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## French Reinforcements Arrive in Ivory Coast

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast, Dec. 28 (Reuters) — Hundreds of French reinforcement troops landed in Ivory Coast today, as rebel leaders warned that if France wanted a war here in its former colony, it would get one.

The French troop-landing ship Foudre docked in Abidjan, the main city, after a 10-day voyage from France with about 20 trucks, a dozen jeeps, more than 30 light armored vehicles and 5 helicopters.

The reinforcements raise France's force in this West African country to about 2,500 troops. It is France's biggest intervention force on the continent since the 1980's when it sent 3,000 soldiers to Chad to halt a Libyan-backed uprising.

"There are hundreds of soldiers, mostly paratroopers," said a French Army spokesman, Benoit Suire, on board the Foudre. "There will be two kinds of mission — one to the border and cease-fire lines, while the other stays in Abidjan."

The civil war began in this once stable nation on Sept. 19, when there was a failed coup by soldiers. The uprising led to four weeks of fighting that left hundreds of people dead, and the rebels continue to control the largely Muslim north.

The main rebel group signed a truce in mid-October, but peace talks in Togo made little headway since then. Last month, two new rebel factions not bound by the truce emerged in the west.

French soldiers in Ivory Coast were originally ordered to protect the 20,000 French citizens here. France's involvement broadened as its troops clashed with the Western splinter rebel groups, which are believed to include foreign fighters.

One of the new groups, the Ivorian Popular Movement of the Far West, has clashed with French troops three times. A spokesman for the faction said today that he could not rule out more confrontations with French.

"We will fight to defend our area," said the spokesman, Felix Doh. He contended that France was taking sides, helping government forces and mercenaries he said had been hired by President Laurent Gbagbo.

"If France wants a war, France will get a war," Mr. Doh said.

Foreign Legion paratroopers repulsed a rebel column a week ago using heavy weapons on a dirt road near the western town of Duekoue, killing six. In the latest fighting, on Friday, a group of about 30 rebels attacked a small French patrol just north of the junction town Duekoue.