

Coup Seen in Mrs. Marcos Attack

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MANILA, Dec. 8 (AP)—The government said today that the attacker of the wife of Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos, was part of a "rightist coup d'etat conspiracy."

Information Secretary Francisco S. Tatad made the statement in the opening session of a business conference. He said the conspiracy against Marcos' leadership "can only be expected to continue until it is fully liquidated."

Tatad said the bolo knife attack on Mrs. Marcos "put our nation on notice that we have not entirely subdued the polit-

ical passion, bitterness and the violence that have long sought to claim the life of our president in the hands of his enemies."

Mrs. Marcos was reported resting comfortably at a suburban medical center. She suffered deep cuts in the hands and arms in the attack. The assailant was shot dead.

[Authorities named the assailant as Carlito Dimaali, who lived 60 miles from Manila, according to United Press International. The authorities said Dimaali's two sisters and another man tentatively identi-

fied as a brother were being questioned.]

Marcos announced that President Nixon is sending a surgeon to help treat Mrs. Marcos' wounds, which include severed tendons in the right hand. Marcos said Dr. Robert T. Chase of the Stanford Medical Center was expected to arrive Saturday or Sunday.

Tatad recalled seven attempts to kill Marcos since early 1970. "The plot not having succeeded and not having fully terminated, continues," he said.

Further Anti-Marcos Murder Plots Alleged

From News Dispatches

MANILA, Dec. 9—Three men held on suspicion of plotting to kill Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos and his family have warned that there will be more assassination attempts such as the one Thursday against Marcos' wife, the government said here today.

Government spokesman Francisco Tatad told a press conference that 85 persons had been detained for questioning in connection with the alleged "rightist plot."

The spokesman said the three were members of prominent Filipino families, including the grandson of a former president and the nephew of the current vice president.

Tatad said they had signed a voluntary confession which "warned that attempts shall continue."

Mrs. Marcos, 42-year-old former beauty queen and mother of three, had 75 stitches in her hands and arms after Thursday's attack by a bolo-wielding man during an award ceremony. The attacker was shot dead.

An American medical specialist sent by President Nixon to treat Mrs. Marcos arrived in Manila today. Dr. Robert Chase of California's Stanford Medical Center said he examined Mrs. Marcos' wounds and reported she was "resting well."

THE PHILIPPINES

Aquino Rewrites the Script

A television program that Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos, 55, watched last week did not exactly follow the script he had written. Beamed to Manila's Malacañang Palace by closed-circuit TV, the drama was supposed to be an orderly show trial of Marcos' longtime political enemy, former Senator Benigno (Ninoy) Aquino Jr., 41, onetime secretary-general of the Liberal Party. Instead, the President had to watch, presumably in pain and anger, as Aquino turned the trial into an emotional and stunningly effective public challenge to the regime of martial law that Marcos imposed over eleven months ago. Startling the seven army officers who sat as judges of the military tribunal, his voice quavering with emotion, Aquino implored: "I am begging this court to be allowed to speak. I am pleading for my life!"

Aquino, who was charged with illegal possession of firearms, murder, and plotting subversion with Maoist rebels, was not exaggerating; if convicted, he could have been sentenced to execution or life imprisonment. Despite having spent eleven months in prison since his arrest, Aquino looked trim and confident when he took his place in the dock of the courtroom, a converted army lecture hall in Manila's Fort Bonifacio. Instead of trying to answer the specific charges, however, he shrewdly grabbed every opportunity to denounce the proceeding itself as "an unconscionable mockery," clearly aiming his remarks at the 200 newsmen and spectators who jammed the courtroom.

In a foolish tactical error, the prosecutor allowed Aquino's opening written statement to be made part of the

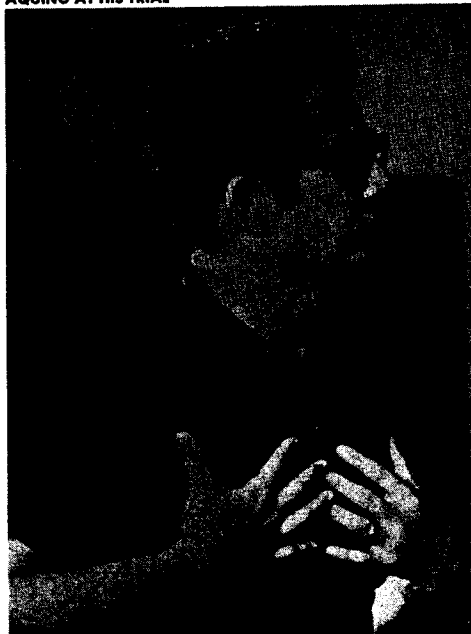
record. It turned out to be a violent attack on Marcos' "new society" as a regime bent on "coercion, violence, human degradation, the total suppression of civil liberties and political processes, and the imprisonment of political enemies." Since the statement had been made in open court, it could therefore be freely reprinted despite martial law. Indeed, thousands of mimeographed copies were soon circulating all over Manila.

