

The National Security State and the Assassination of JFK

The CIA, the Pentagon, and the "Peace President"

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Just 47 years ago, on November 22, 1963, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas. This marked the turning of the American National Security State apparatus against its own leadership. After having overthrown, assassinated leaders, and orchestrated coups around the world, the moment its growing power was threatened by the civilian leadership in America, the apparatus of empire came home to roost.

The National Security State

The apparatus of the National Security State, largely established in the National Security Act of 1947, laid the foundations for the extension of American hegemony around the globe. In short, the Act laid the foundations for the apparatus of the American Empire. The National Security Act created the National Security Council (NSC) and position of National Security Adviser, as well as the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) as the Pentagon high command of military leaders, and of course, the CIA.

The first major foreign operation carried out by the National Security State, or rather, the “secret government,” was the overthrowing of a democratically elected government in Iran. In 1952, the British were concerned at the efforts of Iran’s new Prime Minister Mohommad Mossadeq, in nationalizing Iran’s oil industry, taking the monopoly away from British Petroleum. So the British intelligence, the SIS, proposed to the Americans a joint operation, and the CIA obliged.

In early 1953, with the ascendancy of the Eisenhower administration, two brothers, the Dulles brothers, came to dominate foreign policy decisions. John Foster Dulles became Secretary of State while his brother, Allen Dulles, became director of the CIA. Allen Dulles was a founding member of the Council on Foreign Relations and was a director of the CFR from 1927 to 1969,[1] while John Foster Dulles had joined the Council in the 1930s, and was a career diplomat and Wall Street lawyer.[2] In 1953, the Dulles brothers both worked and lobbied Eisenhower for the removal of Mossadeq from Iran,[3] and subsequently, the CIA and SIS worked together to enact the plan and overthrew the Iranian government.[4]

On January 17, 1961, President Dwight D. Eisenhower gave his farewell address to the nation in which he warned America and indeed the world about the growing influence of the National Security State in what he referred to as the “military-industrial complex”:

"Until the latest of our world conflicts, the United States had no armaments industry. American makers of plowshares could, with time and as required, make swords as well. But now we can no longer risk emergency improvisation of national defense; we have been compelled to create a permanent armaments industry of vast proportions. Added to this, three and a half million men and women are directly engaged in the defense establishment. We annually spend on military security more than the net income of all United States corporations.

This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. The total influence – economic, political, even spiritual – is felt in every city, every State house, every office of the Federal government. We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society.

In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.

We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together."[5]

Eisenhower was speaking from the point of view of having first-hand knowledge of this “influence” in the corridors of power, himself as President being unable to challenge it, and unable to do so simply in the first decade of the American Empire. He was warning against the influence of the interconnected relationship and organized power of the military, government, and industry, in that the growing influence of this “complex” was so vast that it threatened to take over the government and subvert democracy itself. It was the functions of this complex that saw profit created through war and empire, and thus, there was a constant drive and impetus towards pursuing empire and resorting to war. If you build a massive military structure, you are going to use it; if it is profitable to go to war, you will go to war.

The “Secret Government” and the Bay of Pigs

In January of 1959, the Cuban Revolution ousted the military strong man and American-ally Batista, and installed the Communist government of Fidel Castro. Beginning in October of 1959, the United States began a covert bombing and strafing campaign against Cuba, and in the early months of 1960, the US even firebombed Cuban cane fields and

sugar mills. The CIA had organized the Cuban exile community, largely under the leadership of former supporters of Batista, in Florida to mount an operation aimed at overthrowing the revolutionary government.[6]

The CIA and the American military, headed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff (itself a creation of the National Security Act of 1947), were dead-set against Cuba. The idea of a Communist government so close to the United States was seen as completely unacceptable to the National Security State. Thus, in less than three months of JFK becoming president, in April of 1961, the CIA launched the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, in which nearly 2,000 Cuban exiles trained and supported by the CIA were to invade from the sea. However, Kennedy refused to go along with the operation and cancelled the air support for the invasion, leading to the failure of the invasion and capture of the exiles, and “the CIA, military, and Cuban exiles bitterly blamed Kennedy.” Kennedy, in turn, blamed the CIA and the Pentagon, and fired CIA Director Allen Dulles and Deputy Director of the CIA, Charles Cabell in January of 1962.[7]

The Bay of Pigs reveals some startling information about the “Deep Politics” surrounding the Kennedy administration. “Deep politics” is a term popularized by former Canadian diplomat, author and academic Peter Dale Scott, who – in my opinion – is one of the pre-eminent researchers of the “secret government.” Scott defines “deep politics” as “looking beneath public formulations of policy issues to the bureaucratic, economic, and ultimately covert and criminal activities which underlie them.”[8] In short, “deep politics” is the functions and actions of the “secret government”.

