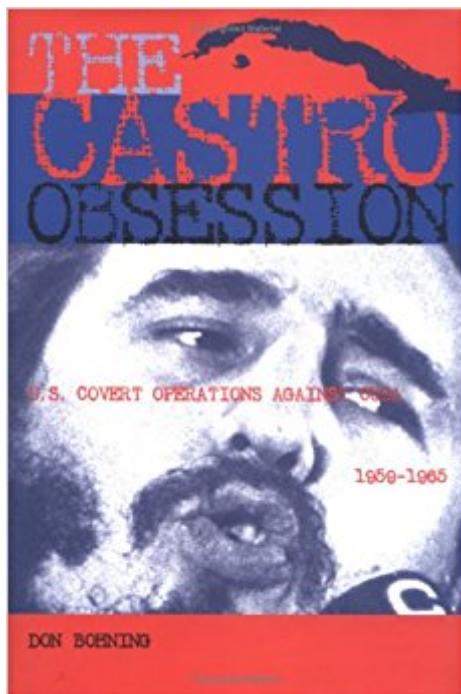


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The Castro Obsession: U.S. Covert Operations Against Cuba, 1959-1965



Synopsis

At the height of the Cold War, the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations made removing Fidel Castro's regime one of their highest foreign policy priorities. The Castro Obsession provides new insight into the bold U.S. covert war against Cuba that lasted from 1959 until 1965. Eisenhower and Kennedy's fervent desire to get rid of Castro led to the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, but the efforts to oust his regime did not end there. It became an obsession. Primarily through the CIA and the military, the United States resorted to economic and political destabilization, propaganda, sabotage, hit-and-run raids, and assassination plots to try to topple the regime. This secret war was one of the most wide-ranging, sustained, expensive, and ultimately futile covert action campaigns in history.

Was this secret war wise, and did it ultimately promote U.S. interests? Don Bohning says no. Even if the details were murky, the extreme American pressure on Cuba was apparent to all, and this heavy-handedness severely damaged the U.S. image in Latin America and much of the Third World. Instead of ridding the hemisphere of a dictator, these efforts increased his international political fame and provided him the excuse for more repression in Cuba. U.S. attempts to overthrow Castro also had dire unintended consequences, such as contributing to the Soviet decision to install nuclear missiles in Cuba, which produced the most dangerous crisis of the Cold War. Bohning sheds new light on this covert war, revealing that it was even more extensive, risky, and long-lived than previously thought.

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Customer Reviews

Don Bohning's book *The Castro Obsession* is about the secret war by the Kennedy administration to topple Fidel Castro. Numerous documents declassified for the Kennedy Assassination Records Review Board and the Church Committee hearings testify to the diligence of Bohning's research and the verisimilitude of his account. Following the disastrous Bay of Pigs failed invasion by CIA-led Cuban exiles removing Fidel Castro's regime became the highest of the Kennedy administration's foreign policy priorities. The Kennedys, particularly the president's brother Bobby, continually berated the CIA and other agencies to dream up 'boom and bang' ideas to destabilize Fidel Castro's government. The Kennedys were likely so obsessed because Bobby was the type of individual who would do anything to see his brother re-elected and he believed that if Castro remained in power it would damage his brother's forthcoming re-election campaign. The Kennedys may also have harbored feelings of revenge after the failed Bay of Pigs invasion. It was, in effect, an obsession that was completely out of proportion to the actual threat. The plans, implemented at the behest of JFK and Bobby Kennedy after the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, was code named 'Operation Mongoose'. The plans eventually included numerous ridiculous ideas like the 'Elimination by Illumination' mission. It was a half-cocked plan for Cuban exiles to pass a rumor throughout the island that Castro was the 'Anti-Christ' then summoning a submarine to explode fireworks designed to show the 'Second Coming' had arrived and Cubans should show their displeasure at Castro by rebelling.

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