

104th Congress, 2d Session - - - - - House Document 104-220

STATUS REPORT ON ACTIVITIES IN BANGUI, CENTRAL  
AFRICAN REPUBLIC

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COMMUNICATION

FROM

**THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES**

TRANSMITTING

NOTIFICATION THAT ON MAY 19, 1996, HEAVY FIGHTING BROKE OUT BETWEEN GOVERNMENT FORCES AND MUTINOUS TROOPS IN THE CAPITAL CITY OF BANGUI, CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC AND THAT ON MAY 20, 1996, THE DEPLOYMENT OF U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL WAS ORDERED TO CONDUCT THE EVACUATION FROM THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC OF PRIVATE U.S. CITIZENS AND CERTAIN U.S. GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES



MAY 23, 1996.—Referred to the Committee on International Relations and ordered to be printed

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THE WHITE HOUSE,  
Washington, May 23, 1996.

Hon. NEWT GINGRICH,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: On May 19, 1996, heavy fighting broke out between government forces and mutinous troops in the capital city of Bangui, Central African Republic. Early reports suggested that some 200–500 renegade soldiers were firing weapons, including rockets and artillery, and that they had called for troops from outside the capital to join them in the mutiny. During the fighting, prison guards reportedly abandoned their posts and prisoners were observed loitering around the prison. Although neither the American Embassy nor American citizens have been directly targeted, heavy fighting has been reported around the American Embassy, which has sustained some damage from stray rounds. At one point, government forces indicated an intention to assault a rebel stronghold very near the Embassy, but were dissuaded by the Ambassador.

On May 20, due to the rapidly deteriorating security situation and the resultant threat to American citizens and the Embassy, I ordered the deployment of U.S. military personnel to provide enhanced security for the American Embassy in Bangui and to conduct the evacuation from the Central African Republic of private U.S. citizens and certain U.S. Government employees. Approximately 32 U.S. Marines entered the capital city in the early morning hours on May 21 and immediately took up positions in and around the American Embassy compound. They also deployed to the international airport in order to assist in processing evacuees and act as liaison with French military forces already positioned there. Evacuation operations began later that day, involving a U.S. KC-130 cargo aircraft operating into Yaounde, Cameroon. Further evacuation flights are planned. Additional U.S. forces may also be deployed in order to provide a means of safe passage for evacuees to the airport and to provide additional security at the American Embassy if required.

The marines involved in this operation are from the Marine Expeditionary Unit currently operating off Liberia. Although U.S. forces are equipped and prepared to defend American lives and property, I do not anticipate that they will become involved in hostilities. U.S. forces will redeploy as soon as evacuation operations are complete and enhanced security at the American Embassy is no longer required.

I have taken this action pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct the foreign relations of the United States and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution. I

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appreciate the support of the Congress in this action to protect American citizens and the American Embassy in Bangui.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

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