



- By Aryeh Cohen

An American General's Terror Campaign... Against America!

OPERATION NORTHWOODS

A dangerous group met clandestinely in 1962 to plot terror attacks against America, targeting military bases and naval vessels, as well as planning shootings and bombings on the streets. This group was not a precursor to Al-Qaeda, or even one of the Arab terror organizations that were soon to develop in the Middle East; it was a group within the US military itself!

It occurred at a time when Cuba had become a potential threat, as the only Communist nation in the western hemisphere. Controlled and influenced by the USSR and only 90 miles south of Florida, it was too close for comfort, and American generals were itching for any opportunity to drive its dictator, Fidel Castro, from power. With no plausible pretext for initiating hostilities, they decided to plan a campaign of terror against America and then blame Castro for it—and they came surprisingly close to successfully carrying out their plan.



Among the wild theories that circulated after the horrible attacks of September 11 was one that the attacks were carried out on orders of President Bush himself in a desperate attempt to shore up his approval rating (there's nothing like a war to make a politician popular). There even developed a movement of 9/11 deniers, referred to by the media as "truthers," who carried out demonstrations against average Americans and American defenders of President Bush, propagating the conspiracy theory that claimed the American government had crafted the events of September 11th in order to blame distant Middle Eastern militants for its problems.

Of course, no self-respecting American bought into such ridiculous notions. Some based their refusal to accept the conspiracy theory on the argument that it was too improbable to believe that the American government would order an attack against its own citizens. The US would never hurt its own people in order to create an opportunity to go to war against its perceived enemies, right?

Wrong.

While the evidence establishes beyond a doubt that the 9/11 attacks were carried out by Al Qaeda, the argument that the American government would never plan an attack against its own people to provide political justification for a war is deeply flawed.

On at least one occasion, some 50 years ago, Pentagon officials did exactly that.



The Pentagon itself planned a terror campaign targeting the American public in the 1960s.

Documents that were kept secret for many years and have only leaked to the public over the last decade reveal that officials planned large scale attacks on American military and civilian targets in order to fabricate a pretext for a war against Cuba!

Prelude to Operation Northwoods

It occurred during the presidency of John F. Kennedy (1961-1963). Fear bordering on hysteria of rising Soviet power and influence ran high in America. Politicians such as the unscrupulous Senator Joseph McCarthy harangued that the American government had been infiltrated by men with Communist sympathies, or even outright Soviet spies, and virtually no member of government was above suspicion of harboring Communist ideologies.

One of the centers of the fiercest anti-Communist movements in America was naturally within the Armed Forces who were sworn to protect America against any enemy from without—and who could be a greater enemy of American democracy than the Soviet Union?

Officers regularly stirred up the soldiers under their command with talks about the danger of Communists within their own government. One general even had to be relieved of his command by President Kennedy because he refused to obey orders that he cease agitating against the American government.

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Lyman L. Lemnitzer had been appointed by the previous president, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, as the highest military leader, answering only to the president himself. He was so concerned about the threat of Communism that he secretly incited other generals against President Kennedy, whom he faulted for not pursuing an anti-Communist campaign with the appropriate level of alacrity. In private he even stated his hope that some day America would be freed of its civilian

regime, and government control would be handled by military leaders.

The level of anti-establishment sentiment heard in the halls and corridors of the military sector were sufficient to set off alarms in Congress, and a congressional hearing was initiated in the Senate in which senators protested loudly against the winds of accusation blowing in the Pentagon. Some went so far as to warn that if the anti-government rhetoric was not stopped it could lead to a military coup. General Lemnitzer himself was censured by the Senate, in particular by Senator Albert Gore Sr. (father of future Vice President Al Gore) for his connections with extreme right-wing groups.

In fact, General Lemnitzer was one of those behind the plan to attack innocent Americans in order to fabricate an excuse for America's military to launch an attack against Communist Cuba.

Bay of Pigs Debacle

During the final months of the Eisenhower administration the CIA began to plan quietly for a secret mission that was intended to overthrow the Castro regime without revealing America's involvement in the revolt. This involved training Cuban exiles and dissidents in Guatemala to attack Castro's forces.

One month after Kennedy took office in January 1961, CIA Director Allen Dulles met with him and informed the new president of the details of the CIA operation. He urged President Kennedy to approve the plans immediately so that the CIA could go ahead without delay. Dulles reassured Kennedy that the moment the dissidents set foot on Cuban shores, the highly organized local resistance would join them and together they would have little difficulty in toppling the Castro government.

The green president took Dulles' statements at face value. The truth, though, was very different from what the CIA director had promised.



General Lyman L. Lemnitzer (far right) with other Allied generals in Belgrade at the end of WWII.



Castro sits inside a tank during his revolution to overthrow Fulgencio Batista which succeeded in 1959.



Cuban leader Fidel Castro with Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev.

Castro was widely seen among his populace as a hero who had freed them from the brutal dictatorship of President Fulgencio Batista just two years prior, so there were no solid grounds for the assumption that rebels who arrived from without would be joined by dissidents from within. Castro's socialist policies, so deeply despised and hated