

Assailant Slashes Wife Of President Marcos

From News Dispatches

MANILA, Dec. 7—Imelda Marcos, First Lady of the Philippines, was attacked today by a man wielding a foot-long bolo knife. She survived with injuries reportedly requiring 75 stitches.

The assailant, whose motive was not known, was shot and killed by guards assigned to protect Mrs. Marcos, wife of President Ferdinand Marcos.

Mrs. Marcos, 42, once a beauty queen, was badly cut on both arms and hands when the unidentified man attacked her during a ceremony in neighboring Pasay City.

The ceremony was televised and viewers in the Manila area were able to see the attack as it happened. The scene was replayed by video tape several times.

Mrs. Marcos, wearing a long, elegant Filipino gown, had just congratulated winners of a civic beautification project when a short man in a dark suit walked onto the stage, pulled a bolo—normally used for cutting sugar cane—from his sleeve and made swift lunges at her.

Hundreds of spectators screamed as Mrs. Marcos fell back and threw up her arms, pushing the blade away from her body. Her action, which limited the wounds to deep

gashes in her hands and arms, probably saved her life.

The attack lasted only 10 seconds. As Mrs. Marcos staggered off the platform, the assailant began slashing wildly at those around him, wounding three other persons, including a member of the Philippines' congress, before guards gunned the attacker down.

Mrs. Marcos, her beige gown splattered with blood, was carried to a helicopter and flown to a nearby hospital where surgeons worked for three hours closing her wounds.

A hospital spokesman said later that she was out of danger and estimated she may require three weeks hospitalization. He said that in addition to the flesh wounds she had three broken fingers.

The government information minister, Francisco Tatad, said President Marcos was "shocked beyond words." Marcos rushed to the hospital immediately after hearing of the attack.

Tatad said: "The identity and the motive of the assailant will be known after the proper investigation has been made."

Officials said a label in the assailant's suit jacket indicated he was from Davao City, 610 miles south of Manila, and authorities there have been

asked to assist in identifying him. He was carrying no identification papers.

Speculation regarding the assailants' motive included theories that he was a fanatic operating alone, that he was part of a premeditated plot by Marcos' political enemies, or that he was part of a secessionist Moslem group now fighting the Philippine armed forces in the southern Sulu Province.

Tatad said earlier there had been a number of phone calls inquiring whether the president was to attend the award ceremony, indicating Marcos, not his wife, was the original target of the assailant.

After Marcos imposed martial law on Sept. 23, the government announced there had been five assassination plots against the president in the last year, including one in which at least two Americans were allegedly involved.

The assault against Mrs. Marcos comes at a time when violence in the country has shown a marked decline. There has also been some easing in the martial law restrictions laid down at the beginning of the referendum campaign for the new constitution.

During the past few years, Mrs. Marcos has become a somewhat controversial personality, with her political foes charging she planned to run for the presidency at the end of Marcos' second term in 1974. Mrs. Marcos denied this.

The president has said of his wife that she was his "best representative" at home and abroad.

Marcos married her after



Photos By Associated Press and United Press International

Mrs. Marcos, blood-stained following a knife assault, is carried to a helicopter (left). Her unidentified assailant lies dead (right).

she had won a Miss Manilaidental campaigns she sang, dren are studying abroad. pardonable, another crime of Bagatsing said. "We adore her. beauty contest in 1954. He at political rallies across the Philippines were shocked at the century, since the First We love her. I am asking all was a congressman at the country. the attack. Lady is beloved by the Fili-Manilians to rally and pray time, and during his two pres- The first family's three chil- "This is a criminal act, un- phnos," Manila Mayor Ramon for her early recovery."