

Documents Show Bizarre Plans to Topple Castro

U.S. strategies from Cold War era

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If John Glenn had crashed in 1962 during the first U.S. orbital space flight, Kennedy administration officials — under a plan called "Operation Dirty Trick" — planned to blame the disaster on Fidel Castro and use it as an excuse to retaliate against Cuba.



John Glenn

Fidel Castro

This was just one of many American strategies aimed at toppling Castro revealed yesterday with the release of 1,500 pages of long-secret Cold War documents.

The plans were dreamed up in concert with the CIA's effort, code-named Operation Mongoose and spurred by Attorney General Robert Kennedy, to get rid of Castro.

A sample comes from a March 1, 1962, Army memorandum entitled "Possible Actions to Provoke, Harass or Disrupt Cuba," one of the documents released yesterday by the Assassination Records Review Board, a federal panel that by law can release government records related to President John Kennedy's assassination.

Among the revelations was "Operation Good Time," which would have fabricated a photograph of "an obese Castro with two beauties in any situation desired" near "a table brimming over with the most delectable Cuban food," accompanied by the caption, "My ration is different."

Other plans included staging

deadly attacks against Americans and anti-Castro Cubans. They included what the documents call "a 'Remember the Maine' incident." That slogan was shouted when the United States went to war against Spain in 1898, falsely blaming Spain for sinking an American warship in Havana. "We could blow up a U.S. warship in Guantanamo Bay and blame Cuba," the memorandum said.

"We could develop a communist Cuban terror campaign in the Miami area, in other Florida cities and even in Washington," it continued.

"The terror campaign could be pointed at Cuban refugees seeking haven in the United States. We could sink a boatload of Cubans en route to Florida (real or simulated)."

The records show that on March 13, 1962, the Joint Chiefs of Staff endorsed these ideas as "suitable for planning purposes." No evidence exists that they were carried out.

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