The Washington Merry-Go-Round

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Castro Plot Raises Ugly ons

By Jack Anderson

The plot to kill Cuban dicofficials would rather keep buried deep inside the Central buried deep inside the Central Intelligence Agency. 1. Has the CIA tried to as-ter it to the winds." He put about his brother's martyr-his brother, Robert, in charge dom? John McCone, who headed the of the CIA with instructions John McCone, who headed the of the CIA with instructions The last surviving brother, CIA during the six attempts to shake it up. The CIA made Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass), to knock off Castro, denied five attempts on Castro's life could give us no insight. His emphatically that the CIA has after the Bay of Pigs while brothers had never spoken to tried to kill anyone. But ex-Robert Kennedy was riding him about any assassination Sen: George Smathers, one of herd on the agency. John F. Kennedy's closest 4 Could the plot friends, told us the late Presi-Castro have backfired against teered, only that Sen. Smath-dent suspected that the CIA President Kennedy? The late ers had talked to the late had arranged the shootings of President was murdered nine President about eliminating the Dominican Republic's Ra- months after the last assassi- Castro.

Bay of Pigs scheme, All six selves as oilmen seeking re-mous. attempts, however, were made venge against Castro for his seizure of oil holdings. during 1961-63 when Mr. Kennedy occupied the White House. Smathers told us he once spoke to the late Presi- that Robert Kennedy, deep- a stupid thing to do, and he dent about assassinating Cas-ly despondent, went into semi-tro. Mr. Kennedy merely seclusion after his brother's the CIA was doing." rolled back his eyes, recalled assassination. Could he have Smathers, as if to indicate the been tormented by more than idea was too wild to discuss, natural grief? He certainly plot was authorized or imple-Subsequently, Mr. Kennedy learned that the assassin, Lee mented" to assassinate Castro, Cholon and "shot in a station

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4. Could the plot against said. He was aware, he volunfael Trujillo in 1961 and South nation team was caught on a Smathers told us that Presi-Vietnam's Ngg Dinh Diem in Havana rooftop with high-dent Kennedy seemed "horri-1963. 2. Did President Kennedy personally sanction the plot against Gastro? The prepara-they were subjected to fiend assassinations. "I remember ish tortures until they told all him saying," recalled Smath-rations to assassinate the Cu-sination teams, however, had did things he didn't know ban dictator began during the last months of the Eisenhower administration as part of the Bay of Pigs scheme. All eix Selves as oilmen seeking re-mous.

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behind the Trujillo and Diem ment and had traveled to sion, there was a wide spec-Mexico to visit the Cuban trum of plans ranging from 3. Did the late Robert Ken- Embassy a few weeks before one extreme to another," tator Fidel Castro, hidden for nedy know about the assassina- the dreadful day in Dallas. McCone admitted. "Whenever 10 years from the public, raises tion attempts? After the Bay Could Bob Kennedy have this subject (assassinating Cassome ugly questions that high of Pigs flasco, President Ken been plagued by the terrible tro) was brought up-and it was - it was rejected immediately on two grounds. First, in a thousand pieces and scat forces that may have brought it would not be condoned by

There was also talk in high places, McCone acknowledged, or of supporting a coup to oust Diem. The former CIA di-rector said he had argued against this at a secret session with both Kennedy brothers. He had contended that there was no one strong enough to take Diem's place and that a coup, therefore, would bring

'political upheaval." "I told the President and Bobby together," recalled Mc-Cone, "that if I were running a baseball team and had only one pitcher, I wouldn't take him out of the game."

The November, 1963, coup caught the United States completely by surprise, he said.

While the plotters were mov- in CIA had arranged to have ing on the parace, he said, Diem and Trujillo bumped off. Lodge was visiting Diem. FOTHER ASSOCIATES recall about that. He thought it was Adm. Ulysses Sharp, then our Adm. Ulysses Sharp, then our Pacific commander, had also wanted to get control of what been present, but had left early to go to the airport.

But McCone, disagreeing vigorously, told us that "no McCone said President wagon."

