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Subject: AP Second Cuba II Article
19003 RECORDS OUTLINE PLAN TO PROVOKE CASTRO, THEN SQUASH HIM BY MIKE FENSLIBER, ASSOCIATED PRESS, 01/29/98
WASHINGTON (AP) - America's military leaders signed off on a scheme in 1963 to provoke Fidel Castro into attacking the United States so that retaliating U.S. forces could squash him "with speed, force and determination," newly declassified records show. The records were among 600 pages opened at the National Archives by a government agency, the Assassination Records Review Board, to help researchers into John F. Kennedy's Nov. 22, 1963, assassination explore the possibility of a Cuban connection and to "put the assassination into its historical context." Some Cuban involvement has been theorized because of slain suspect Lee Harvey Oswald's association with the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. "These military records further demonstrate how high on the U.S. government's radar screen getting rid of the Castro government was in the early 1960s," said John R. Tunheim, a federal judge in Minnesota and the board's chairman. The documents showed that in February 1962 the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Deputy Defense Secretary Roswell Gilpatric approved a plan to "lure or provoke Castro, or an uncontrollable subordinate, into an overt hostile reaction against the United States." The attack "would in turn create the justification for the U.S. to not only retaliate but destroy Castro with speed, force and determination," the memo said. It was not clear where along the chain of command the plan eventually was squelched. But by the following year, another Pentagon policy paper discussed a new scheme to make it appear that Cuba had attacked a member of the Organization of American States so that the United States could retaliate. Five scenarios were spelled out, foreseeing either real or faked Cuban attacks on a U.S. ally. One of them: "A contrived 'Cuban' attack on an OAS member could be set up, and the attacked state could be urged to take measures of self-defense and request assistance from the U.S. and OAS." The paper expressed confidence that "the U.S. could almost certainly obtain the necessary two-thirds support among OAS members for collective action against Cuba." The planners got cold feet, the documents show. They feared leaks. "Any of the contrived situations described above are inherently, extremely risky in our democratic system in which security can be maintained, after the fact, with very great difficulty," a memo said. "If the decision should be made to set up a contrived situation, it should be one in which participation by U.S. personnel is limited only to the most high trusted covert personnel." The documents were the second set about Washington's preoccupation with getting rid of Castro to be made public by the board. Late last year, 1,500 pages showed that military planners had come up with a variety of dirty tricks intended to harass or humiliate Castro. One prescribed flooding Cuba with faked photos of an overweight Castro "with two beauties" and "a table brimming over with the most delectable Cuban food" to Record
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