

Presidents Knew

WXP FILED CIA (A)



Jack Anderson

THE SENATE Intelligence Committee was unable to pin down any proof that past Presidents authorized the CIA to assassinate foreign leaders.

Top CIA officials, however, have now broken their silence on this subject. They have told us categorically that all the assassination plots had White House approval.

To avoid embarrassing a President, no written record was kept. This provided the Presidents with what the Senate calls "plausible deniability." But the CIA officials have given us this rundown:

• **Eisenhower Administration** — The late CIA chief Allen Dulles personally consulted President Eisenhower about the plot to poison the Congo's Patrice Lumumba. Dulles had a tendency to talk in circles. He probably used delicate words in discussing the assassination plot.

But he came back and reported to associates that the President had authorized the plot to kill Lumumba.

• **Kennedy Administration** — The late Robert Kennedy, according to our sources, took a personal interest in the effort to eliminate Cuba's Fidel Castro. Kennedy pursued the details down through the lower levels. He had full knowledge of the "executive action plan," as the plot against Castro was known.

Our sources weren't privy to Robert Kennedy's private conversations with his brother, the President.

But our sources regard it as highly unlikely that Robert withheld anything from his brother.

In any event, President Kennedy put Robert in charge of a counterinsurgency committee, called the Special Group, which concentrated on harassing Castro. The President's brother complained about the use of mobsters to kill Castro but approved of the plot, our sources swear.

• **Johnson Administration** — President Johnson, upon being advised of the CIA plots to assassinate foreign leaders, made it clear he didn't want to know about them. There were some activities, he indicated that the President shouldn't be told about.

LBJ, therefore, was not informed personally about the continuing effort to knock off Castro.

• **Nixon Administration** — President Nixon was given an oral briefing on the assassination attempts, a briefing which might have been recorded on the secret White House tapes.

Our sources say Nixon was "gung ho" about covert activities, that he personally ordered CIA chief Richard Helms to foment a coup against Chile's late President Salvador Allende. But Nixon gave no assassination orders.

Clearly, not only the CIA but the White House must be restricted against using murder as an instrument of U.S. foreign policy.