Ver a lot. Moreover, in the chain of command, the Defense Secretary did not figure. I mean, it was really the commander-in-chief, the chief of staff, and the service commander who were the important personages. The secretary of national defense was a staff as far as that organization was concerned so there was no reason really for any sector of defense to be resentful of the commander-in-chief going straight to the chief of staff for military operations. The administration of the Department of National Defense (DND) was another matter. But Enrile got a big slice of power during martial law.

TADEM: [Fidel] Ramos was never a threat to Marcos?

TATAD: No. Fidel Ramos was never a threat.

TADEM: You were no longer in government when there were stories about Enrile and the Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM)?

TATAD: *Wala na ako* (I was no longer there). I resigned six years before EDSA.

TADEM: So when you left was the relationship between [Juan Ponce] Enrile and [Fidel] Ramos okay?

TATAD: They were okay.

TADEM: Was it in the personality of [Fidel] Ramos not to leave [Ferdinand] Marcos until the end... there were stories that people were telling him to join [RAM]...

TATAD: No, it was not out of loyalty to Marcos... he just wanted to be sure that it [RAM] was going to win...

TADEM: I would just like to clarify things about Paeng [Rafael] Salas. When you mentioned that [Alejandro] Melchor was working with [Cesar] Virata and other technocrats, was Paeng also doing that?

TATAD: Paeng [Rafael Salas] was gone already. Paeng left in 1971... Paeng was going to run for Senate, remember? I never really learned about the inside story. These are unverified things that we heard because after announcing his candidacy [for the 1971 senatorial elections], he suddenly decided to leave the country, for the [United] States, and the story I heard was that he went with Bobby [Roberto] Benedicto, a very close friend and classmate of [Ferdinand] Marcos, who was in-charge of raising campaign funds for the party. Paeng was executive-secretary but I do not think he made any money. So he went to Benedicto to ask for contributions for his political campaign. Apparently, he was promised a very small amount. Paeng said that was hardly enough...

TADEM: To clarify, when you were invited by [Ferdinand] Marcos to join the cabinet, was there any particular perspective that you wanted to bring in? For example, as regards the relationship with media and government...

TATAD: I told you earlier that the most important concern then was the reelection bid. [Ferdinand] Marcos wanted to project himself through the media. I addressed... that issue at that time but after the elections and all things had settled down, we had to look at the things that he wanted to accomplish, so I had to tailor my programs according to that. I believe that there was a two-way information flow. At that time, there was a very strong doctrine in UNESCO ((United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)).

KATAYAMA: When the Dewey Dee Scandal came out, what was the initial response of Mr. Marcos? Was he embarrassed?

TATAD: When that happened I think I was in my honeymoon. I just got married that time. When I got back home, I reported to work and then [Ferdinand] Marcos called me and said that there was an American woman who had been going to his office. "I have nothing to do with her." He denied it, but it was generally presumed it was true. I think the main problem there was its effect on Mrs. [Imelda] Marcos and their relationship.

KATAYAMA: After that Imelda Marcos] had some sort of leverage?

TADEM: That was what we gathered from OD (Onofre D.) Corpuz. Imelda's leverage against [Ferdinand] Marcos increased.

TATAD: Yes, [they were] very smart players.

KATAYAMA: Who Imelda [Marcos]? <laughs> At that time, was there only a strategic alliance...how will I put this, between Imelda and [Ferdinand] Marcos?

TADEM: Like for example, Hillary and Bill Clinton...

KATAYAMA: Yes. Like that, a political alliance only?

TATAD: You should remember that even before martial law, during the bid for the elections, Imelda [Marcos] had been very instrumental already in projecting the Marcos image. It was not without reason. He called her his secret weapon because, you know, she was the most stunning beauty on stage. She helped in making him President for the first time and again for the second time and then he started sending her on missions abroad. Otherwise purely touristic and pleasure trips were considered official in nature. She became a political personality also. And then there were people gravitating around her and that fed her ego. ... OD is correct.

TADEM: Did you see the dynamics in the Cabinet, when Mrs. [Imelda] Marcos was getting more and more leverage? Did you notice anything?

TATAD: Yes. People were going her way...I can say I was the only one who could leave her group without causing any resentment. She would start talking from 9 o'clock up to the next day. It was not easy to get yourself out of there. I would say [to her] that the President [Ferdinand Marcos] wanted [to see] me even though that was not true. Did I tell you the story about the meeting in Hong Kong? One time, she went to Indonesia, and she invited my wife to be part of her entourage and then she told me on the way home, that she wanted to be in Hong Kong to meet editors and publishers. I arranged a meeting with them. I contacted them. They said that they would be very happy to host a dinner for her. She did not have to host anything; they volunteered to host dinner... so she agreed. The arrangements were made. There would be a dinner on the day... [of her arrival] in Hong Kong. They would host her dinner ... and she would stay in the Peninsula. I went there to arrange things. As soon as she came, she said she could not go to the dinner because it was on the other side. She wanted the dinner in her hotel. At that point, everything had been arranged; I could not change anything anymore. So I had to go to the press guys, "I am sorry." I had to tell a lie. "There were so many telephone calls coming back and forth so she could not leave the hotel. But it was possible for her to see you after dinner. "No problem." I felt so small and wanted to crawl under the table. We went there to the Peninsula. She hosted an elaborate banquet in the hotel. I got more embarrassed. After that, it was over. The ladies were with her in her suite talking... "Ma'am, I have to go back to the hotel on the other side. My wife would go with me." "No, go back to Mandarin and leave your wife here." "No, Madam, I am the only one who is employed by the Philippine government. My wife is not part of it." So she was taken aback. "Okay. go." If you are not firm, you would fall under her spell.

TADEM: Who would be considered as her technocrats?

TATAD: Jolly [Jose Conrado Benitez].

