

Talks in L.A.

Slain Mobster's West Coast Ties

Los Angeles

John Rosselli, the slain mobster whose body was found Saturday stuffed in a metal drum floating in a Florida bay, met with several West Coast crime figures the month before he was killed.

The meetings, closely monitored by FBI agents and Los Angeles Police Department intelligence officers, took place in a Malibu restaurant and a Hollywood hotel in the first two weeks in June.

Although no direct link has been established between the meetings and Rosselli's murder, details of the surveillance are being checked by federal agents.

Rosselli, 70, key figure in a reported CIA plot to assassinate Cuban Premier Fidel Castro, had made several recent appearances before Senate investigating committees.

However, despite Rosselli's supposed status as a "government witness," the FBI refused yesterday to assume jurisdiction in the investigation of his gangland-style murder.

FBI Director Clarence M. Kelley, in response to an earlier request from the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, said:

"We were informed that it (the

murder) is a matter over which we have now no obvious or detectable jurisdiction."

Kelley told a Washington press conference: "If there is some later information (to indicate a change in jurisdiction) it might be that we would (investigate), but at this point we will not."

Jurisdiction rests with officials in Dade County, Fla., where Rosselli's body was discovered inside a chain-wrapped metal barrel in an arm of Biscayne bay off Miami.

During his recent trips to Los Angeles, according to investigators, Rosselli participated in a June 1 meeting at a Malibu restaurant with James (Jimmy the Weasel) Fratianno, 62, Michael (Mike Rizzi) Rizzitello, 49, and Allen Smiley, 69, a former associate of the late Mickey Cohen.

At a subsequent meeting June 11, Rosselli met with Fratianno and Rizzitello in a restaurant in a Hollywood hotel, and two days later met with Fratianno alone at the same hotel.

Investigators said they have not been able to uncover the reason for Rosselli's trips to California or his meetings with various organized crime figures.