

Castro says Bush 'authorized' his death

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HAVANA --

Fidel Castro on Monday accused President Bush of "authorizing and ordering" an attempt on his life, although his rambling essay on the subject provided no details.

American law now prohibits the U.S. government from ordering the assassination of foreign leaders, but declassified U.S. documents have shown that the CIA made numerous attempts to kill Castro in the early years after the 1959 Cuban revolution.

Castro's essay noted that President Gerald Ford signed an order banning official assassinations, and said he didn't believe that Presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton ever tried to have him killed.

But Castro alleged that Bush has other ideas.

Now 80, Castro hasn't been seen in public in the 11 months since he underwent emergency intestinal surgery. Cuba's provisional government is being led by his younger brother Raul while he recovers. Meanwhile, he's become a prolific essay writer. In one, on May 29, Castro accused Bush of renewing U.S. attempts to assassinate him.

"I'm not the first, nor will I be the last, whom Bush has ordered to be deprived of life," Castro wrote then.

His latest essay, signed Sunday afternoon and published Monday in state media, referred to that May 29 allegation.

"Why did I say one day in a reflection that Bush authorized or ordered my death? This phrase can seem ambiguous and imprecise," Castro wrote. "Perhaps it would be more exact, although even more confusing, to say that he authorized it and ordered it."

Castro promised to explain himself, but never did, writing only that "really it is a mystery to name those responsible for the hundreds of attempts on my life, all the direct and indirect forms to cause my death were used."

The White House had no reaction to Castro's statement.