TADEM: How was her relationship with [Cesar] Virata? She was also doing economic programs, right, so how was it?

TATAD: It was a correct relationship. There was deference... mostly these technocrats only worked with the president.

TADEM: Did you feel the tension between Marcos' and Imelda's technocrats in the Cabinet?

TATAD: Not in the Cabinet. In the Cabinet, Marcos was in command...

KATAYAMA: Suppose [Ferdinand] Marcos did not suffer from that serious disease, do you think he could have survived?

TATAD: Yes. But of course the pressure could not have been avoided. The real pressure was coming from the US because of the bases questions. As I said, quoting **Ambassador B... (full name)** "Marcos had become unpredictable." At that time, they still wanted to keep the bases. Remember, since Marcos came to power the 1966 agreement had become different from the original. The lease term was shortened to 25 years. Later, the nomenclature was changed. They were already called the Philippine bases not American bases. The Philippine flag would be placed singly in these bases except in the premises of buildings where American crewmen worked. And then finally, this provision had to be revisited and the Americans started to pay the so-called economic support fund. So since the expiration date was going to be 1991 and the Americans still needed to stay, they suggested an extension but given those premises. Marcos was not sure if he would consider but they were [convinced] that he would not agree. During this time, the so called convenors' group, led by [Jaime] Ongpin and several others, was formed. They brought in Chino [Joaquin] Roces, they were anti-US bases. They [the Americans] were probably confident that they could change the mind of Cory [Corazon] Aquino. She did not understand the issue but...They could play with that group but not risk things with Marcos. If Marcos was in good health until then, the pressure would build up; Marcos could have survived it...

TADEM: And continue martial law?

TATAD: Martial law was done. Martial law was over during that time.

TADEM: But he could have shifted to Parliamentary [system] and he could have been the Prime Minister.

TATAD: No. The constitutional amendments were already there so that would have continued probably unless there were pressures from the ground that would compel him to do away with Amendments 5 and 6. Without those amendments, the Constitutional structure was good but it became a crazy, half-baked parliamentary system. The Prime Minister was there able to legislate by himself even on matters that were already being taken up on the floor by the Parliament.

KATAYAMA: I know this is also a very naïve question, but I am very much curious about cronies. Marcos eventually developed one big business person in each sector like for example [Roberto] Benedicto, Danding [Eduardo Jr.] Conjuangco, and others. I am curious why he gave big benefits to those persons. Theoretically, it would work [if in] specific fields, they would tap people and let them compete with each other but Marcos did not choose that kind of approach. He delegated almost everything to Lucio Tan and others...

TATAD: That was probably one of the major weaknesses of the Marcos rule. You have to understand that when [Ferdinand] Marcos came to power the oligarchy was already deeply entrenched. This was most evident in the Lopezes. The Lopez empire, which I think is still there, became stronger. The clan was headed by Don Iñing, Eugenio Lopez Sr. who was known as the prince. Whenever he needed to see the president, he would just say a word, and then they would be available in his office. Probably this was an exaggeration of a proof. The story that went around was that all the former First Ladies... were no longer given importance, not even half of the importance they used to get. Probably, they had prepared for this. This was probably the basis for the creation of his own group of cronies. It turned out to be not a very good idea. They got the money and kept it and they ended up with a reputation that was not very good...

KATAYAMA:... As far as Armed Forces were concerned, Marcos had to deal with figures, one was Fabian Ver and the other was Fidel Ramos. They were competing with each other and Marcos enjoyed that. (He used the divide and rule strategy) but for big businesses [Marcos allowed] only one person to one sector [and encouraged monopolies]... and but in South Korea or even Indonesia... they allowed economic leaders to compete within segregated sectors... if Marcos did that, I think [Philippine] economic development would be different...

TATAD: I would not question that observation... I am not going to justify crony capitalism. We were just trying to understand what happened. But the old monopolies not only existed for accumulation of capital but also to accumulate political power. That was what [Ferdinand] Marcos tried to break but instead he made his own oligarchy.

KATAYAMA: That was a big mistake.

TATAD: Certainly! That was a mistake but in fairness to [Ferdinand] Marcos there was never any project, any big... projects that became a scandal that involved any member of his cabinet. The money making was completely separated from running government. The cronies were never identified to have connections inside the Cabinet. Did you notice? Who were the cronies? [Roberto] Benedicto, [Jose Yao] Campos...

KATAYAMA: How about Bobby [Roberto] Ongpin? Ongpin was a cabinet member but he handled the Binondo Central Bank.

TATAD: This was during the crisis. It was supposed to be a solution to the crisis; the Binondo Central Bank was supposed to be the solution to the foreign exchange crisis...

TADEM: How about Baltazar Aquino of the DPWH (Department of Public Works and Highways)? I think we got that from our interview with Ting [Vicente] Paterno; he was removed because of corruption.

TATAD: That could have been the reason but these were normal government projects; these had nothing to do with contracts entering the country from outside, unlike the things that we have been seeing in the last couple of years. I do not believe the Japanese government would be in the position to identify a project that went through the Cabinet and became the source of corruption... so the cronies made money as businessmen using their own talents and the privileges accorded to them by their closeness to [Ferdinand] Marcos.

TADEM: How about the logging [concessions] of [Juan Ponce] Enrile?

TATAD: That was probably questionable when you look at the provision in the Constitution, which says that government officials should not engage in any business dealing but it was probably facilitated by the decision at that time to give logging concessions to former rebels in Mindanao and other places. The Defense Department probably figured that out and besides he is a smart lawyer...

TADEM: But even with the coconut levy, the UCPB (United Coconut Planters Bank), that was [Juan Ponce] Enrile and Danding [Eduardo Jr.] Cojuangco, right?