David Talbott, former Editor-in-Chief of Salon, wrote a book about the assassinations of JFK and Robert Kennedy, in which he undertook in depth research into what can only be described as the “deep politics” of their deaths. In it, he explained that upon JFK becoming President, Allen Dulles had felt that as he and his late brother John Foster Dulles (who died in 1959) “had largely run America’s foreign policy between the two of them during the 1950s,” that “he expected to continue the family’s policies undisturbed under the new, inexperienced president.” Dulles, in the presence of a close Kennedy confidante, even “started boasting that he was still carrying out his brother Foster’s foreign policy,” saying, “that’s a much better policy. I’ve chosen to follow that one.” The Kennedy confidante who was present informed JFK who was furious, “God damn it! ... Did he really say that?”[9]

Richard Bissell, a man who formerly worked with the OSS (the precursor to the CIA), as well as the Ford Foundation, was brought into the CIA by Allen Dulles in 1958 as the Deputy Director for Plans, overseeing and personally running the covert plots to overthrow Arbenz in Guatemala, Patrice Lumumba in the Congo, Rafael Leónidas Trujillo in the Dominican Republic, Ngo Dinh Diem in South Vietnam and primarily Fidel Castro. He was in charge of the Bay of Pigs operation. In short, Bissell was a devout acolyte of the “secret government.” Bissell reassembled the key CIA officers involved in the Guatemala coup for the Bay of Pigs operations, including Tracy Barnes, David Atlee Phillips, Howard Hunt (who would later become famous as one of the Watergate burglars) and David Sanchez Morales.[10]

The Bay of Pigs operations, which was organized in the Eisenhower administration, under the guidance of his Vice President, Richard Nixon, was briefed to Kennedy upon becoming president. JFK “made it clear to Dulles and Bissell that he would not commit the full military might of the United States to the Bay of Pigs operation.”[11] During the Bay of Pigs operation, when it was clear that the operation would fail without military support, a major meeting took place with Kennedy, his Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, Vice President Johnson, Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Lyman Lemnitzer, as well as Admiral Burke, the Navy Chief and Richard Bissell of the CIA. Bissell urged the president to take military action, with the support of Navy Chief Burke. Kennedy had refused, and he “was beginning to realize that his top military and intelligence chiefs did not take his instructions that seriously.”[12]

Kennedy had repeatedly told Bissell in the lead up to the Bay of Pigs that as president, he reserved the right to abort the operation at any time. Yet Bissell had informed the military leaders of the Bay of Pigs operation that there were forces in the White House trying to stop it from going forward, and if they succeeded, he advised them to “mutiny against their U.S. advisors and proceed with the invasion.” Further, on the first day of the invasion, Admiral Burke, the Navy Chief, had sent “the U.S. aircraft carrier Essex and helicopter landing ship Boxer close to Cuban shore, in violation of Kennedy’s order to keep U.S. ships fifty miles away.”[13] This was the true first test of the young president:

"The country’s military and intelligence chiefs had clearly believed they could sandbag the young, untested commander-in-chief into joining the battle. But he had stunned them by refusing to escalate the fighting.”[14]

As declassified CIA documents later revealed, the CIA itself knew that the operation was doomed to fail, and had hid these bleak reports from Kennedy and went ahead with the operation anyhow. Startlingly, “the CIA knew that it couldn’t accomplish this type of overt paramilitary mission without direct Pentagon participation,” and further, the CIA had “discovered in advance that the plan had been leaked to Soviet intelligence” and Castro, who even knew the date of the attack. Dulles, therefore, “regarded the band of Cuban exiles who were about to hit the beaches as mere cannon fodder, a device to trigger the real invasion by the U.S. military.”[15]

On the evening that the mission had finally come to an abrupt failure, Allen Dulles sat down to dinner with Richard Nixon, “the man who had spearheaded the plan as vice president,” and Dulles proclaimed, “This is the worst day of my life!” Thus, the Bay of Pigs failure “sent shockwaves through the [central intelligence] agency, particularly among the agents who had worked closely with the Cuban émigrés on the operation.”[16]

Following the Bay of Pigs, “the heavens ripped open for the Kennedy administration” and “never came back together,” as JFK became “estranged from his national security team.” CIA agents like Howard Hunt, who were involved in the operation, would proclaim that the United States “owed the Cuban people a blood debt,” and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Lyman Lemnitzer proclaimed that Kennedy’s actions were

“unbelievable... absolutely reprehensible, almost criminal.” With Kennedy’s first test as president, the nations’ top military and intelligence officials saw him “to be a dangerously weak link at the top of the chain of command.”[17]

Kennedy, for his part, said, “I’ve got to do something about those CIA bastards,” and also “lashed out at the Joint Chiefs.” JFK publicly took responsibility for the Bay of Pigs failure, but “CIA and Pentagon officials knew that he privately spread the word that they were to blame.” Subsequently, Kennedy threatened to “shatter the CIA into a thousand pieces, and scatter it to the winds.”[18]

