

LETELIER/MOFFITT MURDER

Witnesses support Townley testimony

A surprise a day

By Max Weisenfeld

WASHINGTON

Assistant U.S. Attorney Eugene Propper has sprung three surprise witnesses in as many days in the trial of the accused murderers of Orlando Letelier and Ronni Moffitt.

The witnesses corroborated the testimony of confessed DINA assassin, Michael Vernon Townley, and they added new details. More supporting testimony has come from the half-dozen FBI agents the government called this week.

Ricardo Canete, a former member of the Cuban Nationalist Movement and a paid FBI informant, revealed damaging testimony. The defendants—Guillermo Novo, head of the Cuban Nationalist Movement's "operational section," his lieutenant, Alvin Ross, and his brother, Ignacio—all mentioned in Canete's testimony, are charged with the car bombing that killed Letelier and Moffitt Sept. 21, 1976, and related crimes.

Canete told the court that Ross boasted of building the Letelier bomb. Ignacio and Novo told Canete that he expected to receive counterfeit \$100 bills, from Chile, as aid from "his friend in DINA." (The Chilean secret police who allegedly ordered the assassination.)

Ignacio Novo, according to Canete, arranged for the purchase of "40 or 50 pounds" of marijuana. Canete further reported that Ignacio Novo tried to obtain false documents from him for "friends" who had "left some bodies behind" and wanted to get out of the country.

Two right-wing Chilean journalists covering the trial for *El Mercurio* and *El Cronista* were asked to leave the country by the FBI. The journalists allegedly arranged to provide defense lawyers Paul Goldberger and Larry Dubin with secret Chilean investigation reports concerning the Letelier case.

The press release from the Council on Hemispheric Affairs that was distributed in the courthouse earlier this week alleging that the Justice Department had given up attempts to extradite the three Chileans indicted in this case, Gen. Manuel Contreras, Col. Pedro Espinosa, and Capt. Armando Fernandez, was vehemently denied by U.S. attorney Propper. Defense lawyer Dubin, upon receiving a copy of the press release, read portions into the record and protested any inactivity of the American government. Propper made an immediate and absolute denial. ■

All in a day's work, Townley testifies

By Saul Landau

WASHINGTON

The details of Chile's Gen. Augusto Pinochet's international murder activities and the organization of his hit squad have begun to leak out, thanks to innuendos in the testimony of Michael Vernon Townley, the U.S. government's star witness in the Letelier-Moffitt murder trial, now in its fourth week here.

On the witness stand, this man whom FBI agents and prosecutors have described as "a nice guy" speaks politely, with control, occasional humor, and always with great specificity. "True, but incomplete," he often answers to cross examination questions. "Correct." "Incorrect."

"No sir, I have no regrets about killing Mr. Letelier. He was a soldier in his army, his party. I was a soldier in mine. I received an order to eliminate Mr. Letelier. I carried it out to the best of my abilities. I do have regrets, sir, deep regrets, about the other person in the car." The other person was Ronni Moffitt, Letelier's col-



Relatives of disappeared persons demonstrate in Santiago, Chile. The sign reads: "My husband and niece were taken alive. No to presumed death."

league, who was riding to work with him in the car that Townley and his Cuban exile chums had rigged with a bomb.

But other "missions" took place. Townley describes how his "Service," meaning DINA, Pinochet's political police, sent him to Mexico to assassinate Carlos Altamirano and Volodia Teitelboim in 1975. Then Townley went to Europe. But here the U.S. government interrupted Townley's testimony. The government had made deals, it turns out, beyond the plea bargain with Townley.

They can ask only about crimes committed in the U.S. or against U.S. citizens. Prosecutor Eugene Propper's boss, Earl Silbert, head of major crimes for the Department of Justice, had signed an agreement with his Chilean equivalent pledging the U.S. not to tell any foreign governments of any DINA crimes in their jurisdictions revealed by the Letelier-Moffitt investigation.

But information on these crimes leaks out. Townley had been assigned to kill Olaf Palme, in 1975, in Europe. The Swedish prime minister was in Madrid at a meeting. In addition, Pinochet had selected for death certain exiled Chilean military officials living in Belgium and Germany.

In Paris, Townley made another abortive attempt to kill Altamirano. In Rome, in the fall of 1975, he worked with Italian fascists to kill Christian Democratic leader Bernardo Leighton. The attempt led to the wounding of Leighton and the paralyzing of his wife.

Townley sent explosives to his Cuban accomplices from Chile in LAN Chile planes, using the pilots to carry materials through customs. He tells how LAN offices at JFK Airport were used for meetings with his surveillance officer, Capt. Fernandez, who gave him a map of Letelier's house and route to work, plus infor-

mation on Letelier's car, license plate, and work routine.