TATAD: But then again the coconut levy is a legal question. In my view, these funds were government funds because they were able to collect on the basis of a [presidential] decree. Otherwise, if it were on the basis of an agreement between the millers and the farmers, then government had nothing to do with it. But it was the government who said that this is the decree, this is the fee you have to pay, etc... that is my view but until now the legal experts are still

contending and the Supreme Court is having difficulties in making a decision that you and I would hardly understand. <laughs>

TADEM: So, how about Marcos creating his own political dynasty? Do you also see that? I think in Isabela...

TATAD: The dynasty issue...

TADEM: Compared to the cronies...

TATAD: Okay let us discuss the dynasty issue because in 2007, I made a big point on this in the Senate. The dynasty is not peculiar to the Philippines. I mean even in the United States, in Britain, and in developing countries, you have dynasties and I do not say that it is wrong per se because if I were a lawyer and my children decided to become lawyers, no one can fault me. There is also no law that my children should not be lawyers. Now in politics, there should be no law that prohibits my children from becoming politicians because in politics you submit yourself to an electoral process and it is really the voters who decide that you should be here rather than there. But I questioned the fact that in a Senate of 24 members representing 16 million families, you could have a family with two members sitting at the same time. That is completely immoral. One senator comes from my family. At the end of his term, another family member comes in. For me that is okay. The people wanted them there, so it's okay. It's also okay if I have 10 grown up children who want to be members of the House for as long as they are representing their districts and the people like them. Because I want to give the people the ultimate decision to say, "You are good and you can become my representative in Congress. After one term, if you were not good and we do not want you, that's it." That is the principle but of course in practice, right now because our politics had become solely based on popularity, people who do not have the talent end up in politics. They are encouraged by their families to go there because it is the most lucrative business now... You need business accumulation when you are in business but in politics you do not need any business accumulation, you just need to steal.

KATAYAMA: But when the EDSA revolt happened, information came out and was shared, particularly about the Marcos hidden wealth. I think it is already common knowledge that they amassed incredibly huge amounts of money. What kind of ideas came into your mind? Were you surprised? Or not surprised? Did you know that?

TATAD: I had no inkling what was going to happen. However, when I left the Cabinet, I was still writing and I think I was the first one to reveal in my columns the fact that the illegal wealth story was going to blow up but the San Jose Mercury News was going to exploit this. I learned the story in the course of a lecture tour in the Midwest, when I was being interviewed in some places. So when I came home, I wrote the story that [Ferdinand] Marcos would be targeted on

this issue. In fact, after this revelation, I found myself being dragged to the Sandigang Bayan. Years after I left the Cabinet, they put together a case involving something like PhP25,000. After 10 years of being in the Cabinet, I was being accused of stealing PhP25,000. That was so bad but then anyway, they dragged me into the Sandigan as a reaction to the story I wrote. But what was regrettable about this whole thing was that, in the public mind, you have a kleptocracy... The propaganda was far gone for the Marcoses. The cases are in court and these cases have not moved. The prosecutors have not been able to produce the evidence in court. In the mean time, you have all sorts of stories coming out from everywhere about Marcos getting his money from the war booty not from government. This is credible because the budget of Marcos for 20 years was not even half a trillion pesos. And he was able to build infrastructures for the country, so if he had been stealing billions from the budget, he could not have put up these infrastructures. Cory [Corazon] Aquino's budget was 1.3 trillion in six and half years. All we see are these flyovers built from that budget... . You have to substantiate your story with enough evidence to make your story credible. And I fear that after the [Gloria Macapagal] Arroyo administration, the same thing would happen. We have the story, people believe that stealing had gone on but there was no evidence. We need evidence. Korea and Taiwan were able to do it. Japan, was it able to do it?

KATAYAMA: To some extent, do you still believe the Yamashita treasure story?

TATAD: I do not know if I believe it or not, but the trouble is from the time I left the Cabinet until now, so many people are coming to me with all these stories from abroad saying that there are so much gold, bonds, treasury notes from Ohio etc., and they have instruments, they show you, all impressive... such that you cannot believe that there are people in this country who could fabricate these. You must have seen some.

TADEM: Going back to the bases issue, who was the point person during the negotiations of the bases, was it [Benjamin] Romualdez?

TATAD: With the American government, the new treaty?

TADEM: No, during the Marcos' time.

TATAD: Not Kokoy. It was [Carlos P.] Romulo as Foreign Affairs Secretary.

TADEM: People said there was a separate DFA (Department of Foreign Affairs) [ran by Benjamin "Kokoy" Romualdez]...

TATAD: No, it had to do with state visits and Kokoy [Benjamin Romualdez] used to believe that foreign policy was visiting foreign countries <laughs>. For all the trips of the President

[Ferdinand Marcos] and Imelda [Marcos], Kokoy was instrumental in putting together the program. *Hindi naman ganoon kahirap yun pero* [It was not that difficult but] he got involved. *Mukhang pinapahirap lang* [He was just making it look difficult]. Have I told you the story about the Osaka, Japan visit? When Imelda went to Osaka in 1980, I joined Kokoy in negotiating with gaimutsu, the program of Marcos. It was a straightforward program but at the time the [---] was very active in Tokyo. Security was a concern of our host. He agreed on what were to be done. We would be going to stay in the Imperial Hotel. The First Lady would be brought to the hotel upon arrival and of course at that time, the Imperial Hotel had the old wing and the new wing... There was the front entrance and there was the back entrance. The Japanese guys said, “We would use the back entrance for security reason because if we use the front entrance, [there may be]...demonstrators We are not expecting demonstrations but we cannot preclude [that]... so we will use the back entrance.” “No. No. We insist.” So we went back and forth. We covered in so much time, with so little time the main points... Kokoy finally said “Gentlemen, in my country only women with ill reputation used the back entrance.” “In that case, we used the front entrance.” <laughs>

TADEM: Kokoy [Benjamin Romualdez] was organizing the trips of Imelda [Marcos], he was not part of any policy-making body?

