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Subject: AP story about today's release of documents
FTT.Copyright 1998 THE ASSOCIATED PRESS. All rights reserved. The information contained in this news report may not be published, broadcast or otherwise distributed without the prior written authority of the Associated Press. By MIKE FEINSILBER Associated Press Writer WASHINGTON (AP) -- In 1962 Pentagon planners came up with a scheme to provoke Cuban dictator Fidel Castro into attacking the United States so that retaliating U.S. forces could "destroy Castro with speed, force and determination," newly declassified records show. One plan, for example, called for concurrent air and sea assault exercises in the Caribbean, loading and deployment exercises on the East and Gulf coasts of the United States, and air defense exercises in the Southeast United States to lure Castro into a hostile reaction. A year later, with that plan shelved, planners had a new idea: Provoke a war between Cuba and another Latin American state so the United States could come to the aid of the threatened nation through an invasion of Cuba or air strikes. But the planners got cold feet, the documents show. "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 records were made public today by the Assassination Records Review Board, a government agency created by Congress to declassify and open to public inspection any records that might shed light on President Kennedy's assassination on Nov. 22, 1963. At the time, Cuba was considered a possible sponsor of assassination suspect Lee Harvey Oswald because of his 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 chairman of the board. A paper written by the Defense Department's Caribbean Survey Group and dated Feb. 19, 1962, called for making Castro so fearful of an imminent U.S. attack that he would call up the Cuban militia, causing "a complete disruption of the available labor force" for the 1962 sugar cane harvest. The same paper spelled out plans to "lure or provoke Castro or an uncontrollable subordinate into an overt hostile reaction against the United States, a reaction which would in turn create the justification for the U.S. to not only retaliate but destroy Castro with speed, force and determination." A cover letter said the plans had been approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Deputy Defense Secretary Roswell Gilpatric. It was stamped "top secret." But the board's documents, amounting to 600 pages, were silent on why the plans were not carried out. All the papers were written after the disastrous April 1961 invasion of Cuba's Bay of Pigs by Cuban exiles trained, armed and directed by the United States in
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