Paul Goldberger and Larry Dubin, who represent the Cuban defendants, try to show the jury how Townley plea-bargained to get a sweet deal for himself and for his wife, Mariana, also a DINA agent who was involved in various assassination missions. In return for testifying, he received a 42-month to ten-year sentence, and immunity for his wife and for all other crimes.

They try to show Townley as a master CIA mole, a corrupt liar, a monster killer. Townley responds: "I did what any normal husband would do to protect his wife." A normal husband who follows orders.

Townley's lawyers, Glanzer and Levine, counsel him on when he should take the Fifth Amendment regarding his various murder "missions." The prosecutor, Eu-

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Chilean press censors self on trial

By Marcelo Montecino

SANTIAGO

When Christian Democratic weekly *HOY* on Jan. 10 asked ousted air force general Gustavo Leigh what kind of control the junta had over the activities of the secret police, he answered: "DINA answered directly to the President of the Republic. Although it's true that it was born through a decree that made it responsible to the Junta, the President never allowed any participation in its operations."

This basic political conclusion has been scrupulously avoided in the exceptionally heavy coverage by the self-censored Chilean press of the Letelier-Moffitt trial in Washington, D.C. Four Santiago dailies and all three weekly news magazines have sent correspondents to cover the "trial of the decade," as one tabloid characterized it.

With the notable exception of *HOY*, the strategy of the Chilean press has been to call the case "a police matter," devoid of any political connotation. As a police matter, the daily press covers the case with a wealth of detail, much of it peripheral, designed to confuse the reader. The occasional reader is hard pressed

to get a complete picture of the conspiracy and its implications.

Chilean correspondents in Washington have focused on the incidental aspects of the trial to demonstrate that the "enemies of Chile are engaged in an international propaganda campaign" to get political mileage out of the event.

La Segunda, an afternoon tabloid belonging to the Edwards conglomerate, has spearheaded a campaign to defame the Institute for Policy Studies, where Letelier and Moffitt worked. Emilio Bakit has extensively reported on activities of the "left-wing institute."

Prosecutor Eugene Propper has also been singled out for special treatment. Stories often point out his political ambitions and his "elegant suits." Propper has been characterized as a man driven by ambition, who is using this trial as a springboard for future office.

Pilar Vergara, who usually covers the theater and the movies for *El Mercurio*, Dean of the Chilean press, described Propper's opening statement as "truly a political speech."

A racist note, perhaps inadvertently, has also been injected into the coverage. Without exception, every publication

has noted that the jury is composed of 12 blacks, a disturbing element to a homogenous Chilean society, unfamiliar not only with jury trials but with the racial composition of Washington, D.C. The stories state that the jury is made up of humble, uneducated people, "who are probably unable to understand the complexities of the case."

The most glaring aspect of the Chilean press' handling of the assassination trial has been the obvious editorial slant. While the moral or ethical considerations of political assassination are condemned, Letelier is constantly portrayed as an "enemy of Chile." The affair is written off as the acts of three secret police agents who exceeded their authority.

The long extradition proceedings of the three Chilean army officers indicted have also been clouded. Defense lawyers for the accused hold regular and lengthy press conferences in which exotic theories are aired. Echoing the strategy for the defense in the trial, the lawyers have stated that Michael Townley was really a CIA agent that infiltrated DINA and murdered Letelier in a U.S.-Cuban conspiracy to destabilize the Pinochet regime. ■

ARMS CONTROL

Peace groups attack hawk in dove's coop

By A. Lin Neumann

WASHINGTON

HEARINGS WERE HELD BY the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last week on the controversial appointment of Gen. George M. Seignious (ret.) to replace outgoing Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) head Paul Warnke.

The appointment of Seignious raises concerns regarding, in Foreign Relations Committee chairman Sen. Frank Church's (D-ID) words, "the appropriateness of having an ex-military man as head of the arms control agency." But the appointment is not expected by Hill observers to have much difficulty in the committee. In fact, the appointment is seen as President Carter's bid to shore up support for the proposed SALT II agreement by having a military man to quiet the voice of Senate hawks.

Seignious' credentials as a supporter of arms control were questioned severely by several witnesses and members of the arms control community here. Admiral Gene LaRoque (ret.) who once served with him, characterized the general as a hawk and said, "Since we've not yet reached the agreement (SALT II), he's the very worst to negotiate it."

Jeremy Stone, director of the prestigious Federation of American Scientists (FAS), said his group was strongly opposed to the presence of a military man on an agency designed to limit the spread of arms. He characterized Seignious as "naive and inexperienced" in the mix of Washington politics, as well as having ties to the conservative Coalition for Peace Through Strength, a group that has condemned the SALT negotiations.