Kennedy Versus the “Kings” of the National Security State

Shortly after the Bay of Pigs, the Joint Chiefs approached Kennedy urging him to invade the Southeast Asian country of Laos, “to respond to the advances of Communist insurgents,” yet Kennedy quickly dismissed their advice, and Kennedy had personally thought of Chairman Lemnitzer as “a dope.” However, “Kennedy was acutely aware of how formidable the institutional powers were that he confronted.” As Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, an old family friend of the Kennedy’s explained, regarding JFK confiding in him, that Kennedy was “seared” by the Bay of Pigs experience, and “he had experienced the extreme power that these groups had, these various insidious influences of the CIA and Pentagon, on civilian policy.” JFK even questioned if he, as president, could “ever be strong enough to really rule these two powerful agencies.”[19]

Following the Bay of Pigs, JFK pulled away from any advice of these National Security kingpins and began to rely upon his most trusted personal advisers, and particularly his brother Robert Kennedy, who was the Attorney General, who would “move into the center of national security decision making for the rest of his brother’s presidency,” and took on the responsibility of supervising the CIA.[20]

Kennedy, for his part, “was more viscerally antiwar than has been recognized in some quarters,” as he once stated, “I am almost a “peace-at-any-price” president.” As Robert McNamara, the Secretary of Defense, once explained, JFK “brought into the presidency the knowledge of history that many presidents didn’t have when they became president,” and that JFK had thought that, “the primary responsibility of the president is to keep the nation out of war if at all possible.”[21]

Arthur Schlesinger, Special Assistant to President Kennedy, later recalled that, “Certainly we did not control the Joint Chiefs of Staff,” reflecting on the deep divisions within the Kennedy administration. The National Security State’s “secret government,” which had controlled foreign policy in the previous two administrations of Truman and Eisenhower, “was not prepared to cede power to the new Kennedy government. This was soon made clear to the president’s team by the top military commanders.” In particular, Schlesinger explained regarding Kennedy’s fears of the military, “Kennedy’s concern was not that Khrushchev [the Soviet leader] would initiate something, but that something would go wrong in a Dr. Strangelove kind of way,” referring to Stanley Kubrick’s film in which a

rogue U.S. general starts World War III. Even Defense Secretary Robert McNamara was struggling to control the generals under his command.[22]

General Curtis LeMay, the Air Force Chief, was a particularly staunch opponent of the Kennedy administration. He had once mused aloud to a Washington Post columnist in July of 1961 that he felt “nuclear war would break out in the final weeks of the year,” and that nuclear war was “inevitable.” LeMay, as McNamara acknowledged, was a staunch advocate of “preemptive nuclear war to rid the world of the Soviet threat,” casually acknowledging that “it would likely incinerate such major U.S. cities as Washington, New York, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Chicago and Detroit.” LeMay, during World War II, made his name by “laying waste to much of Japan with his infamous firebombing campaign.”[23]

In the summer of 1961, JFK came under intense pressure from both the military and intelligence officials in his government “to consider launching a preemptive nuclear strike against the Soviet Union.” On July 20, “at a National Security Council meeting, Kennedy was presented an official plan for a surprise nuclear attack by the Joint Chiefs chairman, General Lemnitzer, and Allen Dulles,” and Kennedy, disgusted, got up and left in the middle of the meeting, then remarked to his Secretary of State Dean Rusk, “and we call ourselves the human race.”[24] Kennedy had, in the fall of 1961, fired Allen Dulles, Charles Cabell, the Deputy Director of the CIA, and Richard Bissell, the Deputy Director of Plans for the CIA. Kennedy had made himself “Enemy #1” of the National Security State apparatus. A retired Marine general at the time once “suggested a coup was in order if the “traitors” could not be voted out.”[25]

As Robert Kennedy, the Attorney General, began to increasingly exert supervision over the CIA, he discovered that the CIA was working with the Mafia in plots to assassinate Castro. JFK had appointed John McCone as CIA director to replace Dulles, however, Richard Helms “emerged as the real power in the agency soon after the downfall of Dulles and Bissell,” leading one top official to even state that, “Helms was running the agency,” and that, “anything McCone found out was by accident.”[26] Richard Helms worked in the OSS, the precursor to the CIA during World War II, and became CIA Director of Plans in 1962, running the covert operations of the CIA.

The Joint Chiefs Propose a Plan for State-Sponsored Terrorism

In 1962, the Pentagon was still pushing for a war with Cuba, and was even drawing up contingency plans for an invasion of Cuba. One such plan, named Operation Northwoods, was recently declassified. On March 13, 1962, Chairman of the Joint Chief General Lemnitzer delivered this plan to McNamara, marked “top secret” and signed by the nation’s highest military commanders.[27]

Operation Northwoods, also named “Justification for US Military Intervention in Cuba,” was endorsed by the entire Joint Chiefs, which recommended the operation go into planning stages, and recommended that the Joint Chiefs assume responsibility “for both overt and covert military operations” of the plan.[28] The purpose of the plan was to

orchestrate pretexts for a US military intervention in Cuba, and the Joint Chiefs recommended that throughout the operations, the US military will be in an “exercise” mode in order to allow for a “rapid change from exercise to intervention if Cuban response justifies.”[29]

