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Filipinos probably are some of the wittiest and funniest people on earth. They love to crack jokes about, and at, public officials.

During the Marcos presidency, Filipinos made fun of the Philippine equivalent of Air Force One, the American presidential plane. People said that the Marcos plane was called "Air Force One-Half." This was because First Lady Imelda Romualdez-Marcos refused to ride on the same plane used by her husband, Ferdinand Marcos. People said she needed an extra plane to carry all those pairs of shoes. So Imelda followed him in another plane, which usually traveled a few minutes behind the President's plane. Filipinos dubbed Imelda's plane the "Air Force Better-Half." Wags said that "one-half" plus "better-half" equaled Air Force One.

When Corazon Cojuangco Aquino became President in 1986, Filipinos started dubbing her plane "Air Force Oneder Woman." It obviously referred to the sobriquet, Filipino Wonder Woman, which many Filipinos used in calling the lady President. Why? Because President Aquino made people wonder whether she knew what she was doing.

When Gen. Fidel V. Ramos became President in 1992, people called his presidential plane "Air Force Oneder" after he made several state visits. People wondered if Ramos, who became the most-traveled President in Philippine history, knew why he was flying to so many foreign countries.

When Joseph Ejercito Estrada became president in 1998, his whiz kids decided to preempt the wags by naming unofficially the presidential plane after his moniker, Erap. They dubbed the Philippine equivalent of Air Force One as "Eraplano." This was obviously a corruption of the colloquial Filipino term for airplane, "eroplano." But alas, this was not to be. Some National Institute of Language officials, who coined "salimpapaw" as the official Filipino word for airplane, insisted that it be used as the name of the presidential plane. When wags heard about it, some of them started dubbing President Estrada's plane as "Air Force Salimpusa." This term, which uses "pusa" (cat) as the main root word, is the colloquial Filipino name for a lightweight participant in a fight among heavyweights. "Salimpusa" thus can be used literally to mean a cat joining a fight among dogs.

Wags started also to invent more humorous names for the Estrada presidential plane. A favorite term coined was "Air Force One IQ." A longer name cropped up: "Air Force One Too Many Clowns On Board." ###

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(As excerpted from the forthcoming book, *ERAP-SPEAK*.)

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