TATAD: This was policy, <laughs> the negotiation of her trips! To illustrate another story in 1980, we were in Vienna, Austria. We were discussing the details with the governor and mayor of Vienna. The governor and mayor of Vienna was one person. The main points were easy to agree with and the final details. For the arrival they would provide a Mercedes Benz 600 for the First Lady. So they said, “we have not had state visits for awhile, we do not have 600 in Vienna”. Then finally, Vienna said that they could get one from Stuttgart, Germany. . So they got one. On the day of the visit, the 600 was there for Madam Marcos. The Governor was behind, [using a] small black cab. Imelda was being led to the 600. “No, no I would be riding with the governor.” Kokoy got his point. Imelda was smart enough to say what she wanted. But that was not the end of the story. [Leonid Ilyich] Brezhnev was also there for a state visit. He had his standard black limousine...with probably another six, we had the long stretched vehicle with about twenty there.

TADEM: You said that if [Ferdinand] Marcos were not sick then, he would still be in control. Would that mean that the Communist insurgency was not a threat?

TATAD: That was a threat. That was the reason for the declaration of martial law.

TADEM: But not enough to topple down?

TATAD: The army was strong enough to topple it down.

TADEM: The same with the Moro insurgency?

TATAD: The MNLF (Moro National Liberation Front) became more of a problem because of its relationship with the Islamic countries, particularly the oil producing countries. I remember there was a threat to withhold supplies to the Philippines. [Ferdinand] Marcos embarked on very high profile intensive diplomacy in the US and that was how they withstood the two oil shocks during the 1970s. They put together an energy program, which Cory [Corazon] Aquino dismantled immediately when she came to power and this is the program which Noynoy [Benigno Aquino III] wants to continue.

TADEM: In your years in government, what were your major issues in terms of the policies of the government?

TATAD: My area was Information; we lent support to the entire program of the government. But the major issues that were internal had to do with the attempt to democratize at the local level through the less than orthodox democratic structure, the barangay. People were laughing at the idea of the barangay in the beginning. It turned out to be institutionalized at this point. On the international front, we were ahead of so many so-called Third World countries in opening our windows and doors to our socialist neighbors. We preceded the United States in opening up to China and the Soviet Union. These were major achievements for the Philippine State. The course of Philippine-American relation was being reshaped at that time and it ultimately caused the government money. I am not entirely convinced that the EDSA crowd was responsible for the ouster of [Ferdinand] Marcos. It was a US project. That was why I am embarrassed because after EDSA 1 the first big book was the *Biggest Democracy Ever Told*. I wrote the continuity text flashed with enthusiasm and so on... it is a journalist [writing] without any reflections. I would not have written that text because the appearances could be deceptive.

TADEM: In terms of Cabinet decision-making, was it always [Ferdinand] Marcos?

TATAD: But not against the Cabinet. He would throw an idea with the Cabinet and if he had these inputs, which the Cabinet might have been totally unaware of, he would talk about the inputs. It was like a dialogue. In my case, I was the Minister of Information. I did not find it necessary to participate actively in the Cabinet discussions. I would prepare my memos before the Cabinet and then I would present it to the President. If he liked the idea, he would be the one to articulate my own ideas. I did not have to defend that. As far as the others were concerned, I was merely taking down notes, listening to their exchanges. Blas Ople, Bong [Arturo] Tangco, they were very prolific in their utterances.

TADEM: Were you involved in any social planning?

TATAD: As I was saying awhile ago, I introduced the two-way flow. I organized the information assistance system and centralized it so that we got all the complaints from all the departments. At the end of the day, we would have results for every complaint filed. That was one. I organized the information caravan where we would have the various departments going to a certain place and delivering services and at the same collecting data. We sent the social data we collected to the various departments. This was a significant input to the planning and to the monitoring of the contracts of programs and policies.

TADEM: So were there other departments involved in this?

TATAD: Yes. Precisely, we brought them in, these were not just information people, DSWD (Department of Social Welfare and Development), Department of Justice, Land Registration people, the various departments targetting the needs of the communities, for instance, health and education. That is not being done anymore.

TADEM: What about the involvement of the private sector in those activities? Did you pull in the private sector?

TATAD: We tried to reach out but then, it was not really that significant because the private sector as far as information was concerned was media. They covered us but they were not involved in the policy-making.

TADEM: So these were your ideas? Not [Ferdinand] Marcos'?

TATAD: I ran the department for ten years. I did not get a day-to-day instruction from anyone. I was not micro managed. As I said in the beginning, I only had a two-sentence instruction from [Ferdinand] Marcos when I took my office. "I will depend on you." So we formulated the program. You should remember the Disiplina Campaign. That was my program. The Mabuhay ang Pilipino campaign was my program. It paid off when it began to invite ten types of reactions from some players. It had become too big. My name was not even there.

TADEM: Who were in the Cabinet?

TATAD: There were two cabinets before, remember? Human Settlements and the others...

TADEM: Just to clarify...when you were Minister of Information, were there specific functions you were supposed to perform... at the start and then in the process [the Ministry] evolved to include other functions?

TATAD: It may not be inaccurate to say that the policies and programs were information-led. They formulated and supplied the basis for policies and programs and these were helped partly because aside from my work as a spokesman, I was also writing the speeches for [Ferdinand] Marcos. I rather had a generous role formulating presidential [policies and programs]...

TADEM: Were there any other people?

TATAD: Of course, I could not do this alone.

TADEM: How did you choose your people?

TATAD: I brought in a few people within the department and then some lateral entries for others.

KATAYAMA: How about speech writers from the academe... did you get any?

TATAD: We invited inputs from other departments. I was not strongly linked to the academe. We had PCAS (Philippine Center for Advanced Studies) at that time. That was the one dealing with the academe. And PCAS was dealing with the Office of the President directly...