Among the recommended provocations and pretexts to justify a war, the Joint Chiefs suggested that, “a series of well coordinated incidents will be planned to take place in and around [the US military base at] Guantanamo to give genuine appearance of being done by hostile Cuban forces,” including starting rumours, landing “friendly Cubans in uniform” outside of the base to “stage attack on base” in Cuban uniform, capturing friendly “saboteurs inside the base,” and have friendly Cubans “start riots near the base main gate.”[30] Further recommendations were to “blow up ammunition inside the base; start fires,” as well as burning aircraft on the base, or sabotage a ship in the harbor, or to even, “sink [a] ship near harbor entrance. Conduct funerals for mock-victims.”[31]

One startling recommendation was that, “We could blow up a US ship in Guantanamo Bay and blame Cuba,” or that, “we could blow up a drone (unmanned) vessel anywhere in the Cuban waters,” and blame Cuba, and that, “casualty lists in US newspapers would cause a helpful wave of national indignation.”[32] However, the most disturbing aspect of Operation Northwoods was the recommendation that:

"We could develop a Communist Cuban terror campaign in the Miami area, in other Florida cities and even in Washington. The terror campaign could be pointed at Cuban refugees seeking haven in the United States. We could sink a boatload of Cubans enroute to Florida (real or simulated). We could foster attempts on lives of Cuban refugees in the United States even to the extent of wounding in instances to be widely publicized. Exploding a few plastic bombs in carefully chosen spots, the arrest of Cuban agents and the release of prepared documents substantiating Cuban involvement also would be helpful in projecting the idea of an irresponsible government."[33]

The general even suggested bombing other Latin American countries such as Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala and Nicaragua and blaming it on Cuba. They even suggested that a “US military drone aircraft” could be destroyed by a US military plane that, “properly painted would convince air passengers that they saw a Cuban” aircraft.[34] The Joint Chiefs further suggested, “hijacking attempts against civil air and surface craft should appear to continue as harassing measures condoned by the government of Cuba.” Startlingly, the plan also recommended concocting a scenario in which an American plane, possibly consisting of “a group of college students,” would be flown over Cuba and blown up, to be blamed on Cuba.[35]

So there you have it, the US Joint Chiefs of Staff put out recommendations for hijacking US aircraft, staging “false flag” attacks, which are covert military operations in which they attack selected targets under the “flag” of another nation/entity in order to blame that particular entity for the attack, such as the recommendations for attacking Guantanamo Bay by “friendly Cubans” and conducting a “terror campaign” within the United States, itself.

Three days after Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Lemnitzer presented this plan to McNamara, he was summoned by President Kennedy to the Oval Office for a discussion of Cuba strategy alongside other National Security figures. Many of the figures suggested a military invasion of Cuba, and Lemnitzer jumped at the opportunity to recommend Operation Northwoods, yet spared the specific operational plans of “blowing up people on the streets of Miami and the nation’s capital and blaming it on Castro.” However, “Kennedy was not amused” and he told the general that, “we were not discussing the use of U.S. military force.”[36]

Yet, over the next month, the Joint Chiefs and in particular, Lemnitzer, continued to press both McNamara and Kennedy for a military invasion of Cuba, and “after a National Security Council meeting in June, the president took the general aside and told him he wanted to send him to Europe to become NATO’s new supreme allied commander.” Kennedy thus replaced Lemnitzer with Max Taylor.[37]

The Cuban Missile Crisis: America on the Verge of a Military Coup

Another event of monumental importance to the conduct of JFK challenging the “secret government” apparatus of the National Security State was with the Cuban Missile Crisis, a thirteen-day nuclear standoff between the United States and the Soviet Union, which was described by one top official involved as, “the most dangerous moment in human history.” The crisis was started when US reconnaissance observed missile bases being built in Cuba by the Soviet Union. It brought the world closer to nuclear war than ever before or since. During the crisis, JFK, his brother Bobby, and Robert McNamara:

"were trying to steer the decision-making process toward the idea of a naval blockade of Cuba, to stop the flow of nuclear shipments to the island and to pressure the Soviets into a peaceful resolution of the crisis. But virtually his entire national security apparatus was pushing the president to take military action against Cuba. Leading the charge for an aggressive response were the members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who were urging the president to launch surprise air strikes on the island and then invade." [38]

Air Force Chief Curtis LeMay, who had been advocating nuclear war with the Soviet Union since the early 1950s, thought Cuba was a “sideshow” and told the President that the United States should “fry it.” LeMay, himself a member of the Joint Chiefs, “was in the habit of taking bullying command of Joint Chiefs meetings,” and with LeMay leading the charge for war, “the other chiefs jumped into the fray, repeating the Air Force general’s call for immediate military action.” LeMay even did something remarkable for a military official:

"He decided to violate traditional military-civilian boundaries and issue a barely veiled political threat. If the president responded weakly to the Soviet challenge in Cuba, he warned him, there would be political repercussions overseas, where Kennedy’s government would be perceived as spineless. “And I’m sure a lot of our own citizens would feel that way too,” LeMay added. With his close ties to militaristic congressional leaders and the far right, LeMay left no doubt about the political damage he could cause

the administration. “In other words, you’re in a pretty bad fix at the present time,” LeMay told Kennedy.[39]

Kennedy asked him to repeat what he said, LeMay obliged, and Kennedy retorted, “You’re in there with me.” Kennedy soon left the meeting with McNamara, “the confrontation with his top military men had clearly disturbed the commander-in-chief. Later he told an aide that the administration needed to make sure that the Joint Chiefs did not start a war without his approval, a chronic fear of JFK’s.” After Kennedy and McNamara left the meeting, a secret taping system in the office recorded the conversation between the generals, who “began profanely condemning Kennedy’s cautious, incremental approach to the crisis.”[40]

LeMay’s right-hand man, General Tommy Power, who even LeMay regarded as “not stable,” had taken “it upon himself to raise the Strategic Air Command’s alert status to DEFCON-2, one step from nuclear war,” and ensured that the Soviets knew it. The White House was completely unaware of Power’s actions at the time.[41]

As the crisis continued, Kennedy ordered McNamara “to keep close watch over the Navy to make sure U.S. vessels didn’t do anything that would trigger World War III.” Admiral Anderson, Chief of Naval Operations, who was running the Naval blockade of Cuba, was increasingly frustrated at McNamara’s “hands-on control” of the blockade and clashed with the Defense Secretary in the Navy’s Flag Plot room, suggesting that he didn’t need McNamara’s advice on managing the blockade, prompting McNamara to respond explaining that he doesn’t “give a damn” about past procedures for running blockades, to which Anderson replied, “Mr. Secretary, you go back to your office and I’ll go to mine and we’ll take care of things.” As Anderson later recalled, “Apparently it was the wrong thing to say to somebody of McNamara’s personality,” as when McNamara left the office, he told his aide, “That’s the end of Anderson.” Anderson, months after the Cuban Missile Crisis, was sent to Portugal as ambassador, “where he would be chummy with dictator Antonio Salazar.”[42]

During the Cuban Missile Crisis, it wasn’t the Joint Chiefs alone who were trying to push for war, as the “CIA also played a dangerous game during the crisis,” as Kennedy had ordered the CIA to halt all raids against Cuba during the crisis, “to make sure that no flying sparks from the agency’s secret operations set off a nuclear conflagration.” However, Bill Harvey, the CIA agent in charge of “Operation Mongoose,” the CIA plan which employed the Mafia to attempt to kill Castro, in brazen defiance of Kennedy’s orders, mobilized “every single team and asset that we could scrape together” and then dropped them into Cuba, “in anticipation of the U.S. invasion that the CIA hoped was soon to follow.”[43]

Robert Kennedy became the conduit through which the back-channel negotiations took place with the Soviets that ultimately ended the crisis without catastrophe. Nikita Khrushchev recounted the situation in his memoirs, in which he explained that Robert Kennedy “stressed how fragile his brother’s rule was becoming as the crisis dragged on,” which struck Khrushchev as “especially urgent.” Robert Kennedy warned the Soviets

that, “If the situation continues much longer, the president is not sure that the military will not overthrow him and seize power. The American army could get out of control.” Khrushchev even later wrote that, “for some time we had felt there was a danger that the president would lose control of his military,” and that, “now he was admitting this to us himself.” Thus:

“Moscow’s fear that Kennedy might be toppled in a coup, Khrushchev suggested in his memoirs, led the Soviets to reach a settlement of the missile crisis with the president. “We could sense from the tone of the message that tension in the United States was indeed reaching a critical point.”[44]

Thirteen days after the crisis began, the Soviets announced that they would remove the missiles from Cuba, with the US agreeing to remove missiles from US bases in Turkey and “pledging not to invade Cuba,” which Kennedy and future presidents would honour. At the announcement of the end to the crisis, General LeMay roared at Kennedy, “It’s the greatest defeat in our history,” and that, “We should invade today!” A defense analyst at the Pentagon, Daniel Ellsberg, who was consulting with Air Force generals and colonels on nuclear strategy at the end of the crisis, remarked that after the settlement was reached, “there was virtually a coup atmosphere in Pentagon circles,” explaining, “not that I had the fear there was about to be a coup – I just thought it was a mood of hatred and rage. The atmosphere was poisonous, poisonous.”[45]

What’s more, the CIA was further enraged at Kennedy, as “for those militants who were part of the massive juggernaut organized to destroy the Castro regime, the peaceful resolution of the missile crisis was a betrayal worse than the Bay of Pigs.”[46]

Going into 1963, however, the anti-Castro Cuban exiles in Miami continued to undertake covert actions against Castro. The CIA claimed the groups got out of its control, “but the rebels were heavily dependent on agency funding and it was never certain whether the groups’ frequent defiance of Kennedy policy was in fact instigated by their spymasters in Langley and Miami.”[47]