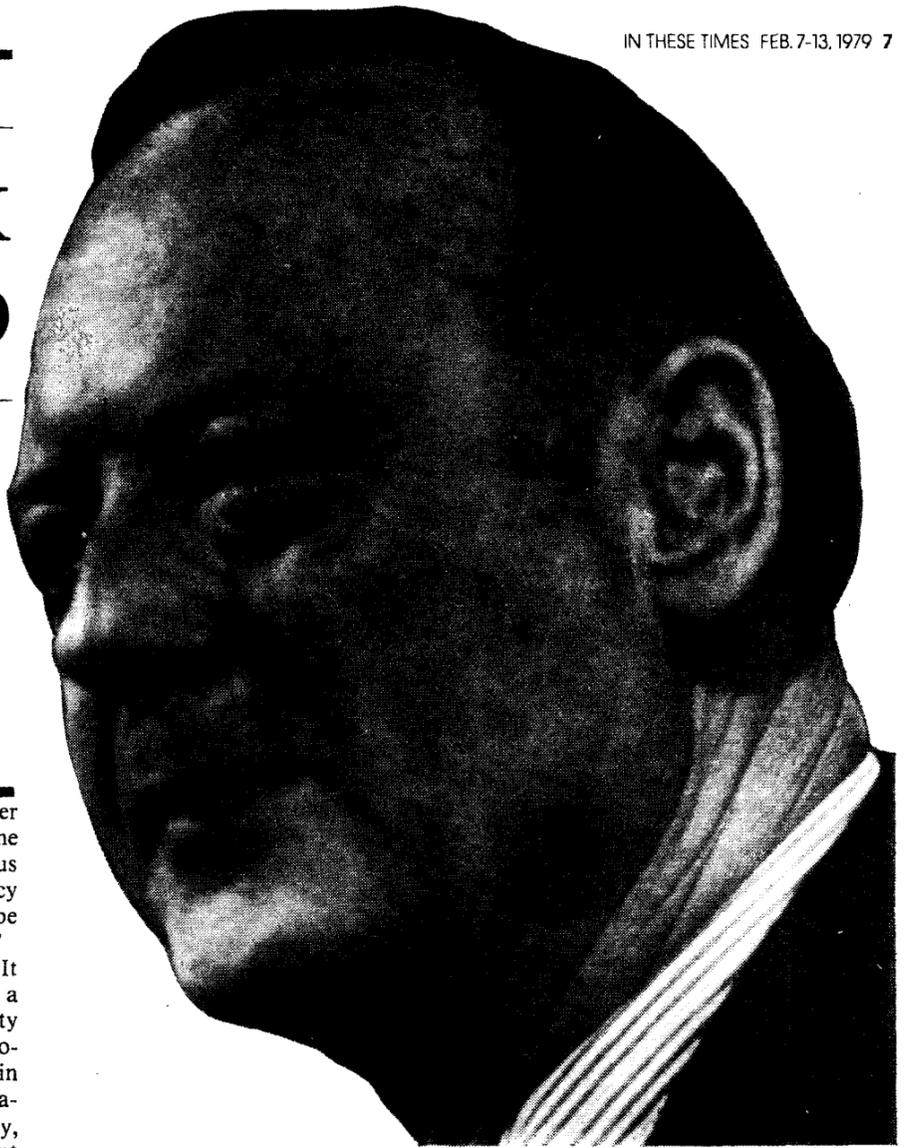
Gen. Seignious' appointment as head of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency is widely criticized at Senate committee hearings.

Seignious asserted that he no longer has any contact with that coalition. Stone and FAS further feel that the Seignious appointment would "sever the agency from its constituency" and prove to be a "booby trap for the administration."

Seignious, in his testimony, said, "It is high time that arms control became a central component of national security policy." He has been an at-large negotiator during the SALT II negotiations in between his time as president of the Citadel, a South Carolina military academy, and claims a high degree of commitment to the principle of arms control that he sees as compatible with a strong defense. "It is a fallacy to believe that because one believes in a strong defense he cannot believe in arms control."

When a member of the committee asked the general about the opposition to his appointment voiced by, among others, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, he responded that his critics were "ungrateful" considering his long years of service. He said those who testify against him will "only lose their credibility."

In addition to FAS, Women's Interna-



Gen. George M. Seignious, named by President Carter to head arms control agency.

tional League for Peace and Freedom, the United Methodist Church, World Federalists, Sane, and Women's Strike for Peace are strongly against the appointment.

Another group, Foreign Affairs Information Project, based at Columbia University, raised objections to the shape of U.S. foreign policy which the appointment represents.

They cited the affair as a ploy of presidential Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski to gain control of ACDA. Jim Khatami, chairman of the Project, said, "Brzezinski has hinted...the U.S. can re-

assert its global primacy over the Soviets by facing them down in a nuclear confrontation."

Other sources confirm the fact that the Seignious choice was a Brzezinski decision. An aide at the White House told one questioner, "We don't know anything about it [the Seignious appointment], it's a Brzezinski appointment."

