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Panama: U.S. Military Exercises Continue

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On Sept. 14, US troops under the Southern Command took strategic sites in the Amador Causeway area southwest of the capital in maneuvers that involved 350 soldiers, four landing craft, 17 armored tanks and undetermined number of helicopters, according to military sources. Military exercises have been constant in the last several days. US troops also occupied positions Thursday on Perico island where Panama's elite troops are located. On Sept. 13, the US Army conducted an exercise involving a mock evacuation of 200 students in the city of Colon, backed by three helicopters and an A-37 fighter plane. The maneuvers, employing 100 soldiers from the Ninth Combat Regiment from Fort Ord, Ca., consisted of evacuating the Coco Solo secondary school in the Panama Canal area because of a supposed flood. The four-hour exercise was designed to transport people to US military installations in the event that land routes are closed, according to the Southern Command. The students were taken from the school to a landing craft, protected by dozens of soldiers armed with M-16 assault rifles and M-60 machine guns. (Basic data from AFP, Xinhua, 09/14/89)

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