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Guatemala: More Rumors Of Attempted Coup

by Deborah Tyroler

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On the evening of Sept. 27, large numbers of Guatemalan troops were on the move, while rumors of an attempted coup circulated throughout the country. In a statement to the press Sept. 28, presidential spokesperson Claudia Arenas insisted that "nothing is happening." She said infantry and air force troops were merely engaged in night-time maneuvers, "part of normal training exercises." Next, Arenas said the proximity of troop movements close to the residence of Defense Minister Gen. Hector Gramajo was purely "coincidental." President Vinicio Cerezo was in New York at the time, attending the 44th UN General Assembly. In the attempted coup on May 9 this year, rebellious soldiers surrounded the Gramajo's residence, and held his wife and children captive for a short time. The May rebellion was the second such event during Cerezo's administration. Political violence in Guatemala has escalated in the past four months. In the next few days, military authorities are to pass sentence against the nine officers accused of participating in the failed May 9 coup. (Basic data from Notimex, 09/28/89)

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