

# CIA Plots to Kill Castro Continued Past JFK Death

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The Central Intelligence Agency continued sponsoring efforts to kill Cuban Premier Fidel Castro after President Kennedy's assassination and then apparently misled President Johnson about them when he demanded a full accounting.

According to the findings of the Senate intelligence committee, the CIA not only gave a poison pen to kill Castro to a Cuban secret agent on Nov. 22, 1963—the day Kennedy was killed in Dallas—but also arranged for the delivery of several caches of arms and finally a silencer and other equipment in 1964-65.

Some two years later, during a surge of criticism over the findings of the Warren Commission, which investigated Kennedy's assassination, Johnson became concerned by reports alleging U.S. involvement in plots to kill Castro and suggestions that Kennedy might have been killed in retaliation for such schemes.

The committee's 347-page report on CIA assassination attempts said Johnson ordered then-CIA Director Richard Helms to conduct an investigation in response to a column by Drew Pearson airing such allegations.

The column appeared on March 7, 1967, in the midst of the then-New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison's highly publicized pursuit of various rumors concerning the Kennedy assassination.

The CIA inspector general's office, the Senate report disclosed this week, conducted a formal inquiry and submitted a written "report on plots to assassinate Castro" to Helms on April 4, 1967.

It included a full account of the CIA's dealings with the Cuban secret agent who was known as AM-LASH during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations.

The report, however, was never submitted to Johnson. Senate investigators indicated that they could find no evidence that LBJ ever knew the document existed. Instead, the committee said in its report, Helms "briefed the

President orally," and apparently said nothing of the CIA's involvement in anti-Castro plotting past mid-1963.

Helms' handwritten notes, which he evidently prepared as an aid for the May 23, 1967, briefing and which committee investigators obtained, stopped the story in mid-1963, the Senate report said. When asked if he went any further and reported on efforts to kill Castro during Johnson's presidency, Helms told the committee: "I can't recall having done so."

Now ambassador to Iran, Helms said that it would not have occurred to him to brief LBJ about the delivery of several arms caches to AM-LASH in 1964, for example, because "I don't think one would approach the AM-LASH thing as an assassination plot against Castro."

Helms, the Senate report said, contended that AM-LASH "was an intelligence and political action agent." However, the committee pointed out, the CIA inspector general's report "treated the AM-LASH operation as an assassination plot."

At first, he spoke of defecting, but in the fall of 1963, started talking of

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**VOA Airs Story on Death Plots**

Associated Press

In 35 languages, the lead story from the Voice of America began this way:

"In Washington, a Senate investigation reveals that the United States Central Intelligence Agency was involved in several plots to kill foreign leaders."

The United States was washing its dirty linen, in broadcasts heard round the world Thursday.

"We have a charter which says you will be accurate, objective and comprehensive," said the chief of the VOA's news division. "I was not told to do otherwise with this story."

Bernard H. Kamenske said there was never any question about whether the report by the Senate intelligence committee would be handled straight. "There was no prior clearance of news copy (by superiors)," he said.

"People would know if our reporting didn't carry the

wanting to do something "really significant" and expressing a desire to plan the "execution" of Castro, one of AM-LASH's case officers told Senate investigators.

The agent also began asking for supplies and firm assurances of American support, specifically "a meeting with Attorney General Robert Kennedy."

With Helms' approval, Desmond Fitzgerald, chief of the CIA special affairs staff which was then in charge of covert Cuban operations, met with AM-LASH, reportedly in Paris, in October, 1963, and assured the agent that he (Fitzgerald) "was the personal representative of Robert Kennedy."

At the later meeting of Nov. 22, 12 years ago today, Fitzgerald also offered AM-LASH the poison pen. The Senate report said the Cuban operative spurned the pen, but was assured the CIA would "give him everything he needed" such as a rifle telescopic sight, a silencer and "all the money he wanted."

The Senate committee found that "the CIA delivered arms to AM-LASH in Cuba in March and June of 1964." Then, in early 1965, when he became

even more insistent on the need for Castro's assassination, the CIA put him in touch with the leader of an anti-Castro group known as B-1 "with the intention that AM-LASH obtain his desired weapon"—including a silencer—from that group.

The Senate report said that it was not until June, 1965, that the CIA "terminated all contact with AM-LASH and his associates for reasons related to security."

The Senate committee said it found "no evidence whatsoever" that Johnson authorized or even knew about "any assassination activity during his presidency." Helms, the report said, not only failed to give Johnson a full briefing on the Castro plots, but "also failed to inform the Warren Commission of the plots . . ."

The report said the reason Helms gave for not telling the Warren Commission was that "the precise question was not asked."

The Senate report also stated that Helms sent a memo in 1966 to Secretary of State Dean Rusk explicitly denying CIA involvement with the Cuban operative in an assassination plot.

meat on the bone," he said in an interview yesterday.

"What is a listener going to tune in for if he is going to hear slogans and platitudes?"

In all, six VOA writers and editors had a hand in preparing what the agency would broadcast about the Senate report. All of it was then translated and sent through powerful transmitters around the world.

Latin Americans learned that President Nixon personally ordered an attempt through political espionage to block Marxist Salvador Allende from becoming president of Chile.

Africans learned of plots to kill Patrice Lumumba, the first premier of the Congo, now Zaire.

And Cubans heard of the repeated and often bizarre plots against the life of Premier Fidel Castro.

While painful to report, U.S. involvement in assassination plots goes against traditional public policy "not to interfere in the internal affairs of other governments," said Kamenske.