

World news

Leftist guerrillas invade justice building in Bogota

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP) — About 25 leftist guerrillas shot their way into the Palace of Justice Wednesday, but three hours later troops stormed the court building, seizing the lower three floors and freeing more than 100 hostages.

Guerrillas of the April 19 Movement still held a "large

number" of judges on the top two floors of the five-story structure, according to one of the hostages, Supreme Court President Alfonso Reyes. He was contacted by telephone and said, "If the government doesn't cut off its attack, there could be a tragedy here."

Bogota radio stations said

preliminary reports indicated at least 17 guerrillas and one police lieutenant were killed and four policemen were wounded.

Reyes told radio station Todelar, "We are here with a large number of judges as hostages and it is a question of life or death that the gunfire stop. Please pass that on so the president will give the order to stop the attack."

As the judge spoke, bursts of submachine gun fire could be heard from Reyes' office on the fourth floor of the building. Exchanges of gunfire continued as night fell.

Radio Caracol telephoned federal Judge Fernando Gonzalez before the army assault, and he said, "I think all 24 members of the Supreme Court are being held hostage."

It was not known if Gonzalez was among more than 100 people who were freed and fled from the building during and after the army assault.

Radio stations said President Belisario Betancur's brother, federal Judge Jaime Betancur, was among those who escaped unharmed.

President Betancur met with his Cabinet in an emergency session, but no details were

given and it was not known if it was negotiating with the guerrillas.

At least 15 guerrillas were killed when the soldiers launched their assault at 3 p.m., Radio Caracol reported.

An anonymous person who telephoned the radio played a tape recording that declared that M-19 guerrillas had seized the Palace of Justice "in the name of peace and social justice."

The movement takes its name from the April 19, 1970 presidential election that dissidents said was fraudulent.

Soviet defector returns home

WASHINGTON (AP) — Smiling broadly, former KGB official Vitaly Yurchenko boarded a

Soviet airliner and flew home late Wednesday, capping a bizarre twist in an East-West

spy drama in which the defector became an accuser against the nation that offered him a new life.

After a half-hour motorcade from the Soviet embassy to Dulles International Airport outside Washington, Yurchenko walked briskly past three State Department officials, leading an entourage of about 20 Soviets into the Ilyushin 62 jet that earlier had returned Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin from pre-summit talks in Moscow.

Before being allowed to leave, Yurchenko apparently satisfied U.S. authorities that he was returning to the Soviet Union on his own accord, without coercion.

American officials had said Yurchenko defected in Rome in August and was brought to this country. Last Saturday, he left his CIA handlers and went to the Soviet Embassy in Washington.

On Monday, he told a news conference at the Soviet compound that he had been kidnapped, drugged and held at a CIA safe house near Fredericksburg, Va. On Tuesday, he went to the State Department and convinced officials that he was not pressured in asking to go home.

State Department deputy spokesman Charles Redman said Yurchenko "repeated several times that he wished to return to the Soviet Union." U.S. officials branded his charges about kidnapping and torture as "completely false," saying he was a willing defector who for some reason had a change of heart.

At the time of his defection, Yurchenko was the No. 5 official in the Soviet KGB spy agency, responsible for North American operations.

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