

8-16-1989

Panama: U.S. Marines Deployed To Force Release Of Soldiers Detained By Panamanian Defense Forces

Deborah Tyroler

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/noticen>

Recommended Citation

Tyroler, Deborah. "Panama: U.S. Marines Deployed To Force Release Of Soldiers Detained By Panamanian Defense Forces." (1989).
<https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/noticen/3266>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Latin America Digital Beat (LADB) at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in NotiCen by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact amywinter@unm.edu.

Panama: U.S. Marines Deployed To Force Release Of Soldiers Detained By Panamanian Defense Forces

by Deborah Tyroler

Category/Department: General

Published: Wednesday, August 16, 1989

On Aug. 11, dozens of Marines and vehicles were deployed in a Panama City neighborhood to force the release of six US military police detained by the Panamanian Defense Forces (PDF). According to AFP, about 100 Marines, 20 M-113 military vehicles and several armored vehicles cordoned off some 13 km. of the capital's Curundu district for about four hours. PDF Maj. Carlos Saldana told reporters that Panamanian units detained two civilian vehicles carrying "US paramilitaries armed with M-16 rifles." Saldana said that when Panamanian forces stopped the two cars, the armed occupants fled to a semi-forested area, "where they called for the reinforcements, which immediately arrived." Saldana said the incident started when "American troops went around in civilian clothes, with their weapons, riding in private vehicles in violation" of the Panama Canal treaties. He added, "No country in the world can accept that units, claiming to be part of an army, move in within its territory armed and in civilian clothes. If they tried to do this in any other nation they would be killed like common muggers, like a common thief." The Southern Command issued a statement saying the Panamanian action forced US troops "to secure the area to enforce (the Americans') rights of free movement provided by the Panama Canal Treaty." The news release said the PDF had detained four vehicles full of military policemen. The release said the action was "unjustified" and that the Command had deployed several armored vehicles, supported by helicopters, in the area. "The vehicles were freed after US military officers discussed the situation with officers of the Defense Forces," according to the Southern Command. The incident on Friday was resolved after two hours of negotiations between Panamanian officials and US Col. Arnie Rossi, deputy chief of the Southern Command. Earlier in the week, US troops surrounded a naval base and arrested two Panamanian police officers. The US soldiers were released, as were the two police officers. The Southern Command's news release said the area is shared by forces of the two countries. Saldana said it has been an exclusively Panamanian military zone for several years. On Aug. 10, some 1,000 US troops conducted military maneuvers near Panamanian military bases. (Basic data from AP, AFP, 08/11/89)

-- End --