

Hopes of ousting Marcos dim as opposition unity fails

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — A unity bid between Corason Aquino and Salvador Laurel fell apart Sunday, dimming opposition prospects of defeating President Ferdinand E. Marcos in a Feb. 7 special election.

While Laurel's supporters cheered and fireworks exploded at his family compound, the former senator blamed the widow of assassinated opposition leader Benigno Aquino for the collapse of talks that would have put her at the top of the opposition ticket against Marcos.

Instead of accepting Mrs. Aquino's offer to run as her vice presidential candidate on a single ticket, Laurel said he would run on his own for president.

Aquino said she hoped the opposition still would unite behind her and Laurel, and invited him to join in a "grand coalition" ticket.

But fragmenting of the opposition gives Marcos, at least for now, two rivals, each with distinct followings — strengthening his chances of keeping the presidency he has held since 1965.

"I was pleading; I was telling them, let us not destroy ourselves now," Francisco Rodrigo, the chief mediator in opposition unity talks, said in recounting his discussions early Sunday with Laurel and Aquino.

"Marcos already has all the advantages; he has the money, the machinery, the resources, and he is ruthless, and he will cheat and tell the world

he won because his opponents were divided," Rodrigo, a former senator, told The Associated Press.

Marcos' foes still have time to patch the rift and produce a unified ticket. The deadline for filing is Wednesday.

Laurel said he had agreed to run as vice president under Aquino but insisted they use the party banner of his United Nationalist Democratic Organization. He said Aquino first agreed, then changed her mind Sunday.

Aquino said Laurel agreed to run with her under the joint banners of both the United Nationalist group and the People's Fight Party but it was Laurel who changed his mind.

Bombs blamed for Paris store explosions

Associated Press

PARIS — Crudely made firebombs may have caused the explosions in two big department stores filled with Christmas holiday shoppers that injured 39 people, 12 of them seriously, authorities said Sunday.

This led to speculation that the attacks Saturday may have been the work of a disgruntled, or unstable, individual, rather than any known terrorist group.

Both Galeries Lafayette and Printemps, lavishly decorated for the Christmas season, were filled with shoppers when the attacks came shortly before 6 p.m.

The two stores are next to each other on the Boulevard Haussmann in the city's crowded, commercial ninth district, not far from the Paris Opera.

Dr. Francis Roy, who headed the rescue effort, said 25 people were

treated and released following the blasts and 14 remained hospitalized Sunday, all but two of them seriously burned.

Police said claims of responsibility for the blasts included ones allegedly on behalf of the Palestine Liberation Front headed by Mohammed Abbas, also known as Abul Abbas; the Islamic Jihad, or Islamic Holy War Organization; and the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia, known as ASALA.

Five years later

McCartney says he's still in mourning over Lennon's death

Associated Press

LONDON — Paul McCartney said Sunday, on the fifth anniversary of the day John Lennon was killed by a deranged fan in New York City, that he is still mourning the death of his former Beatles songwriting partner.

"I still cannot believe he is dead," McCartney said in a rare television interview.

"I think I would include myself in a kind of top 10 list of people who loved John most," McCartney said, on Independent Television's "Good Morning Britain."

"I was probably more shattered than most people when John died," said McCartney, 43. "I had plenty of sort of personal grief, but I am not very good about public grief."

Lennon was shot outside his apartment in New York on Dec. 8, 1980.

McCartney said there is danger that Lennon, who died at age 40, could be considered a saint by fans who overlook Lennon's faults.

"It is like his Auntie Mame would tell you, he could be naughty as well as good, as any mum or auntie could tell you about their loved ones."

McCartney said he missed Lennon musically. The two were responsible for writing nearly all of the Beatles' tunes from albums such as "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," "Revolver," "Magical Mystery Tour" and "Abbey Road."

"He was definitely the best collaborator I have ever worked

with. . . . He was great, he was smart, and we started off together."

New controversy about the two Beatles' relationship arose after an interview with McCartney was published Nov. 5.

The telephone interview with author Hunter Davis was published in Britain's Woman Magazine four years after the interview was conducted.

It quoted McCartney as describing Lennon as jealous, insecure with women, and a "maneuvering swine" who took credit for songs he did not write.

After the interview was published, McCartney issued a statement saying: "I'd like to make it clear that John Lennon was no angel, but I, like millions of others, loved him dearly."

Fans meet, sing, recall at New York's Strawberry Fields

Associated Press

NEW YORK — They could not be in Strawberry Fields forever, but many at least spent the day there — singing, talking and remembering John Lennon on the fifth anniversary of his murder.

Dozens of fans of the former Beatle came together Sunday at a teardrop-shaped section of Central Park that was dedicated in Lennon's memory Oct. 9, shortly after what would have been his 45th birthday.

Strawberry Fields is on the

edge of the park, and through barren trees Lennon's admirers could see the spot in front of the Dakota apartments where he was shot by Mark David Chapman the night of Dec. 8, 1980.

Chapman is serving a term of 20 years to life at Attica Correctional Facility in upstate New York.

Elliot Mintz, a family spokesman, said Lennon's widow, Yoko Ono, and their 10-year-old son Sean would be in the city Sunday, but declined to say if they would be in their apartment at the Dakota.

Mintz said Ono would use the day for "quiet reflection."

Some of those who gathered Sunday at Strawberry Fields sat on benches and stared.

Most were too young to remember the British rock invasion that brought the Beatles and their music to the United States in 1964.

But their emotion was evident, as young women dropped flowers in the center of a 10-foot, black-and-white starburst mosaic featuring the word "Imagine," the title of Lennon's biggest post-Beatles hit.

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