One of these groups was the Cuban Student Directorate (DRE), “a particular favourite of the CIA,” which was founded in 1954 “as a Catholic student group militantly opposed to the dictator Batista,” but in 1960 moved to Miami and shifted its operations against Castro, where its operations were planned by the CIA. A man named Lee Harvey Oswald became affiliated with the group in August of 1963. Oswald made contacts with other Cuban exile groups that summer, some of whom found the “Ex-Marine” to be “suspicious” and even reported on him to Bobby Kennedy.[48]

Kennedy Makes Moves for Peace

In June of 1963, Kennedy delivered his famous “Peace Speech” in which he discussed “the most important topic on earth: world peace.” Kennedy continued:

"What kind of peace do I mean? What kind of peace do we seek? Not a Pax Americana enforced on the world by American weapons of war. Not the peace of the grave or the security of the slave. I am talking about genuine peace, the kind of peace that makes life on earth worth living, the kind that enables men and nations to grow and to hope and to build a better life for their children – not merely peace for Americans but peace for all men and women – not merely peace in our time but peace for all time.

I speak of peace because of the new face of war. Total war makes no sense in an age when great powers can maintain large and relatively invulnerable nuclear forces and refuse to surrender without resort to those forces. It makes no sense in an age when a single nuclear weapon contains almost ten times the explosive force delivered by all the allied air forces in the Second World War. It makes no sense in an age when the deadly poisons produced by a nuclear exchange would be carried by wind and water and soil and seed to the far corners of the globe and to generations yet unborn.

... First: Let us examine our attitude toward peace itself. Too many of us think it is impossible. Too many think it unreal. But that is a dangerous, defeatist belief. It leads to the conclusion that war is inevitable – that mankind is doomed – that we are gripped by forces we cannot control.

We need not accept that view. Our problems are manmade – therefore, they can be solved by man. And man can be as big as he wants. No problem of human destiny is beyond human beings. Man's reason and spirit have often solved the seemingly unsolvable – and we believe they can do it again."[49]

Kennedy further stated, "Let us reexamine our attitude toward the Soviet Union," suggesting an end to the Cold War, and then remarked: "We do not want a war. We do not now expect a war. This generation of Americans has already had enough – more than enough – of war and hate and oppression. We shall be prepared if others wish it. We shall be alert to try to stop it." Kennedy famously proclaimed, "We all inhabit this small planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children's future. And we are all mortal."[50]

This was not particularly to the liking of the National Security State, a proclamation for America to follow "not a strategy of annihilation, but a strategy of peace." Kennedy even stated that America would "never start a war." As Robert McNamara later recalled, "the American University speech laid out exactly what Kennedy's intentions were," and that, "If he had lived, the world would have been different, I feel quite confident of that."[51]

Kennedy and Vietnam

While the National Security State began maneuvering for an escalation of violence in Vietnam, Kennedy began formulating a plan of his own. He was intent upon the United States withdrawing from the conflict. However, knowing that it would prompt a great outcry, he would wait until after the 1964 election. As Kennedy told one of his top aides, Kenny O'Donnell, "In 1965, I'll become one of the most unpopular presidents in history.

I'll be damned everywhere as a Communist appeaser. But I don't care. If I tried to pull out completely now from Vietnam, we would have another Joe McCarthy red scare on our hands, but I can do it after I am reelected. So we had better make damned sure that I am reelected.”[52]

As Vietnam came to crisis late in his term, Kennedy was the lone voice against escalation of military conflict. On October 11, 1963, Kennedy issued National Security Action Memoranda NSAM 263, authorizing his plans “to withdraw 1000 U.S. military personnel [from Vietnam] by the end of 1963,” with the longer goal of withdrawing “the bulk of U.S. personnel” by the end of 1965. However, Kennedy ordered that, “no formal announcement be made of the implementation,” yet on November 20, at a top-level conference, “the secrecy was lifted,” and it was reported in the New York Times the following day, which was the day before Kennedy was assassinated.[53]

Following Kennedy's continuing stealth moves to avoid an escalation of the conflict in Vietnam, the majority of his national security bureaucracy “was in flagrant revolt against him. The Pentagon and CIA were taking steps to sabotage his troop withdrawal plan.” Further:

"Frustrated by the growing instability of South Vietnam's Diem regime, U.S. officials split over whether to back a military coup to replace it, with Kennedy himself vacillating back and forth on the question." [54]

An open revolt took place between the two camps with Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, “who supported a coup, and Saigon CIA station chief John Richardson, who backed the increasingly autocratic President Ngo Dinh Diem.” Richard Starnes, a newspaper correspondent in Saigon, wrote on this feud, and explained that “a high U.S. official” in Saigon views the CIA as a “malignancy,” guilty of “insubordination,” and that he “was not sure even the White House could control [it] any longer.” The U.S. official added:

"If the United States ever experiences a [coup attempt] it will come from the CIA and not the Pentagon... [The CIA] represents a tremendous power and total unaccountability to anyone." [55]

