

# Urban warfare training exercises continue in Chicago area

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In the late evening hours of July 22, several Blackhawk helicopters flew low over central areas of the city of Chicago without any lights, startling a number of residents who were not aware of the scheduled military helicopter training exercises.

A July 10 Chicago *Tribune* article on fresh exercises planned in the nearby suburb of Tinley Park cited Tinley Park Emergency Management Agency Director Pat Carr on helicopter exercises planned for July 23 and 24, but there was no indication of where these would be taking place.

Not visible on the City of Chicago web site front page, but placed in the Office of Emergency Management's "News" section—having gone up on that site around 5:30 p.m. CT—was a vague notice reading, "The City of Chicago is providing support for a routine military training exercise in and around the Chicagoland area on July 22-25. This routine training is conducted by military personnel in cities across the country, designed to ensure the military's ability to operate in urban environments as service members meet mandatory training certification requirements and prepare for upcoming overseas deployments. The training sites have been carefully selected to minimize the impact on the daily routine of residents. The training is not open to the public."

A number of city residents turned to social media to find out what was going on, and throughout the evening and into Tuesday, a wide majority expressed their disagreement with the exercises and with the militarization of American cities more generally.

@HeatherStammen tweeted: "Blackhawk helicopters flying over my condo in the Loop, and all news stations are covering the royal birth, what's up?"

Jerry Burch of New York wrote on NBCChicago.com: "These drills desensitize the public.

The article calls them routine, we shouldn't have routine urban warfare drills in a free or peaceful country. Having all these military and paramilitary drills with black vehicles is nothing but intimidation of the public using our own tax dollars. Why is this urban warfare practice so important? There seems to be zero accountability here."

Craig Kegger wrote: "Who do they think they're kidding? Training for overseas? They are training for civil unrest here."

The military training exercises reported to prepare troops for urban combat are scheduled to continue through July 25. Three months ago, on April 23 and 24, urban warfare training exercises were coordinated by the Department of Defense at a recently shuttered mental health facility in the suburb of Tinley Park. Additional exercises were carried out there on July 15 and 17, coordinated by the United States Navy.

Last April, similar helicopter drills were conducted in the afternoon hours over the Loop area ahead of the May 2012 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Summit. City of Chicago officials are not indicating what branch of the military is carrying out the helicopter exercises over the city, but reiterated that they are "in preparation for overseas deployment."

Since the unprecedented military lockdown of the city of Boston in April, it is evident that urban warfare exercises are increasingly relevant to the domestic policy of the ruling elite as it prepares for social unrest.



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