

Fidel on JFK and

By DANIEL F. GILMORE

WASHINGTON (UPI) — At the moment John F. Kennedy was killed, Fidel Castro was considering peace feelers from the American President — and the CIA was plotting the Cuban leader's assassination, a taped interview with Castro revealed yesterday.

The House Assassinations Committee released the full transcript of Castro's interview with Chairman Louis Stokes (D-Ohio) and other committee members and staff in Havana on April 3.

The committee, during its public hearing, also played tapes of the interview, carried out through an interpreter.

Castro was quoted as vehemently denying any advance knowledge of the assassination of Kennedy, as he was alleged to have said he had — in a 1967 interview — based on Lee Harvey

Oswald's remarks to the Cuban consul in Mexico City in 1963.

"This is absurd," he said. "I didn't say that. It's a lie from head to toe . . . It would have been our moral duty to inform the United States."

"Actually, I felt sad about it," he said of the assassination. "I received that news with bitterness. I was very badly depressed."

On Nov. 22, 1963, the day the President was killed, Castro recalled, he was meeting with a secret envoy from Kennedy,

French journalist Jean Daniel.

Bettering Relations

"He asked the journalist to talk with me and then return to Washington with a 'a response' to his feelers on bettering relations between the two countries following the Bay of Pigs affair and the missile crisis, Castro said.

"We were just talking in those terms . . . but then . . . the first news started to arrive by radio that an attempt against Kennedy had taken place and that he had been seriously wounded . . . from

Oswald

our point of view, Mr. Kennedy was the only man that at that point had the authority and enough courage in order to bring about the change."

Castro said he and Kennedy had waged a "strong political struggle" but "Kennedy was an adversary we had sort of become used to . . . to a certain extent we were honored in having such a rival. He was not mediocre. He was an outstanding man."

Further, Castro said, "I was convinced that Kennedy himself was starting to change."

Tells of Poisoning Plot

Castro said he learned later that on the day of Kennedy's assassination the CIA was giving instructions to Rolando Cubela,

one of its agents in Cuba with the code name Amlash, to poison the Cuban leader.

Cubela was later arrested and imprisoned and committee members were allowed to interview him. Cubela confirmed, the committee said, that he was the Amlash mentioned in the 1976 Senate Intelligence Committee report on CIA abuses who was instructed by his "case officer" to poison Castro.

Castro said he did not like or respect Kennedy's successors, Lyndon Johnson or Richard Nixon, but President Carter, he said, "is a man of a different mentality" who could not tolerate CIA assassination projects.