

Helms, Miami-Area Cubans To Testify in Letelier Case

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WASHINGTON — Former CIA Director Richard Helms and several Miami-area Cuban activists will be called as witnesses for three Cuban exiles charged in the bombing assassination of former Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier, the defense said Friday.

Federal prosecutors, meanwhile, revealed plans to call Sen. George McGovern (D., S.D.), U.S. Ambassador to Chile George W. Landau and several FBI and South Florida law-enforcement officials knowledgeable about Cuban exile activities.

The names were made public as the prosecutors and defense attorneys exchanged witness lists on the fourth day of the trial of the Miami Cubans.

Also late Friday, Judge Barrington Parker Jr. swore in a jury of five men and seven women. The jurors were picked from 125 prospects after intensive questioning by both sides. Most of the questions were aimed at finding out if the publicity surrounding Letelier's death would preclude an impartial verdict.

CIRCUIT COURT Clerk James Davey said it was the longest jury-selection proceeding here since the Watergate coverup trial in 1974.

Letelier was a cabinet member in the Chilean government of Marxist Salvadore Allende until Allende was overthrown by a military junta in 1973. Letelier came to Washington and became a leading critic of the military regime.

He was killed on Sept. 21, 1976, when a bomb attached to the chassis of his car exploded as he was driving to work along Embassy Row. A young assistant, Ronnie Moffitt, also died in the explosion.



McGOVERN



HELMS

Two of the defendants, Alvin Ross Díaz and Guillermo Novo Sampol, both of New Jersey, are charged with helping Chilean secret police agent Michael Townley carry out the assassination.

Townley, an American expatriate, has pleaded guilty and is the government's key witness.

THE THIRD Cuban is Ignacio Novo Sampol, of Miami. He is charged with lying to a federal grand jury investigating Letelier's death and with withholding information from authorities about the conspiracy to kill him.

Although defense attorneys have not revealed their strategy, the witness list suggests that they intend to raise a possible CIA link to the assassination.

Helms was the head of the CIA under President Nixon. He directed the agency at a time when its agents were working in Chile to undermine the Marxist Allende regime.

Also during that period, Townley sought unsuccessfully to work for the CIA in Chile.

Although prosecutors have al-

leged that Townley carried out the killing under orders from DINA, the Chilean secret police, the Chilean government has suggested that Townley may in fact have been a double agent.

THE DEFENSE may also attempt to convince the jury that the three Cuban defendants believed Townley was a CIA agent.

The CIA, in an affidavit, has denied that Townley ever worked for the agency, although he was "cleared" to do so.

The defense also intends to call several prominent Miami Cubans. Among them are Felipe Rivero, founder of the militant Cuban Nationalist Movement, of which the defendants were members, and Roberto Carballo, former president of the Brigade 2506, which is composed of Bay of Pigs veterans.

It was not clear why the prosecution team led by Eugene Propper plans to call McGovern, although he was a close friend of Letelier.

There was speculation that McGovern might be used to establish that Letelier's criticism of the Chilean junta was so effective he was a likely assassination target.

Opening arguments in the trial, which is expected to last up to two months, could begin on Monday.

THE JUDGE ordered the 12 jurors and six alternates sequestered for the duration of the trial. He also ordered that their names be withheld, an extraordinary precaution that reflects the rigid security arrangements surrounding the trial. Both Parker and Propper have received death threats.