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Deborah Tyroler

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Panama: Former Head Of Security For Noriega Announces Plans To Lead Guerrillas In War Against Government

by Deborah Tyroler

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On Dec. 11, local Radio Ancon broadcast a phone conversation in which former army captain Jorge Eliecer Gaitan said he would soon lead a guerrilla band into war against President Guillermo Endara's government. Gaitan headed security for deposed leader Manuel Antonio Noriega. In October, Gaitan escaped from the Vatican embassy in Panama City, where he had taken refuge since the US military invasion in December last year. Gaitan told the radio station that he commanded a force of 250 guerrillas from Panama, Guatemala and Colombia, based at the Chorcha plateau, 450 km. west of the capital. He said he would launch anti-government sabotage operations on an undisclosed date in Panama City and in Chorrera, Santiago and Chiriqui departments. Gaitan claimed he had contacts with the Panamanian police force. After his escape from the Vatican embassy, Panamanian officials believed Gaitan had sought refuge in Argentina. (Basic data from AFP, 12/11/90)

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