

# Detailed U.S. Plan Targeted Castro

## '62 Document Indicates Wide Plot

By Michael Dobbs

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MOSCOW — New evidence has emerged on the eve of an international conference on the Cuban missile crisis suggesting that the Kennedy administration was even more deeply involved in planning the overthrow of Fidel Castro in 1962 than previously established.

One U.S. document made public under the Freedom of Information Act set October 1962 as the target date for Mr. Castro's overthrow after a U.S.-supported insurrection on the island. The document, which was circulated to only 12 persons, including President John F. Kennedy, was dated Feb. 20, 1962.

The plans outlined in the document included military and sabotage support for anti-Castro guerrillas. Not all were put into effect. The subversion plan, code-named Operation Mongoose, was abandoned after the United States and the Soviet Union stepped back from a nuclear confrontation in October 1962.

The Soviet leader, Nikita S. Khrushchev, insisted in his memoirs that his primary goal in deploying missiles in Cuba was to forestall a U.S. invasion of the island after the Bay of Pigs fiasco the year before. U.S. specialists have emphasized other motivations, such as redressing an unfavorable nuclear balance.

The new documents were obtained by the National Security Archives, a nonprofit library and investigative group in Washington. They will be discussed by "academics and Soviet, Cuban and U.S. former officials during a conference that opened in Moscow on Friday. It is the first opportunity

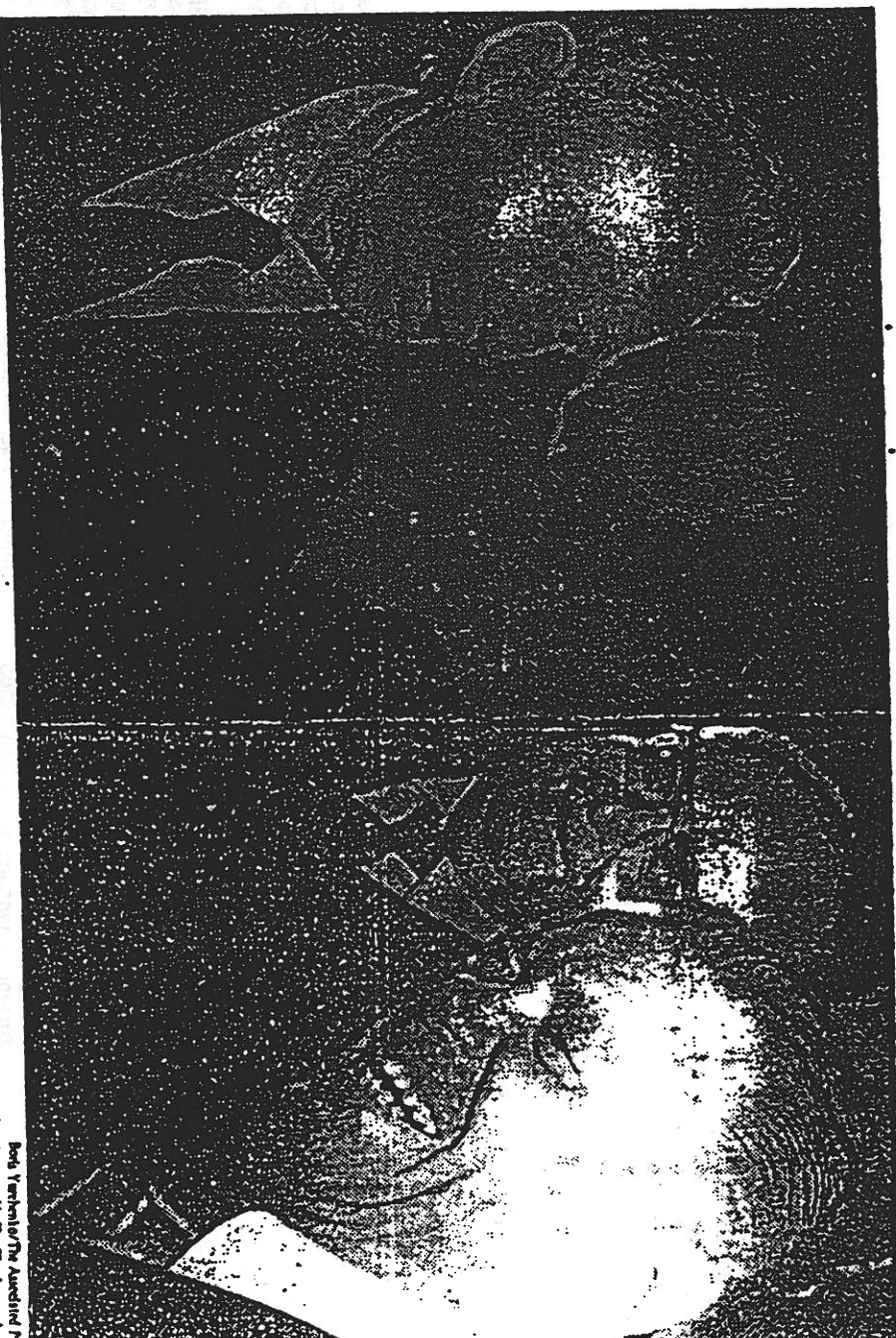
for high-ranking participants from the three sides to discuss their roles retrospectively.