TADEM: From the Cabinet, were you close to anyone in particular?

TATAD: I tried to maintain a very good relationship with the entire cabinet... I felt comfortable with Cesar Virata, Gerry [Gerardo] Sicat, and Jimmy [Jaime] Laya even with [Juan] Ponce Enrile. During that time Ponce Enrile and I were the most visible cabinet members.

TADEM: You left in 1981. Was that before the Dewey Dee scandal?

TATAD: ... in 1980.

KATAYAMA: Did the opening of the Interim Pambansa in 1978 change your function as Minister of Public Information a little bit?

TATAD: It simply widened my responsibilities because I have then become an elected member of the Batasan. I had certain responsibilities to the region and the election to the Batasan exposed me to the ... gross realities of politics which eventually changed my relations with [Ferdinand] Marcos.

KATAYAMA: Can you elaborate on that?

TATAD: As I said in the beginning, I wanted [Ferdinand] Marcos to call an election at around 1975. He felt that it was not necessary. In 1978, he decided to call the elections for the Batasan and the elections would be regional rather than by district. When he said, "I wanted you to have this election." "Mr. President, I think that is not a wise decision because I am not a politician. I do not laugh at jokes that are not funny. I do not slap the backs of people. And if we will have regional elections, I am a Bicolano, that means that I have to run in Bicol. I am a Bicolano but the Bicolanos do not know that I am one because I grew up in the city." So he called up the Bicolano leaders to ask them: "I decided to call for elections..." He called me Kits, plural. I was more than one... "And Kits will run in this election. Do you think this is a wise move?" "Oh yes," was their reply. Of course my conversation with the President was not finished yet. "Really Mr. President? If there is any other way of getting out of this, I want to get out because I am not really psychologically prepared." "No this is the first elections of the New Society and you are the spokesman of the New Society. You have to get involved." "If that is an order and then I would have to go down to Bicol." So I went down to Bicol, spent some time there talking to people. I told the Bicolanos, "I am being asked to run, can I ask for your help?" After a month I ran a survey to find out if I am already being recognized as a Bicolano. So at the end of this period, when the survey [results] came in, I ranked third in terms of familiarity. The most popular guy was a radio broadcaster in Naga by the name of Eddie Alanis and the second guy was Eddie Ilarde who was a TV personality and who had become a Senator. By the time I got back to Manila, these Bicolano leaders were saying that my running was a great idea. However, when asked by the President, they said: "I think you need to reconsider your decision to Kits because they do not know him in Bicol." Marcos said, "No. He is known by people more than all of you. When he was down there, he was already number three." That was the first stage. When the candidates were about to be formally announced, these leaders came back saying, "We are asking you to reconsider your decision about Kits because this is national campaign, you will need him in Manila to man your propaganda for the entire campaign." Marcos turned to me and said, "I think they are right. I would leave you in Manila. You better stay in Manila." "Mr. President, remember that I was against this from the very beginning but you were the one who insisted. I talked to a lot of people to ask for their help and now they agreed to help. But if you say so, I would stay in Manila. I will not be running but I am resigning as Minister of Public Information because my word means nothing to people now. And if the spokesman's words mean nothing, the spokesman should go." He said, "In that case, run." So I ran but in that campaign, there were 12 candidates in the region, I was a member of the Cabinet, there were ten guys in that ticket of twelve who decided to junk me and the other candidate from Camarines Norte who had become very close to me. For that very reason, I was treated as a persona non grata so all other election materials did not include my name and the name of my friend. In the final stage of the campaign, they were offering Php5,000 for every precinct where I got zero votes. When I was running with Congressman [Jose] Alberto from Catanduanes, our campaign manager was the governor who was Alberto's relative. They were campaigning in Catanduanes to vote for only one candidate, his brother. So this is the smallest province of Bicol, we only

spent half a day there to campaign and the rest we spent in the mainland so I had no idea. So when the elections came, the people from Catanduanes voted for me alone and not for the Albertos and the others. So I got the biggest majority of votes in the history of the province, even though I did not campaign... I also had not yet committed any offense against anybody. In the whole of Bicol, I was also number one despite them junking me. [Luis] Villafuerte came in second but the gap was 200,000 votes between me and him. Villafuerte was from Camarines Sur with 40 percent of the votes, Catanduanes had five percent of the votes. I also topped in Albay, Sorsogon, Camarines Norte, and Masbate. I came in second in Camarines Sur. So these were the results. When the next elections came, [Ferdinand] Marcos wanted to support the candidacy of the Albertos again in Catanduanes. "Mr. President, these are young people who wanted to run, I want to support them." "No, I also must with the Albertos." "Mr. President, I am the number one representative of Bicol in the Batasan. If you run the Albertos in Catanduanes, I will not be able to support them. I will have to go abroad while the elections are being held and it will not look good. I will not be involved in the elections just because I cannot support your candidate. If you cannot support my nominee, why don't you choose someone whom the Albertos and I can jointly support? You did it in Cagayan where --- and Enrile were quarelling." He chose another neutral person. "Why don't you adapt the Cagayan formula to Catanduanes?" "No. It cannot be," he said. I submitted my letter of resignation and told him, "I would go to Catanduanes to support my candidates." He did not take me seriously. He thought that I was just throwing tantrums. He went to Legazpi with Imelda [Marcos] and some movie stars for the campaign, when Rico Puno was asking the crowd to cheer for the KBL (Kilusang Bagong Lipunan), "Mabuhay KBL 1,2,3!," the crowd would reply "4,5,6." In Naga the same thing happened. When Marcos was already on stage, he said "When you do not say KBL, *di niyo mapapakinggan si Nora Aunor* [you won't be able to listen to Nora Aunor]!" They did not hear Nora Aunor because they did not say *mabuhay* KBL! They sent a helicopter to pick me up in Catanduanes. I told them to tell [Ferdinand] Marcos and his party, "I am in the hinterlands." The helicopter came back to Legazpi without me and all the Bicol leaders were there. They said that I caused this problem. Marcos got back to Manila the next day, January 17. It was the anniversary of the Marcos Constitution. Where normally he would deliver a speech on the Constitution, on this particular anniversary I was not there to write his speech. I was still in Bicol and his speech was about me. He was asking me to resign. I anticipated this, so the next day I was in Manila, I found my office already taken over. Nevertheless, I called a conference. The foreign press was there. So I answered every question that he raised. After that I went to see him. Marcos was in his office, "Mr. President, in your press conference, you accused me of every crime in the book except insanity and treason but how come I never heard of these crimes that I was supposed to have committed during these ten years we've been together? Besides you did not need to ask for my resignation because I gave you a letter in October that says I was leaving everything in your pleasure because I am going to Bicol to organize the parties of the candidates." Marcos replied, "Kits, this is politics." We parted. In that election, my candidates won almost all the towns except Virac. They bought everyone. My gubernatorial candidate was winning by 4,500 votes in

