

Novo sentenced to 4½ years

WASHINGTON (UPI) — A U.S. District Court judge Friday sentenced an anti-Castro Cuban to 4½ years in prison for lying under oath to a grand jury investigating the assassination of former Chilean ambassador Orlando Letelier and an American aide in Washington.

Judge Barrington Parker ordered Guillermo Novo Sampol, 41, of Jersey City, jailed immediately pending a decision on a defense request that the defendant be allowed to remain free on bail pending appeal.

The government had asked for the maximum prison term of 10 years.

Parker sentenced Novo to 4½ years for each of two perjury counts, but said the sentences could be served concurrently in a minimum security facility.

Novo has already served three years of an original life sentence in a federal penitentiary after his conviction in 1979 on charges of murder and conspiracy.

That sentence was overturned by an appeals court in 1980 and a new trial that ended last month found Novo and co-defendant Alvia Ross Diaz innocent.

Novo had been freed pending a verdict on the per-

jury charges.

Parker's decision came after a 45-minute hearing during which he rejected a motion from defense attorney Paul Goldberger that Novo's sentencing be moved to another court because Parker also presided at the original 1979 trial and imposed maximum sentences.

Novo showed no emotion as the sentence was read. A group of Cuban-born supporters remained grimly silent as a U.S. marshal escorted Novo from the courtroom.

Parker refused to release the Cuban on continued bail because defense lawyers could not immediately produce a guaranteeing affidavit.

In handing down the original life sentence against Novo in 1979, Parker also added concurrent five-year terms to be served simultaneously for the two perjury charges.

A government lawyer had argued the maximum 10-year sentence should stand because Novo's false testimony had delayed its investigation and the initial trial for two years.

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Letelier was killed along with his American aide, Ronni Moffit, when a time bomb attached under his car exploded as they rode through busy Sheridan Circle off Washington's Embassy Row.

The murders prompted the Carter administration to impose sanctions against Chile when it refused to extradite three Chilean secret police officers also indicted in the Washington case.

Letelier was a former ambassador to Washington and a defense minister in the leftist government of Salvador Allende, killed during a military coup that brought Augusto Pinochet to power in September 1973.

After spending a year in jail during the Pinochet regime, Letelier came to Washington with his family and worked for the Institute for Policy Studies, a liberal think tank on foreign and military affairs. Moffit worked with him at the institute.

During the first trial, the prosecution contended the Cubans hoped to establish in Chile a Cuban government in exile and wanted to help the Chilean government by assisting in the assassination plot.