

Maheu and a Castro Plot

Washington

Robert A. Maheu, a former aide to billionaire Howard Hughes, described in detail yesterday his role in a Central Intelligence Agency scheme to poison Cuban Premier Fidel Castro, but insisted that the order to carry out the plot never was given.

The plan, which was timed to coincide with the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, was "always subject to a go signal, which to my knowledge, ever came," Maheu told reporters.

In other related developments:

•Senator George McGovern (Dem-S.D.) released a summary of documents compiled by Castro purporting to outline a total of 24 CIA-inspired assassination plots against Castro and other Cuban leaders. McGovern, who turned over the documents to the Senate intelligence committee, said "I have no way to verify these allegations" of CIA involvement which "are apparently based on confessions and on circumstantial evidence."

•Senator Frank Church, chairman of the Senate intelligence committee, and vice-chairman John Tower announced that the panel has decided "to extend an invitation" to former President Nixon to testify on his administration's policy toward Chile.

Maheu met with reporters after completing his sworn testimony before the Senate committee.

The plot, in which Maheu acted as a liaison between the CIA and underworld figures John Roselli and Sam Giancana, has been described previously in various news reports, but Maheu's account reported for the first time that Hughes was aware of the scheme.

Maheu was not able to shed any new light on where in the government authority to draw up plans to kill Castro had originated.

Richard M. Bissell, the former chief of clandestine services for the CIA, was quoted by the Los Angeles Times on Wednesday as saying he personally approved CIA cooperation with the Mafia in the assassination plan and that he believed then-CIA Director Allen W. Dulles received regular re-



UPI Telephoto

ROBERT MAHEU AS HE TALKED TO REPORTERS
 'A project for removing Mr. Castro from the scene'

ports on the Mafia connection.

Maheu said he was contacted sometime in 1960 by a CIA officer named James O'Connell, "who asked me in connection with a planned invasion of Cuba if I would contact a Mr. John Roselli in Los Angeles, asking if Mr. Roselli would be inclined to help in a project for removing Mr. Castro from the scene."

Asked to be more specific about the phrase "removing Mr. Castro," Maheu replied, "My understanding was that when the go signal was received, if it was received, Mr. Castro would be killed."

According to Maheu's account, he and Roselli went to Miami where they met a man named Sam Gold "who subsequently turned out to be Mr. Giancana."

As described by Maheu, Roselli and Giancana were to use contacts they had as a result of their gambling interests in pre-Castro Cuba to pass the poison "to someone who was in a position to be close enough to Castro so that it could be administered if need be."

Maheu, who was receiving a \$500-a-month retainer fee from the CIA at the time, said he did not think that either Roselli or Giancana were paid any money by the agency.

Maheu said he was never told why the order to carry out the plan was never given.

Maheu said he was "phased out" after the Bay of Pigs and knew nothing about remarks attributed to Roselli by columnist Jack Anderson that as many as a half-dozen attempts were made on Castro's life between 1960 and 1963.

According to Maheu, his principal role was to make sure that Roselli and Giancana did not back out of the plan.

At one point, Maheu said, Giancana was threatening to leave Miami for Las Vegas because of his concern that his girl friend, singer Phyllis McGuire, was involved with comedian Dan Rowan. To keep Giancana in Miami, Maheu said, he arranged, and the CIA paid, for private detectives to place Rowan under surveillance.

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