"During those days of ten- @ 1971. Bell-McClure Syndicate, Inc.



Jack Anderson

WASHINGTON. Robert H

The plot to kill Cuban dictator Fidel Castro, hidden for 10 years from the public, raises some ugly questions that high officials would rather keep buried deep inside the CIA.

¶Has the CIA tried to assassinate any other leaders? John McCone, who headed the CIA during the six attempts to knock off Castro, denied emphatically that the CIA had tried to kill anyone.

But ex-Senator George Smathers, one of John F. Kennedy's closest friends, told us the late President suspected that the CIA had arranged the shootlings of the Dominican Republic's Rafael Irrujillo in 1961 and South Vietnam's Ngo Dinh Diem in 1963.

4Did President Kennedy personally sanction the plot against Castro? The preparations to assassinate the Cuban dictator, began during the last months of the Eisenhower Administration as part of the Bay of Pigs scheme.

All six attempts, however, were made during 1961-63 when Kennedy occupied the White House. Smathers told us he once spoke to the late President about assassinating Castro.

Kennedy merely rolled back his eyes, recalled Smathers, as if to indicate the idea was too wild to discuss. Subsequently, Kennedy told Smathers of his suspicion that the CIA may have been behind the Trujillo and Diem assassinations.

¶Did the late Robert Kennedy know about the assassination attempts? After the Bay of Pigs flasco, President Kennedy swore to friends he would like "to splinter the CIA in a thousand pieces and scatter it to the winds."

He put his brother, Robert, in charge of the CIA with instructions to shake it up. The CIA made five attempts on Castro's life after the Bay of Pigs while

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Robert Kennedy was riding herd on the agency.

QUESTIONS IN THE CLOSET

Could the plot against Castro have backfired against President Kennedy? The late President was murdered nine months after the last assassination team was caught on a Havana rooftep with high-powered rifles. Presumably, they were subjected to torture until they told all they knew.

None of the assassination teams, however, had direct knowledge of the CIA involvement. The CIA instigators had represented themselves as oilmen seeking revenge against Castro for his seizure of oil holdings.

Former associates recall that Robert Kennedy, deeply despondent, went into semi-seclusion after his brother's assassination. Could he have been tormented by more than natural grief?

He certainly learned that the assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, had been active in the pro-Castro movement and had traveled to Mexico to visit the Cuban embassy a few weeks before the dreadful day in Dallas.

Could Bob Kennedy have been plagued by the terrible thought that the CIA plot, which he must at least have condoned, put into motion forces that may have brought about his brother's martyrdom?

The last surviving brother, Senator Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.), could give us no insight. His brothers had never spoken to him about any assassination attempt against Castro, he said. He was

1)19/7] aware, he volunteered, only that Senator Smathers had talked to the late President about eliminating Castro.

Smathers told us that President Kennedy seemed "horrified" at the idea of political assassinations. "I remember him saying," recalled Smathers, "that the CIA frequently did things he didn't know about, and he was unhappy about it. He complained that the CIA was almost autonomous.

"He told me he believed the CIA had arranged to have Diem and Trujillo bumped off. He was pretty well shocked about that. He thought it was a stupid thing to do, and he wanted to get control of what the CIA was doing."

But McCone, disagreeing vigorously, told us that "no plot was authorized or implemented" to assassinate Castro, Trujillo, Diem or anyone else.

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"During these days of tension, there was a wide spectrum of plans ranging from one extreme to another," Mc-Cone admitted. "Whenever this subject (assassinating Castro) was brought up - and it was—it was rejected immediately on two grounds, First, it would not be condoned by anybody. Second, it wouldn't have achieved anything." There was also talk in nigh places, McCone acknowledged, of supporting a coup to oust Diem. The former CIA director said he had argued against this at a secret session with both Kennedy brothers. He had contended that there was no one strong enough to take Diem's place and that a coup, therefore, would bring "political upheaval."

"I told the President and Bobby together," recalled McCone, "that if I were running a baseball team and had only one pitcher, I wouldn't take him out of the game."