

Bobby Kennedy reportedly told of CIA plot

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Central Intelligence Agency warned then Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy in 1962 that two Mafia figures, under investigation by the Justice Department, had been involved in an agency plot to assassinate Cuban Premier Fidel Castro, a former high agency official said Tuesday.

"Mr. Kennedy said, 'The next time you deal with the Mafia come to me first,'" the official said, "but he didn't voice any other objection."

The official, who asked that his name not be used, said Kennedy was informed of the assassination plot after the CIA learned that the two alleged Mafia figures involved, Sam Giancana and John Roselli, were targets of a Justice Department probe.

"We gave Kennedy the facts and said, 'Here's the problem,'" he said, explaining the CIA was concerned whether Roselli or Giancana would reveal the plot against Cas-

tro in an effort to avoid prosecution.

The official added he did not know what effect the information had on subsequent Justice Department efforts to prosecute Giancana and Roselli.

Giancana, a reputed Chicago rackets chief, was sentenced to one year in jail for refusing to answer questions before a federal grand jury in 1964.

When he was released, the U.S. attorney for Chicago proposed to convene a new grand jury and jail Giancana again if he still refused to answer questions, but Justice Department officials in Washington ordered the prosecution dropped.

William Hundley, the former head of the department's organized crime division, said that he had no knowledge of Giancana's CIA connection at the time and that the decision to drop the prosecution was made in order to avoid the appearance of harassment.

Giancana never reveal-

ed his CIA connection, but an attorney for Roselli sought a reduction of sentence for his client on the grounds of his cooperation with the agency. Roselli was convicted of failing to register as an alien and of conspiracy to rig card games.

The New York Times reported Tuesday that the Rockefeller commission investigating CIA activities has learned of documents detailing the CIA's relationship with Giancana and Roselli. The documents, now in the hands of the Justice Department, are said to express Kennedy's concern that a vigorous prosecution of either man

might compromise the CIA.

The former CIA official said the 1961 plot involved contacts between Giancana and Roselli and two former CIA agent, William K. Harvey and Col. Sheffield Edwards. He said he and Edwards,

then chief of security for the CIA, personally informed Kennedy of the plot.

Edwards, now retired and living in suburban Maryland, refused to comment. Harvey, now living in Indianapolis, could not be reached for comment immediately.