

# Senate Panel to Ask Nixon if He Knows of Plots Against Castro

By NICHOLAS M. HORROCK  
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WASHINGTON, July 8.—Senator Frank Church, Democrat of Idaho, who is chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, said today that he would be asking President Richard M. Nixon whether he had any evidence regarding plots to assassinate Premier Castro of Cuba. Such plots allegedly began in the last year of the Eisenhower Administration, when Mr. Nixon was Vice President.

Senator Church told reporters that Mr. Nixon had been "action officer for the Eisenhower Administration in connection with the preparations for the Bay of Pigs," and that as a result the former President might have knowledge of plans to kill Mr. Castro.

He said that committee members would get in touch with Mr. Nixon's lawyers in an effort to find out if he had new evidence.

"The committee has discussed this matter, and we are now in the process of approaching Mr. Nixon and his attorney," Mr. Church said. "I simply don't want to blow this up out of context because at this time we have no reason to

believe that this testimony will be very important in connection with the assassination issue.

"However, we're trying to touch every possibility, and for that reason we don't want to overlook any possibility, and for that reason we have to take the necessary precautions where Mr. Nixon is concerned."

Mr. Church's reference to Mr. Nixon's role in the report on CIA assassination plots without naming Mr. Nixon to get all possible intelligence sources and numerous press reports have said that plots to kill Mr. Castro and General Moïna, then the Dominican Republic's strongman, were conceived in the last year of the Eisenhower Administration.

The committee plans to question several witnesses about what was done in 1959 and 1960.

For instance, the committee has called Gordon Gray to appear tomorrow. He was President Eisenhower's Special Assistant for Foreign Affairs and represented Mr. Eisenhower on the National Security Council's Special Group, which controlled covert activities.

The Senate committee has also called Thomas Parrott, a former CIA officer who was secretary of the Special Group.

The scope of Mr. Nixon's knowledge of the plans against Cuba is not publicly known.

Mr. Church said today "Some have called him [Mr. Nixon] an action officer for the Eisenhower Administration," but did not give details.

E. Howard Hunt Jr., a Watergate burglar and former CIA officer, said in a book on the Bay of Pigs that Mr. Nixon was the action officer.

Mr. Nixon discussed his role in his book "Six Cakes," though he did not use the term "action officer."

He said that he had been hamstrung in his pre-election debates with then Senator John F. Kennedy because he knew

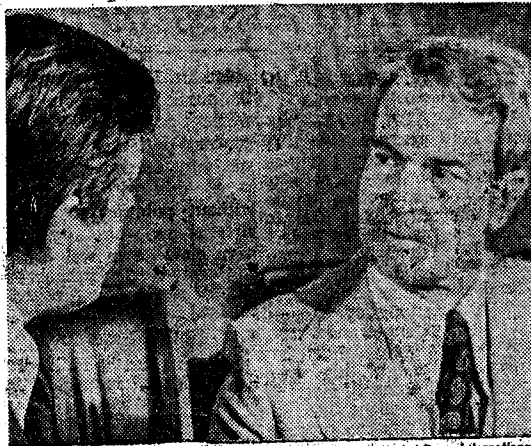
of covert operations being planned against Cuba that he said he chose not to compromise. Mr. Kennedy was charging the Eisenhower Administration had not taken a hard enough line against the Cuban leader.

In the book, Mr. Nixon said that after a five-hour meeting with Mr. Castro in April 1959, he became convinced that Mr. Castro was either a Communist or "naïve." He said that then wrote a secret memorandum that was sent to the C.I.A., the State Department and the White House urging that United States foreign policy be tough against Mr. Castro.

At first, Mr. Nixon said in the book, this was opposed by many in the Government but by early 1960 a secret order was issued to arm and train Cuban refugees in the United States and in Latin-American countries, Mr. Nixon said that to protect the secrecy of this operation he did not use his knowledge of it in the debates against Mr. Kennedy. The plans evolved into the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in April, 1961.

Herbert J. Miller, Mr. Nixon's lawyer, issued a statement saying that he had had preliminary contact with the committee staff, but that no formal request had been received. He declined to speculate whether the former President, who now lives in San Clemente, Calif., would cooperate with the committee.

Mr. Church said that there was a "very real possibility" the committee would also call Mr. Nixon as a witness on other matters in its investigation of the United States intelligence community.



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Frank Church, left, head of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, talking yesterday with Edward G. Lansdale, a retired major general, who has said his remarks about Premier Fidel Castro were distorted. Mr. Church said yesterday his committee would ask Richard M. Nixon about possible plots against Mr. Castro.