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'Neutralization' of Dictator's Brother

U.S. Envoy Urged Slaying

BY GEORGE LARDNER JR.

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Washington — Shortly after the assassination of Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo in 1961, the State Department was urged by its new consul general there to give highest priority to the "complete neutralization" of Gen. Arismendi Trujillo, the slain dictator's troublesome brother.

The word "neutralize," according to informed sources, was a bureaucratic euphemism for "assassinate" and had turned up before in secret government documents concerning the rebel group that killed Rafael Trujillo.

The recommendation involving Arismendi Trujillo was sent directly to the State Department and apparently received fairly widespread distribution there.

The Senate Intelligence Committee has been investigating CIA involvement in assassination plots for months.

The proposal to neutralize Arismendi Trujillo was made to the State Department in an early September 1961 telegram from U.S. consul general John C. Hill in Ciudad Trujillo (now Santo Domingo).

The telegram, which also contained other recommendations for U.S. policymakers, sources said, was stamped "Secret," earmarked for "action" by the State Department's Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, and was designated for distribution to approximately a dozen other offices at the department.

It could not be learned how seriously the recommendation was considered or how high it was carried. Arismendi Trujillo left the Dominican Republic in November 1961 in a showdown with President Joaquin Balaguer that brought U.S. warships close to shore.

The State Department also had been informed of the assassination plans of the Dominican dissident group which killed Rafael Trujillo on May 30, 1961, after getting what has been described as a token supply of small arms from the CIA.

In the Dominican Republic at least, confirmed one investigator of the CIA's involvement in assassination plots, "the CIA was not operating in a vacuum."

The CIA weapons, for example, were provided to the rebel group that killed Trujillo with the help of consul general Henry Dearborn, Hill's predecessor. The CIA reportedly stated that the guns had not been given to members of the opposition as "personal defense weapons attendant to neutralize (Rafael) Trujillo."

Although there is no evidence that the CIA guns were used in Trujillo's assassination, Dearborn has acknowledged that the U.S. government was well aware that the dissidents saw assassination as "the only option" for them. He repeatedly has stated that whatever he did was done "not only with the knowledge but the approval of the State Department."

A few days after Trujillo was killed, Dearborn was replaced by Hill as consul general. Meanwhile, Lt. Gen. Rafael (Ramfis) Trujillo Jr., the dictator's son, returned to take command of the Dominican armed forces. The island remained in turmoil.

One of the biggest problems was Gen. Arismendi Trujillo, Ramfis's uncle, who reigned virtually supreme in the Bonao district with a private army of 6,000 men known as Cocuyos de las Cordilleras (Glowworms of the Mountains).

Hill, among others, reportedly tried to persuade Arismendi Trujillo to leave the country, but without success.

By early September 1961, sources said, Hill informed the State Department that he felt "highest priority" should be given not only to "removing" Hector Trujillo, another of the late dictator's brothers who had been president (and who, the cable said, was neutralizing Gen. Arismendi Trujillo).

Hill told Washington that "his departure or complete neutralization would do much to promote" a more democratic climate and would substantially reduce the possibility of "repeated incidents" in the countryside.

In late October 1961 the government newspaper El Caribe said Arismendi Trujillo had left the country "for health reasons." Brother Hector left a day later, but the two of them returned unexpectedly in mid-November, triggering fears of a coup.

Acting on information supplied by Hill, Secretary of State Dean Rusk warned publicly that the two brothers might be plotting to seize power. Besides calling the threat to the world's attention, Rusk hinted of possible intervention, saying the Kennedy administration was considering "further measures."

Ramfis quickly resigned as chief of the armed forces and left for Paris. The elder Trujillos went into exile a day later, while a flotilla of U.S. warships stood offshore in support of President Balaguer.

A Foreign Service career officer, Hill later was credited with working out the formula for a provisional government in the Dominican Republic and was named by President Kennedy as one of the United States' outstanding diplomats. He died in 1973.

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Testifying about proposed covert operations generally, a longtime State Department liaison officer with the CIA, James R. Gardner, said recently that they were usually discussed at informal meetings in the State Department, no matter whether the proposal was generated in the field or in Washington, by the CIA or by State.

In an appearance before the House Intelligence Committee, Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger added that every covert operation has had the personal approval of the President since he came to Washington with the Nixon administration. Kissinger said he was virtually certain that this was the case in earlier administrations as well.

Bizarre Episode

Senate Pursued Story That JFK May Have Heard Castro Plot From Woman With Mob Ties

BY LAURENCE STERN

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Washington — Senate intelligence investigators pursued a bizarre White House episode which raised the possibility — now fully discounted — that President Kennedy may have learned of CIA plans to poison Fidel Castro from a woman friend of top underworld figures.

