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# U.S. Plane SFChronicle Shelled at

## Phnom Penh

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Rebel artillery shelling Phnom Penh airport yesterday hit an American plane for the first time after the DC-8 cargo jet landed with a load of rice.

U.S. officials halted the emergency airlift for the rest of the day, but the flights resumed this morning, an American Embassy spokesman said.

Government troops launched a three-pronged armor-backed operation against the "rocket belt" northwest of the airfield.

Field reports said about 1000 troops backed by more than 70 armored personnel carriers moved into the Kambol area just northwest of the airport late yesterday and were expected to push on the suspected insurgent rocket and artillery sites during the day today.

The "rocket belt" is about five miles northwest of Pochentong airfield. Military sources say the operation is aimed at pushing the insurgent fire out of range.

No injuries were reported among the crew of the World Airways plane hit yesterday. Diplomatic sources said it returned to Saigon's Tan Son Nhut air base with only minor damage.

Meanwhile, two U.S. Marine liaison officers arrived in Phnom Penh to coordinate evacuation plans for 400 Americans in the beleaguered city — if it becomes necessary.

A helicopter carrier with about 800 Marines aboard is cruising near the Gulf of Thailand to help in any evacuation.

Airport sources said two persons on the ground were killed and more than 20 wounded as more than 50 rockets and shells struck the airport area.

An airlift of fuel and ammunition was started five months ago with U.S. funds and civilian American crews in an attempt to help President Lon Nol's troops hold off the Khmer Rouge forces closing in on the city.

(For the Washington reaction, see Page 26.)

*Associated Press*