

Rebel tribes gain ground in Zaire

KINSHASA, Zaire (AP) — Rebel tribesmen were reported gaining ground Wednesday in southern Zaire, stranding 2,500 foreigners behind their lines, but American officials said a surprise ground-and-air rescue mission mounted by a U.S. firm managed to evacuate most Americans from the embattled area.

In this capital city, more than 100,000 dancing and chanting Zaireans rallied in a stadium in support of Pres. Mobutu Sese Seko's pro-West government and to denounce alleged Cuban and Soviet support for the rebels.

The central government and rebel invaders accused each other of murdering whites in the war zone.

"Foreigners are being hunted in Kolwezi," Foreign Minister Henri Simonet told the Belgian Parliament in Brussels. He said this was the last message Belgian officials received from the rebel-held town in this central African nation's southeastern copper belt.

He urged Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim of the United Nations to take action to aid civilians caught in the fighting.

A United Nations spokesman in New

York said Waldheim was in touch with various sources to get foreigners out of the area "on humanitarian grounds."

Belgian Foreign Ministry spokesman Alfred Cahen described the 2,000 Belgians, 400 French citizens and assorted other foreigners in the Kolwezi area as hostages of the rebels.

The Kinshasa government dropped several hundred paratroopers around Kolwezi earlier this week to join ground forces in a drive against the rebels. The Zairean news agency AZAP said the paratroopers recaptured the Kolwezi airport Wednesday after

three hours of heavy fighting.

There has been no word on military casualties.

Various reports from diplomats here and from Belgian sources said between five and nine Europeans have been killed in the Kolwezi area — apparently all Belgians, except for one Italian.

In a statement issued in Brussels, the rebel Congolese National Liberation Front denied its forces had killed foreigners in the five-day-old invasion, said they were protecting civilians and blamed any civilian deaths on "barbaric" government forces.

World at a glance

From Associated Press reports

Police find Chaplin's body

LAUSANNE, Switzerland — The body of Charlie Chaplin, stolen from its grave 76 days ago in a macabre theft that seemed to have stumped international investigators, was found Wednesday in a shallow hole in a cornfield near Lake Geneva and the two alleged grave robbers were arrested.

Authorities said they picked up the pair — a Pole and a Bulgarian — after they allegedly called the Chaplin family lawyer demanding a ransom for the return of the remains of the famed comedian.

Examining Magistrate Jean-Daniel Tenthorey said the call was traced, the two men were tracked down Tuesday and the body, still in its oak coffin, was found early Wednesday near Villeneuve, a small town at the eastern tip of Lake Geneva.

FDA recalls Coca-Cola packs

WASHINGTON — The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced the recall today of 16,000 six-packs of Coca-Cola distributed in Oregon, Washington and possibly Alaska.

The 10-ounce bottle produced by Pacific Coca-Cola Bottling Co. in Bellevue, Wash., contained foreign material identified as paraffin lubricant floating in the soda, the agency said.

FDA spokeswoman Nancy Glick said the company estimates "little, if any," of the contaminated Coke bearing lot nos. VMC 10 and VMC 15 stamped on the crown in ink remain on the market.

House approves budget

WASHINGTON — The House today approved a congressional budget allowing for a tax cut of \$19.4 billion and projecting a \$50.9 billion federal deficit for the next fiscal year.

The 201-198 House vote was the final action on the budget resolution, which now will serve as a guideline until Congress adopts a second, binding budget resolution in September. The Senate had approved the preliminary resolution Monday.

The resolution calls for revenues of \$447.9 billion and spending of \$498.8 billion.

Civilian convoy rescues Americans in Zaire war

WASHINGTON (AP) — A civilian rescue operation plucked most of the Americans from Zaire's battle-scarred Shaba province Wednesday, and Pentagon sources said it was unlikely U.S. paratroopers would be sent to rescue the 11 persons still trapped there.

The rescue convoy was organized by Morrison-Knudson, a Boise, Idaho firm which is building an electric transmission line from a dam at Inga on the country's

west coast to Kolwezi in the southeast.

Without encountering fire, the convoy of trucks and helicopters reached a compound eight miles from the rebel-held town of Kolwezi on Wednesday morning, State Department spokesman Hodding Carter reported in Washington. He said the convoy took 65 Morrison-Knudson employees and dependents out by truck and rescued another 12 by helicopter.

Left behind were 11 Americans

caught in the midst of renewed fighting in which some 4,000 exiled Lunda tribesmen from Angola crossed northern Zambia and seized Kolwezi, 25 miles from the Zambian border.

Nonetheless, Defense Department sources here said it was "highly unlikely that Army paratroopers, still on alert Wednesday, would be sent to Africa. A Pentagon source said "the situation seems to sorting itself out."

S.S. tax cut stifled; Ullman defies party

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House Ways and Means Committee reversed itself Wednesday and stifled an election-year effort to roll back Social Security taxes for 106 million workers and their employers.

"I have decided that I cannot live with a vote" to undo the tax increases enacted last December, said Rep. Al Ullman, D-Ore., chairman. His position, and the committee's turn-about,

defies a mandate from the House Democratic Caucus, which last month instructed the panel to write a tax-cut bill.

Ullman had cast the tie-breaker last week when the committee voted 19-18 for a rollback. He and four other members switched their positions Wednesday, resulting in a 21-16 vote against a reduction.

Ullman said that vote probably settled the question for the year. That would mean higher Social Security taxes starting next Jan. 1.

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