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U.S. Military Wanted to Provoke War With Cuba

NEW YORK, May 1, 2001

By David Ruppe

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In the early 1960s, America's top military leaders reportedly drafted plans to kill innocent people and commit acts of terrorism in U.S. cities to create public support for a war against Cuba.

Code named Operation Northwoods, the plans reportedly included the possible assassination of Cuban émigrés, sinking boats of Cuban refugees on the high seas, hijacking planes, blowing up a U.S. ship, and even orchestrating violent terrorism in U.S. cities.

The plans were developed as ways to trick the American public and the international community into supporting a war to oust Cuba's then new leader, communist Fidel Castro.

America's top military brass even contemplated causing U.S. military casualties, writing: "We could blow up a U.S. ship in Guantanamo Bay and blame Cuba," and, "casualty lists in U.S. newspapers would cause a helpful wave of national indignation."

Details of the plans are described in *Body of Secrets* (Doubleday), a new book by investigative reporter James Bamford about the history of America's largest spy agency, the National Security Agency. However, the plans were not connected to the agency, he notes.

The plans had the written approval of all of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and were presented to President Kennedy's defense secretary, Robert McNamara, in March 1962. But they apparently were rejected by the civilian leadership and have gone undisclosed for nearly 40 years.

"These were Joint Chiefs of Staff documents. The reason these were held secret for so long is the Joint Chiefs never wanted to give these up because they were so embarrassing," Bamford told ABCNEWS.com.

"The whole point of a democracy is to have leaders responding to the public will, and here this is the complete reverse, the military trying to trick the American people into a war that they want but that nobody else wants."

Gunning for War

The documents show "the Joint Chiefs of Staff drew up and approved plans for what may be the most corrupt plan ever created by the U.S. government," writes Bamford.

The Joint Chiefs even proposed using the potential death of astronaut John Glenn during the first attempt to put an American into orbit as a false pretext for war with Cuba, the documents show.

Should the rocket explode and kill Glenn, they wrote, "the objective is to provide irrevocable proof ... that the fault lies with the Communists et all Cuba [sic]."

The plans were motivated by an intense desire among senior military leaders to depose Castro,

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who seized power in 1959 to become the first communist leader in the Western Hemisphere — only 90 miles from U.S. shores.

The earlier CIA-backed Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba by Cuban exiles had been a disastrous failure, in which the military was not allowed to provide firepower. The military leaders now wanted a shot at it.

"The whole thing was so bizarre," says Bamford, noting public and international support would be needed for an invasion, but apparently neither the American public, nor the Cuban public, wanted to see U.S. troops deployed to drive out Castro.

Reflecting this, the U.S. plan called for establishing prolonged military — not democratic — control over the island nation after the invasion.

"That's what we're supposed to be freeing them from," Bamford says. "The only way we would have succeeded is by doing exactly what the Russians were doing all over the world, by imposing a government by tyranny, basically what we were accusing Castro himself of doing."

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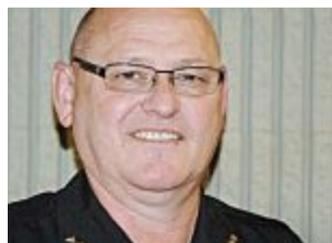


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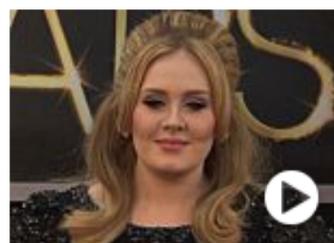
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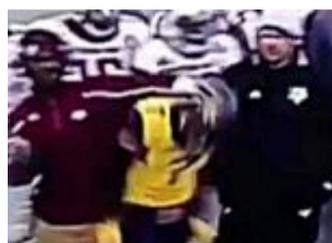
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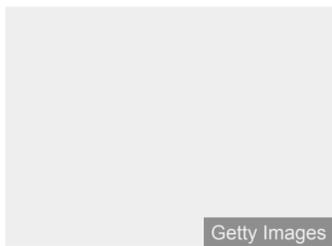
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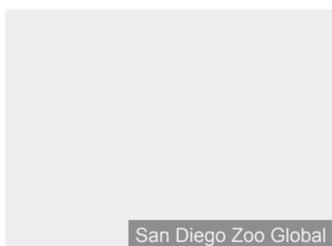
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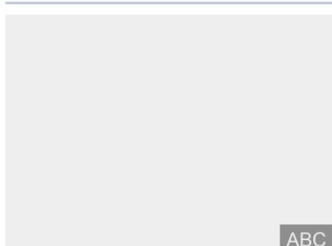
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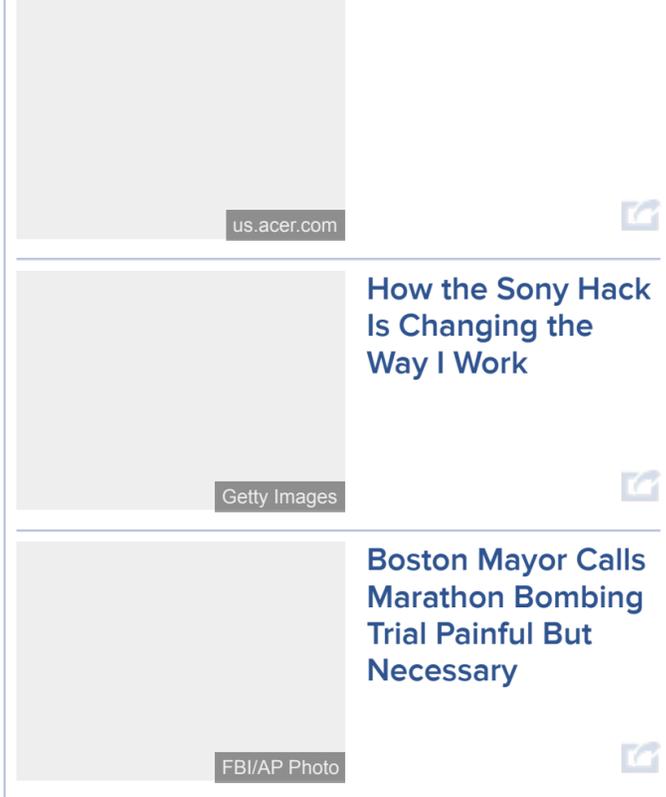


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