the ten towns. In the capital of Virac where we were very strong, that was mixed so my gubernatorial candidate lost. Even my own watchers were bought completely. Marcos saw that I was fighting the old dynasties and I was alone. That was the story.

KATAYAMA: I am very much impressed with your bravery but I wonder if you never thought or anticipated very severe retaliation from [Ferdinand] Marcos?

TATAD: No I did not think of it at all. I was young. I was completely uninitiated. I was proceeding on the basis of principles. If I had been a more mature politician, I would have taken a different course and I would probably end up running for president at this point. I said no...

KATAYAMA: Of course I never heard of that open defiance among the key figures. You are very exceptional.

TATAD: I grew up in the typhoon belt. I could not be intimidated by anything. No human or natural force could intimidate me because I grew up amidst all adversities.

KATAYAMA: But at least you tried to show Mr. Marcos that personally you trusted him?

TATAD: I retained the respect.

KATAYAMA: No hidden agenda, you mentioned that?

TATAD: No... We were campaigning in 1987 for the Senate. Vic Magsaysay was running with me and Vic was telling me in the course of campaign that some of the Marcos's boys had asked for my head because after I resigned from the Cabinet, I became an active opposition member of the Batasan. But it was nothing personal. I did not launch personal attacks against [Ferdinand] Marcos; everything had to do with policies and issues. Allegedly, his boys said, "Just give us the go the signal." But Marcos told them, "Don't touch him because when he still believed in me, he fought against anyone who attacked me. *Kaya ganyan yan di na naniniwala sa akin yan.* [He had lost his faith in me, that's why he is like that.] But we have adversaries. They are against us because they are asking for things which I cannot give them... Kits never asked for anything from us. Leave him alone." When I heard that, I said that I was not wrong in retaining my respect for Marcos.

TADEM: [Ferdinand] Marcos was a hands-on campaigner or did he use a particular candidate? You said that he went with Imelda [Marcos] to campaign...

TATAD: In that election, he would accommodate requests, his visitors...but probably he had heard that Bicol was becoming a problem.

TADEM: What was the hold of the Albertos on Marcos?

TATAD: Long association and the Albertos belong to the HQ Club. There was a group of eight political start-ups who were able to deliver votes over the years. [Jose] Alberto was also the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee for a very long time. That was a very important committee in the House.

TADEM: Going back to the martial law years, was the information blackout in the papers and on television, was that from Marcos or...

TATAD: That was the function of the martial law proclamation. That was why, the original plan was for me to read the Proclamation without [Ferdinand] Marcos being seen. We discussed that earlier? I was told that I was going to read a proclamation. I had not seen it before. And then Imelda [Marcos] came in and said that she did not think that was right. If martial law was proclaimed without the President, it would result to chaos. In a war, rumors would multiply. Rumors would become the source of a major problem. If they did not see the president that would give credence to speculations that he was sick or dead. He had to deliver the speech himself. There was no prepared speech. I had to sit down and write the speech. I did not even have the chance to read what I wrote. At that time, there were no computers only typewriters. I read the Proclamation after that. What was the question?

TADEM: The information blackout?

TATAD: We implemented the instruction. The directive was given to the Defense Secretary and the Press Secretary...

TADEM: PD 19 prohibited rumor mongering, which was a punishable crime, what brought that about?

TATAD: As I just mentioned, in any war situation, you generate a thousand and one rumors a day. So this was psychological more than anything. But have we implemented something like that? We did not implement that. That could not have been implemented but it had, I think, a psychological value.

TADEM: How do you think martial law economic policies were perceived by the media?

TATAD: The media was supposed to play a support function. There was a tendency for the Office of the President in normal times to try to influence media in such a way [that] they reflect all things positive, nothing negative. Martial law probably tried to make the situation even more

acute. What they did in my case, at that time, in the first months of martial law at least, I was in the position to recommend to media certain directions. But when I saw columnists praising [Ferdinand] Marcos at every turn, even if it was not real, I asked the media to suspend their columns. I talked to the columnists, “You know we do not need to praise Marcos if there is nothing to praise. It cheapens the presidency, it cheapens the press. What we need is intelligent analysis of the situation. When a problem exists, it should be brought to the attention of the policy makers, but if you praise Marcos in every paragraph even when there is no reason for it, you are not helping us.” Doroy [Teodoro] Valencia, who was the dean of the columnists, was complaining, “This is not good for me and not good for us.” “As long as we would have that understanding then you can redo your praises.”

TADEM: When you were in the Batasang Pambansa, what were the highlights or the major issues in your term?

