

Congressman says he'll help recover treasure from Marcos

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — Rep. Stephen Solarz, an outspoken critic of Ferdinand E. Marcos, pledged support Thursday in recovering billions of dollars the former president allegedly plundered from the public treasury.

Solarz met for an hour with Aquino and other officials of the new government. The Democrat from New York told reporters that he had asked how the United States could help but he did not reveal Aquino's reply.

In other developments:

• The chief prosecutor in the Benigno Aquino assassination trial last year acknowledged that Marcos intervened in the case. He called the acquittal of Gen. Fabian C. Ver, the

former armed forces commander, and the other defendants "a failure of justice" that should be nullified.

• Joker Arroyo, President Corason Aquino's executive secretary, said resignations of judges had cleared the way for her to reorganize the judiciary.

• The government news agency reported an aborted plot by Marcos loyalists to commit arson, bombings and murders during the last days of his rule, to be used as a pretext for declaring martial law.

• Marcos and his entourage, including Gen. Ver, fled the country in U.S. Air Force planes Feb. 26.

Solarz said he believed Congress could be persuaded to increase economic and military aid to the Philippines because Americans were impressed by Aquino's popular

support and the peaceful revolution that brought her to power.

"The determination as to what those needs are and how they can be met needs to be made in Manila rather than in Washington," said Solarz, who is chairman of the House subcommittee on Asian affairs and has been a critic of Marcos for years.

He said he discussed Marcos' "hidden wealth" with Aquino and former Sen. Jovito Salonga, chairman of a commission to find ways of recovering it, and promised "our complete cooperation in the effort to facilitate the recovery of these resources."

Salonga has estimated that Marcos, his relatives and cronies stole from \$5 billion to \$10 billion in public funds during his two decades as president.

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Shuttle crash may be result of internal ice

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — Investigators say a puff of steam emerged from Challenger's right booster rocket at ignition, suggesting rainwater collected in a seam, froze and may have forced open critical seals, an industry magazine reported Thursday.

The space shuttle had stood exposed to the elements on the launch pad for 37 days, during which time it was pelted by at least one torrential storm with four inches of rainfall.

The possibility that internal ice in the U-shaped joint triggered the accident is a new avenue of investigation for the presidential investigating commission.

The steam, newly noticed in photographs, emerged at 0.2 seconds after ignition, preceding a puff of black smoke from the booster segment at 0.44 seconds, the magazine Aviation Week and Space Technology says in its March 10 edition.

Experts at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center were asked in an interview February 28 whether anyone had considered that water might have seeped into the joints and turned to ice. Lawrence B. Mulloy, the space agency's manager for booster rockets, dismissed the notion.

AIDS possibly linked to virus found in pigs

Associated Press

NEW YORK — An African virus that causes an AIDS-like illness in pigs may have been present in some American AIDS patients and could be a contributing cause of human AIDS infections, according to a new study.

Evidence of infection with African swine fever virus, or ASFV, was found in nine of 21 American AIDS patients tested, and in only one of 16 healthy Americans, according to a study to be published Saturday in the Lancet, a British medical journal.

If future experiments prove the existence of a link between African swine fever and AIDS, it would mean that doctors now searching for a cure for AIDS are aiming at the wrong target.

The new study challenges volumes of scientific evidence supporting the belief that acquired immune deficiency syndrome is caused solely by a virus most commonly called HTLV-III that was discovered in 1983.

John Beldekas, a researcher at the Boston University School of Medicine and the principal author of the new study, said, "I don't think we're trying to say that HTLV-III is out and ASFV is in" as the cause of AIDS.

Beldekas added, "What we're saying is that AIDS is complicated. It can't be explained solely by HTLV-III."

Flossie Wong-Staal, a molecular

biologist at the National Cancer Institute, where HTLV-III was discovered, said the evidence showing that HTLV-III is the cause of AIDS is as strong as such evidence can be.

"In any other disease where there's a definite link between an agent and a disease, they don't get a better correlation," she said. Furthermore, she said the AIDS virus "does exactly what we would expect in an AIDS patient."

Jane Teas, a former cancer researcher now with Human Ecology Research, a firm she established in Boston, was the first to suggest, in a letter to the Lancet in April 1983, that African swine fever virus might have some link to AIDS. That was when she learned that an epidemic of swine fever had occurred in Haiti at roughly the same time that AIDS was discovered there.

The researchers cannot be certain that they have evidence of African swine fever virus in AIDS patients until more testing is done, Teas said.

William Hess, a microbiologist at the Department of Agriculture's Plum Island Animal Disease Center in New York, has studied African swine fever for more than 30 years and believes that more research should be done.

As of March 3, 1986, AIDS had struck 17,871 people in the United States and claimed 9,463 lives. The disease is most commonly transmitted by sexual contact or sharing of contaminated needles by intravenous drug abusers.

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Sixty students will be selected for each seminar. Applications are due back in the Student Programs Office on March 10.

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