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With few exceptions, the 24-hour strike called by the Civic Opposition Democratic Alliance (ADOC) for May 17 to coincide with the Organization of American States emergency meeting to discuss the Panamanian crisis was described as a failure, or that it received much less support than similar opposition strikes organized last year. An estimated 90% of manufacturing and retail establishments opened for business as usual. Buses and taxis were on the streets, and most of the 140,000 government employees were on the job. Among businesses that closed for the day were beer breweries, auto dealerships, and Panamanian outlets of US chains, such as McDonald's, Dairy Queen and Kentucky Fried Chicken. According to Copley News Service, most of the nation's 118 banks were open, but few tellers showed up for work. Merchants interviewed by AP said sales were down since few customers made an appearance. AP said there were no reported incidents of violence. Ricardo Arias Calderon, ADOC candidate for first vice president on May 7, told Copley News Service that despite the opposition's efforts to avoid confrontations, two minor clashes between troops and opposition supporters erupted in Panama City, and at least three persons were arrested. Many Panamanian opposition spokespersons said government threats against business owners and merchants were responsible for the failure of the strike. According to Notimex and AP, government officials threatened to revoke the licenses of distributors of "public services" such as foodstuffs, medicines, transportation and fuel if they failed to open for business on Wednesday. The opposition also called for people to demonstrate at noon in their own neighborhoods in Panama City to "demonstrate their solidarity with the Organization of American States." Most neighborhoods, however, were silent. Notimex reported that many owners of small shops and plants asserted that they would not support "the entrepreneurial political strike." The strike, they said, was promoted by "interests" who were committed to promoting confrontation and with this, subsequent invasion by the US. Panamanian journalist Luis Restrepo, in an interview with Notimex on Wednesday, said "total stability" prevailed throughout the country, and that the strike organizers' plan to "justify a US invasion" on grounds of ending violence in Panama had failed. Luis Gaspar Suarez, leader of the pro-government Revolutionary Panamenista Party, told Notimex that the strike was a total failure. Consequently, he said, the attempt to replace political and diplomatic measures with military force was forestalled. According to Gaspar, "In the OAS, it has been recognized that the opposition cannot do anything by itself, and would need the support of the US to achieve its objectives." At an afternoon press conference, Guillermo Ford, second vice presidential candidate on the ADOC ticket in the May 7 election, said: "Frankly, I'm not satisfied with the reaction of the people. I thought people would express their dissatisfaction in a harsher way." Opposition presidential candidate Guillermo Endara declared the strike a "total success." The businesses which opened for the day, he said, did so only because of government threats. Next, Endara said he discussed plans for the strike in a "five-to-10 minute " telephone conversation with President Bush on the evening of May 16. Arias Calderon asserted that 85% of shops and business establishments had joined the strike. On Wednesday afternoon, the pro-government Labor Party proposed negotiations between the opposition, the government party coalition, and the Defense Forces. Arias Calderon said the government does not have a civilian sector and any negotiations must be with the military. (Basic data from Notimex, AFP, AP, 05/17/89; Copley News Service, Xinhua, New York Times, 05/18/89)