TATAD: The main thing there was budget... Because the President and the Prime Minister were at the same time legislating. I could not discuss major issues there and besides until I moved to the opposition, there was really no opposition in 1984 except for the Puyon Bisaya which included [Hilarion] Davide, Fernandez, Legazpi, and Lugata. When I joined the opposition, I became the most active articulator of the opposition against the policies of the administration during budget deliberations. I discussed the principles and Davide would concentrate on the line by line entries.

TADEM: How was your relationship with your colleagues then, with your former colleagues in the Cabinet who were in the Batasan?

TATAD: Well the beauty of Philippine politics is that even when you belong to different [camps], you would still be able to shake hands with each other. I never lost my personal relationships with members of the Cabinet. I did not have any personal animosity against anyone. My most intense debates on the floor were against [Leonardo] Yuni Perez(?), former Senator Perez who remained the star war defender of President [Ferdinand] Marcos. Another guy was this lawyer from Pangasinan, (Atty.) Vic Millor who became my friend. As an accomplished Parliamentarian, Senator Perez and I would clash heatedly on the floor to the point of having personal references... *ganoon kaheated yung* discussion [The discussions were that heated]. But after that we would meet in the lounge and we would have coffee together. This was the dynamics in Congress where parliamentary practice was observed as it should be. No personal animosities.

TADEM: Did you see the value of the position of the Prime Minister, specifically Virata's position? What was the opposition's take on the Prime Minister?

TATAD: Well that was an aberration, I think, not the Office itself but the fact that we had a Prime Minister in a parliamentary system but had no power. In a parliamentary system, the power rests on the prime minister but you know for awhile the president and the prime minister was one man and that was [Ferdinand] Marcos. But going back to the presidential election in 1980, there was a dividing line introduced and Cesar [Virata] at that point already had the powers.

TADEM: Do you think it would have been different if Imelda [Marcos] became the Prime Minister? I think she also wanted to be the Prime Minister...

TATAD: Then she would exercise the power but the situation would have become surreal.
<laughs>

TADEM: What were your main projects when you were a representative of Bicol?

TATAD: We did not have much because there was no pork barrel during that time. We relied on the budget and then the projects were there... Today, it has become abusive... For example, since [projects in] public works were in the budget, they were implemented. You did not have to claim for anything. Local government officials did not go to your office to ask for projects and to follow up the projects. They went directly to the implementing agencies. In that respect, the system worked better.

TADEM: On hindsight, what did you want to achieve when you joined the Marcos administration?

TATAD: I just wanted to do a good job. It was a job for me to do the best I could. Looking back, I think I did a good job as Information Minister. I tell people in jest that the reason [Ferdinand] Marcos stayed in office for so long was because he had the best Information Minister in the whole world. But kidding aside, that was all I wanted to do. I had no great ambitions because I... always believe whatever your position, you have to earn your appointment everyday. I had one conversation with the former member of the Politburo... I think it was **Alejandrino (full name)**, the young man; [he said] "you have to forge your own sword." I never understood what he meant because I was focused on my job. I was not thinking of the long term, what would follow after this.

TADEM: What were the limitations as you tried to do your job? TATAD: The normal limitations that you find in society and in the profession. The media has always been like that. Freedom of the press is an expression that practitioners interpret as the ability to do anything they like to do, to say what they want to say without limits. Trying to change that culture is also not easy whether you are trying to do it as a member of the profession or as an outsider...

KATAYAMA: Do you think that [Ferdinand] Marcos was very good in developing his young cabinet members? ... Marcos gave you discretion and authority...that was why you feel grateful?

TATAD: We are normal human beings. We have our feelings and emotions and sense of loyalties. I am not blind to the fact that given my origins, it was an accident of history that at the age of 29, I became a member of the cabinet. I was from a very poor place that could not produce anything at all. For instance, I ran in Quezon City in 1984 and I lost the election in spite the fact that I believe I had tremendous support and then I learned later in 1992, from a guy who was in-charge of the elections in Quezon City, that I was in fact the number one winner here... And that was what happened, I am alive and you are saying that I was cheated there, that's okay since I owe my political emergence to Marcos, it's okay. I [could take it]... but not to the extent I would falsify the truth, the historical truth about anything.

KATAYAMA: When you visited [Ferdinand] Marcos in Hawaii, what was the initial reason why you wanted to see him?

TATAD: I did not want to see him. I was invited. What happened was in 1987, after I supported Cory [Corazon Aquino] in the 1986 election, I was the one who first brought her to Bicol. As I was in the opposition, I was a member of the National ... Committee that chose Doy [Salvador Laurel] and Cory [Corazon Aquino] as candidates so I went to Bicol with her and I introduced her to her first political audience and rally. After that, I spoke to her about the need to have a political program of government where she should consult with the people. I also discussed the need to have a responsible organization to run the campaign. On these two points, she said that there was no need because the people were already angry with [Ferdinand] Marcos. "Look Cory, I've been in politics longer than you, if you want to be president, you need a program of government. not just running the government on the basis of people being angry with Marcos." I could not convince her. [I said,] "in that case, I would just vote for you but I cannot campaign for you." What was the question again?

KATAYAMA: Why did you go to Hawaii?

