C.I.A. Documents Tell of 1954 Project to Create Involuntary Assassins: No Evidence of Attempt
By NICHOLAS M. HORROCK Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 8—The Central Intelligence Agency began a study in 1954 to find out whether a person could be secretly induced to commit an assassination against his will, newly released Government documents disclosed today.

It was the first documentary evidence that the C.I.A. had contemplated such a situation.

The study was disclosed in a series of 1954 memorandums made public under a Freedom of Information Act request by The New York Times and others. The documents were prepared as part of a project sometimes known by the code name "Artichoke," one of four C.I.A. programs to conduct mind-control experiments from 1949 to 1974.

No Evidence of Attempt

There is no indication in the documents released so far that the C.I.A. attempted to use mind control in an actual assassination attempt. However, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence reported in 1976 that the intelligence agency had plotted three assassinations and had become indirectly involved in several others.

According to the documents, a team from the project, which usually included interrogation experts, drug experts and psychiatrists or psychologists, was asked to "give an evaluation" of the following "hypothetical problem" in January 1954:

"Can an individual of (deleted nationality) descent be made to perform an act of attempted assassination involuntarily under the influence of Artichoke?"

The memorandum, which like most documents released by the agency has names of individuals, government agencies or locations deleted, described the following "problem." "As a 'trigger mechanism,' for a bigger project, it was proposed that an individual, of (deleted) descent, approximately 35 years old, well educated, proficient in English and well established socially and politically in the (deleted) government be induced under Artichoke to perform an act, involuntarily, against a prominent (deleted) politi-