



AP Wirephoto

GEORGE SMATHERS
He told of a conversation

SFChronicle JUL 24 1975

Kennedy and Castro Plot —New Story

Washington

Former Florida Senator George Smathers said yesterday that President John F. Kennedy sought his reaction to a possible assassination plot against Cuban Premier Fidel Castro early in 1962.

Smathers, speaking with reporters after being questioned by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence said Kennedy "wanted to know what the reaction (in the United States and around the world) would be."

"I said it would be terrible both if it got out in the United States and because no matter what Kennedy did it would be attributed to him," Smathers said.

He gave no indication whether Kennedy actually approved any attempt to kill Castro.

Smathers said his memory on the assassination conversation has dimmed with time, but he believes Kennedy brought up the subject. At the time, Smathers said, "I was more against Castro than he was."

During the conversation, Smathers said, Kennedy "was very outspoken against taking that (assassination) line even though admitting that someone had suggested it to him. I don't know who that was."

Smathers, a Democrat who retired from the Senate in 1970, had related his conversations with Kennedy about a possible Castro assassination plot in a 1964 taped interview for the oral history series in the Kennedy library.

United Press