The documentation for exec states: "If single string is given as the command, it is taken as a command line that is subject to shell expansion before being executed." However, command lines that begin with environment variable assignments do not seem to work.

For example:

```bash
$ install/bin/ruby -e 'exec "FOO=1 echo bar"'
-e:1:in exec': No such file or directory - FOO=1 echo bar (Errno::ENOENT)
```

Other examples of sheeish syntax (not a filename) for the first word do work.

This same problem seems to also afflict all the other constructs for running an external command: system, backticks, IO.popen, spawn. I'm reporting against 1.9.3, but all previous versions of ruby (as far back as 1.8.6) that I've tried have the problem as well.

Related issues:
Related to Ruby master - Feature #2715: Optimization to avoid spawning shell ...