

Ford Abhors U.S. Role in Coups, Plots

11-22-75 By Stephen Isaacs

Washington Post Staff Writer

President Ford said yesterday that he "abhors" the thought of American government officials being involved in assassination plots and coups d'etat abroad.

In the wake of the Senate intelligence committee's report Thursday detailing CIA and other official participation in such plots, White House press secretary Ron

Nessen said the President "absolutely abhors government officials' being involved in those kinds of things, and he has forbidden officials in his administration from being involved."

Nessen refused to be more specific than to say that "he has in mind his own plans" for stopping such involvement and "they will be made public when they are ready."

He reminded reporters that files on individuals' involvement in the plots had been turned over to the Justice Department for review.

While Nessen would not detail what plans President Ford is considering, other White House aides have said in recent months they might include reorganization of the Central Intelligence Agency, appointment of a CIA inspector general who would be independent of the agency's leadership, and a different form of executive branch panel to watch over the CIA's activities.

While Nessen was briefing reporters, Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger was himself appearing before a closed session of the intelligence committee.

The committee's report portrayed Kissinger as playing a strong role in a 1970 Nixon administration plot to disrupt Chilean politics and the government of Marxist leader Salvador Allende.

Kissinger appeared before the Senate committee for

more than two hours, in what he later told reporters was a review of the "the general problem of control of covert operations."

"I think there can be tighter control by the executive branch," he said, adding that he strongly favors a legislative oversight committee to work closely with the executive branch "as it develops covert operations."

Asked if he felt covert operations should be taken out of the CIA, Kissinger paused, and then said, "I would think not."

Reporters asked Kissinger if he was still trying to deny his and President Nixon's involvement in Chilean politics, in view of the committee's report that they instigated the CIA's activities.

At first he said, "I have testified at great length before the committee and they have the full record of these operations and I don't think it's appropriate for me to go into any public session."

When reminded that he and former President Nixon have disavowed any involvement in Chilean activities, the secretary said, "We have stated repeatedly that the military coup in 1973 was in no way supported by the United States. We had no contact with any of the people that carried out the military coup."

Reporters reminded him then that the committee's report was talking about activities in 1970, not 1973.

"The report is another matter," Kissinger said. "That's all I have to say."

With that, Kissinger turned and walked away.

World Bank president Robert S. McNamara, Secretary of Defense under

See REACT, A4, Col. 1

REACT, From A1

Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, talked briefly with a reporter by telephone.

The report suggests that one participant in a high-level meeting on Aug. 10, 1962, recalls McNamara's suggesting the group "consider the elimination or assassination" of Castro. But most participants, and the minutes, do not recall McNamara as having said that. McNamara refused yesterday to add to his own denials of having made the statement.

He said he has read the conclusions of the committee's report and said he agrees "with the two major conclusions of the committee, first that neither I nor any of my senior associates in the Kennedy or Johnson administrations authorized either the assassination of any political leader or the preparation of plans for any such action.

"Secondly, with hindsight, it appears we should have taken the initiative to investigate whether any such actions were under way in any part of the government, and to issue positive instructions to prohibit them.

"The lesson is that our successors must pursue such investigations."

At the Justice Department, where some 10 names of present or former government officials are said to have been referred for possible prosecution in connection with the coup and assassination plots, no one would comment yesterday on the status of the investigation.

In June, Attorney General Edward H. Levi labeled the department's investigation "high priority" and told reporters then he was "shocked" by some of the material that had been forwarded to him by the Rockefeller Commission, which also reviewed CIA activities.

The Justice investigation is in the hands of the head of the Criminal Division, Assistant Attorney General Richard L. Thornburgh, who is said to be leaning strongly toward prosecuting some of the officials.

VOA Airs Story on Death Plots

By Mike Shanahan

Associated Press

In 35 languages, the lead story from the Voice of America began this way:

"In Washington, a Senate investigation reveals that the United States Central Intelligence Agency was involved in several plots to kill foreign leaders."

The United States was washing its dirty linen, in broadcasts heard round the world Thursday.

"We have a charter which says you will be accurate, objective and comprehensive," said the chief of the VOA's news division. "I was not told to do otherwise with this story."

Bernard H. Kamenske said there was never any question about whether the report by the Senate intelligence committee would be handled straight. "There was no prior

clearance of news copy (by superiors)," he said.

"People would know if our reporting didn't carry the meat on the bone," he said in an interview yesterday.

"What is a listener going to tune in for if he is going to hear slogans and platitudes?"

In all, six VOA writers and editors had a hand in preparing what the agency would broadcast about the Senate report. All of it was then translated and sent through powerful transmitters around the world.

Latin Americans learned that President Nixon personally ordered an attempt through political espionage to block Marxist Salvador Allende from becoming president of Chile.

Africans learned of plots to kill Patrice Lumumba, the first premier of the Congo,

now Zaire.

