

Cuban Exiles' Role in Chilean Plot

Newark, N.J.

An agent of the Chilean secret police met with anti-Castro Cubans at a New Jersey motel to enlist their help in the assassination of former Chilean ambassador Orlando Letelier, the FBI disclosed yesterday.

FBI agent L. Carter Cornick testified in U.S. District Court that Michael Townley, the American-born Chilean police agent, admitted planting a bomb under Letelier's car with help from members of the Cuban National Movement after meeting at a North Bergen motel 11 days before the slaying, Sept. 21, 1976.

Letelier was a prominent member of Chile's Socialist party, which was also the party of President Salvador Allende.

About four to six weeks before the military coup in Sep-

tember 1973 in which Allende was killed, Letelier was named as Chile's defense minister.

Cornick detailed the events leading up to Letelier's death at a hearing to transfer Alvin Ross Diaz, 45, of Union City, one of six people charged with conspiring to murder Letelier, to Washington, D.C. U.S. Magistrate Serena Perretti ordered Diaz transferred within ten days.

Diaz; Guillermo Novo, 39, of Union City; his brother, Ignacio, 47, of Jersey City, and two fugitives, Virgilio Paz Romero, 26, of Union City, and Jose Suarez Esquivel, 39, of Elizabeth, and Townley also are charged with conspiracy to murder Letelier.

Cornick said that he accompanied Townley back to the United States after the Chilean government expelled him in

April. He said Townley has agreed to plead guilty to one count of a charge that he conspired to assassinate Letelier.

The agent said he had interviewed Townley daily for several weeks and pieced together the conspiracy plot that allegedly involved members of the CNM, an anti-Castro Cuban organization.

Townley arrived in New York early in September 1976, carrying ten electric igniters to carry out a mission to murder Letelier, Cornick said.

On September 19, Townley, Paz and Suarez drove to Washington, D.C., constructed the bomb and planted it under Letelier's car. Townley flew back to Newark before the bomb went off, Cornick said.

- United Press