

Senate Report on ^{CIA}
Assassinations --
CIA Stalked Castro,
Lumumba
Underworld
Help Used

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The CIA tried unsuccessfully to kill Fidel Castro and Congo Premier Patrice Lumumba with underworld help in the early 1960s, but it is unclear whether Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy or Johnson approved the plots, the Senate Intelligence Committee reported yesterday.

The long-awaited report, published despite last-minute White House attempts to suppress it, also said the Central Intelligence Agency supplied arms or other aid to insurgents who — acting on their own — killed South Vietnam's Premier Ngo Dinh Diem, Generalissimo Rafael Trujillo of the Dominican Republic and General Rene Schneider of Chile.

It said there was no evidence the United States actively sought the deaths of these three, however, and concluded on the overall assassination issue:

"No foreign leaders were killed as a result of assassination plots initiated by officials of the United States."

The report of eight plots and at least two actual attempts against Castro, the Cuban premier, from 1960 to 1965 and one abortive attempt to poison Lumumba is the first official disclosure of plotting that has been widely rumored.

"We are unable to draw firm conclusions concerning who authorized the assassination plots," the 347-page report said on the issue of presidential involvement — although it found "a reasonable inference that the plot to assassinate Lumumba (in 1960) was authorized by President Eisenhower."

Apart from that, the committee lamented it was unable "to make a finding that the assassination schemes were authorized by the presidents or other persons above the government agency or agencies involved," because the chain of command was always "ambiguous," complex and so constructed that the highest-level officials could "plausibly deny" involvement.

But it did say that the murder plots and coup attempts that led to killings and other actions were plotted by "officials at the highest levels" under the administrations of Dwight Eisenhower, Lyndon Johnson, John Kennedy and — in the 1970 case of Chile's General Schneider — Richard Nixon.

High officials named in the
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report as having knowledge of at least some of the plots against Castro and Lumumba included the late Allen Dulles, CIA director at the time, and former CIA Deputy Director Richard Bissell.

All five foreign leaders mentioned in the report — except Castro — were in fact killed in various circumstances.

The report said the United States had nothing to do with the murder of Lumumba by Congolese rebels, but it supplied guns or other aid to the groups that eventually killed Diem, Diem's brother, Trujillo and Schneider, a general who stood in the way of what the report described as intensive U.S. efforts to prevent Chile's Marxist leader, Salvador Allende, from coming to power.

The document was approved by the committee after a five-month investigation and was reviewed by the full Senate in a dramatic, secret session yesterday.

It was finally made public over the strong protests of President Ford and CIA Director William Colby, who said its publication would damage the national interest and possibly subject officials involved to violent retaliation.

In its major recommendation, the report said "assassination has no place in America's arsenal" and recommended that "a flat ban against assassinations should be written into law."

It suggested a statute making it a criminal offense to conspire, attempt or carry out the assassination of a foreign official outside the United States.

Present law already makes it a crime to kill or conspire to kill a foreign official or foreign official guest while in the United States.

"The evidence establishes that the United States was implicated in several assassination plots," the report said. "The

committee believes that, short of war, assassination is incompatible with American principles, international order and morality. It should be rejected as a tool of foreign policy."

An introduction stressed that the report was an "interim" one and that in the continuing investigations "other alleged assassination plots may surface."

The report listed these cases "in which foreign political leaders in fact were killed and the United States was in some manner involved":

Lumumba: "In the fall of 1960, two CIA officials were asked by superiors to assassinate Lumumba. Poisons were sent to the Congo and some exploratory steps were taken toward gaining access to Lumumba. Subsequently, in early 1961, Lumumba was killed by Congolese rivals. It does not appear from the evidence that the

United States was in any way involved in the killing." The report said foreign criminals were involved as the potential assailants against Lumumba.

Castro: "U.S. government personnel plotted to kill Castro from 1960 to 1965. American underworld figures and Cubans hostile to Castro were used in these plots, and were provided encouragement and material support by the United States." The report identified the main "underworld" figure as Las Vegas gambler John Roselli, who helped organize two attempts to poison Castro, and said he had help at various times from the late Sam Giancana, the reputed former Chicago Mafia boss who was shot to death earlier this year, and reputed Mafia figure Santo Trafficante.

It said the weapons considered for use in Castro plots

ranged from poison cigars and pens to exploding seashells, but the actual attempts involved poison pills sent to agents in Cuba.

Trujillo: "Trujillo was shot by Dominican dissidents on May 31, 1961. From early in 1960 and continuing to the time of the assassination, the United States government generally supported these dissidents. Some government personnel were aware that the dissidents intended to kill Trujillo. Three pistols and three carbines were furnished by American officials, although a request for machine guns was later refused. There is conflicting evidence concerning whether the weapons were knowingly supplied for use in the assassination and whether any of them were present at the scene."

Diem: "Diem and his brother, Nhu, were killed on Nov. 21, 1963, in the course of a South Vietnamese general's coup. Although the United States government supported the coup, there is no evidence that American officials favored the assassination. Indeed, it appears that the assassination of Diem was not part of the general's pre-coup planning but was instead a spontaneous act which occurred during the coup and was carried out without United States involvement or support."

Schneider: "On Oct. 25, 1970, General Schneider died of gunshot wounds inflicted three days earlier while resisting a kidnap attempt. Schneider, as commander-in-chief of the army and a constitutionalist opposed to military coups, was considered an obstacle in efforts to prevent Salvador Allende from assuming the office of president of Chile. The U.S. government supported, and sought to instigate a military coup to block Allende. U.S. officials supplied financial aid, machine guns and other equipment to various military figures who opposed Allende."

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FIDEL CASTRO



NGO DINH DIEM



RAFAEL TRUJILLO



PATRICIA LUMUMBA



RENE SCHNEIDER

According to the Senate report, these men were subjects of CIA death plots or their assassins received help from the United States

It added on the Schneider case: "Although the CIA continued to support coup plotters up to Schneider's shooting, the record indicates that the CIA had withdrawn active support of the group which carried out the actual kidnap attempt on October 22, which resulted in Schneider's death.

"Further, it does not appear that any of the equipment supplied by the CIA to coup plotters in Chile was used in the kidnaping. There is no evidence of a plan to kill Schneider or that U.S. officials specifically anticipated that Schneider would be shot during the abduction."

The report said the committee also has evidence "that ranking government officials discussed and may have authorized the establishment within the CIA of a generalized assassination team.

"During these discussions the concept of assassination was not affirmatively disavowed." The prospective assassination team was referred to as the "executive action" squad.

While exonerating the CIA of direct intention to kill Diem, Schneider or Trujillo, the report made clear it considers the United States morally involved because of its support for groups known to be plotting the death of those men or at least plotting violent actions that could result in death.

It also said Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson "should have known" of the CIA plots if they did not and hold "ultimate responsibility" in their capacities as commanders in chief. But it could not go further than that, saying:

"The committee finds that the system of executive command and control was so ambiguous that it is difficult to be certain at what levels assassination activity was known and authorized.

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