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The U.S. plan to overthrow Castro was code-named "Operation Mongoose." Why that name? Doing a bit of investigating, we find this image—created by Joseph Hirsch (1910-1981)—in the U.S. Navy Art Collection. The Naval Historical Center provides this description: "...The mongoose is extant in Hawaii, where this picture was made, because the animal was imported there from the East Indies by sugar planters to rid their cane fields of rats." Might U.S. military leaders have had that concept in mind as they considered invading another island filled with sugar-cane fields? Online via Naval Historical Center.

Did the Kennedy Administration really have a plan to overthrow Castro? Although allegations have persisted for decades, what are the true facts? Where is the proof?

Why was Khrushchev concerned about Cuba? Was it just a convenient "reason" to install offensive nuclear weapons 90 miles from the American shore?

Top-secret documents have been declassified and are available on-line at the National Archives. What do they show?

One memo, written "For the President" *after* the crisis was over, provides some interesting commentary:

Our ultimate objective with respect to Cuba remains the overthrow of the Castro / Communist regime and its replacement by one compatible with the objectives of the U.S.

Who was in charge of that "ultimate objective" - what came to be called "Operation Mongoose?"

Memos reveal the President's brother and trusted advisor, Robert F. Kennedy, attended meetings and expressed opinions about the effects of Operation Mongoose. The man in charge of the details, U. S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Edward G. Lansdale (scroll down 25% - to page 5 - to view his picture) was an assistant to the Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, and reported to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Maxwell Taylor.

Before the Missile Crisis began, the United States military had planned a mock invasion of a Caribbean island. The purpose of the exercise was to overthrow an imaginary tyrant named "Ortsac" (Castro spelled backwards). Word of the "invasion" was leaked to the press.

The Soviets and Castro (here hugging Khrushchev at the United Nations in 1960) also knew about it.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/OPERATION-MONGOOSE-Cuban-Missile-Crisis>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/OPERATION-MONGOOSE-Cuban-Missile-Crisis>

Media Stream



President Kennedy and Robert Kennedy - October, 1962

Photo by White-House photographer, Cecil Stoughton. Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

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View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/President-Kennedy-and-Robert-Kennedy-October-1962>



General Maxwell Taylor

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

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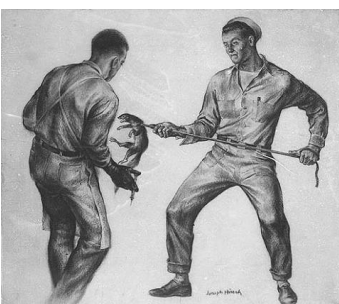


Nikita Khrushchev and Fidel Castro

Image, described above, online courtesy the U.S. National Archives and the JFK Presidential Library and Museum.

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