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Operation Northwoods

Joint Chiefs of Staff, USA
 by Andy Petit, 4/15/00

[Original Northwoods Document from McNamara's files.](#) (pdf, 778kb)

[Career of Gen Lyman Lemnitzer,](#) promoter of Northwoods

[Career & writings of Brigadier General William H. Craig, Project Officer, Operation Mongoose](#)

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Operation Northwoods was a plan by the highest US military authorities to create a series of incidents involving loss of American and Cuban exile lives through the actions of phony Cubans in order to persuade the US public to go to war against Cuba. The document detailing this plan were obtained from Defense Secretary McNamara's files and were first published in Australia by Jon Elliston (*Psy War on Cuba: The Declassified History of US Anti-Castro Propaganda*, Ocean Press, 1999) with no reaction at all from the US. They were used again by ABC News journalist James Bamford in his history of the NSA (*Body of Secrets*, Doubleday, 2001), causing some minor notice among historians. Bamford was tipped off as to their existence by a friend on the Assassination Records Review Board, which was formed after Oliver Stone's film JFK raised the profile of records from that era. We [present here this document](#) (pdf, 778kb) as well as a body of supporting documents. We also trace the careers of some of the participants in the development of this plan, for they had interesting prior and subsequent histories.

From ABC News:

"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."

[-abcnews.go.com/sections/us/DailyNews/jointchiefs_010501.html](http://abcnews.go.com/sections/us/DailyNews/jointchiefs_010501.html)

We note with interest the role of the Army's General Lyman L. Lemnitzer, described in the same ABC News article:

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"The Joint Chiefs at the time were headed by Eisenhower appointee Army Gen. Lyman L. Lemnitzer, who, with the signed plans in hand made a pitch to McNamara on March 13, 1962, recommending Operation Northwoods be run by the military...

Afraid of a congressional investigation, Lemnitzer had ordered all Joint Chiefs documents related to the Bay of Pigs destroyed, says Bamford. But somehow, these remained."

Lyman Lemnitzer's [career](#) holds some interesting momments:

- directed negotiations to turn Italy against Germany, 1943
- Operation Sunrise with Allen Dulles in Ascona, Switzerland, 1944. Dulles had represented numerous US companies doing business with Nazi Germany in the 30's and even into the early 40's (Standard Oil of New Jersey = Exxon). See bibliography for AfroCubaWeb's [New Jersey and the Nazis](#).
- participated in the creation of the NATO stay-behind network, turning Nazi agents into spies against the USSR, and in the exfiltration of Nazi human-rights criminals to Latin America., 1950's
- Chief of Staff of the Army, 1957
- Chairman, Joint Chiefs, 1960
- [subject of a Senate inquiry as a possible participant in the Walker plot](#). Maj Gen. Walker was KKK and developed a plan to indoctrinate the Army into his views, 1961
- presented Northwoods to Secretary of Defense McNamara, 3/13/1962
- Commander of U.S. Forces in Europe, 1962 (demotion after McNamara and Kennedy refused his Northwoods plan)
- retires from the military, 1969
- [U.S. President's Commission on CIA Activities Within the United States](#) (Rockefeller Commission), 1975
- Team B

- [Committee on the Present Danger](#)

Lemnitzer died in 1988.

It is also said that preliminary studies on Northwoods were undertaken by [Brigadier General William H. Craig](#), described as Lemnitzer's covert actions officer.

Craig was CIA and was at the time Project Officer for the Cuba Project (Operation Mongoose) under Operations Chief Brigadier General Edward Lansdale, famed for his psyops.

For some, this whole topic figures prominently in the background to the JFK assassination:

ON THE ORIGINS OF THE ASSASSINATION OF JFK
www.assassinationscience.com/onorigins.htm

Career of General Lyman L. Lemnitzer

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Lyman L. Lemnitzer
General, United States Army
www.arlingtoncemetery.com/lemnitz.htm

"In June 1942, he was promoted to Brigadier General in command of the 34th Anti-Aircraft Brigade, but soon received appointment as Assistant Chief of Staff of the Allied Forces Headquarters, under General Dwight D. Eisenhower, in London. After aiding in the planning of the North African invasion, he resumed command of the 34th in February 1943 and led it in the opening phases of General George Patton's Sicilian Campaign. In late June 1943, he became Deputy Chief of Staff of the Allied 15th Army Group (U.S. 7th, British 8th) under General Sir Harold R.L.G. Alexander. He was promoted to Major General in November 1944 and remained with Alexander when the latter became Field Marshal, Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean Theater, in December 1944.