And Cubans heard of the repeated and often bizarre plots against the life of Premier Fidel Castro.

While painful to report, U.S. involvement in assassination plots goes against traditional public policy "not to interfere in the internal affairs of other governments," said Kamenske.

CIA Plots to Kill Castro Continued Past JFK Death

11-22-75
By George Lardner Jr.

Washington Post Staff Writer

The Central Intelligence Agency continued sponsoring efforts to kill Cuban Premier Fidel Castro after President Kennedy's assassination and then apparently misled President Johnson about them when he demanded a full accounting.

According to the findings of the Senate intelligence committee, the CIA not only gave a poison pen to kill Castro to a Cuban secret agent on Nov. 22, 1963—the day Kennedy was killed in Dallas—but also arranged for the delivery of several caches of arms and finally a silencer and other equipment in 1964-65.

Some two years later, during a surge of criticism over the findings of the Warren Commission, which investigated Kennedy's assassination, Johnson became concerned by reports alleging U.S. involvement in plots to kill Castro and suggestions that Kennedy might have been killed in retaliation for such schemes.

The committee's 347-page report on CIA assassination attempts said Johnson ordered then-CIA Director Richard Helms to conduct an investigation in response to a column by Drew Pearson airing such allegations.

The column appeared on March 7, 1967, in the midst of the then-New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison's highly publicized pursuit of various rumors concerning the Kennedy assassination.

The CIA inspector general's office, the Senate report disclosed this week, conducted a formal inquiry and submitted a written "report on plots to assassinate Castro" to Helms on April 4, 1967.

It included a full account of the CIA's dealings with the Cuban secret agent who was known as AM-LASH during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations.

The report, however, was never submitted to Johnson. Senate investigators indicated that they could find no evidence that LBJ ever knew the document existed. Instead, the committee said in its report, Helms "briefed the

President orally," and apparently said nothing of the CIA's involvement in anti-Castro plotting past mid-1963.

Helms' handwritten notes, which he evidently prepared as an aid for the May 23, 1967, briefing and which committee investigators obtained, stopped the story in mid-1963, the Senate report said. When asked if he went any further and reported on efforts to kill Castro during Johnson's presidency, Helms told the committee: "I can't recall having done so."

Now ambassador to Iran, Helms said that it would not have occurred to him to brief LBJ about the delivery of several arms caches to AM-LASH in 1964, for example, because "I don't think one would approach the AM-LASH thing as an assassination plot against Castro."

Helms, the Senate report said, contended that AM-LASH "was an intelligence and political action agent." However, the committee pointed out, the CIA inspector general's report "treated the AM-LASH operation as an assassination plot."

At first, he spoke of defecting, but in the fall of 1963, started talking of

wanting to do something "really significant" and expressing a desire to plan the "execution" of Castro, one of AM-LASH's case officers told Senate investigators.

The agent also began asking for supplies and firm assurances of American support, specifically "a meeting with Attorney General Robert Kennedy."

With Helms' approval, Desmond Fitzgerald, chief of the CIA special affairs staff which was then in charge of covert Cuban operations, met with AM-LASH, reportedly in Paris, in October, 1963, and assured the agent that he (Fitzgerald) "was the personal representative of Robert Kennedy."

At the later meeting of Nov. 22, 12 years ago today, Fitzgerald also offered AM-LASH the poison pen. The Senate report said the Cuban operative spurned the pen, but was assured the CIA would "give him everything he needed" such as a rifle telescopic sight, a silencer and "all the money he wanted."

The Senate committee found that "the CIA delivered arms to AM-LASH in Cuba in March and June of 1964." Then, in early 1965, when he became

even more insistent on the need for Castro's assassination, the CIA put him in touch with the leader of an anti-Castro group known as B-1 "with the intention that AM-LASH obtain his desired weapon"—including a silencer—from that group.

The Senate report said that it was not until June, 1965, that the CIA "terminated all contact with AM-LASH and his associates for reasons related to security."

The Senate committee said it found "no evidence whatsoever" that Johnson authorized or even knew about "any assassination activity during his presidency." Helms, the report said, not only failed to give Johnson a full briefing on the Castro plots, but "also failed to inform the Warren Commission of the plots."

The report said the reason Helms gave for not telling the Warren Commission was that "the precise question was not asked."

The Senate report also stated that Helms sent a memo in 1966 to Secretary of State Dean Rusk explicitly denying CIA involvement with the Cuban operative in an assassination plot.

CIA Schemes, Gadgets Would

By Robert G. Kaiser

Washington Post Staff Writer

The late Ian Fleming, who invented James Bond, the archetypal spy of our age, liked to imply that Bond was more than just an invention—that his "license to kill," his exotic partners in espionage and his remarkable gadgets were more than figments of Fleming's imagination.

