

C.I.A. PLOT TO KILL CASTRO DESCRIBED

Agency Flew 2 Assassins to
Cuba, Ex-Colonel Says

WASHINGTON, April 27, (AP) — The Central Intelligence Agency flew a two-man assassination team, into Cuba in an unsuccessful attempt to kill Premier Fidel Castro, a retired Air Force colonel said today.

The colonel, L. Fletcher Prouty, said that in "late 1959 or early 1960," while he was serving in the Defense Department's Office of Special Operations, he handled a C.I.A. request for a small, specially equipped Air Force plane that was used to land two Cuban exiles on a road near Havana.

The two exiles were "equipped with a high-powered rifle and telescopic sights" and "knew how to get to a building in Havana which overlooked a building where Castro passed daily," Colonel Prouty, now an official with Amtrak, said in a telephone interview.

The plane, an L-28 "helio-courier," returned safely to Eglin Air Force Base in Florida, he said, but the "Cuban exiles as far as I know were picked up between where they were left off."

Flown by 'Mercenaries'

He said that one of the would-be assassins was named Oscar Spjio and that the plane had been flown by "mercenaries" on the C.I.A. payroll.

Colonel Prouty added that he knew of "one or two" other assassination attempts against the Cuban Premier after the Bay of Pigs operation in 1961,

but said he did not know the details of those missions because he had not worked on them directly.

Colonel Prouty retired from the Air Force in 1963 and has since written a book called "The Secret Team," detailing his experiences as Air Force liaison with the C.I.A. [The book did not include the Castro assassination report.]

Asked why he had waited until now to come forward with his story, Colonel Prouty said he had become incensed at the verbal abuse directed yesterday at Daniel Schorr, a CBS newsmen, by Richard M. Helms, former Director of Central Intelligence.

Mr. Helms, who had just emerged from three and a half hours of questioning by the Rockefeller commission, denounced the newsmen and referred to him as "Killer Schorr" for reporting that the "C.I.A. goes around killing people."

Ford's Concern Cited

Mr. Schorr has reported on a number of occasions that President Ford is concerned that an unlimited investigation of C.I.A. activities could uncover agency involvement in foreign assassinations.

"It got me a little upset," Colonel Prouty said of Mr. Helms's criticism of Mr. Schorr, adding that he was "positive" Mr. Helms know about the mission.

At the time, Mr. Helms—now the United States Ambassador to Iran—was an assistant to Richard Bissell, then the agency's deputy director of plans. But Colonel Prouty said Mr. Bissell was preoccupied with directing U-2 flights over the Soviet Union, leaving Mr. Helms in almost total control of clandestine operations against Cuba.