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Deborah Tyroler

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## **Panama: High School Students Demonstrate, Attempt To Set Fire To Government Buildings**

*by Deborah Tyroler*

*Category/Department: General*

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On Aug. 14, pro-government newspaper La Republica reported that high school students burned government vehicles and attempted to set government buildings on fire in Colon, 130 km. northeast of the capital. Police dispersed about 500 students with teargas and birdshot. The protest was called in response to threats by the Education Ministry to close schools where demonstrations occurred, said La Republica. On Monday, high schools were reopened in Panama City and Colon after being closed last week following the death of a student during a protest against the Organization of American States (OAS). La Republica accused the opposition Christian Democratic Party (PDC) of "stirring up disturbances" in Chiriqui, some 450 km. northwest of Panama City. PDC vice president Guillermo Cochez denied the charge and denounced weekend arrests of PDC general secretary Ivan Romero, legal advisor Ralph de Lima and a student activist whose name he did not disclose. In a report by the Panamanian Broadcasting Corporation on Monday night, Education Minister Juan Bosco Bernal announced that one secondary school in Colon, and two in Chiriqui province had been closed indefinitely because of disturbances. (Basic data from AFP, 08/14/89; Xinhua, 08/15/89)

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