

# NEW EVIDENCE LINKS CUBANS TO LETELIER

## Investigators Check for Connection Between Two Men Arrested in Miami and Killing of Ex-Envoy

The Washington Star

WASHINGTON, April 15—New evidence has been uncovered connecting Cuban exiles to the car-bombing death here of Orlando Letelier, a former Chilean Foreign Minister, and his colleague, Ronni Moffitt, investigators disclosed today.

The arrest of Alvin Ross Diaz in Miami yesterday by officers of the Dade County Sheriff's Department and agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation was based on information that explosives and equipment for detonating them had been found in a shop formerly operated by Mr. Ross in Union City, N.J. Miami is part of Dade County.

Warrants issued against Mr. Ross in Newark by Serena Perretti, a federal magistrate, charged the anti-Castro exile with three counts of conspiring to make explosives and incendiary devices and of storing high explosives.

Investigators said the federal charges were filed after explosives and equipment for using them were found in a briefcase in the C and P Novelty Shop in Union City after Mr. Ross had vacated the premises.

The F.B.I., the Washington police and the United States Attorney's office, which are working together on the case here, refused to discuss the explosives that were found in Mr. Ross's former place of business.

However, it was learned that investigators were planning to make comparisons between certain attachments found in the wreck of Mr. Letelier's automobile and equipment found in the C and P Novelty Shop.

Authorities did not disclose the names of the chemicals and explosives found there, but it was learned that one was iranite, a form of dynamite. Neither the police nor the F.B.I. have divulged what kind of explosive was used to kill Mr. Letelier.

Mr. Ross was arrested along with another suspect in the Letelier case, Guillermo Novo Sampol, 38, of Union City, when two Miami detectives, Humberto Rapada and Daniel Benitez, discovered that the two men, who are both Cuban-born, were preparing to leave the United States together, possibly to go to Mexico. Both men are members of the anti-Castro Cuban Nationalist Movement. Mr. Novo was arrested on a probation violation following a 1974 conviction of conspiracy to destroy the Cuban consulate in Montreal.

Mr. Benitez warned the F.B.I. in Miami, which in turn alerted Eugene M. Propper, an assistant United States attorney who has been working on the case, that the suspects were likely to flee the United States. An order was then issued to arrest them.

Investigators said that when the men were captured four pistols, a pound of cocaine and some wigs and other disguise materials were found in Mr. Ross's car. The cocaine, it was reported, was to have been sold in Miami to finance the overseas flight of the suspects.

A third individual who was arrested with them was identified today as Manuel Menendez. Sources said Mr. Menendez is not connected with the Letelier case but was involved with Mr. Ross and Mr. Novo only because of the cocaine, which the two exiles were reported to have been in the process of selling. Drug agents said a pound of cocaine might have a wholesale value of \$20,000.

Mr. Ross was spotted in Miami last Wednesday, according to sources, and he was immediately put under surveillance for three days. Yesterday, when Mr. Ross met Mr. Novo and Mr. Menendez for lunch at the Airport Lakes Holiday Inn, local officers and the F.B.I. made the arrest.

The arrest of the two suspects could put new pressure on Michael Vernon Townley, the American resident of Chile who worked for the Chilean secret police and who is now being held somewhere in the Washington area as a material witness in the Letelier case.

Investigators for the F.B.I., the Washington police and the Dade County Sheriff's Department have learned that Mr. Townley met with some Cubans in a Miami restaurant in June 1976. Mr. Townley was also said to have gone to the New York-New Jersey area, where he reportedly was seen with Mr. Novo and other members of anti-Castro groups.

Mr. Propper refuses to say what he will do next, but it is believed the Government already has enough evidence to charge Mr. Townley and some of the Cubans with conspiracy. But Mr. Townley has not yet been brought before the grand jury yet and it is believed that the Government hopes that Mr. Townley will decide to testify for the Government.

Mr. Letelier, who was Foreign Minister in the Government of President Salvador Allende Gossens, and Mrs. Moffitt were working for the Institute for Policy Studies when they were slain on Sept. 21, 1976.

A heavy charge of explosives had been planted under the front seat of Mr. Letelier's car. It blew up in rush-hour traffic only a few yards from the Chilean Embassy here.