TATAD: After I voted for her, she [Corazon Aquino] lost the elections but the EDSA revolution came. We organized the grand alliance for democracy. Many people who supported Cory [Corazon Aquino] were in that group including Ting [Vicente Jr.] Puyat in whose house, Doy [Salvador Laurel] and Cory met to formalize their tickets in 1986. Some agreements were made there which were never complied with. In 1987, we had this senatorial ticket, 24 senators, 12 candidates including people like [Arturo] Tolentino, [Eva Estrada] Kalaw, [Vicente] Ting Puyat, myself, and others. Erap [Joseph] Estrada and [Juan] Ponce Enrile were there so there were 24

of us. The so called survey was supposed to be 24-0 in favor of the administration. What happened was in Mindanao, Cory's candidates took Mindanao. Each one of them from the administration was in the top rank in each province. This was a conclusive evidence [of cheating] ... it does not happen that way even in national or regional elections; there was a topnotcher across... there were 24 topnotchers in 24 provinces. I wrote a paper that in an honest election, nine or ten of us should have won. In UP (University of the Philippines), Luz Tanchanco produced a similar paper. We had no conversation, no tie up with each other. I did not even know her. Anyway, I brought this [out] after I was teargassed in EDSA and they had allowed Erap [Joseph Estrada] to win already in number 16. Enrile was being yoyoed at 24, 25, 26, 25, but the Supreme Court was not acting on the petition so I went to Washington DC. There was a forum there organized by a breakline, a Global Strategy Council was the name, I think. We had people from the [US] state department, from Pentagon and the Senate so I made the presentation. Senator Jesse Alexander Helms, long time chairman of foreign relations, was in the audience. He reacted rather strongly and said it was very clear from this presentation that the Supreme Court of the Philippines had just become the rubber stamp of the Aquino Administration. The people from the State Department came to me, blaming me, "This is a very serious statement and it is all because of you." "Look I made the presentation; I have no control of the reaction of other people." After two days, the Supreme Court ruled in Enrile's favor and he finally won. Apparently, Marcos heard about this so I got an invitation for me to drop by in Hawaii and see Marcos. No commitments. I would come to see him but no commitments... So I went to see him.

KATAYAMA: But was he very talkative? He touched many topics?

TATAD: He was not that talkative. I was asking questions. To begin with... [as I was coming in], the aide said "Sir, the guy who caused your downfall has just arrived." I came here with your invitation. Inside, Marcos said "Kits, I'll explain that to you." "Don't be offended, I have to come to the conclusion that if you did not leave the Cabinet, I would not have fallen. So you caused my fall." the best compliment I ever got in all ten years...

TADEM: Imelda [Marcos] was nowhere around when you visited [Ferdinand] Marcos?

TATAD: She was there but she was not part of the conversation. She wanted a separate meeting with me. <laughs>

KATAYAMA: Okay, which remark impressed you most during your conversation with Mr. Marcos?

TATAD: Well, was that not impressive enough?...

KATAYAMA: I was reminded by the poll survey...

<Mr. Tatad excuses himself to have a break.>

KATAYAMA: You suggested that you conducted poll surveys secretly sometimes?

TATAD: During the time when I was going to run?

KATAYAMA: Even [when you were not running]...

TATAD: We were regularly assisted by surveys.

KATAYAMA: What were the topics that you wanted to know from public opinion?

TATAD: [Public opinion] on certain issues...

KATAYAMA: For instance?

TATAD: The most serious problems affecting their lives...

KATAYAMA: How about controversial topics like peace and security situation?

TATAD: Yes.

KATAYAMA: From the day of the declaration of martial law or after that?

TATAD: After martial law, because before martial law, we had rather very limited access to resources.

KATAYAMA: Which company did you mobilize?

TATAD: We used specific individuals with expertise, not necessarily companies.

KATAYAMA: Like UP (University of the Philippines) professors?

TATAD: Some academics.

KATAYAMA: [Ferdinand] Marcos was very sensitive to public opinion?

TATAD: He was trying to be systematic about these.

KATAYAMA: He would always take into consideration the people's opinions?

TATAD: He respected facts and opinions.

KATAYAMA: But was he was attentive to public opinion?

TATAD: Of course. Definitely!

KATAYAMA: Do you have any recollection of issues where he showed some interesting reactions to the [results of the] public opinion survey.

TATAD: <laughs> The social issues, he was sensitive to the perceptions of the poor about their actual conditions, whether their lives were actually improving or not.

KATAYAMA: Very interesting.

TADEM: How about the public perception about corruption, did it come out?

TATAD: There was great deal of accusations on cronyism later on but if you recall his administration was not hobbled by accusations of corruption. [Ferdinand] Marcos was not corrupt. He became corrupt after he fell. He did not fall because of corruption. Almost every American book wrote about his corruption... the exact opposite of what is happening today.

KATAYAMA: How about [the issue about him as a] war heroe, the fake medals...?

TATAD: I did not devote much time to research on these issues. The documentation appeared to have been authentic before Mr. Alfred McCoy came in the picture. I have not really examined the credentials of McCoy. We talked to Mrs. [Imelda] Marcos; she said the American government has rectified all previous allegations so that probably is a good subject for research.

KATAYAMA: Alfred McCoy [had questions] about the authenticities of the war stories.

TATAD: In fact, [Ferdinand] Marcos had some comrades in arms. [It was]...not actual falsification. The data was improved to look much better than it was. But if he was a war hero...whether he was that kind of a war hero is the question.

KATAYAMA: How about the *utang na loob* (debt of gratitude) of Marcos to the Laurel family?

TATAD: That was well-known. You could see that no matter what the Laurels were saying against him... there was no attempt to get back because of this.

TADEM: How did your colleagues perceive this in general?

TATAD: You have to ask them not me... <laughs> What other people say of you should come from the other people. I do not believe in saying, he sees me this way.

TADEM: If you were to return to government service under the present administration, what position would you want to take?

TATAD: Well [that is] probably beyond me now, when Domingo Siazon left office (DFA), the first name that appeared in the Inquirer was my name as a possible foreign affairs secretary. I was in Bicol at that time, when I saw the article I said I was the wrong person for the post because I do not believe in the legitimacy of this government. I spent enough years in public office. I should probably try to spend the last years of my life living a more meaningful life. I would like to dedicate it to a life of letters rather than politics. If I wanted to go back to government, I could handle any position in the government. I could even be president and run this country well.

TADEM: What advice can you give to those people in government now?

TATAD: Just be true to yourself. Do not sell your soul for anything. I served [Ferdinand] Marcos for ten years. He was authoritarian. He was in control of everything but he could never say that he owned me.

<End of interview>