To dramatize his defiance of the court, Aquino dismissed his civilian attorneys, asserting: "I will not participate in these proceedings. I am requesting to be taken back to my cell to await your verdict." Last week a verdict of sorts was rendered—not by the befuddled judges, who had temporarily adjourned the trial to rethink their tactics, but by Marcos himself. Evidently unprepared for the fierceness of Aquino's rhetoric or the effectiveness of his unorthodox defense, the President dissolved the military court and called for a five-man committee to "determine whether really there is a reasonable ground" to believe that Aquino committed the offenses for which he was accused. Privately, Justice Department officials concede that some or all of the charges may eventually be dropped.

Although more than 91% of eligible Filipinos voted in favor of Marcos' "new society" in a national referendum last month, there is growing unrest over the continuation of martial law, the so-far unsuccessful military struggle against guerrillas in Mindanao and Sulu, and the prospect of the country's worst rice shortage in years. Quite clearly, the President is worried that the shrewd, ambitious Aquino, a member of one of the country's wealthiest families, might become a symbol of political dissent and persecution. Many Filipinos are well aware that the ex-Senator's grandfather was imprisoned by the U.S. during the abortive Philippine war for independence in 1899, and that his father was jailed by General Douglas MacArthur for collaborating with the Japanese during World War II.

"Don't drive too fast," Aquino told the lieutenant at the wheel of the car that took him back to prison last week. "You might deprive the firing squad of a victim." Apparently, Aquino also is well aware of the political advantages of persecution.

AQUINO AT HIS TRIAL



DOUG HERMAN

Part 2/11/77

American Sentenced in Marcos Plot

From News Dispatches

MANILA, Feb. 10—An American and three Filipino opponents of President Ferdinand Marcos were sentenced to six years imprisonment and fined \$1,333 each today after they admitted plotting to kill Marcos and take over the government.

The American, August McCormick Lehman, 26, of Nashville, Tenn., admitted his participation in the plot although he had previously told Amnesty International that the government had no case against him.

There had been reports during his 4½ years in prison indicating that he had been tortured but special correspondent Bernard Wideman reported that he looked healthy and robust in court today, showing no ill effects from the imprisonment.

Lehman's treatment since his arrest the day after Marcos declared martial law on Sept. 22, 1972, has been unusual for a person accused of so serious a crime.

While he was reportedly kept in a dungeon at first, he was later moved to comfortable quarters and allowed to marry the daughter of an officer in Marcos' personal security forces. The wedding was held at the presidential palace, Marcos' security chief gave

the bride away and the president himself congratulated the groom. Lehman and his wife and baby have been living in a detention house in the officers' section of one of Manila's military camps.

The defendants tried today are among 10 persons, including two other Americans and prominent Filipino political figures, who have been charged with at least seven attempts on Marcos' life and with trying to raise an army of 4,300 men to stage a coup.

The two other Americans and a Briton are being tried in absentia, although the Briton is believed to be dead.

Larry Tractman, described as a California businessman who was to supply the rebels with equipment, and Robert Pincus of Jericho, N.Y., are believed to be living in the United States. There is no extradition treaty between the Philippines and the United States. The Briton involved in the case, Brian Borwick, is believed to have died recently in a Singapore prison.

The others sentenced today along with Lehman were Eduardo Figueras, son of a former mayor of Manila, and businessmen Manuel Crisolgo and Antonio Arvalo. "Now that I have had time to re-

flect on this attempt to overthrow the government the least that I can say is that I was certainly wrong," Lehman told the seven-officer tribunal.

"By admitting my guilt, by admitting my participation in this affair, I accept your judgment and the punishment you deem necessary."

In late 1975 Lehman told Amnesty International that Philippine authorities agreed that they had no charges against him and that he was being held as a material witness.

The sentences imposed today will be reviewed automatically by the chief of staff of the armed forces, the secretary of defense and Marcos.

Defense attorneys said they expected the sentences to be reduced and one of the lawyers noted that the men had spent more than four years in jail that could have credited to their sentences. With time off for good behavior "they'll be out in a few months anyway," he said.

Not before the court today were former newspaper publisher Eugenio Lopez Jr., former senator and presidential candidate Sergio Osmena Jr., the alleged mastermind of the plot, and Osmena's son, Sergio Osmena III. Former senator Osmena is in exile in the United States and is being tried

in absentia. He has called the government charges a "amlicious canard." His son and Lopez had their trials postponed until March 24 because the Supreme Court is considering a petition from them asking that a charge of attempted murder be dropped. They are expected to plead "not guilty."

Following the declaration of martial law, Marcos' brother-in-law took over the Lopez newspaper and one of the presidential advisers took over a Lopez-owned radio-television network.

The prosecution claimed the plot was devised shortly before Marcos suspended the Philippine congress and declared martial law. The defendants were taken into custody in 1972 but formal charges were not filed until last year.

Figueras submitted an affidavit to the court claiming that the group also planned to set fire to government buildings throughout Manila but the martial law decree upset their timetable.

He said the elder Osmena offered \$333 for every building burned but the would-be arsonists were arrested before they could carry out their orders.