On November 1, South Vietnamese military plotters killed Diem and his brother in a coup which “was facilitated when the CIA withdrew Richardson from Saigon, allowing the agency to cooperate with the South Vietnamese generals behind the plot.”[56]

Kennedy is Killed

Throughout the fall of 1963, “the CIA pursued its own agenda” with mobsters and militant Cuban exiles, while “the Kennedy's struggled to control the sprawling operations related to Cuba.”[57]

While in Dallas, Texas, on November 22, 1963, President Kennedy was killed while driving in his motorcade along Dealey Plaza. E. Howard Hunt, the infamous CIA agent

who overthrew the government of Guatemala and worked in the CIA's anti-Castro Cuban operations, and who later achieved infamy as one of the Watergate burglars, had his deathbed confession revealed by his son in 2007. In his confession, E. Howard Hunt revealed that it was the CIA and Lyndon Banes Johnson who were behind the assassination, and that he, himself, was involved.[58]

Hunt recalled that in 1963, he was invited to a secret meeting in a CIA safe house in Miami by Frank Sturgis, another infamous Watergate burglar, and a "mob-friendly anti-Castro operative." At the meeting was also CIA agent David Morales, someone Hunt referred to as a "cold-blooded killer," and William Harvey, another CIA man. The discussion of the meeting was the Kennedy assassination, or what they referred to as "the big event." [59] Bill Harvey was the man that Richard Helms, CIA Deputy Director for Plans, had put in charge of the CIA's anti-Castro Cuban operations, and who had a particularly antagonizing relationship with Robert Kennedy, who was trying to supervise Harvey's operations.[60]

As author Peter Dale Scott revealed, Vice President Lyndon Johnson "had been, since 1961, the ally of the Joint Chiefs (and in particular Air Force General Curtis LeMay) in their unrelenting efforts, against Kennedy's repeated refusals, to introduce U.S. combat troops into Asia." The Joint Chiefs had thus taken it upon themselves to keep Johnson more informed than Kennedy on the situation in Southeast Asia, with Chairman Lemnitzer himself going around Kennedy to Johnson. The Joint Chiefs created a back channel where they were delivering "accurate Vietnam reports" to Johnson, "which were denied to the President." US Army Intelligence reports produced in Saigon were delivered to McNamara and Kennedy, which were "false and optimistic" in order to help "ensure their ongoing support for the war," while US Army Intelligence in Honolulu produced a second set of reports, described as "accurate and gloomy," which were supplied to Johnson. When Lemnitzer was replaced as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, the man Kennedy chose to replace him, General Max Taylor, continued in taking part in this deception. As Peter Dale Scott explained:

"These divisive intrigues came to a head at the Honolulu conference of November 20, 1963, two days before the assassination. At this meeting the truth about the deterioration of the ineffective war effort "was presented in detail to those assembled, along with a plan to widen the war, while the 1,000-man withdrawal [first publicly acknowledged at the same meeting] was turned into a meaningless paper drill."

The tone of the meeting, in other words, was in keeping with the policies of the man who would not become President until the shootings in Dallas two days later." [61]

Thus, "a group within the military command, dissatisfied with Kennedy's limited support, had already begun secretly to plan for the option preferred by the Vice-President." [62] Two days after the assassination, Johnson and his top advisers issued a new policy statement in contrast to Kennedy's NSAM 263 issued on October 11, 1963, which called for a withdrawal of forces from Vietnam. Johnson's NSAM 273 was finalized on November 26, 1963, four days after the assassination, of which the key

policy innovation was “for the United States to begin carrying the war north” in Vietnam. On the very same day Johnson’s NSAM 273 was issued, the Joint Chiefs launched “accelerated planning for escalation against North Vietnam.”[63] Roughly one month later, on December 24, 1963, Lyndon Johnson told the Joint Chiefs of Staff, “Just get me elected, and then you can have your war.”[64]

The Warren Commission: The American Establishment Cover-Up Committee

The Warren Commission was established by Lyndon Johnson on November 29, 1963, to investigate the assassination of JFK. Among the members were Gerald Ford, a Congressman who would later become President of the United States, and John J. McCloy, a lawyer, banker, former Assistant Secretary of War in World War II, and former President of the World Bank. McCloy was chairman of Chase Manhattan Bank from 1953 to 1960, was chairman of the Ford Foundation from 1958 to 1965, and was a trustee of the Rockefeller Foundation from 1946 to 1949, and again between 1953 and 1958. From 1954 until 1970, McCloy was Chairman of the Council on Foreign Relations, where he was succeeded by David Rockefeller, a close associate from Chase Manhattan.

