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Report of Plot Against Jamaica Denied by CIA

The Central Intelligence Agency yesterday strenuously denied a published report that it undertook a destabilization program in Jamaica last year, including several abortive attempts to kill Prime Minister Michael Manley.

The assertions were made in an article entitled "Murder As Usual" in the December edition of Penthouse magazine which appeared on newsstands here yesterday.

According to the authors, reporters Ernest Volkman and John Cummings of Newsday, the CIA embarked on a covert program to undermine the Jamaican economy following an unsuccessful ultimatum to Manley in December, 1975, from then-Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger. Among other things, Kissinger is alleged to have pressured Manley to stop being so friendly toward Fidel Castro's Cuba.

The article charged that the CIA later approved a plan to assassinate Manley, and the authors said three schemes were devised, one on July 14, 1976, when Manley's jeep was stopped by a roadblock; then on a scheduled Manley visit to Canada in September, 1976, and finally last Dec. 15, the night of the Jamaican elections.

According to the article, all the plans went awry before shots were fired.

Departing from its customary practice of refusing on such reports comment, the CIA said it undertook no covert action program of any kind against the Manley government and had no part in any plots to kill Manley. "The whole thing is absolutely ridiculous," said CIA spokesman Herbert Hetu. He pointed out that U.S. government officials are prohibited by a Feb. 19, 1976, executive order from conspiring to engage in political assassination. In addition, he said, covert action programs must be approved by the President in writing and reported to a number of congressional committees.