

History/PolS. # 315
Re: Notes with NA!

Was there a military conspiracy?

Refer back to earlier stuff about JFK and the military.

1. Mentioned the Bay of Pigs.

Kennedy's anger with the JCS for not blowing the whistle on the CIA operation as militarily unworkable.

Bay of Pigs was a legacy of the Eisenhower/Nixon administration. When Ike left office he urged the president-elect to go forward with the operation.

Pressure on Kennedy from CIA: (1) what to do with the 1,400 Cubans who were armed and ready to hit the beaches if it was called off? (2) what would it take to disarm them. Remember that many of them were in training in Honduras and Guatemala would JFK have to call in the Marines to disarm them after they found out that the operation was scrubbed. (3) CIA reports that Castro had pilots being training in Czechoslovakia with the new MIGs. If the operation did not get off the dime and right away Cuban flown MIGs would make the operation impossible.

Kennedy was never told that the operation was not coordinated with CIA covert plans inside Cuba to raise an internal insurrection of anti-Castro Cubans timed with the US assisted invasion. JFK knew that 1,400 Cuban Brigade would not be able to pull off this operation alone.

The JCS never alerted him to this either.

2. SE Asia. The JCS and the Laotian Crisis. Lemnitzer's and JCS answer was nukes if the Chinese came across.

Read from Schlesinger on Lemnitzer and the Pentagon's SE Asian Policy.

3. Vietnam. JFK's NSM # 263 and the withdrawal of 1,000 troops and units before the end of 1963.

November 19, 1963 at a conference at Camp Smith in Honolulu. The military leaders at this conference completely rewrote the meaning of NSM # 263 by turning the job over to a couple of clerks in the Pentagon. (The Devil is in the details).

John Newman's JFK and Vietnam: Deception, Intrigue, and Struggle for Power, writes on (p. 446). about what followed after Dallas w/ LBJ's Vietnam policy encapsulated in NSM# 273 "NSM-273 was a significant escalation of the war."

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Stanley Karnow in his prize-winning popular treatment of Vietnam called Vietnam quotes LBJ as telling the JCS "Just let me get elected, and then you can have your war."

We looked at a couple of sources that dealt with the mutual distrust between JFK and the JCS.

The Purcell/Galbraith article:

They lay out the planning of the JCF to unleash a surprise all-out nuclear attack on the SU by 1963. It was calculated that at that time the US would have a "outright missile superiority" to destroy everything in the world that was Red--from Albania to China. JFK left this meeting in disgust and remarked to Dean Rusk, "And we call ourselves human beings."

This 1961 meeting where the SIOP-62 was discussed and is documented in the "Burris memo" to LBJ has been confirmed by others without providing the exact date as Purcell/Galbraith do.

Richard Reeves, President Kennedy: Profile of Power
Arthur Schlesinger, Jr, Robert Kennedy and His Times
Ted Sorensen, Kennedy
Dean Rusk, As I Saw It

Khrushchev in Memoirs states that during the height of the Cuban missile crisis Robert Kennedy speaking to Soviet Ambassador Anatoli Dobrynin referred to "an irreversible chain of events could occur against JFK's will" unless the crisis was resolved and very soon. According to K he told Dobrynin that "the President is not sure that the military will not overthrow him and seize power. The American military could get out of control."

We have to remember that JFK was told by Lemnitzer that as soon as the president gave the "execute order" for using nuclear weapons--even one nuclear weapon--that once he opened the cage this giant snake was under the control of the military--SAC would decide on how many weapons would be used and how many targets would be hit.

The SIOP-62 targeted over 3,000 cities and military bases that were part of the "Red World." That is from Albania (Eastern Europe) the SU, and Red China.

Apropos of this was the inclusion of the recommendations to JFK by defense analyst Thomas C. Schelling quoted in the Purcell/Galbraith article in which Schelling recommended that the "centralization of control of the nuclear arsenal be placed only in the president's hands as a "means of preventing any use by anyone not specifically authorized" This became a priority of the JFK administration in the months following the 1961 review

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of the JCS's SIOP-62.

Kennedy frustrated any of these contingency plans by negotiating a peaceful solution to the crisis.

So by 1963 the military and powerful figures in the civilian sector were questioning Kennedy's handling of the Cold War. Many thought he was a "defeatist." He had backed away on the Bay of Pigs. He sought a negotiated settlement of the Laotian crisis. He accepted the Berlin Wall rather than call on US forces in Europe to knock it down. He refused to send combat troops into Vietnam. He was listening to the likes of MacArthur, DeGaulle, and Senator Mike Mansfield, about the utter futility of sending a land army into SE Asia. He had initiated the withdrawal of 1,000 troops and units (a signal to those in his party and Congress who opposed any deeper commitment in Vietnam). He was working toward a detente with Khrushchev after the missile crisis. (His pledge of no invasion of Castro's Cuba; hot line w/ Russ; wheat deal with the Soviets; and end to atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons by US/USSR.

The 1964 presidential election was almost a certainty for his return to the White House. He was running against Barry Goldwater and would almost certainly be re-elected giving him another four years to find some diplomatic solutions to the Cold War.

None of this was proof that the military was behind the assassination. But at the same time if we look at the question of motive, means, and opportunity it cannot be dismissed.

The readiness of some of our highly placed military leaders to incite nuclear war that would have killed hundreds of millions of people in Eastern Europe and Asia and would doubtlessly have ended with the destruction of some American cities from Soviet missiles and the death toll among Americans and other innocent civilians around the world by radioactive fallout from the fiery holocaust that would be Eastern Europe, Russia, and Asia. . . .

If they were willing to undertake this kind of extreme action (one could say they had crossed into the zone of total lunacy) would the removal of a president be off limits?

Consider all this when you consider MOTIVE

When you consider Means what group or organization had the means to plant evidence against Oswald (C.E # 399), get the Mannlicher-Carcano into the building; explain the mystery of the paper bag.

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And control the autopsy at Naval Bethesda Hospital that you have read about for today. No other interest, group, or agency had this kind of Opportunity.

Ask the question the lawyers' ask" Cui Bono? Who benefiited from Dallas?

The there was Richard Rhodes' article on General Curtis LeMay and SAC'scall for at least 2400 ICBMs and Thomas Powers, head of SAC, who wanted 10,000. Rhodes gives some idea of the serious disappointment by the military that JFK did not use the Cuban missile crisis to invade Cuban and strike at the Russians if they took any counterreaction. LeMay and others saw the peaceful solution of the greatest crisis of the nuclear age as a "lost opportunity" for the US to "win" the Cold War.

Note: Dispute the Kennan quote hBT
did not show JCS after he
became President. (See McMaster's
Dereliction of Duty (1997)