

# **Seven Indicted In U.S. Murder Of Chilean Aide**

## **Former Secret Police Head and 4 Cubans Included**

**By NICHOLAS HORROCK**

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Aug. 1 — The former chief of the Chilean secret police and six other persons, including four members of a Cuban nationalist group, were indicted today on charges of murdering Orlando Letelier, a strong critic of the Chilean military Government, who was killed in 1976 when his car was blown up on a public street here.

The Federal indictments bring to an end the investigative phase of a case that has sharply disrupted relations between the United States and Chile.

The jury charged Gen. Juan Manuel Contreras Sepúlveda, who until last year was the head of Chile's National Directorate of Intelligence, or DINA, with having ordered the assassination of Mr. Letelier, a former Foreign Minister and Defense Minister who lived in exile here and was a leader of the opposition to the Government of President Augusto Pinochet. It named Lieut. Col. Pedro Espinoza Bravo, former operations chief for the intelligence service, and Capt. Armando Fernández Larios, as principals in carrying out the plot.

### **Cubans Were Anti-Communist**

The grand jury also brought charges of murder and conspiracy to commit murder against Guillermo Novo Sampol, Alvin Ross Díaz, Virgilio Paz Romero and José Dionisio Suárez Esquivel, former Cuban citizens now living in New Jersey, who are the leaders of a group of militantly anti-Communist Cubans. It charged a fifth Cuban-American, Ignacio Novo, with having lied to a grand jury and failed to report a felony.

Earlier, Michael V. Townley, an American who had lived in Chile for more than two decades, was charged in connection with the killing. Both he and Ignacio Novo were reported to be in custody and cooperating with American authorities.

The United States will seek the extradition of General Contreras and the two other Chileans, the Justice Department announced. [The three men were arrested in Santiago Tuesday night, Reuters said, quoting a Government announcement. The Government added that

# Ex-Chief of Chilean Secret Police Indicted in the Murder of Letelier

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the arrests were "preventive" and had been made at the request of the United States.]

The bomb that killed Mr. Letelier on Sept. 21, 1976 also caused the death of Ronni Moffitt, his research assistant, and wounded her husband, Michael. The three Chileans and four Cubans were also indicted in Mrs. Moffitt's slaying.

Mr. Moffitt said in a telephone interview today that the indictments showed the "United States Government has reached the conclusion that we have never strayed from. We said that, from day one, that the Pinochet Government was responsible.

"We will continue to press the investigation," Mr. Moffitt added, "until the Chilean Government responds to the request for extradition of the Army officers, but we are pleased with the job that the Federal Bureau of Investigation has done so far. They operated in the face of domestic and foreign opposition and interference."

With the exception of Ignacio Novo and Mr. Townley, all the suspects face four separate charges that could carry sentences of life imprisonment. Guillermo Novo, Ignacio's brother, was also charged with two counts of having given false statements to a grand jury, which could result in a fine of \$10,000 and five years' imprisonment on each count. If convicted, Ignacio Novo could receive up to 13 years in jail and more than \$20,000 in fines.

## Other Conspirators Suggested

The indictment hinted that General Contreras might not be solely responsible for ordering the plot, saying that he "initiated the action which began the conspiracy and, either alone or with others unknown to the grand jury, ordered the assassination of Orlando Letelier."

In listing the "overt acts" of the conspiracy, the grand jury for the first time detailed what the Government believes might have been the sequence of the plot.

According to the charges, in July 1976, General Contreras ordered Captain Fernández to take on a "two-man mission" and to get his detailed instructions from Colonel Espinoza. It was Colonel Espinoza who directly ordered Captain Fernández and Mr. Townley to go to the United States and murder Mr. Letelier, the jury charged.

The jury said that passports and false identification were obtained in Chile and Paraguay through the cooperation of the Paraguayan intelligence service.

## Assigned to Stalk Letelier

On Aug. 26, Captain Fernández, the grand jury said, was assigned to stalk the movements of Mr. Letelier in Washington, accompanied by Liliana Walker Martínez, described as "another DINA agent." This was the first time that her name has come up in the case.

Twelve days later, Mr. Townley was sent to the United States to recruit and organize the assassination team, the indictment said. He and Captain Fernández met at Kennedy Airport on Sept. 9, and Mr. Townley received the information about Mr. Letelier's movements.

On Sept. 13, the jury charged, Mr. Townley met with four Cuban-Americans and discussed the plot. Two days later, on Sept. 15, two of the Cubans gave Mr. Townley and Mr. Paz explosives and a remote-controlled electronic detonating device, which the two carried by car to Washington. On Sept. 19, the indictment continued, two Cuban-Americans and Mr. Townley, using parts purchased from a

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The New York Times

**Gen. Juan Manuel Contreras Sepúlveda, former head of Chile's intelligence agency, was charged with ordering the assassination.**

Sears Roebuck store, constructed a bomb in a downtown Washington motel room.

The following day, Sept. 20, Mr. Townley placed the charge underneath Mr. Letelier's car at his home in the nearby suburb of Bethesda, the grand jury said.

"On or about Sept. 19, 1976, Michael Townley telephoned Chile and told his wife, Mariana Inés Callejas de Townley, who was also an agent of DINA, to advise DINA that a bomb had been placed in Orlando Letelier's car, which she did," the indictment said.

Mr. Townley, the jury charged, left Washington and was in Miami on Sept. 21 when the bomb was detonated, "killing Orlando Letelier and Ronni Moffitt." Three days later, the jury said, he "advised Pedro Espinoza that the DINA mission to assassinate Orlando Letelier had been carried out."

The investigation into Mr. Letelier's murder has been complicated by international and domestic pressures. The Chilean intelligence service was trained and supported by the Central Intelligence Agency, and the C.I.A. had undermined the administration of former President Salvador Allende Gossens, a Marxist, thus paving the way for the Pinochet regime to take power.

Mr. Letelier, who had served in Dr. Allende's Cabinet and also as Ambassador in Washington, was regarded by many in American intelligence services as a Communist agent. Mrs. Letelier, and her husband's associates at the radical Institute for Policy Studies here, said early in the case that they felt the United States would make no serious attempt to place the real blame for the murder.

## Prosecutor and F.B.I. Man Persisted

Even Government sources acknowledged by the middle of 1977 that the inquiry seemed bogged down. But the prosecutor in charge, Eugene M. Propper, a 31-year-old assistant United States attorney here, and Carter Cornick, the F.B.I. agent in charge of the case, seemed unwilling to be deterred by the initial frustrations.

Sometime late last year or early this year — the details are expected to come out at the trial — they "turned" one of the Cuban-Americans. It is now speculated that the assistance came from Ignacio Novo. This assistance, fleshed out by widespread domestic and international legwork, gave the prosecutors hard allegations to carry to the Chilean Government.