



Malacanang Palace An abandoned picnic ground

MANILA, Feb. 25.—The grounds of the Philippine presidential palace looked like an abandoned picnic ground, or a battlefield, today after about 3,000 people affirming loyalty to President Ferdinand Marcos turned up for his official inauguration, reports Reuter.

About 600 people were allowed inside the grounds including several cabinet ministers, officials of the ruling new society movement (KBL) and members of various youth and community groups identified with the Marcos party.

They filled about three-quarters of the spacious ceremonial hall of the Malacanang Palace on red

velvet cushioned benches as Marcos, with his wife Imelda and two daughters beside him, took his oath of office from the Supreme Court Chief Justice, Ramon Aquino.

He is not related to opposition leader Corazon Aquino, who was sworn in a few hours earlier as President.

Outside the Palace, about 2,500 people, mostly from the same citizen groups that were inside, wandered across spacious lawns that until a few days ago had been dotted with carrots, lettuce and other vegetables planted by Mrs. Marcos as an example for her national "self-reliance project."

An earlier story says: Ferdinand Marcos was sworn in as President of the Philippines for a fourth term shortly after opposition leader Corazon Aquino also took her oath of office for the presidency.

The Presidential palace said Marcos was administered the oath of office by Supreme Court

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Picnic ground

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Chief Justice Ramon Aquino. Both Marcos and Corazon Aquino claimed victory in the February 7 election.

Another report says: Airport security men stopped Justice Minister Estelito Mendoza leaving the Philippines today church backed radio Veritas said.

The radio said Mendoza who is also a Provincial Governor and Solicitor-General, was bound for San Francisco.

It quoted security men as saying he was held for about two hours. They gave no reason why he was not allowed to leave.

Airport sources said Foreign Minister Pacifico Castro and Metropolitan Manila Vice-Governor Ismael Mathay left the country today.

'The war is over'

AFP reports: At least 1,000 marines today marched out of the presidential Palace and their commander said that "The war is over" eyewitnesses said.

The Commander Colonel Fortuno said they were returning to their barracks located across the river from the Palace.

Some 200 troops backed up by three armoured personnel carriers, who had been guarding a road leading to the Palace moved back and were chatting with a crowd of about 500 opposition supporters who handed them flowers.

The marines are regarded as the backbone of forces still loyal to President Ferdinand Marcos, under heavy guard at his Palace.

Reuter says: Ferdinand Marcos has lost all access to television in the Philippine capital following today's seizure of commercial channel by troops backing opposition leader Corazon Aquino.

Witnesses said troops supported by a helicopter gunship stormed channel 9, a burst of gunfire from the helicopter hitting the transmission tower and cutting out live pictures from the presidential palace showing Marcos being sworn in as President.

Sin congratulates

AFP adds: Philippine church leader Jaime Cardinal Sin today congratulated the "new government" of Corazon Aquino and said he was praying for the safety of the supporters battling soldiers loyal to President Ferdinand Marcos.

The Manila archbishop issued the statement in a telephone interview aired by a rebel-held television station a few hours after Mr Marcos was officially sworn in as President, and Mrs Aquino was sworn in by her supporters.

AFP from Singapore says: A Muslim pro-autonomy faction which backed Corazon Aquino's campaign for the Philippines presidency said Tuesday it would withdraw its support unless she severed ties with remnants of the administration of President Ferdinand Marcos.

Professor M.Y. Abbas, Political and Foreign Affairs Chairman of the Moro National Liberation Front faction he added by Commander Dimas Pundato, alleged, that Mrs Aquino had been "coopted" by former Marcos Defence Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and Deputy Chief of Staff Fidel Ramos.

In a telephone interview with Agence France-Presse, he said the presence at her said of the two former Marcos men meant that Mrs Aquino "would be only a titular President."