From November 1945-August 1947, he was the Army Member of the Strategic Survey Committee of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and then Deputy Commandant of the National War College until October 1949.

After a year as Director of the Office of Military Assistance in the Department of Defense, he underwent parachute training - at the age of 51 - and was given command of the 11th Airborne Division, Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

In November 1951, he was ordered to Korea to command the 7th Infantry Division. He was promoted to Lieutenant General in August 1952 and was named Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army for Plans and Research.

In March 1955 he was appointed Commander of U.S. Army Forces in the Far East and of the 8th Army, with the rank of General, and in June became Commander of the Far East Command and of the United Nations Command and Governor of Ryuku Island. In July 1957, he succeeded General Maxwell D. Taylor as Chief of Staff of the Army. He held that post through September 1960 when he was appointed Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

In November 1962, he became Commander of U.S. Forces in Europe, and in January 1963 succeeded to the post of Supreme Allied Commander, Europe. He retired from the Army in July 1969. In 1975 he was appointed by President Gerald Ford to a blue-ribbon panel to investigate domestic activities of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). He was greatly respected as a strategist, one of the most durable soldiers of his time, his powers in no degree were diminished even in advanced age. He died on November 12, 1988."

Yes, Ford appointed Lemnitzer to server on the U.S. PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON CIA ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE UNITED STATES (Rockefeller Commission)

A description of this can be found in the Ford Library site at the University of Texas:

<http://www.ford.utexas.edu/library/findaid/ciacom0.htm>

see especially the narrative at

<http://www.ford.utexas.edu/library/faintro/ciacom1.htm>

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"The U.S. President's Commission on CIA Activities Within the United States (also known as the Rockefeller Commission) was charged with investigating allegations of improper CIA activities within U.S. borders. The files consist of documents created by the Commission in the course of its work (correspondence, testimony, report drafts, etc.), as well as historical documents and exhibit items collected during its investigation.

The portions of the file which are available for research (2.5 cubic feet) deal with the investigation of possible CIA involvement in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy or in anti-Castro plots of the early 1960s...

The Commission investigated allegations that the CIA was somehow involved in the assassination of President Kennedy. Specifically, it looked into allegations that E. Howard Hunt and Frank Sturgis were CIA agents and were present in Dallas ("the derelicts") at the time of the assassination and could have fired the alleged shots from the grassy knoll. It also investigated claims that the CIA had relationships with Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack Ruby."

A masterful stroke... note the irony of Cuban exile Sturgis, a career terrorist with known Mossad ties, being whitewashed by the author of Northwoods.

Lemnitzer was part of the very influential Team B and the Committee on the Present Danger, along with an illustrious cast:

Major General John Singlaub (ret) [of Coca Contra fame] and Lieutenant General Daniel Graham (ret.) co-chaired the American Security Council's Coalition for Peace Through Strength (CPTS). (1,3) William Van Cleave, George Keegan, Sen. Robert Dole, and Sen. Paul Laxa It have also served as co-chairs of CPTS.

Other individuals of note who have served with the CPTS include former members of Team B, a pro-military, anti-Soviet team that went on to form the Committee on the Present Danger. These include retired head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Lyman Lemnitzer; former U. S. ambassador Clare Booth Luce; father of the hydrogen bomb Edward Teller; physicist Eugene Wigner and Charles Burton Marshall, a close friend of ultra-hawk arms negotiator Paul H. Nitze. - www.publiceye.org/research/Group_Watch/Entries-12.htm

Lemnitzer was the subject of a 1961 Senate inquiry as a possible participant in the Walker plot. Maj Gen. Walker was KKK and developed a plan to indoctrinate the Army into his views.

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The Senate Foreign Affairs Committee opens an inquiry into the military far right. Hearings are held by Sen. Albert Gore (D-Tenn.), father of the future American VP. The senators suspect the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Lemnitzer, of taking part in the "Walker plot." [Since the end of the Korean War, Maj. Gen. Walker was convinced that the

US government was engaging in a policy of giving up in the face of Communist progress. After having been relieved of his duties by Secretary of Defense McNamara, and having received a reprimand, he fomented a riot at the University of Mississippi to protest the hiring of a black professor. He was then pursued by Attorney General Robert Kennedy, and arrested for seditious conspiracy, insurrection, and rebellion. Benefitting from the support of the conservative press, who designated him "The Kennedys' Political Prisoner," he was freed after he paid a \$5000 fine. He was later to be found financing an OAS plot to assassinate Charles de Gaulle, then driving "Committee 8F" which is suspected in the JFK assassination.] Gore knows that Lemnitzer is a specialist in covert ops: in 1943, he personally ran the negotiations for bringing Italy back into the Allied fold against the Reich, then, in 1944, he and Allen Dulles conducted the secret negotiations with the Nazis at Ascona, Switzerland, preparing the surrender (Operation Sunrise) [*The Secret Surrender*, Allen Dulles, 1967]. He participated in the creation of the NATO *stay-behind* network, turning Nazi agents into spies against the USSR, and in the exfiltration of human-rights criminals in Latin America. But Gore did not manage to prove his responsibility in current events.

