

# Ex-CIA man hints JFK knew of Castro plots

By David Nyhan  
Globe Staff

A former Central Intelligence Agency official maintains that he cannot conceive that President John F. Kennedy was unaware of CIA plots to kill Cuban leader Fidel Castro.

Harry Rositzke said in an interview his week, "There was a great deal of discussion about assassinating Castro at the highest levels of the government" in the early 1960s.

"I left it at that" in the book, he said. "The Attorney General (Robert F. Kennedy) knew about it. It's hard to use the word 'condoned' or 'approved'."

Rositzke said, because initial planning for the abortive Castro plots took place under the Eisenhower Administration.

"And I cannot conceive the Attorney General knowing about this without telling the President."

Rositzke, who retired in 1970 and is author of a book about the CIA, said speculation that some US officials may have been involved in attempts to aid in the assassination of President Kennedy is "one of the absolutely blatant false accusations... there was no indication, no evidence of any sort."

He said it is clear now that Eisenhower ordered the assassination

of African leader Patrice Lumumba, but that Lumumba was killed before US efforts could succeed.

"The Senate (intelligence committee) report found no documentary evidence that President Kennedy or Robert Kennedy knew of any CIA plans, with or without the use of the Mafia, to assassinate Castro. I talked to Sen. (Frank) Church about this, and he said, 'We put down the facts such as we had them, and it was up to the reader to determine whether or not they (the Kennedy brothers) did know.'"

Rositzke said, "My personal view, and I talked to many of the people

connected with this, is that the circumstantial evidence makes it really quite clear that the Attorney General must have known about these matters, that he was, after the Bay of Pigs, in very close contact, in fact to a certain extent kind of running the CIA, at his brother's request."

Rositzke, who refused to reveal his last title at the CIA, said Robert Kennedy was socially friendly with Desmond Fitzgerald, a CIA official at the time, and that Fitzgerald was "highly accessible to the Administration."

Rositzke's book, "The CIA's Secret Operations: Espionage, Counterespionage, and Covert Action,"

Readers Digest Press, \$12.95, has an introduction by Arthur Schlesinger Jr., a friend of Rositzke's since 1945, when the pair were at Harvard.

The introduction has Schlesinger calling the work "much more complete than any account available to the public... absorbing."

Asked what Schlesinger thought of his theory that both Kennedy brothers knew of the Castro plots, Rositzke replied, "This is something obviously Arthur Schlesinger has a big fight with me about."

Schlesinger was an official of the Kennedy Administration.

Secured. Boston Globe  
2 April 1977