The Church committee, however, did not respond to the broader issues raised by Khatami. Church said, "The question of Mr. Brzezinski's position is not now before the committee." ■

JERRY BROWN

The governor makes his cuts sound leftish

By Larry Remer

SACRAMENTO, CALIF.

JERRY BROWN MAY HAVE HIS sights set on the White House, but he's clearly in the doghouse with Democratic Party regulars in his home state. Anti-Brown sentiment boiled over at the state Democratic Party Convention here in mid-January, where Brown played to a mixture of cheers and boos as reaction built to his headline grabbing assault on government spending the week before.

Brown's travails lived up an otherwise dull gathering where the major item on the agenda was selection of state chairman, a largely ceremonial post since organized political parties in California have little formal power.

A clear majority of the 2,000 delegates were angered by Brown's new state budget, which holds hikes in public aid payments and public employee wages to less than half the rate of inflation. Many delegates were also disturbed by Brown's call for a Constitutional Convention to draft an Amendment that would force the federal government to balance its budget—a move widely heralded as a definitive shift to the right for Brown.

The point man in the attack against Brown was State Assembly Speaker Leo McCarthy, who is admittedly gearing up to make a bid for the statehouse in 1982 when Brown's term is over. Without mentioning Brown by name, McCarthy delivered a blistering attack on the Governor at a luncheon on the first day of the con-

fab. "This party had its proudest moments

when it was guided by visionary leaders who gave voice to the underprivileged and dispossessed," McCarthy declared.

Wearing a button with "\$28" stamped on it to connote the monthly differential in aid payments to the blind and disabled under Brown's budget, McCarthy pledged to fight to restore the funds in the legislature.

Barely half an hour later Brown appeared before the convention to defend his positions. The boos and cheers were

yourself, "Where did those hundreds of billions of dollars go?"

"Did it go to the poor? Did it go to better education? Or did it go to dictators? Did it go for arming the Shah of Iran? Did it go to kill people in Vietnam?"

"While I hear invocations of the needs of the many, I see a theory that props up the privileges of the few," he stated. "And that kind of Democratic Party philosophy I reject. I reject it today and I reject it tomorrow."

"Where did those hundreds of billions of dollars go?" Brown asks. "To the poor, or for better education? Or to foreign dictators?"

evenly split upon his arrival, yet the young governor took to the offensive, lashing back at his critics.

"I'll be glad to debate any Democrat to test the qualities of leadership," he declared, challenging McCarthy's statements. "Who are the timid souls of this party? Are they the ones who serve up the rhetoric of the '60s and ignore the realities of the '80s?"

It was Brown's strongest indication yet that he doesn't plan to backtrack on his stance that the federal budget should be balanced. As he spoke, his face turned red and his voice rose to an almost undecipherable shout in a rare display of emotion.

"Why is the dollar going down?" he asked. "Is it because we've had hundreds of billions of dollars of deficit spending? ...[and] did anyone in this room ever ask

It is time to challenge "the cherished myths of liberalism," declared Brown in defense of his call for a balanced federal budget. It was "the best and the brightest," he continued [who] told us all we have to do is spend more money, and if that doesn't work print more; and if that doesn't work, print still more."

He called for an end to federal expenditures of more than \$50 billion annually in foreign aid to "dictatorships like Korea, where they pay labor 90¢ an hour to make goods that are sold here undercutting our own markets." He urged energy self-sufficiency, limits on imports, and the development of a Common Market-like economic unit involving Mexico, the U.S. and Canada.

In an impassioned plea, Brown urged, "Don't yield this issue to the far right." He repeatedly brought up Vietnam, which

he said the American people were hoodwinked into supporting through deficit financing. And he linked his own opposition to the war and support of Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers in the late '60s as part of the search for new directions—a search he insists his call for a balanced budget is in harmony with. Were the federal government to be forced to balance its budget, Brown argued, the petense that the country could have "guns and butter" would have to be shelved, and the fight over priorities would commence.

Seeking to meet his critics head on, he opened up the microphone to questions from the floor. It was a masterful display of Brown's statesmanship and political acumen. The questions came hot and heavy and he parried them with ease.

No, he wasn't firm about trimming the level of public aid. But the electorate in a post-Prop. 13 California would only stand for so much government spending and if aid levels were raised, cuts would have to come from somewhere else. Yes, he'd be willing to explore the use of public pension fund monies to finance socially useful programs like housing instead of investments in corporations with South African operations and if legislation permitting changes in investment policies reached his desk he'd sign it. And yes, he is sincere about the need for a Constitutional Convention. Its scope can be limited to one issue. It may be the only way to force Congress to act.

By the end of the session, Brown had mollified his critics. And though the applause wasn't as warm as it had been for McCarthy, when he was done the boos had vanished. ■