-- www.boss-tweed.com/conspiracy/effroyab-chap11.html

Career & writings of Brigadier General William H. Craig

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- Project Officer, Operation Mongoose (Cuba Project), 1961
- head of Group W, CIA, 1962, part of Mongoose
- Army Security Agency, NSA

Possible Actions to Provoke, Harrass, or Disrupt Cuba, 2/2/62

On February 2, 1962, Brig. Gen. William Craig sent this memo to Brig. Gen. Edward Lansdale, the commander of the Kennedy administration's Operation Mongoose. The document lists bizarre and ruthless plans to "provoke, harass, or disrupt" the government of Fidel Castro.

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF OF OPERATIONS, CUBA PROJECT, 3/13/62

Memo from Gen. William Craig which duplicates some of Operation Northwoods, dated the same day as Lemnitzer presented Operation Northwoods to McNamara.

Parascope on Craig

from the defunct website www.parascope.com

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In late 1961, a Mongoose task force was created which brought together officials from the CIA, the U.S. Information Agency and the departments of State and Defense. The Pentagon representative was Brig. Gen. William Craig, who, as the documents show, was never short of ideas for the operation.

Part of Craig's contribution to Mongoose was divulged decades ago. In 1975, while reporting on U.S.-backed assassination plots, the Church Committee in the U.S. Senate took note of "Operation Bounty," a proposal Craig sent to Lansdale in January 1962. The plan was to offer rewards (via leaflets) to Cubans who killed government officials. Lansdale told the Senate investigators that he rejected the plan.

However, the newly released documents indicate that Craig pushed for even stronger psychological warfare measures. In one February 2, 1962 memo to Lansdale, Craig listed no less than twelve "possible actions to provoke, harass, or disrupt" the Castro government. ([Click here](#) to view the document.)

Craig schemed to pin international blame on Cuba for incidents staged covertly by the United States. The aptly named Operation Dirty Trick, for example, would have made it seem that Cuba was responsible for a failed U.S. space launch from Florida. "This is to be accomplished by manufacturing various pieces of evidence which would prove electronic interference on the part of the Cubans," Craig wrote.

Another Craig disinformation plot, Operation Bingo, called for faking a Cuban attack on the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, "thus providing the excuse for use of U.S. military might to overthrow the current government."

Some of Craig's plans were more whimsical. Consider Operation Good Times, an attempt to "disillusion the Cuban population with Castro[s] image by distribution of fake photographic material." Craig proposed disseminating "a desired photograph, such as an obese Castro with two beauties in any situation desired, ostensibly within a room in the Castro residence, lavishly furnished and a table brimming [sic] over with the most delectable Cuban food with an underlying caption (appropriately Cuban) such as 'My ration is different.'"

The image of a fat, satisfied Castro "should put even a Commie Dictator in the proper perspective with the underprivileged masses," Craig advised.

Most of Craig's plans never got off the ground, but other materials released by the ARRB document the anti-Castro propaganda operations that were actually conducted. On the one hand there were the overt operations, those openly supported by the United States. These included Voice of America broadcasts and State Department statements focusing on Cuba -- messages that were tailored (to the extent possible) to enhance the secret plans of Operation Mongoose.

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Friendly Fire

Book: U.S. Military Drafted Plans to Terrorize U.S. Cities to Provoke War With Cuba

5/1/01

abcnews.go.com/sections/us/DailyNews/jointchiefs_010501.html

Pentagon proposed pretexts for Cuba invasion in 1962, 4/30/02

National Security Archives, George Washington University

<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/news/20010430/>

pdf of Northwoods documents

www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/news/20010430/doc1.pdf

Another site that carries the pdf broken up into individual pages for easier access is emperors-clothes.com/images/north-i.htm

Group Watch: American Security Council - Political Research Associates

http://www.publiceye.org/research/Group_Watch/Entries-12.htm

ON THE ORIGINS OF THE ASSASSINATION OF JFK

www.assassinationscience.com/onorigins.html

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"Lemnitzer and his covert action officer, Brigadier General William H. Craig, reviewed their final plans for OPERATION NORTHWOODS, which would have placed the responsibility for both

over and covert operations in the hands of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, before heading for a "special meeting" in Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara's office. 'An hour later he met with Kennedy's military representative, General Maxwell Taylor. What happened during those meetings is unknown. But three days later, President Kennedy told Lemnitzer that there was virtually no possibility that the U.S. would ever use over military force in Cuba.' "

Macabre Mise en Scene, 5/11/01

by Thierry Meyssan, author of L'Effroyable Imposture

pcfmetz.free.fr/rv.pdf

Interesting discussion of Northwoods, pp 5-9. The French seem to have access to details of right wing US operations unavailable in the American media.

