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# U.S. helicopters evacuate Americans from Liberia

MONROVIA, Liberia (AP)—The first U.S. helicopters flew into Monrovia on Tuesday and began evacuating Americans from the chaotic capital, in the grips of fierce rebel fighting.

Twenty-six Americans, including two children, were on the first flight to arrive safely late Tuesday in neighboring Freetown, Sierra Leone—a two-hour flight from Monrovia—U.S. officials there said.

The fighting that broke out Saturday was the worst in Monrovia since 1993. Liberia, which was founded in 1847 by freed American slaves, has been wracked by civil war since 1990, the fighting broken occasionally by truces that collapse within a matter of weeks.

Late Tuesday, State Department officials said they expect the helicopters to continue shuttling Americans out of Liberia. There are 470 Americans holed up in the West African country.

But, one official said, "We want to avoid use of the word evacuation." The Pentagon is concerned that an unstable situation could develop if at this point there is a formal announcement of an evacuation, the official said.

Some 15,000 people, many of them

foreigners, have crowded into a U.S. Embassy compound since Monday seeking safety from the worst fighting in three years.

State Department spokesman Glyn Davies said U.S. helicopters were ready to take out all of the Americans who wish to leave Monrovia. The helicopters can carry about 25 passengers each.

"The several helicopters that are there, that have brought in the military assessment team, will not go back to Freetown empty if we have anything to do about it," Davies said. "We want to make sure that American citizens are given the opportunity on those helicopters to leave the country if they wish."

U.S. Embassy spokesman Dudley Sims had no details on how any further evacuation would be carried out except to say it could take several days.

In Freetown, more than 100 U.S. special forces from the Air Force and Army—some from Germany, some from other places—and at least four MH-53 helicopters were spotted at the Lungi international airport. The airport seemed largely taken over by the U.S. troops, which totaled about 200.

A couple of Humvees, C-130 cargo planes and one C-141 cargo plane were also seen at the airport outside

Freetown, where the first Americans to be evacuated landed without incident Tuesday night.

All the soldiers were in camouflage, dressed in flak jackets and carrying maps of Monrovia.

Navy Cmdr. Bob Anderson, a spokesman for the U.S. European Command in Germany who is with the evacuation team in Freetown, said the airlift would continue throughout the night and that the Americans would be flown to Dakar, Senegal, because there were few accommodations available in Freetown.

The fighting in Monrovia erupted Saturday, when rebel factions and government troops engaged in fierce battles for portions of the city. The conflict among seven rebel factions has killed more than 150,000 people and left at least half the country's 2.3 million residents homeless in six years of war.

Rebels were reportedly holding hundreds of foreigners, including West African peacekeepers, at a military barracks in the capital. Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon said about 110 of the 470 Americans in Liberia are at the U.S. Embassy compound and the others are at various compounds elsewhere in the capital.

## Oklahoma City bombing lawyer seeks evidence of international conspiracy

DENVER (AP) — Timothy McVeigh's lawyer asked for access to government intelligence files Tuesday on the Ku Klux Klan, European neo-Nazis and Midwest terrorist groups, hoping to show the Oklahoma City bombing was the product of a far-flung conspiracy.

But a federal prosecutor insisted investigators have no evidence the bombing that killed 168 people and injured more than 500 others was the work of foreign governments or terrorists.

McVeigh and co-defendant Terry Nichols arrived at a courthouse secured by police convoys and electronic scanners. It was the first hearing in the case in Denver since a federal judge moved the bombing trial from Oklahoma.

Prosecutor Beth Wilkinson acknowledged the government at first put intelligence agencies to work on international angles to the bombing of Oklahoma City's federal building.

But she said that within two days of the attack, "the government learned through the FBI's diligent investigation that the bombing had been carried out by a U.S. citizen."

"As of today, we have no information showing anyone but Mr. Nichols and Mr. McVeigh were the masterminds of this bombing," she said.

Stephen Jones, McVeigh's attorney, said if that is true, it is because intelligence agencies quit searching after McVeigh's arrest.

The attorneys argued over a defense request for classified information from the CIA and other government agencies about their brief search for a foreign culprit. Jones says the government has intelligence data on neo-Nazis in Britain and Germany; terrorist groups in Sudan, Iraq, Iran and Northern Ireland; and the Aryan Nation, The Order and other white supremacist groups.

He also is seeking purported statements from witnesses whose descrip-

tion of the suspects did not match McVeigh. A list of 176 requested items was submitted to U.S. District Judge Richard Matsch on Monday.

In other developments:

● Prosecutors agreed to turn over letters from FBI agent Frederic Whitehurst, who tested McVeigh's clothes for traces of explosives. Whitehurst has claimed that investigators faked evidence in the bombing case.

● Attorneys for both Nichols and McVeigh said they would seek separate trials. Jones said the defenses for the two men would be different. A hearing on the matter is set for Aug. 27.

● Wilkinson acknowledged defense assertions that "inert explosives" were being stored in the federal building at the time of the attack. She said the explosives were being used as training devices by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms and were not armed at the time.

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