

Belgian soldiers to aid in rescue

KINSHASA, Zaire (AP) — Belgian paratroops flew to Zaire Thursday to mount a joint Western rescue mission for 2,000 of their countrymen, hundreds of other Europeans and 14 Americans isolated and threatened by the rebel invasion of Shaba Province.

Plane after plane packed with crack airborne troops took off from

Brussels' military airport Thursday afternoon on the 5,000-mile journey to this Central African nation, a former Belgian colony. The flight by the U.S.-made C-130 transports was expected to take at least 10 hours.

An estimated 1,750 paratroops and other Belgian military personnel had been alerted to take part in

the intercontinental operation.

It was reported unofficially in Corsica that three planes carrying 250 French Legion paratroopers had taken off from that Mediterranean island bound for Africa.

In Washington, a State Department official who asked not to be identified said the United States would not supply troops or planes for the mission but might provide some lesser logistical support. About 1,500 U.S. Army airborne soldiers remained on alert at Fort Bragg, N.C., however.

The British also were involved in the planning for the rescue effort, but it was not known what role they might play.

Belgian officials reported receiving a single radio report from the battle area saying only: "There is no more fighting in Kolwezi."

Kolwezi, a copper-mining town at the center of the rebel-held area of southern Zaire, is where most of the 2,500 foreigners have been stranded since the invasion last Friday.

A Belgian Foreign Ministry spokesman said the broadcast could not be reconfirmed. It was not known whether it meant that either the rebels or government troops had withdrawn, or that a

truce had been arranged.

The Belgian paratroopers were reported headed for Kinshasa and then on to the government-held air base at Kamina, 130 miles north of Kolwezi.

The last battle report by the pro-West Zaire government claimed its forces had recaptured Kolwezi's airport Wednesday. The rebels said they still held the town and the area around it for nine miles in all directions.

At least 11 Europeans — one Italian, the rest apparently Belgians — have been reported killed in the Kolwezi area since the Angola-based rebels struck last Friday, infiltrating through northern Zambia and quickly seizing Kolwezi, a town of 100,000 people.

Most of the Americans in the embattled area were rescued Wednesday.

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World at a glance

From Associated Press reports

Special vault set for Chaplin

LAUSANNE, Switzerland — Charlie Chaplin's body will be reburied under a "strong, solid" protective vault built around his grave to ensure that the remains of the famed film comedian will not be disturbed again, authorities said Thursday.

The body, which was found Wednesday buried in a cornfield after it had been snatched by grave robbers in a midnight theft 2½ months ago, will be placed in the same village cemetery of Corsier-sur-Vevey where the comedian had been buried Dec. 27.

Police said the body, found in its 300-pound oak coffin, had not been touched.

Dissident Orlov gets 12 years

MOSCOW — A Soviet court Thursday sentenced dissident physicist Yuri Orlov to 12 years' loss of freedom and police briefly detained Nobel Peace Prize winner Andrei D. Sakharov with his wife after they hit officers who barred them from the courthouse.

Sakharov, also a physicist, is the most prominent Russian dissident. Orlov's was the first of an expected round of trials of Moscow dissenters, with the apparent aim of putting down organized criticism of the Soviet government.

In Washington, the House passed by a 299-0 vote and sent to the Senate a resolution asking the Soviet Union to free the 53-year-old Orlov.

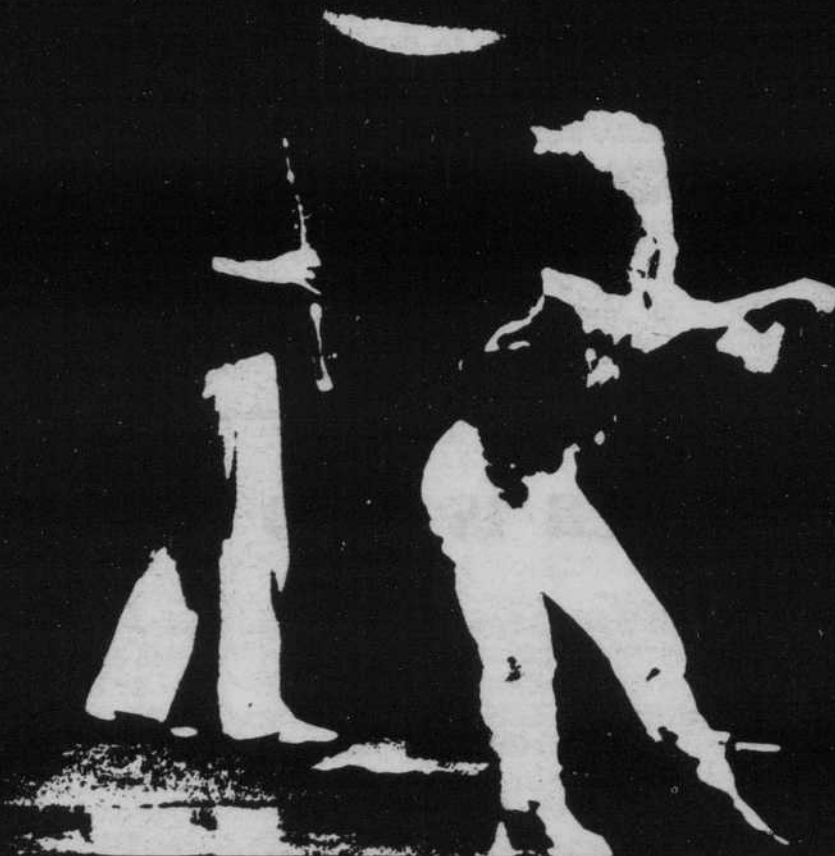
S. Korea aid block stifled

WASHINGTON — House leaders were blocked Thursday from rushing approval of a resolution threatening to cut off U.S. aid to South Korea until it allows questioning of a former ambassador accused of influence buying in Congress.

Special counsel Leon Jaworski had asked for approval of the resolution in an effort to counteract House rejection last week of a non-binding proposal to reduce U.S. aid to South Korea.

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Conservatives pledge tough SALT battle

WASHINGTON (AP) — A leading conservative organization, undaunted by its failure to defeat the Panama Canal treaties, announced plans Thursday to wage an even greater offensive against the arms limitation pact (SALT) being negotiated with the Soviet Union.

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