

# CIA : THE KILLING MACHINE

## **Fidel Castro Ruz**

The first package of declassified documents goes by the name of "The Family Jewels"; it consists of 702 pages on illegal CIA actions between 1959 and 1973. About 100 pages of this part have been deleted. It deals with actions that were not authorized by any law, plots to assassinate other leaders, experiments with drugs on human beings to control their minds, spying on civil activists and journalists, among other similar activities that were expressly prohibited.

The documents began to be gathered together 14 years after the first of the events took place, when then CIA director, James Schlesinger became alarmed about what the press was writing, especially all the articles by Robert Woodward and Carl Bernstein published in *The Washington Post*, already mentioned in the "Manifesto to the People of Cuba". The agency was being accused of promoting spying in the Watergate Hotel with the participation of its former agents Howard Hunt and James McCord.

In May 1973, the Director of the CIA was demanding that "all the main operative officials of this agency must immediately inform me on any ongoing or past activity that might be outside of the constituting charter of this agency". Schlesinger, later appointed Head of the Pentagon, had been replaced by William Colby. Colby was referring to the documents as "skeletons hiding in a closet". New press revelations forced Colby to admit the existence of the reports to interim President Gerald Ford in 1975. *The New York Times* was denouncing agency penetration of antiwar groups. The law that created the CIA prevented it from spying inside the United States.

That "was just the tip of the iceberg", said then Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

Kissinger himself warned that "blood would flow" if other actions were known, and he immediately added : "For example that Robert Kennedy personally controlled the operation for the assassination of Fidel Castro". The President's brother was then Attorney General of the United States. He was later murdered as he was running for President in the 1968 elections, which facilitated Nixon's election for lack of a strong candidate. The most dramatic thing about the case is that apparently he had reached the conviction that Jack Kennedy had been victim of a conspiracy. Though investigators, after analyzing the wounds, the caliber of the shots and other circumstances surrounding the death of the President, reached the conclusion that there had been at least three shooters. Solitary Oswald, used as an instrument, could not have been the only shooter.

Oswald wanted to come through Cuba on his trip to the USSR. He had already been there before. Someone sent him to ask for a visa in Cuba's embassy in Mexico but nobody knew him there so he wasn't authorized. They wanted to get us implicated in the conspiracy. Later, Jack Ruby, a man openly linked to the Mafia unable to deal with so much pain and sadness, as he said, assassinated him, of all places, in a precinct full of police agents.

Subsequently, in international functions or on visits to Cuba, on more than one occasion I met with the aggrieved Kennedy relatives, who would greet me respectfully. The former president's son, who was a very small child when his father was killed, visited Cuba 34 years later. We met and I invited him to dinner.

The young man, in the prime of his life, and well brought up, tragically died in an airplane accident on a stormy night as he was flying to Martha's Vineyard with his wife. I never touched on the thorny issue with any of those relatives. In contrast, I pointed out that if the president-elect had then been Nixon instead of Kennedy, after the Bay of Pigs disaster we would have been attacked by the land and sea forces escorting the mercenary expedition, and both countries would have paid a high toll in human lives. Nixon would not have limited himself to saying that victory has many fathers and defeat is an orphan. For the record, Kennedy was never too enthusiastic about the Bay of Pigs adventure; he was led there by Eisenhower's military reputation and the recklessness of his ambitious vice-president.

I remember that, exactly on the day and minute he was assassinated, I was speaking in a peaceful spot outside of the capital with French journalist Jean Daniel. He told me that he was bringing a message from President Kennedy. He said to me that in essence he had told him: "You are going to see Castro. I would like to know what he thinks about the terrible danger we just experienced of a thermonuclear war. I want to see you again as soon as you get back." "Kennedy was very active; he seemed to be a political machine", he added, and we were not able to continue talking as someone rushed in with the news of what had just happened. We turned on the radio. What Kennedy thought was now pointless.

Certainly I lived with that danger. Cuba was both the weakest part and the one that would take the first strike, but we did not agree with the concessions that were made to the United States.

Kennedy had emerged from the crisis with greater authority. He came to recognize the enormous sacrifices of human lives and material wealth made by the Soviet people in the struggle against fascism. The worst of the relations between the United States and Cuba had not yet occurred by April 1961. When he hadn't resigned himself to the outcome of the Bay of Pigs, along came the Missile Crisis. The blockade, economic asphyxiation, pirate attacks and assassination plots multiplied. But the assassination plots and other bloody occurrences began under the administration of Eisenhower and Nixon.

After the Missile Crisis we would have not refused to talk with Kennedy, nor would we have ceased being revolutionaries and radical in our struggle for socialism. Cuba would have never severed relations with the USSR as it had been asked to do. Perhaps if the American leaders had been aware of what a war could be using weapons of mass destruction they would have ended the Cold War earlier and differently. At least that's how we felt then, when there was still no talk of global warming, broken imbalances, the enormous consumption of hydrocarbons and the sophisticated weaponry created by technology, as I have already said to the youth of Cuba. We would have had much more time to reach, through science and conscience, what we are today forced to realize in haste.

President Ford decided to appoint a Commission to investigate the Central Intelligence Agency. "We do not want to destroy the CIA but to preserve it", he said.

As a result of the Commission's investigations that were led by Senator Frank Church, President Ford signed an executive order which expressly prohibited the participation of American officials in the assassinations of foreign leaders.

The documents published now disclose information about the CIA-Mafia links for my assassination.

Details are also revealed about 'Operation Chaos', carrying on from 1969 for at least seven years, for which the CIA created a special squadron with the mission to infiltrate pacifist groups and to investigate "the international activities of radicals and black militants". The Agency compiled more than 300,000 names of American citizens and organizations and extensive files on 7,200 persons.

According to *The New York Times*, President Johnson was convinced that the American anti-War movement was controlled and funded by Communist governments and he ordered the CIA to produce evidence.

The documents recognize, furthermore, that the CIA spied on various journalists like Jack Anderson, performers such as Jane Fonda and John Lennon, and the student movements at Columbia University. It also searched homes and carried out tests on American citizens to determine the reactions of human beings to certain drugs.

In a memorandum sent to Colby in 1973, Walter Elder who had been executive assistant to John McCone, CIA Director in the early 1970s, gives information about discussions in the CIA headquarters that were taped and transcribed: "I know that whoever worked in the offices of the director were worried about the fact that these conversations in the office and on the phone were transcribed. During the McCone years there were microphones in his regular offices, the inner office, the dining room, the office in the East building, and in the study of his home on White Haven Street. I don't know if anyone is ready to talk about this, but the information tends to be leaked, and certainly the Agency is vulnerable in this case".

The secret transcripts of the CIA directors could contain a great number of "jewels". The National Security Archive is already requesting these transcripts.

A memo clarifies that the CIA had a project called OFTEN which would collect "information about dangerous drugs in American companies", until the program was terminated in the fall of 1972. In another memo there are reports that manufacturers of commercial drugs "had passed" drugs to the CIA which had been "refused due to adverse secondary effects".

For *The New York Times*, large censored sections reveal that the CIA still cannot expose all the skeletons in its closets, and many activities developed in operations abroad, checked over years ago by journalists, congressional investigators and a presidential commission, are not in the documents. □□□