The highly sensitive investigation by the Senate Intelligence Committee will be alluded to briefly in the report expected this week on the CIA's involvement in plans to assassinate foreign leaders. The report is scheduled for release Thursday.

The investigation centered on a 1960 Kennedy campaign volunteer, then known as Judith Campbell, who became the subject of top-priority concern to late FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover because of her association with crime figures John Roselli and the late Sam Giancana. Both men were involved in the CIA's plot to poison Castro.

Campbell's role in the episode was heightened by the fact that she frequently telephoned the Kennedy White House.

Investigators found evidence of some 70 phone calls from her during an 11-month period in the log of former presidential secretary Evelyn Lincoln on file in the Kennedy Library.

Lincoln told the Senate Intelligence Committee that Campbell was a volunteer in the California campaign and had met the President there. She said she could not recall that the former campaign worker ever visited the President in the White House or elsewhere after the 1960 election.

Campbell gave the committee a deposition saying that she never knew of the poison plot from Giancana, Roselli or anyone else. From the standpoint of the investigation into assassination schemes directed against foreign leaders, this meant the entire Campbell episode was irrelevant to the committee's inquiry.

"We were not investigating President Kennedy's personal associations," said one ranking member of the investigating panel.

Campbell's calls to the White House — usually logged into Lincoln's office — began on March 29, 1961, from the caller's Los Angeles residence. Many were described in the investigative files of the staff as "Campbell-JFK calls."

The files indicate that several of Campbell's calls to the White House were made from the Oak Park, Ill., residence of Giancana. At times, however, she would call from the Mayflower Hotel in Washington.



J. EDGAR HOOVER

FBI Director Hoover, who was aware of the CIA's involvement with Giancana in anti-Castro operations, sent memos in February 1962, to Atty. Gen. Robert F. Kennedy and White House chief of staff Kenneth O'Donnell alerting them to the potentially embarrassing range of Campbell's social acquaintances.

Hoover then submitted a memo on Campbell directly to President Kennedy and met with him for lunch on March 22, 1962. There is no record of the discussion. Close former aides to the President recall no mention of it.

Lincoln said she also received a copy of the first memo and, at that point, Campbell's calls were no longer accepted at the White House.

The committee decided unanimously to take a low-key approach to the Campbell episode, some members feeling that it would be more appropriate to ignore it as irrelevant to presidential awareness of the Castro assassination schemes.

"We decided to allude to it in order to avoid any suggestion that we were playing favorites with some administrations," said one well-informed committee source.

Church committee staff logs which came into the possession of The Washington Post indicate that Hoover sent a

memo to then CIA Deputy Director for Plans (covert operations) Richard Bissell Oct. 18, 1960, recording his awareness of Giancana's involvement in the Castro poison plot.

By January 1961, Bissell was discussing an "executive action" — believed to be the Castro assassination plan — with two other high-level CIA officials. They were Sidney Gottlieb, who became chief of the technical services division in charge of the agency's drug experimentation program, and William Harvey, a senior case officer for underworld recruits.

The same month Bissell is recorded as having briefed McGeorge Bundy, then the President's national security affairs adviser, on the executive action.

Also in January 1961, the new President began receiving intensive briefings from then CIA Director Allen Dulles on the Bay of Pigs invasion plan.

That month of the Kennedy inauguration the new Attorney General undertook a coordinated investigation by federal and local agencies into the affairs of attempt on Castro's life.

It could not be determined when Atty. Gen. Kennedy first became aware of Giancana's dual role as a target of domestic criminal prosecution and an espionage agent in the pay of the U.S. government.

By April 1961 — days prior to the Bay of Pigs fiasco — there is evidence in the committee's files that the transmission of the poison materials toward the intended political target in Havana had begun.

Nonetheless, the committee could not determine whether President Kennedy ever learned of the CIA's recruitment of underworld figures, who were interested in re-establishing their bases in Havana, for the assassination attempt against Castro.

One preliminary memorandum prepared for the Senate committee said: "As elaborated in the previous sections of this report, all living CIA officials who were involved in the underworld assassination attempt or who were in a position to have known of the attempt have testified that they never discussed the assassination plot with the President."

Most of the principal figures are dead. The surviving aides of the late President profess, on the whole, to have no recollection of the Campbell episode 15 years ago.

Hoover's memorandum to President Kennedy is, for the moment, in the vaults of the Senate committee.