

# Church Says CIA Tried 3 Times To Kill Castro

Associated Press

CIA attempts to kill Cuba's Fidel Castro occurred under three presidents, but there is no hard evidence that any president authorized such schemes, according to Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Frank Church.

The Idaho Democrat said in a televised interview yesterday that "plans and attempts" against Castro's life "span the years from the Eisenhower administration through the Kennedy administration, and into the Johnson administration."

Church appeared on ABC's "Issues and Answers."

"WE HAVE NO hard evidence that directly relates this activity to any order that was given by any president," he said.

Church said the attempts against Castro had been confirmed by former CIA Director Richard M. Helms in secret testimony before the intelligence committee.

Although Church has made previous references to CIA plots and attempts against Castro's life, his remarks gave a much wider scope to the agency's involvement in assassination than previously reported.

CIA Director William E. Colby, in a separate appearance on the CBS program "Face the Nation," refused to discuss the allegations of CIA involvement in assassination, saying "the situation was very murky, and . . . I really don't believe that this subject is an appropriate one for an official to be talking about."

NEWS ACCOUNTS of CIA attempts to kill Castro have centered on a 1961 plot

in which underworld figures Sam Giancana and John Rosselli were involved in a scheme to poison the Cuban leader in connection with the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion.

That scheme has been publicly admitted by both Robert Maheu, a former aide to Howard Hughes, and Lawrence Houston, former CIA general counsel who said he informed then-Atty. Gen. Robert F. Kennedy about the plot in 1962. Maheu said he was a liaison between the CIA and the Mafia.

Other news accounts, based on anonymous sources, have described a variety of plots against Castro, all of them occurring during the Kennedy administration.

Church's comments marked the first official indication of CIA attempts to kill Castro during the Eisenhower and Johnson administrations as well.

"CURIOUSLY ENOUGH, an assassination may not be illegal" under current law, Church said. "Nobody ever thought that it would be necessary to write a federal law against assassination," he said.

Church also said there is no justification for a charge made by Sen. Barry M. Goldwater, R-Ariz., a committee member, that Democrats on the committee are trying to minimize the role played by President John F. Kennedy and his brother, Robert.

"There is no justification whatever for that charge, and I am surprised that Sen. Goldwater would have made it," Church said.

On another subject, Church said he and other members of the committee

would favor subpoenaing Richard M. Nixon if the former president refuses to testify voluntarily. The committee is seeking Nixon's testimony in a number of areas, including the so-called Huston plan for domestic intelligence gathering and CIA operations against Chilean Marxist Salvador Allende.

COLBY, meanwhile, said that Chairman Otis Pike, D-N.Y., of the House intelligence committee had overlooked the 1962 Cuban missile crisis when Pike recently stated that the CIA could not issue a timely warning against a surprise attack.

"He seems to have forgotten the Cuban missile crisis, on which intelligence did warn the country of a very direct threat to our country."

Asked whether he agreed with Pike, Church said: "I don't know about being open to a surprise attack. . . . I do know that there have been intelligence failures. One of them preceded the (1973) Yom Kippur war. We had bad intelligence with respect to the estimates of enemy strength in Vietnam," he said.