

Witness: Arocena guilty plea asked

NEW YORK (UPI)—A former Omega 7 soldier testified yesterday that he had urged the reputed chief of the anti-Castro terrorist group to plead guilty so its links to drug traffickers would remain secret.

Gerardo Necuze, 46, of Miami, took the stand at the trial of former

New Jersey dockworker Eduardo Arocena. Arocena is charged with masterminding Omega 7's eight years of violence, including murder and bombings in New York, New Jersey and Florida.

Necuze said he learned from the FBI that Arocena had divulged in-

formation about Omega 7 and its ties to Florida drug dealers.

Knowing this would be used as propaganda by Cuba's Fidel Castro, Necuze said he urged Arocena and other Omega 7 members to plead guilty to bombing charges. Necuze said he feared that a trial would reveal the group's links to drug dealers and would hurt its members' image as freedom fighters struggling to liberate their homeland.

Necuze lamented that the testimony at Arocena's trial in U.S. District Court in Manhattan was fertile ground for Castro.

"I never thought that the Omega 7 organization ... would give the chance to the communist government of Cuba to see us in court, morally destroyed, associated with drugs and looking like garbage," he

said sadly.

A convicted Miami drug dealer testified last week that he hired Arocena and his Omega 7 soldiers to collect his drug debts and serve as his bodyguards.

Necuze pleaded guilty in February to taking part in the Miami bomb attacks on the Mexican consulate, the Nicaraguan consulate and the offices of Replica magazine. He faces up to 10 years in prison. Two other Omega 7 members pleaded guilty with Necuze.

Necuze said he became a member of Omega 7 because "I had a feeling I could do something for my country." He said he and Arocena were very close friends.

"For me, he is like a brother and he knows it," Necuze said, staring at the defendant.