Participants include Andrei A. Gromyko, the former Soviet foreign minister; Anatoli F. Dobrynin, the former ambassador to the United States; Robert S. McNamara, a former U.S. defense secretary, and McGeorge Bundy, a former national security adviser. The Cuban side will be led by Jorge Risquet, a member of the ruling Politburo and a close aide to Mr. Castro.

The documents made public on the eve of the conference raise several questions about the background to the missile crisis, including whether Soviet and Cuban agents were able to penetrate Operation Mongoose. In reminiscences published recently in Moscow, a former Soviet ambassador to Cuba, Alexander Alexeev, said Mr. Khrushchev had "precise data" on U.S. plans for armed intervention against Mr. Castro and regarded the installation of missiles as an effective deterrent.

"It is a highly interesting coincidence," said Scott Armstrong, director of the National Security Archives and one of the American participants. "If the Soviets knew that the target date for Castro's overthrow was October, that might explain why they were racing to do something by then."

Some details about Operation Mongoose emerged in 1975 after a Senate investigation into alleged assassination plots against foreign leaders. But the documents circulating in Moscow include a discussion of the possibility of direct U.S. military intervention and a timetable for overthrowing Mr. Castro.



Old adversaries, Andrei A. Gromyko, left, and Robert S. McNamara at the Moscow conference. At center is Anatoli F. Dobrynin

The Feb. 20, 1962, document, signed by Brigadier General Edward Lansdale, who drafted the plan, called for "an early decision" on "the use of open U.S. force to aid the Cuban people in winning their liberty." It said such a commitment was necessary "prior to deep involvement of the Cubans in this program."

A document dated March 14, 1962, said the United States "will make maximum use of indigenous resources, internal and external, but recognizes that final success will require decisive U.S. military intervention."

Mr. McNamara, who was listed as one of 12 recipients of the Feb. 20 document, on Thursday repeat-

ed his earlier assertions that the Kennedy administration had "absolutely no intention" of launching a military operation to overthrow Mr. Castro before the missile crisis. He added, however, that it was quite possible that the Cubans and Soviets misinterpreted the signals coming out of Washington.

"If I was a Cuban," he said, "and read the evidence of covert American action against their government, I would be quite ready to believe that the U.S. intended to mount an invasion."

Senior Cuban officials have reportedly told American participants in the conference that they knew about Operation Mongoose from an early stage, because of a

well-placed informant. It is unclear, however, whether they were aware that October 1962 had been mentioned as a target date for Mr. Castro's overthrow.

The Feb. 20 document outlined a six-phase plan of action against Mr. Castro to begin in March 1962 and culminate in "open revolt and overthrow" of the Communist regime" in October.

"Some of the plan was implemented," said Ray Geruloff, a former State Department specialist on the Soviet Union who is taking part

in the conference. "There was covert-operations policy. We send sabotage units into the country. Most of the effort in the spring and summer of '62 involved guerrilla insurgency units in place."

According to a chronology prepared by the National Security Archives, Operation Mongoose action against Cuba continued until Nov. 8, 1962. The crisis was defused after Mr. Kennedy gave Khrushchev an undertaking not to invade Cuba in return for removal of the Soviet missiles.