

What LBJ Said About Diem, Trujillo and JFK

By THOMAS R. HOSS
WASHINGTON (CS-T) — Johnson did not mention the assassinations of President Lyndon B. Johnson indicated several times that the U. S. was directly responsible for the assassinations of Dominican Republic dictator Rafael J. Trujillo and South Vietnam President Ngo Dinh Diem, associates of Johnson say.

And Johnson repeatedly expressed suspicion that President John F. Kennedy was the victim of a conspiracy and was not killed by a gunman acting alone as the Warren Commission concluded, according to the associates.

They insist, however, that Johnson did not mention the Central Intelligence Agency in connection with the slayings.

CBS News reported yesterday that President Ford has been told of at least three CIA assassinations of foreign officials and that he ordered "extreme caution" to prevent the embarrassing disclosure of such incidents in current investigations.

The Chicago Sun-Times was told that the CIA had maintained links in the past with the underworld, but intelligence officials cautioned against concluding that the agency had hired gangsters as assassins.

During the late 1960s and early 1960s, as the Chicago Sun-Times disclosed, the CIA had a connection with Chicago gang boss Sam Giancana.

The CIA reportedly sought to exploit Giancana's former gambling network in Cuba against prime minister Fidel Castro. In return, a detective agency acting as a front for the CIA buggered the Las Vegas hotel room of a singer and girl friend of Giancana at his request.

Earlier, during Castro's visit to the UN in 1960, high-ranking New York City police men said CIA agents approached them with a plan to kill him by placing a box of exploding cigars within his reach. Later the policeman said, agents told them the plan had been called off.

After the CBS report, CIA officials were quoted as admitting that there had been such assassination talk at a lower level but that it had not been approved at the top.

Johnson reportedly made his remarks about Trujillo and Diem in the first few weeks after Kennedy's assassination on Nov. 22, 1963.

Associates said yesterday that Johnson's first reaction to Kennedy's death was that it might have been some type of Communist plot. Later he reportedly declared "without amplification—that 'we' took care of Trujillo and Diem and that perhaps Kennedy's assassination represented some kind of terrible retribution.

Trujillo was killed in 1961 and Diem in 1963, both in military coups. The U. S. never has acknowledged responsibility for either assassination, but the Pentagon Papers revealed the CIA was in close contact with the generals who overthrew Diem. Former President Nixon declared in 1971 that there had been U. S. "complicity" in his assassination.

The Johnson associates said he repeatedly expressed doubt that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in killing Kennedy. David W. Belin, executive director of the Rockefeller Commission on the CIA, insisted again yesterday that only Oswald was involved.

But Sherwood Ross, a publisher of several major magazines, said that next Monday one of his clients will produce "new scientific findings" showing that Oswald told the truth when he denied killing anyone in Dallas that day.

1 = Not Castro or Castro's "retribution" - all went into