

'CIA Plot on Castro'

New York

Convicted Watergate burglar Frank Sturgis says he plotted to assassinate Fidel Castro in 1959 while working with the CIA but dropped the plan after failing to get the "green light" from Washington, the New York Daily News reported yesterday.

"They couldn't make up their minds. They couldn't decide what to do," said Sturgis in an interview published in today's editions.

He said he sought approval for the plan through the U.S. Embassy in Cuba and added: "Whether this (approval) would have to come from the top level in Wash-

ington or a lower level, I don't know."

Sturgis, who served 15 months in prison after pleading guilty in the Watergate conspiracy, first went to Cuba in 1957 at the urging of Cuban exiles in Miami who supported Castro

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against Fulgencio Batista.

The News said Sturgis worked as a gun-runner for Castro and, within a period of months, was recruited for intelligence work by Park F. Woolam, then in charge of the U.S. Consulate in Cuba.

After Castro rose to power, Sturgis became intelligence chief of the Cuban Air Force. He said Woolam told him to go to Havana and make contact with CIA agents at the American Embassy.

At the agent's direction, he said, "I recruited everyone I could, Americans and Cubans, to be undercover agents."

The News said a friend of Sturgis', Max Gorman Gonzales, confirmed that the CIA asked Sturgis to participate in assassination plots in Cuba and elsewhere.

But Sturgis would comment only on the abortive plot in 1959. He said he first discussed it with CIA contacts in February of that year.

"I was making reports on all the Communist activity in the military," Sturgis told the News. "I suggested that this would be a good time to assassinate Fidel. I said I would organize it and follow it through."

Sturgis said he suggested setting up a conference with top military and government leaders attending. "I was going to station gunners on

the roofs, set up a crossfire. I would have wiped out Fidel, his brother Raul and all the top military commanders in 30 seconds," he said.

"I asked my contact in the Embassy to get a green light on this," he added, but was abandoned.

The News said other intelligence sources said the CIA later approved and bankrolled other plots to wipe out Castro, with Mafia dons and others playing prominent parts in those conspiracies.

Associated Press