

# Defense, prosecution sum up in Letelier trial

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WASHINGTON—The prosecution and defense completed their closing arguments yesterday in the retrial of two Union City men, Guillermo Novo Sampol and Alvin Ross Diaz, in the Letelier-Moffitt murder case.

The jury is expected to begin its deliberations this afternoon following the prosecution's rebuttal arguments and lengthy instructions from Judge Barrington D. Parker.

Tension and drama — mainly absent from the trial — mounted yesterday as U.S. Attorney E. Lawrence Barcella crisply and neatly related the physical evidence in the case — a lengthy inventory of receipts, telephone records, immigration papers and samples of bomb components — to the testimony of Michael Vernon Townley, the government's star witness.

Defense lawyers, in their closing arguments yesterday afternoon, spent nearly all their time trying to undermine Townley's credibility.

Townley, who has admitted he was an agent of the Chilean secret police — the DINA — testified two weeks ago for three days and his story is the mainstay of the government's case against Ross and Novo.

"DINA wanted Orlando Letelier dead and Michael Townley came to the United States to

contract with the Cuban Nationalist Movement to carry it out," Barcella told a rapt jury of eight women and four men.

Reminding the jury that many of Letelier's activities were aimed at weakening Gen. Augusto Pinochet's regime, which had overthrown Salvador Allende's government three years earlier — including helping to have a \$63 million loan from a Dutch firm canceled — Barcella said Chilean officials had decided "they had to have a final solution to the problem of Orlando Letelier."

Letelier, the Chilean ambassador to the United States under Allende, and Ronni Karpen Moffitt, a 25-year-old co-worker of his at the Institute for Policy Studies here, both were killed when a bomb exploded beneath Letelier's car on the morning of Sept. 21, 1976.

Ross and Novo both are charged with conspiring to murder Letelier and with murdering Moffitt. Novo also is charged with lying to a grand jury investigating the crime in 1976.

Novo, a leader of the Cuban Nationalist Movement's northern zone, is alleged by Townley to have agreed after a series of meetings to provide assistance to Townley's "mission" to kill Letelier.

Townley has testified that Ross attended a

meeting at which the conspiracy was discussed and also provided transportation to him from Newark Airport to Union City after the bomb was placed, but before it was detonated.

During that car ride, Townley claimed that he told Ross all the details of the plan.

The two men were both sentenced to two consecutive life sentences in 1979 after they were convicted in an earlier trial. The verdict was overturned on a procedural question by the U.S. Court of Appeals here in September.

The courtroom, which had been nearly empty during the last week of the three-week-old trial, was nearly half filled yesterday. In attendance was Isabel Letelier, the widow of the former Chilean ambassador, and Eugene Proper, the U.S. prosecutor credited with having uncovered the Chilean government's involvement in the plot.

The defense, attorney Paul Goldberger, who represents Novo, and attorney Lawrence Dubin, representing Ross, argued throughout the afternoon that the government's case relies on the credibility of one witness, Townley. They argued that no other credible witnesses have seriously implicated the defendants.

"They have corroborated right up to their eye balls that Michael Vernon Townley is an assassin," Goldberger told the jury.

"But they haven't corroborated anything that has anything to do with Alvin Ross and Guillermo Novo."

The defense argued that Townley still was acting under instructions from Chilean officials and his testimony was part of a continuing cover-up designed to implicate the Cubans and to prevent top Chilean officials, such as Pinochet, from being implicated in the Letelier assassination and in other crimes.

They drew the jury's attention to the 1974 assassination of a pro-Allende military officer, Gen. Carlos Prats, and his wife in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Townley has testified that he was ordered to kill Letelier by Juan Manuel Contreras, the head of the DINA, and that to his knowledge, Pinochet was not aware of the assassination plot.

The defense also pointed out several statements made by Townley to Gen. Hector Orozco, a Chilean general investigating the Letelier matter, which Townley now says were false statements intentionally designed to keep the truth from being divulged.

Pointing to the defendants in concluding his argument before the jury, Dubin said, "There was a cover-up and these are the bodies that have to be sacrificed."