



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on February 1, 2013

Military Drills and Black Helicopters in U.S. Cities Spark Panic

A series of recent military exercises in major cities including Miami and Houston have alarmed residents and even local officials, many of whom were reportedly unaware that the drills would be taking place in their jurisdictions. The Obama administration's controversial "urban-warfare" scenarios included low-flying black helicopters firing blanks out of machine guns, heavily armed troops rappelling onto buildings, and more.



More than a few commentators have expressed concerns about the true purpose of the training exercises — especially in light of [troubling anti-constitutional political developments in Washington, D.C.](#), and the [increasingly unstable economy](#). However, authorities assured media outlets that there was no cause for alarm and that the drills were just "routine" operations to keep American forces ready for urban warfare.

The most recent military exercises in urban areas were held this week in Texas — one over Houston and another in Galveston. In southeast Houston, U.S. Army Special Operations forces working with other agencies used unmarked military helicopters to "take over" a former local high school in the area as heavily armed men in fatigues ran around firing what most frightened residents assumed were live rounds.

"When you see this, you think the worst. When you hear this, you think the worst," area resident Frances Jerrals [told](#) a local ABC affiliate after witnessing the highly controversial exercise. "I felt like I was in a warzone. ... It was nonstop. I was terrified." Other residents who spoke with reporters expressed similar sentiments, and emergency services reportedly responded to multiple reports of gun fire throughout the operation.

Police officials later apologized for not warning people about the exercise, though the Army claimed it had at least notified the city's public safety director. Still, local authorities, including the city council and the mayor, were never informed of the plans. "They should have notified us on this magnitude. They should have let somebody know," [complained](#) Houston Council Member Wanda Adams, who represents the district where the drill took place. Authorities also refused to tell reporters exactly what they were doing, according to local news reports.

In Galveston, meanwhile, residents suffered from a similar simulated military invasion by U.S. Army Special Operations forces working with other agencies; although there, at least, citizens were given advance warning in news reports. According to local media, some 80 soldiers and an unknown number of law enforcement agents firing "simulated ammunition" were involved in the "urban combat" operations. A military spokesman attempted to justify the scheme in a statement e-mailed to reporters.

"We were invited by the city of Galveston to conduct joint training exercises to enhance the effectiveness of both services in order to better protect the residents of Galveston," [claimed](#) Army spokesman Sgt. 1st Class Michael Noggle without touching on [posse comitatus](#) — legal restrictions on



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the domestic use of the armed forces. “The purpose of the realistic urban training is to give our Special Operators an opportunity to hone their skills in a controlled, but unfamiliar, realistic urban environment that cannot be replicated with the bare-boned facades found on military installation ranges.”

Before simulating “urban warfare” in Texas, the military was also conducting similar drills in Miami, Florida. Multiple videos have emerged online, some from [news agencies](#), of U.S. military Black Hawk helicopters swarming around downtown last week — similar to late-night drills conducted in the city in 2011 without warning that left thousands of residents terrified. Prior to the latest exercises on January 24, however, local authorities issued a statement urging locals not to be alarmed.

“This is routine training conducted by military personnel designed to ensure the military’s ability to operate in urban environments, prepare forces for upcoming overseas deployments, and meet mandatory training certification requirement,” local police claimed in the statement cited in news reports, adding that the locations and times “were carefully selected to minimize negatively impacting the citizens of the City of Miami/Miami-Dade County and their daily routines.”

Still, more than a few residents in the area panicked during the drills. “I heard the machine gun fire and then I hit the deck,” [said](#) Josh Epperson, an artist who was visiting Miami and captured video footage of black military helicopters flying over the freeway firing blanks out of machine guns. “I didn’t know what to expect, and it was one of the loudest things I’d ever heard.”

While the frequency and intensity of such operations have been increasing in recent years, similar controversial military exercises on American soil are nothing new. In fact, as far back as the 1990s, U.S. military personnel have been [training with foreign troops serving various governments](#) inside the United States in [exercises simulating citizen disarmament and other operations](#).

More recently, the Obama administration even invited “Airborne Assault” terror troops from Russia to train on U.S. soil in Colorado last year. “The Russian soldiers are here as invited guests of the U.S. government; this is part of a formal bilateral exchange program between the U.S. and Russia that seeks to develop transparency and promote defense reform,” Cmdr. Wendy L. Snyder, U.S. Defense Press Officer for policy, [told The New American](#) in an e-mail at the time.

“Aside from typical military training, the exchange will include discussions on the rule of land warfare, developing appropriate rules of engagement, and employing cultural literacy and competency in the tactical environment,” Snyder added. “This type of training is routinely conducted by 10th Special Forces Group.”

Of course, federal law [prohibits the use of the U.S. armed forces for domestic law enforcement](#). But with Washington, D.C., becoming increasingly lawless while expanding its size and scope wildly outside constitutional limitations, citizens and analysts have become quite concerned. The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which [purports to authorize the arrest and indefinite detention of Americans without charge or trial by the military](#), has added to the fears.

The latest controversial “urban warfare” drills come in the wake of [mass ammunition purchases by the U.S. government](#) that have analysts concerned about what the Obama administration may be preparing for. Combined, civilian federal agencies and departments ranging from “Homeland Security” to the Social Security Administration have purchased hundreds of millions of rounds of ammo in recent months — much of it hollow-point, designed to inflict maximum damage and death.

Also concerning to analysts is the increasing federalization and [militarization of local law enforcement](#), which is supposed to be independent of federal control and accountable to local citizens. As *The New*



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American has documented extensively, Washington unconstitutionally [handing out U.S. taxpayer money with “strings” attached while offering military weaponry to state and local police forces](#) is becoming increasingly common.

Meanwhile, the federal government is also training law enforcement agencies nationwide to equate peaceful political activism, [even displaying mundane and popular bumper stickers](#), with domestic terrorism. [The Justice Department, Homeland Security, military think tanks](#), and [so-called “fusion centers”](#) have all been caught in recent years painting [regular Americans](#) — pro-lifers, veterans, Second Amendment supporters, opponents of world government, constitutionalists, and more — as potential terrorists.

Analysts had varying thoughts on the true purpose of the [increasing number of military drills](#) being conducted in U.S. cities and communities. Some [said](#) the purpose was likely to acclimate Americans to [seeing heavily armed troops in their midst](#) despite [posse comitatus](#), which prohibits the use of soldiers in domestic law enforcement. Others [suspect](#) something [even more sinister](#). For now, however, the real reason for all of the “urban warfare” training remains uncertain.

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