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WASHINGTON
KISSINGER BELIEVES SOVIETS BEHIND ATTEMPT ON POPE' LIFE

Accounts that have emerged so far on the assassination attempt on the pope lead "almost to no other conclusion" than that the Soviet secret service was behind it, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger said Friday.

"Here is a Turkish terrorist, who suddenly shows up in Bulgaria, which is not the normal thing for a Turk to do, lives in the best hotel in Bulgaria, emerges with $50,000 and a weapon, travels all over Europe. It cannot happen without the Bulgarian secret police," Kissinger said in a Cable News Network interview.

The interview was taped Wednesday for broadcast Friday and Sunday.

"It's nonsense to say, as I read somewhere, that maybe something got away from the higher levels. That does not happen in Bulgaria. Then it had to be the Soviets. The Bulgarians have no interest in coming after the pope."

Kissinger continued, "... they must have concluded that they had to crush Solidarity. At that time in 1981, they must have thought that the possibility existed that the Red Army would have to go in.

"In that case if there were a Polish Pope who did what he was alleged to have threatened, go to Poland and oppose them, that would be a formidable psychological problem."

Kissinger said he had been told by Richard Helms, former head of the CIA, that "it had all the earmarks to them of a KGB operation."

"If you try to square the known facts, it really leads almost to no other conclusion."

Yrui Andropov, the new Soviet leader, was head of the KGB at the time.

Asked what the implications of that were, Kissinger said: "I take it we will never know more than we know. We don't negotiate with the Soviets because we like them. ... The Soviets will ruthlessly pursue their own interests. Our problem is whether in a nuclear world the Soviets pursuing their own interest and we pursuing our interest can ease the potential conflicts and reduce the danger of confrontation."

On the two sets of negotiations now under way with the Soviets, the strategic and the intermediate-range nuclear missile talks in Geneva, Switzerland, Kissinger said, "the difference between the two sides is not so irreconcilable."

Kissinger was the primary negotiator of the SALT I treaty and the unratified SALT II treaty limiting strategic nucler weapons.

Noting pressure for a nuclear freeze from some sectors of U.S. public opinion, he said, "I do not think it is useful and I do not think it is communist manipulated."

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