

Retaliation Called Castro Motive

Roselli Blamed Cuba in

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WASHINGTON—Long before his recent murder, John Roselli, the CIA's underworld recruit in attempts to kill Fidel Castro, had been privately claiming that agents of the Cuban premier, in retaliation, were involved in the assassination of President Kennedy.

Roselli's belief in a Cuban connection to the 1963 assassination was expressed through his lawyer, Edward P. Morgan, to the Federal Bureau of Investigation as long ago as March 1967, and also in private conversations with a long-time associate of Roselli who participated in meetings between Roselli and the CIA.

An FBI "blind memorandum" on an interview with Morgan dated March 21, 1967, was included, without identifying Morgan, in last June's Senate Intelligence Commit-

tee report on the role of the intelligence community in the Kennedy assassination investigation.

Morgan told the FBI that Roselli and another Morgan client had informed him that Castro had become aware of CIA assassination conspiracies against him and thereafter employed teams of individuals "who were dispatched to the U. S. for the purpose of assassinating Mr. Kennedy."

Because neither Morgan nor Roselli was identified in the Senate report, the significance of that portion of the 106-page document was discounted at the time it was published in June, before Roselli's body was discovered in a floating oil drum off the Florida coast.

The Washington Post, however, has confirmed that Morgan and Roselli were the sources of testimony that suggested a Cuban role in the Kennedy murder.

Morgan's account, accord-



PRESIDENT KENNEDY
Victim of retaliation?



JOHN ROSELLI
Told his lawyer in '67.

ing to a summary of the FBI interview, was that Roselli had reached his conclusion about a Cuban connection to the Kennedy assassination from "feedback" furnished by sources close to Castro who

were involved in the CIA plots to assassinate the Cuban leader.

"His [Morgan's] clients were aware of the identity of some of the individuals who came to the United

JFK Death



FIDEL CASTRO
Allegedly sent agents.

States for this purpose and he understood that two such individuals were now in the state of New Jersey," the FBI summary said.

The longtime associate of Roselli who was interviewed

by the Washington Post said there had been no question in the slain mobster's mind that Kennedy had been killed on Castro's behalf in reprisal for the CIA schemes against the Cuban leader.

"He was positive, he was sure," said the associate, who knew Roselli well and was in contact with him before Roselli disappeared from his Florida home on July 28.

The associate, who does not want to be identified publicly, is scheduled to be interviewed this week, by Dade County, Fla., homicide detectives. He has a party to Roselli's contacts in the early 1960s with CIA case officers overseeing the attempts to assassinate Castro.

However, the CIA's involvement in the schemes to assassinate Castro, was not

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divulged to the Warren Commission, and knowledge of the attempts was until 1967 confined to a small, elite circle of the U. S. intelligence community.

President Johnson apparently first learned about the schemes only after a March 7, 1967, column by the late Drew Pearson, which prompted Johnson to order a CIA investigation of the highly sensitive episode.

Full details of the CIA-underworld collusion in the plots to kill Castro did not surface publicly until the publication last year of the Senate Intelligence Committee's assassination report and the ensuing report last June on the possible role of the intelligence agencies in the investigation of the Kennedy assassination.

The body of Roselli, who lived flamboyantly in a world of mobsters, politicians and playgirls, was found two weeks ago in an oil drum weighted with chains but buoyed by gases from decomposition on the ocean's surface off the coast of Miami. The specific cause of death was determined by an autop-

sy to be asphyxiation.

Last year an underworld colleague of Roselli, Sam (Momo) Giancana, who also had been recruited by the CIA in the effort to kill Castro, was found shot to death in his Chicago home in what police described as a highly professional job by assailants who penetrated the mobster's personal security screen. Giancana was due to testify before the Senate Intelligence Committee shortly after his demise.

Neither murder has been solved.

The possibility that Roselli's murder might have been related to his Senate testimony on the CIA schemes to kill Castro has brought the FBI into the investigation at the request of Attorney General Levi.

In a Senate Intelligence Committee summary of the FBI's interview, Morgan was

reported to have acknowledged that his clients were "on the fringe of the underworld" and that they faced "possible prosecution in a crime not related to the assassination . . ."

It may be relevant that Roselli had serious legal problems at the time.

In May 1966, the FBI threatened to deport him for living in the U. S. under an assumed name unless he cooperated in an investigation of the Mafia (his true name was Filippo Saco). At the time he contacted a CIA acquaintance from his anti-Castro conspiracy days, CIA security director Col. Sheffield Edwards, who informed the FBI that Roselli wanted to "keep square with the bureau" but was afraid that the mob might kill him for talking.

In 1967 after being arrested for gambling fraud at the Friars Club in Beverly Hills, Roselli approached his former CIA case officer, William Harvey, who sought unsuccessfully to intercede in the prosecution.

It was against this background that Morgan went first to Drew Pearson and then to the FBI with Roselli's sensational allegations of CIA plotting against Castro and the Cuban counterespionage directed against Kennedy.

Last April Roselli told the Senate Intelligence Commit-

tee he had no recollection of either receiving information that Castro had retaliated against Kennedy or of having discussed it was Morgan. This meant either that Roselli had suffered a dramatic loss of memory or that Morgan's statement to FBI agents nine years earlier was a pure invention, a serious risk for an established Washington lawyer.

No committee source could explain the discrepancy, and Morgan declined to confirm that Roselli was the client in question or to discuss either his allegations against the Cuban government or his recent testimony.

The internal FBI memo on the 1967 interview with Morgan was sent to headquarters with a transmittal slip saying: "No further investigation is being conducted by the Washington field office unless it is advised to the contrary by the bureau."