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NEW ORLEANS

Manchester in Error--Pentagon

NEW YORK (AP) — The Defense Department denies statements in William Manchester's book that President Lyndon B. Johnson had not been advised on procedures for ordering nuclear retaliation in the event of an attack following the assassi-

nation of President John F. Kennedy.

Security officials in the Kennedy administration also denied that Johnson had not been briefed. The U.S. atomic attack shaped satchel that lay in the code was carried in a football-presidential jet which took Johnson and the body of Kennedy back to Washington from Dallas Nov. 22, 1963.

KENNEDY OFFICIALS said that at the late president's insistence Johnson had been familiarized thoroughly on the contents of the satchel.

Manchester says in the book, "The Death of a President":

"The difficulty was that Johnson had no idea of what was in the bag. He knew that it existed, but he hadn't been briefed about the contents, and if the thunderbolt of all-out war struck that afternoon, the country's retalia-

tory arsenal could be spiked until he had been led through Taz Shepard's primers for the first time."

CAPT. TAZEWELL Shepard was a military aide to President Kennedy.

Manchester also writes:

"Had Russia attacked across the DEW line, the greatest military establishment in the history of the world might easily have been musclebound during the 15 fateful minutes of warning time and perhaps even afterward, when second-strike capacity became a factor."

Manchester also says there was a slowdown in commercial telephone service because of the great load of calls in the hours immediately following the assassination. He says phones in the Senate and House offices, the White House and the Signal

Corps had been paralyzed temporarily.

According to Manchester's account, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy roamed the streets in Washington, trying the phones of strangers, until he got through to then-Atty. Gen. Robert F. Kennedy, to learn if their brother was dead.

"It became obvious that in a national emergency this (telephone service) would be the first link to snap," Manchester writes.

Regarding the passages on the slowdown in commercial telephone service, the Defense Department said:

"Governmental communications, military and civil, were fully operational at all times and were far in excess of any requirement arising out of any security emergency. Those secure communications operate independently of commercial systems."