

World news

Marcos struggles to keep power as Reagan calls for resignation

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Soldiers fired on a jeering crowd early today near the palace of Ferdinand Marcos, who struggled desperately to retain his 20-year hold on power that the United States said is no longer rightfully his.

Eight people were wounded in the shooting, and five were injured while trying to flee the gunfire, hospital officials said.

Hundreds of thousands of civilians defied a dusk-to-dawn curfew to form human shields around the suburban camp of military rebels, who proclaimed Corason Aquino president, and around the rebel-held government television station, Channel 4.

Witnesses said masses of people at the television station drove back seven armored per-

sonnel carriers loaded with loyalist soldiers at midnight Monday.

Marcos appealed to civilian loyalists Monday to bring their guns to the capital and protect him. In a broadcast on private Channel 9 television, owned by an associate, he said, "We will defend the republic to the last breath of our life; the last drop of our blood."

Several top government officials resigned Saturday. Some diplomats serving abroad declared allegiance to Aquino, who accuses Marcos of using fraud and violence to win the Feb. 7 presidential election in which she opposed him.

Both Marcos, 68, and Aquino, 53, scheduled inauguration ceremonies for today.

President Reagan's dramatic

request today for Marcos to step down marked a reversal for Reagan, who two weeks earlier said there was a strong two-party system in the Philippines that should be able to function.

A rapid-fire series of events, set in motion by the Feb. 7 election, led the White House to issue a pre-dawn statement, which said: "Attempts to prolong the life of the present regime by violence are futile. A solution to this crisis can only be achieved through a peaceful government."

A Washington congressional source said the United States offered Marcos a U.S. aircraft to use in leaving the Philippines. The State Department and Pentagon had no immediate comment.

Beggs criticizes New NASA chief

NEW YORK (AP) — The departing head of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration says his interim replacement is unqualified to run the agency. The Wall-Street Journal reported today.

"He's not qualified... read his resume," NASA chief James Beggs, who is on leave because of federal fraud charges, said of acting administrator William Graham.

Graham told the Journal he could lead NASA through its "very difficult crisis" caused by the explosion of the space shuttle Challenger.

Beggs took a leave of absence in December after he was indicted on fraud charges unrelated to his NASA post. He was accused of improperly charging the Pentagon for cost overruns while a vice president of General Dynamics.

Beggs told the Journal he planned to resign from NASA soon because it "badly needs a leader." Although he criticized Graham, he said he was not setting any conditions on his replacement.

"I have put no conditions on anything I might do," he said. "Obviously, I'd like to see an experienced, capable individual come in here."

He said Graham had insufficient management experience, the Journal reported.

Graham's name is one of those raised as a possible permanent successor to Beggs.

Eastern Airlines to be bought out by Texas Air

MIAMI (AP) — Racing against strike deadlines from unions and default threats from creditors, Eastern Airlines announced Monday that it would be taken over by aggressive, cost-slashing entrepreneur Frank Lorenzo and his Houston-based Texas Air Corp.

Union officials said they understood that Lorenzo, whose company also operates Continental Airlines and New York Air, would continue Eastern, the nation's third-largest carrier, as a separate airline.

Charles Bryan, president of the International Association of Machinists local that represents 12,000 Eastern workers, sent Lorenzo a telegram offering cooperation.

Bryan, who also sits on Eastern's board of directors, said Chairman Frank Borman told other board members he would resign from the company following their 11:45 p.m. PST vote on Lorenzo's offer. Borman, a former astronaut, has headed the Miami-based carrier since 1975.

Eastern spokesman Glenn Parsons said Borman and other company officials were unlikely to hold a news conference before today. Lorenzo did not return repeated telephone messages.

Major creditors had given Eastern management a Feb. 28 deadline to present a long-term plan to turn around the airline, \$2.5 billion in debt. Ken Mills, spokesman for Chase Manhattan, one of the largest creditors, said it had no comment on the takeover.

Late Sunday, Eastern reached agreement with its 4,200 pilots to avert a strike threatened for Wednesday, but there was confusion over the status of a tentative verbal accord with flight attendants, who could strike March 1.

The Texas Air agreement must be approved by Eastern's creditors, shareholders and federal authorities. A union source and a New York-based airline analyst, both speaking on condition they not be identified, said Lorenzo's effort to buy 51 percent of Eastern stock could trigger a bidding war from other sources.

The stock is reported to be for between \$600 million and \$700 million in cash and securities, the two sources said.


Some union officials and Eastern employees were dismayed at the takeover, citing what one called Lorenzo's "anti-union" reputation.



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