

War Alert at JFK Death Told

By The Associated Press and United Press International

NEW YORK — President Kennedy's assassination precipitated a two-hour telephone blackout

in Washington that could have meant the difference between survival and defeat if Russia had been plotting nuclear war, William Manchester's "The Death of a President" discloses.

The book, to be published April 6 after months of controversy, says that the Army Signal Corps still has not been given the go-ahead to link the homes of all vital government officials to an emergency telephone system, even though it has the equipment and expertise.

Fears of an international plot to overthrow the United States government prompted Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara to alert every

American military base around the world the minute he heard that Kennedy had been shot in Dallas, Manchester also says.

"By every readable signal the situation was very red," Manchester writes, "with both the President and Vice President and six cabinet members out of Washington."

McNamara "kept his head and made all the right moves" even before he learned that Kennedy was dead, the \$10 book says. The worldwide warning told American military commanders, "This is the time to be especially alert."

The new president, Lyndon Johnson, is quoted in the book as saying "There might be war" if Americans became aroused by suspicions that Soviet Premier Khrushchev and Fidel Castro had conspired to kill Kennedy.

It was the "wild rumors" about a conspiracy that

Book Sale by Mistake

PITTSBURGH — (UPI) — William Manchester's "The Death of a President" went on sale yesterday in Pittsburgh's three major department stores — at least six days prematurely.

A spokesman for Horne's department store blamed a "horrible mistake" on the part of Harper & Row, the book's publisher, for the premature release.

"A bindery of Harper & Row released the books prematurely to a West Coast shipper delivering to Kauffmann's department

store in Pittsburgh," the Horne's spokesman said.

"Kauffmann's refused to hold up placing the books on sale and advertised in Sunday's newspapers that the book would go on sale Monday," the Horne's spokesman aid.

So Harper & Row hired a special truck and delivered 2,500 volumes each to Horne's and Gimbels' before Monday morning.

The book is scheduled to be placed on sale in San Francisco April 7.

suggests that in any disaster on a workday commercial telephones would become highly unreliable," according to Manchester.

The author says the most sinister development was the gradual blackout of Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Co. service in the Washington area, suggesting massive sabotage. Actually it was due to an unprecedented load of calls between 2 p.m. when Kennedy was pronounced dead and 4 p.m. when government workers began going home.

In Washington, a spokesman for the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Co. rejected the contention that there was a phone blackout. "There was unusually heavy volume," he said, "but actually the only effect was that the dial tone was a little slow."

The Defense Department would only say: "There have been no military communications blackouts. Military

communications facilities are, and have been, considered to be adequate."

Most incredible of all, Manchester says, Johnson did not know the Cabinet's whereabouts when he became President and had never been informed about procedure to follow in the case of nuclear attack, instructions for which were contained in a football shaped case aboard the Presidential jet.

If war had materialized "the country's retaliatory arsenal could be spiked" until Johnson was briefed.

ON ALERT

"Had Russia attacked across the DEW Line, the greatest military establishment in the history of the world might easily have been muscledound during the 15 fateful minutes of warning time and perhaps even afterward, when second-strike capacity became a factor," the book asserts.