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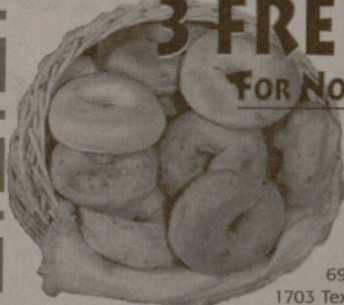
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## American kids escape bloody African uprising

YAMOUSOUKRO, Ivory Coast (AP) — Waving U.S. flags and shouting "Vive la France!" American schoolchildren escaped a rebel-held Ivory Coast city under siege Wednesday, as U.S. special forces and French troops moved in to rescue Westerners caught in the West African nation's bloodiest uprising.

The evacuation came amid concerns that a full-scale battle could envelop Bouake, a central city of half-million residents. "We're running out of everything," said one frightened Ivorian woman, reached by telephone. "We are scared."

U.S. and French troops moved into Bouake Wednesday to safeguard Westerners caught in a six-day uprising after a failed coup Sept. 19 in which at least 270 people died. With insurgents holed up in Bouake and the northern city of Korhogo, President Laurent Gbagbo has pledged an all-out battle to root out rebels in what was once West Africa's most stable and prosperous country.

The 191 Americans evacuat-

ed from the school were escorted by the French military to an airfield in Yamoussoukro, where U.S. C-130 airplanes waited for them to Ghana Thursday morning, Pentagon officials said.

The children were American flags out of car windows as the convoy headed safely down the region's main road. "We're very happy to be off campus," one girl said as the convoy swept past.

U.S. special forces sent out of two C-130 cargo planes that touched down in the Ivory Coast at mid-afternoon from a staging point in neighboring Ghana. Plane ramps came down and U.S. forces secured the area of the forest-lined road in Yamoussoukro, clearing a way for Humvees that were rolling out.

American soldiers hunched over duffel bags and metal boxes, idly set up a post at the base for French troops that arrived earlier to move in the behalf of Yamoussoukro's citizens. American officials would not say what the soldiers were going to do next.

## Support within NATO for stand on Iraq is growing

WARSAW, Poland (AP) — U.S. Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld expressed satisfaction Wednesday with growing behind-the-scenes support within NATO for Washington's tough stand on Iraq, but deep differences remained with some allies on how to deal with Saddam Hussein.

Sparring between Germany and the United

action. He insisted President Bush has made no decision on an attack and is still working through the United Nations to find a solution.

But Rumsfeld said a number of nations offered their backing after he and CIA Deputy Director John McLaughlin briefed NATO defense ministers Tuesday on the gravity of the threat.

*"There is a huge premium on alliance"*

...tions that Iraq has stockpiled chemical and biological weapons and is trying to develop nuclear arms.

But German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, fresh from

led to the worst U.S.-German rift in decades — a dispute that has raised concern among NATO countries about the unity of the 53-year-old alliance.

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