

Novo again balks FBI questioning

By GARY FISHMAN

The FBI again yesterday tried to question anti-Castro Cuban exile Guillermo Novo, presumably about the assassination of a Chilean diplomat, but he refused, according to his attorney.

Ronald Wohl said two FBI agents yesterday morning tried to question his client at the federal Metropolitan Correction Center (MCC), in lower Manhattan, where he is being held, but Novo "didn't have any desire to talk to them."

Novo is being held on the charge he violated his parole on a sentence for conspiring to bomb Cuban diplomatic offices in Montreal. He allegedly had been a fugitive for 10 months when he was arrested April 14 in Miami.

The FBI has said it wants to question Novo, as well as a second anti-Castro Cuban exile, Alvin Ross Diaz in connection with the car-bombing assassination of former Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier in 1976 in Washington, D.C. Novo and Diaz are members of the Union City and Miami-based Cuban Nationalist Movement.

A New York City FBI spokesman said he could not confirm or deny whether the agents attempted to question Novo, 38, formerly of Union City and Miami, about the Letelier case. A Newark FBI spokes-

man said agents from his office were not at the MCC yesterday.

Novo refused a reported offer by federal prosecutors to make a deal on the probation violation charges in exchange for taking a lie detector test in connection with the Letelier assassination.

In a related development, Diaz, 45, formerly of Hackensack, Union City and Miami, appeared briefly before a U.S. magistrate in Newark to explain that he plans to also retain Wohl to defend him against government charges that he conspired in Union City to make bombs.

Diaz appeared quiet and unemotional as he sat before U.S. Magistrate Serena Perretti. He was wearing a short-sleeved blue sports shirt and faded light blue denims. U.S. marshals refused to allow reporters to speak to him as they took him from the courtroom back to the MCC, where he is being held on a \$200,000 surety bail bond.

Novo is expected to appear before a Newark magistrate today for a bail hearing. He has been held since arrest without federal bail. Wohl has not yet fully discussed the possibility of finding bail to get Diaz released.

Wohl, 43, with offices in Manhattan, was assistant U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of New York State from 1964 to 1968. Diaz said he also plans to be represented by Donald Spain of Miami, an attorney who has defended other anti-Castro Cuban exiles in the face of similar charges.

Wohl also said he, Novo, and Novo's brother, Ignacio, are considering legal procedures to try to overturn the conviction that led to Novo's alleged probation

violation. Also contemplated, Wohl said, are possible libel suits, particularly against employees of the Spanish language press whom he said have referred to Novo as a communist. Novo, from past statements, appears to be staunchly anti-communist.

Novo yesterday also told the FBI agents "that he was disconcerted and concerned about how they have dealt with his family over the last several months." Wohl said.