Excerpt from Body of Secrets by James Bamford

www.internetpirate.com/northwoods.htm

Very readable history of NSA, this excerpt deals with Northwoods


Program Review by the Chief of Operations, Operation Mongoose (Lansdale), 18 January 1962

www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/cuba/mongoose.htm

Operation Mongoose: The Cuba Project, 2/20/62

www.marxists.org/history/cuba/subject/cia/mongoose/c-project.htm

Trading With The Enemy : An Expose of the Nazi-American Money Plot,1933-1949 by Charles Higham, Dell, NY, 1983

Click here to order ==> 

Old Nazis, the New Right and the Reagan Administration: The Role of Domestic Fascists Networks in the Republican Party and their Effects on U.S. Cold War Politics, monograph by Russ Bellant, Political Research Associates, Cambridge MA

An excellent, very well researched monograph. Must have. Click here to order ==> 

Documents Relating to American Foreign Policy Cuban Missile Crisis

www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/cuba.htm

Operation Northwoods

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Northwoods

Chapter 11: The Conspiracy

Northwoods and 9-11

Has good material on history of the document

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Northwoods

From the world's best known ZioEncyclopedia

Friendly Fire

Book: U.S. Military Drafted Plans to Terrorize U.S. Cities to Provoke War With Cuba

By David Ruppe

N E W Y O R K, May 1 — 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, 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."

'Over the Edge'

The Joint Chiefs at the time were headed by Eisenhower appointee Army Gen. Lyman L. Lemnitzer, who, with the signed plans in hand made a pitch to McNamara on March 13, 1962, recommending Operation Northwoods be run by the military.

Whether the Joint Chiefs' plans were rejected by McNamara in the meeting is not clear. But three days later, President Kennedy told Lemnitzer directly there was virtually no possibility of ever using overt force to take Cuba, Bamford reports. Within months, Lemnitzer would be denied another term as chairman and transferred to another job.

The secret plans came at a time when there was distrust in the military leadership about their civilian leadership, with leaders in the Kennedy administration viewed as too liberal, insufficiently experienced and soft on communism. At the same time, however, there real were concerns in American society about their military overstepping its bounds.

There were reports U.S. military leaders had encouraged their subordinates to vote conservative during the election.

And at least two popular books were published focusing on a right-wing military leadership pushing the limits against government policy of the day. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee published its own report on right-wing extremism in the military, warning a "considerable danger" in the "education and propaganda activities of military personnel" had been uncovered. The committee even called for an

examination of any ties between Lemnitzer and right-wing groups. But Congress didn't get wind of Northwoods, says Bamford.

"Although no one in Congress could have known at the time," he writes, "Lemnitzer and the Joint Chiefs had quietly slipped over the edge."

Even after Lemnitzer was gone, he writes, the Joint Chiefs continued to plan "pretext" operations at least through 1963.

One idea was to create a war between Cuba and another Latin American country so that the United States could intervene. Another was to pay someone in the Castro government to attack U.S. forces at the Guantanamo naval base — an act, which Bamford notes, would have amounted to treason. And another was to fly low level U-2 flights over Cuba, with the intention of having one shot down as a pretext for a war.

"There really was a worry at the time about the military going off crazy and they did, but they never succeeded, but it wasn't for lack of trying," he says.

After 40 Years

Ironically, the documents came to light, says Bamford, in part because of the 1992 Oliver Stone film *JFK*, which examined the possibility of a conspiracy behind the assassination of President Kennedy.

As public interest in the assassination swelled after *JFK*'s release, Congress passed a law designed to increase the public's access to government records related to the assassination.

The author says a friend on the board tipped him off to the documents.

Afraid of a congressional investigation, Lemnitzer had ordered all Joint Chiefs documents related to the Bay of Pigs destroyed, says Bamford. But somehow, these remained.

"The scary thing is none of this stuff comes out until 40 years after," says Bamford.

abcnews.go.com/sections/us/DailyNews/jointchiefs_010501.html

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