

F-Pool 9/25/79

Bay of Pigs 'best thing to happen' to JFK

BOSTON (AP) — The late Sen. Robert F. Kennedy said in an interview 15 years ago that the unsuccessful Bay of Pigs invasion taught President John F. Kennedy the danger of blindly following his aides' advice.

In that respect, Robert Kennedy said, the Cuban invasion "might have been

the best thing that happened" to his brother's administration.

The younger Kennedy brother, who was assassinated in 1968, commented about the incident in an interview taped with author John Bartlow Martin in 1964. The tape is part of the collection stored in the John F. Kennedy Library, which opens Oct. 20.

9/18/79

Cuba Frees Four U.S. Prisoners

Associated Press

Four Americans held in Cuba on espionage and other political charges since the mid-1960s were released yesterday, 10 days after four Puerto Rican terrorists were freed from U.S. prisons.

In announcing the release of the Americans, the State Department denied that there was any "package deal" with the Cubans involving the release of the four Puerto Ricans.

However, State Department officials acknowledged being aware of Cuban President Fidel Castro's public offer to release the four Americans in return for the release of the four Puerto Ricans.

The Carter administration dispatched a plane to Havana to pick up the released prisoners and return them to Miami, where they were

to be released to their families later in the day.

The Americans were identified as Larry Lunt, a rancher from Saratoga, Wyo., who was sentenced to 30 years for espionage in 1965; Juan Tur, a native of Tampa, Fla., sentenced to 30 years for "counter-revolutionary activities" in 1963; Everett Jackson of Los Angeles, sentenced to 30 years for espionage in 1967; and Claudio Rodriques Morales of Mayaguez, P.R., sentenced to 20 years in 1968 for smuggling people out of Cuba.

State Department spokesman Hodding Carter had no comment on whether the four were American agents, as alleged by the Castro regime. But an official said privately that the Cuban charges were not true.

Three of the four were among

prisoners in Cuba who were interviewed nearly two years ago by members of the House of Representatives. At that time, Lunt said he was ranching in Cuba when he was arrested on charges of providing information to the Central Intelligence Agency.

Rodrigues Morales told the congressmen he was arrested in 1966 as he was trying to help friends escape the island in a boat. Jackson said his plane was forced down in 1967 while he was on an assignment for a California newspaper.

Cuba informed the United States last Friday that the four Americans would be released, giving the State Department time to arrange for the trip to Miami and for a welcoming committee that will include Reps. Benjamin Gilman (R-N.Y.) and

See RELEASE, A10, Col. 4

Cuba Frees Four Americans

RELEASE, From A1

Mickey Leland (D-Tex.) and Gov. Ed Herschler of Wyoming.

Officials insisted there were no negotiations with Cuba regarding the releases.

"The offer by Castro may have played a role in the decision to release the Puerto Ricans, but after that, we just kept our fingers crossed," said one official.

The four Puerto Ricans were convicted in the 1950s in connection with terrorist attacks in Washington. One of the Puerto Ricans was involved in a 1950 attempt to assassinate President Harry S. Truman. The three others participated in the 1954 shooting of five congressmen from the gallery overlooking the House of Representatives.

President Carter granted clemency to the four Puerto Ricans Sept. 7 and they were released from prison Sept. 10.

State Department officials said the major reason for not negotiating with Castro over the release of the prisoners was an unwillingness to equate the position of the Puerto Rican terrorists with Americans whom the U.S. government insists have done nothing wrong.

Yesterday's release of the four men leaves 27 people who hold American citizenship still in Cuban jails, State Department spokesman Carter said. Of that group, 25 have been convicted of "nonpolitical offenses." Two hold dual Cuban-United States citizenship, and Cuba claims exclusive jurisdiction over them.