Another notable member of the Warren Commission was none other than Allen Dulles, the former CIA Director whom Kennedy had fired. An interesting fact to note is regarding Dulles’ Deputy Director of the CIA whom Kennedy also fired, Charles Cabell, who was also an Air Force General. Cabell’s brother, Earle Cabell, happened to be mayor of Dallas at the time of Kennedy’s assassination. Allen Dulles was the “Warren Commission’s most active member,” and was adamant in his “unwillingness to let the Commission’s investigation get into a most pertinent project, the CIA-Mafia plots against Castro.”[65]

The Warren Commission was responsible for producing the idea of the “magic bullet theory,” which postulated that three bullets fired from Lee Harvey Oswald at the Texas School Book Depository resulted in the murder of Kennedy. The “lone gunman” and “single bullet theory” were sold to the American people and not subjected to criticism by the mainstream media.

Peter Dale Scott differentiated between the notion of a “secret government” – with the institutional structure of something like a government – and “deep politics” – being, rather, the methods of deception, itself. Thus, it is not within a state structure that the assassination was conducted, but rather it was in the functions of an intricate network that transcends government and industry. Scott explained that, “the President was murdered by a coalition of forces inside and outside government,” and that, “In short, Kennedy was killed by the deep political system.”[66]

As a result of the death of JFK, the National Security State “secret government” – or the “deep political” system, as it is more accurately described, got exactly what it wanted with the escalation of the Vietnam War. The military-industrial complex that President Eisenhower warned the American people about two years prior, had turned the apparatus

of the “secret government” in on the president, himself. It was a political lynching on a grand scale. And it was not to be the last.

Notes

- [1] CFR, [Historical Roster of Directors and Officers](#). Council on Foreign Relations
- [2] CFR, [Continuing the Inquiry, War and Peace](#). History of the CFR
- [3] Ebrahim Norouzi, [The Dulles Brothers](#). The Mossadeq Project: April 7, 2010
- [4] James Risen, [Secret History of the CIA in Iran](#). The New York Times: 2000
- [5] Dwight D. Eisenhower, [Military-Industrial Complex Speech](#). Farewell Address: January 17, 1961
- [6] William Blum, [Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II](#). (Common Courage Press: Monroe, Main, 2004), page 186
- [7] Prof. Edward Curtin, [JFK and the Unspeakable: Why He Died and Why It Matters](#). Global Research: November 25, 2009
- [8] Peter Dale Scott, [Deep Politics and the Death of JFK](#). (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1993), page 10
- [9] David Talbott, [Brothers: The Hidden History of the Kennedy Years](#). (Free Press, New York, 2007), page 43
- [10] Ibid, page 44.
- [11] Ibid, page 45.
- [12] Ibid, pages 45-46.
- [13] Ibid, page 46.
- [14] Ibid, page 47.
- [15] Ibid, pages 47-48.
- [16] Ibid, page 49.
- [17] Ibid, page 50.
- [18] Ibid, pages 50-51.

[19] Ibid, pages 51-52.

[20] Ibid, pages 52-53.

[21] Ibid, pages 53-54.

[22] Ibid, pages 64-65.

[23] Ibid, pages 66-67.

[24] Ibid, pages 68-69.

[25] Ibid, page 75.

[26] Ibid, pages 86-87.

[27] Ibid, page 106.

[28] Joint Chiefs of Staff, [Operation Northwoods: Justification for US Military Intervention in Cuba](#). March 13, 1962, Washington, D.C.

[29] Ibid, page 7.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid, page 8.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid, pages 8-9.

[34] Ibid, page 9.

[35] Ibid, pages 10-11.

[36] David Talbott, *Brothers: The Hidden History of the Kennedy Years*. (Free Press, New York, 2007), pages 107-108

[37] Ibid, page 108.

[38] Ibid, page 163.

[39] Ibid, pages 163-165.

[40] Ibid, pages 165-166.

[41] Ibid, pages 166-167.

[42] Ibid, pages 167-168.

[43] Ibid, page 169.

[44] Ibid, pages 171-172.

[45] Ibid, pages 172-173.

[46] Ibid, page 173.

[47] Ibid, pages 176-177.

[48] Ibid.

[49] President John F. Kennedy, [Commencement Address at American University](#). Washington D.C., June 10, 1963

[50] Ibid.

[51] David Talbott, *Brothers: The Hidden History of the Kennedy Years*. (Free Press, New York, 2007), page 206

[52] Ibid, pages 215-216.

[53] Peter Dale Scott, *Deep Politics and the Death of JFK*. (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1993), page 26

[54] David Talbot, *Brothers: The Hidden History of the Kennedy Years*. (Free Press, New York, 2007), page 217

[55] Ibid, pages 217-218.

[56] Ibid, page 218.

[57] Ibid, page 181.

[58] Ryan Singel, [Who Killed JFK? Famous Spook Outs the Conspiracy](#). Wired: April 3, 2007

[59] David Talbot, *Brothers: The Hidden History of the Kennedy Years*. (Free Press, New York, 2007), pages 402-406

[60] Ibid, pages 103-105.

[61] Peter Dale Scott, *Deep Politics and the Death of JFK*. (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1993), pages 30-32

[62] Ibid, page 33.

[63] Ibid, pages 26-28.

[64] Ibid, page 32.

[65] Ibid, page 19.

[66] Ibid, page 299.