

General Ties JFK To Plot on Castro

Washington

Retired Major General Edward Lansdale said yesterday that, acting on orders from President Kennedy, he developed plans for removing Cuban Premier Fidel Castro by any means, including assassination.

"I just wanted to see if the United States had any such

capabilities," said the one-time Air Force officer and expert on counterinsurgency tactics.

In a telephone interview, Lansdale stressed that his planning effort included other means, such as a coup, for removing Castro from power.

Asked if any attempts against Castro's life were made as a result of his project, Lansdale said, "Certainly nothing I ever heard about. Nothing was ever initiated on it as far as I know."

However, a source familiar with the tentative findings of the Rockefeller Commission on the Central Intelligence Agency said he had been told some subsequent assassination efforts were undertaken.

Although Lansdale avoided using the word "assassination," he twice replied in the affirmative to the specific question of whether assassination was one of the

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means he considered.

"I was working for the highest authority in the land," Lansdale said of his project. Asked to be more specific, Lansdale replied, "It was the President."

Lansdale said he did not deal directly with President Kennedy on the project but worked through an intermediary. Asked if the intermediary was McGeorge Bundy, then President Kennedy's assistant for national security affairs, Lansdale replied, "No, it was someone much more intimate."

However, he refused to provide the intermediary's name for the record.

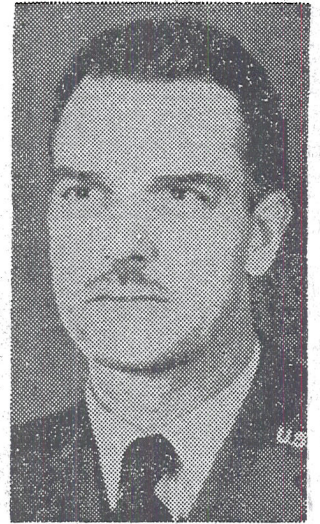
According to Lansdale, he was assigned to the project in 1962 when the United States first received intelligence that Castro was prepared to install Soviet-made nuclear missiles in Cuba.

In previous interviews, Lansdale had declined to discuss his role in the anti-Cuban operations which informed sources have said were directed by a special Cabinet-level group headed by the Attorney General Robert Kennedy and titled Operation Mongoose.

Other members of the group included Bundy, CIA director John McCone, Defense Secretary Robert McNamara and Secretary of State Dean Rusk. The Rockefeller Commission reportedly has obtained the minutes of an Aug. 10, 1962, meeting of this group, whose official title was Special Group (Augmented), which indicate that the subject of assassination was discussed.

The minutes show that Robert Kennedy was not present, sources have told the AP.

The source familiar with the tentative findings of the Rockefeller Commission, which is investigating allegations of CIA involvement in assassination, said that "the CIA end of the Mongoose operation" was handled by William Harvey. "I'm told he did two or three things that were designed to assassinate Castro," the informant source said. Harvey's alleged assassination attempts ended sometime in 1963, this source said, when he was transferred to the CIA station in Rome.



GENERAL LANSDALE
Expert on insurgency

Harvey, who now lives in Indianapolis, has repeatedly declined comment on his alleged involvement in assassinations.

For nearly 20 years, Lansdale served as a top government adviser on how to combat Communist insurgency movements in the Philippines and South Vietnam. Working with the late President Ramon Magsaysay of the Philippines, Lansdale received credit for playing a key role in defeat of a Communist-led rebellion, the Ngo Dinh Diem regime. Lansdale spent most of the next 14 years in Vietnam and is believed to have been the model for Colonel Hillandale in the novel, "The Ugly American."

Lansdale returned to the United States in 1968.

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