

# 3 Cubans Charged as Conspirators in Chilean's Death

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WASHINGTON, May 5—Three anti-Castro Cuban exiles were charged with conspiracy today in the murder of Orlando Letelier, a former Chilean ambassador, as the pool of suspects and details in the 19-month investigation widened.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation charged Ignacio Novo Sampol, 39-year-old leader of a Cuban nationalist organization; José Dionisio Suárez Esquivel, also 39, and Virgilio Paz Romero, 26, with conspiring to kill a foreign official.

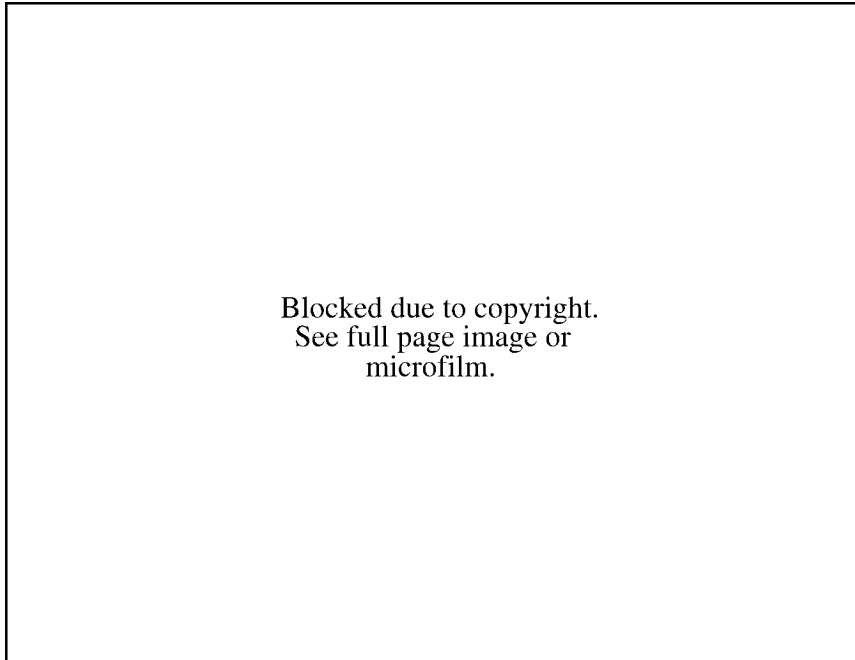
Mr. Novo was arrested by F.B.I. agents in Jersey City and subsequently arraigned in Newark. Warrants have been issued for the other two suspects. All three are naturalized United States citizens. Mr. Suárez was recently released from the District of Columbia Jail here after having been imprisoned for refusing to testify before a Federal grand jury.

The F.B.I. charge is the same one brought against Michael Vernon Townley, 35, an American expatriate who is in custody near Washington and is said to be cooperating with Federal agents. Mr. Townley, who has lived in Chile periodically over 20 years and is married to a Chilean, has reportedly identified seven Cuban exiles and three Chileans in the plot.

The sources of these reports, some in the Government, said that one Cuban suspect in the case had not been identified. In addition to the men charged today, two other Cuban exiles, now in Federal custody on other counts, are suspected of involvement in the Letelier killing. One is Guillermo Novo Sampol, a brother of Ignacio Novo Sampol, and the other is Alvin Ross Díaz.

From a compilation of the fragmentary charges made public, published statements of Mr. Townley's wife, Mariana Callejas de Townley, and private interviews, there emerges a clearer sketch of the reported plot to kill Mr. Letelier and Ronni K. Moffitt, his aide, in September 1976.

By these accounts, Mr. Townley, who was believed to be an operative for the Chilean intelligence service that is known by the acronym Dina, for the National



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Associated Press

**Ignacio Novo Sampol, center, in custody of F.B.I. agents in Newark**

Intelligence Directorate, came to the United States in the summer of 1976 and recruited a team of Cubans to carry out the killing. The Cubans he contacted were involved in radical anti-Communist activity, and several had been implicated in acts of violence against the Castro Government.

Mr. Letelier, Mrs. Moffitt and her husband, Michael, were riding in a car on the way to work when a bomb under the driver's seat exploded and killed Mr. Letelier and Mrs. Moffitt, a research associate at the Institute For Policy Studies.

## Held on Unrelated Charges

Mr. Letelier, a Chilean exile, was Ambassador to the United States and later Foreign Minister in the Government of Salvador Allende Gossens, a Marxist who was overthrown and killed in a coup in 1973.

The F.B.I. has been investigating whether the bomb could have been detonated electronically. According to court documents filed in Miami, the bureau

sought a search warrant on a car seized when Mr. Ross was arrested on April 14, to see whether agents could locate a telephone device that might have been used in a 'triggering' system. They did not find the device.

Mr. Ross and Guillermo Novo Sampol are being held on unrelated charges of bombings and other violence. Mr. Ross at one time owned a shop in which Federal agents suspected that explosive materials had been stored.

Mr. Townley's testimony presumably would be the basis for a conspiracy indictment setting out charges against the men who are believed to have planned and carried out the murder. If Chilean citizens are charged, the United States will have to open negotiations with the Government of President Augusto Pinochet to obtain their extradition for trial.

A spokesman for the Chilean Embassy here said there was no indication from United States officials that extradition proceedings are imminent.