That hint of verisimilitude helped explain the success of Fleming's James Bond novels. Now the Senate intelligence committee has demonstrated that Fleming's hints could have been stronger. It was all true.

Well, nearly all true.

Bond usually got his man. The Central Intelligence Agency agents exposed by the Senate committee—spies with code names like QJ-WIN, WI-ROGUE—never got their man.

WI-ROGUE (an acronymical pseudonym) was "an essentially stateless soldier of fortune . . . a forger and former bank robber," according to an internal CIA report. He was "a man with an unsavory reputation who would try anything once, at least," according to the CIA's station officer in the Congo.

The CIA dispatched WI-ROGU to the Congo "after providing him with plastic surgery and a toupee so that Europeans traveling in the Congo would not recognize him," according to the Senate committee. The Agency's Africa Division had recommended him for the mission:

"He is indeed aware of the precepts of right and wrong, but if he is given an assignment which may be morally wrong in the eyes of the world, but necessary because his case officer ordered him to carry it out, then it is right, and he will dutifully undertake appropriate action for its execution without pangs of conscience. . . ." So reports the Senate Committee, quoting the Africa Division.

WI-ROGUE was in the Congo at the same time as QJ-WIN. QJ-WIN "was a foreign citizen with a criminal background recruited in Europe," the Senate panel learned, "not . . . a man of many scruples," in the words of another CIA operative.

These men were "assets" of the Leopoldville "station" of the CIA, though neither knew of the other's status. Then one day they met. A CIA

agent in the Congo reported on the encounter in a cable to Washington.

"QJ-WIN, who resides same hotel as WI-ROGUE, reported WI-ROGUE smelled as though he in intel (intelligence) business. Station denied any info on WI-ROGUE . . . QJ-WIN reported WI-ROGUE had offered him \$300 per month to participate in intel net and be member 'execution squad.' When QJ-WIN said he not interested, WI-ROGUE added there would be bonuses for special jobs. Under QJ-WIN questioning, WI-ROGUE later said he working for (America) service (i.e., CIA) . . ."

The CIA's department of gadgets, the Senate committee discovered, is called the Technical Services Division, or TSD. In 1960 TSD considered a number of schemes "to undermine (Fidel) Castro's charismatic appeal (in Cuba) by sabotaging his speeches." For example:

" . . . A scheme to spray Castro's broadcasting studio with a chemical which produced effects similar to LSD, but the scheme was rejected because the chemical was unreliable

Amaze Even Ian Fleming

... TSD impregnated a box of cigars with a chemical which produced temporary disorientation, hoping to induce Castro to smoke one of the cigars before delivering a speech, but that one also apparently did not get off the ground.

The most ambitious scheme of 1960 was a plan "to destroy Castro's image as 'The Beard' by dusting his shoes with thallium salts, a strong depilatory that would cause his beard to fall out. The depilatory was to be administered during a trip outside Cuba, when it was anticipated Castro would leave his shoes outside the door of his hotel room to be shined. TSD procured the chemical and tested it on animals . . ."

But that idea was dropped, apparently because "Castro canceled his trip."

(The committee retold these stories from a report prepared by the CIA's inspector general.)

Some of TSD's inventions failed to work. The division produced some capsules of lethal poison for potential assassins who hoped to drop one of the

pills into something Castro was drinking. But "the first batch of pills prepared by TSD . . . would not dissolve in water."

Another of TSD's inventions could never be used because of the unwitting generosity of James Donovan, a New York lawyer who negotiated the release of Cuban exiles captured during the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion.

Someone in the CIA had the idea that Donovan could make a gift of a diving suit to Castro, known to enjoy deep-sea diving. According to the committee report:

"The Technical Services Division bought a diving suit, dusted the inside with a fungus that would produce a chronic skin disease (Madura foot), and contaminated the breathing apparatus with a tubercule bacillus."

But Donovan, who had been negotiating personally with Castro, subverted this plan by giving the Cuban leader —on his own initiative, without consulting Washington—a different new diving suit, untainted by Madura foot or tuberculosis. After that, it seemed inappropriate to

present Castro with a second diving suit.

The Senate committee learned that the CIA has had a committee to pass on the use of biological and chemical substances. In one CIA document it was referred to as the "Health Alteration Committee."

In 1960 the CIA's Near East Division asked the Health Alteration Committee to endorse a "special operation" to "incapacitate" an Iraqi colonel who was thought to be "promoting Soviet-bloc political interests in Iraq." The committee said a "disabling operation" could be undertaken.

According to the Senate committee report, "The approved operation was to mail a monogrammed handkerchief containing an incapacitating agent to the colonel from an Asian country . . ."

The CIA informed the Senate committee that the colonel in question "suffered a terminal illness before a firing squad in Baghdad (an event we had nothing to do with) not very long after our handkerchief proposal was considered."