

WXPost APR 7 1975

CIA Plots to Kill Duvalier Alleged

By Jack Anderson and Les Whitten

A sworn deposition describes two unsuccessful assassination attempts against the late Haitian strongman, Francois (Papa Doc) Duvalier, in the late 1960s.

The deposition, given by Dr. Robert Pritchard to the special commission headed by Vice President Rockefeller, alleges that the CIA first plotted to poison Duvalier in 1966.

When this failed, according to the deposition, the CIA tried to bomb the presidential palace in 1968. A lone B-25 bomber allegedly made two runs over the palace, dropping bombs and leaflets, but the bombs exploded harmlessly on the street outside.

Pritchard is a prominent American concert pianist who had become a confidant of the Haitian dictator. But in 1966, Pritchard defied an order from Papa Doc and gave a forbidden public concert in Haiti.

This caused the pianist's fall from favor, which the CIA allegedly sought to exploit. As Pritchard has related it to the

Rockefeller commission, the CIA first tried to recruit him to spy on Papa Doc and his palace advisers.

Subsequently, a CIA-paid agent posing as a photographer approached Pritchard about slipping a deadly poison into the dictator's food, the deposition alleges. The pianist relates that he saw the lethal poison immediately paralyze a small, mouse-like creature, which the agent carried in a cage.

Pritchard states that he not only refused to cooperate with the agent but reported the plot to a U.S. political officer in Haiti. According to Pritchard's testimony, the officer responded: "Wouldn't anything be better than this situation?"

The pianist said he told Papa Doc about the assassination plot and that the dictator was aware of the scheming against his life. Pritchard also tried again to notify the State Department of what the CIA was doing, according to the deposition.

Nevertheless, the CIA approached him again and tried unsuccessfully to bring pres-

sure on him to work against Papa Doc, Pritchard says. He alleges that in May, 1968, he learned about the bombing attack upon the presidential palace. He says he was told by Arthur Bonhomme, then the Haitian ambassador to Washington, that the attack had been carried out by the CIA.

Footnote: In early 1971, we described six CIA assassination attempts against Cuban dictator Fidel Castro. We reported names and details. The first attempt, interestingly, was a plot to slip poison pellets into Castro's food.

Thieu's Debacle—In an earlier report, we cited secret military cables, which placed much of the blame for the South Vietnamese military debacle upon President Nguyen Van Thieu.

He issued conflicting orders that confused his commanders, according to one cable. He kept changing his mind, for example, whether to order a defense of Danang and Hue. In the end, those cities were lost without a battle.

A subsequent cable reports that the U.S. Army chief of staff,

Gen. Frederick Weyand, now back from a fact-finding mission in South Vietnam, had appointments last week to see Thieu. Thieu canceled the meetings literally at the last minute.

Apparently, Thieu didn't have the answers to Weyand's questions and didn't want to face him. The cables report that Weyand, meanwhile, was shocked over the South Vietnamese army's pell-mell retreat. The North Vietnamese forces advanced southward so rapidly that our own intelligence analysts occasionally lost track of them.

The speculation is that the Communists staged forced night marches to take advantage of the chaotic South Vietnamese retreat.

The intelligence reports warn that within days Hanoi's forces will have the capital city of Saigon under siege. American analysts have all but given up hope, because of the demoralization and disorganization of the South Vietnamese army, that Saigon can be successfully defended.

©1975 United Feature Syndicate