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Report of the Commander of the 51st Missile Division concerning the Operations of the Division during the Period from 12 July through 1 December 1962

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Summary:

Commander of the 51st Missile Division General-Major Igor Demyanovich Statsenko's detailed postmortem on the deployment of Soviet missiles to Cuba in mid-1962 and their removal later that year following the nuclear confrontation with the United States. The report includes an attachment titled: "Some Questions of Operational and Tactical Concealment during the Operation of the Division on the Island of Cuba."

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REPORT

OF THE COMMANDER OF THE 51st MISSILE DIVISION CONCERNING THE OPERATIONS OF THE DIVISION DURING THE PERIOD FROM 12 JULY TO 1 DECEMBER 1962

On the basis of a directive of the General Staff in the middle of 1962 the division was assigned the task of shifting to a new table of organization (headquarter - 6/322; R-12 regiments - 6/332; R-14 regiments - 6/334; RTB [missile technical base] - 6/333), and to take into the division the regiment of Cde. BANDILOVSKY and the regiment of Cde. SIDOROV; the regiment of Cde. CHERKESOV is to take one launch battalion and one RTB assembly team. Units of the division are to be completely manned with personnel and equipment, and to be ready for transfer abroad to perform a Special Government Mission.

I. WORK OF THE SURVEY GROUPS TO SELECT THE COMBAT FORMATIONS

In implementation of this the lead survey group arrived on the island of Cuba on 12 July 1962 on a TU-114 aircraft, on which I was located with the chief of the OPD [data preparation section] of the division.

The survey groups of the regiments flew into Cuba on 19 July 1962.

On the basis of a study of the survey tasks stated in the General Staff directives, a work plan of the lead survey groups was drawn up on 14 July 1962, which provided for:

- beginning work to fly over the western part of Cuba at first the western, then the central part;
- choosing two field launch areas for each regiment, locating the regimental headquarters with one of the battalions;
- the division of the survey groups into groups by region, with the purpose of reducing the time to conduct the work;
- include officers of departments of the staff of the Commanding General of the Group of Soviet Forces in Cuba in the survey groups of the regiments;
- the organization of liaison of the survey groups with the group of General DEMENT'YEV and the General Staff of the Cuban Army to ensure the security of the survey groups during the work.

On arrival of the regimental survey groups in Cuba, that is, on 20 July 1962, the work plan was conveyed to them, the terrain on which it was expected to work was carefully studied using maps, and a special briefing was given concerning measures to conceal the work being done; a necessary minimum of words in the Spanish language was studied and the Cuban Government's conditions for the choice of areas was announced:

- each region submitted for occupation should be no more than 400-500 hectares in area and with no more than six to eight families resettled.

The conditions set by the Cuban Government led to a crowding of equipment in the PPR [translator's note: probably "missile preparation area" or "missile transloading point"].

During the period from 21 to 25 July 1963 the areas of the regiments' deployment planned by the General Staff directive were studied from the air four times by flying over them in helicopters.

The western and central parts of the island of Cuba were studied by flying over them in helicopters, and it was established that the areas for the regiments of Cdes. SIDOROV, CHERKESOV, and BANDILOVSKY have very rugged terrain, poor vegetation, and a badly-developed road network, and therefore are not suitable for the deployment of RP [possibly "the missile regiments"].

At the same time several new areas were identified:

- Mendoza, Jaruco;
- Aguacate, Madruga;

- Coliseo, Limonar;
- Consolacion del Norte;
- Colon, Los Arabos.

On 22 July 1962 the regimental survey groups left for the areas designated by the directive.

Officers of the staff of the Group headed by General Cde. L. S. Garbuz, Deputy for Combat Training to the Commanding General of the Group of Soviet Forces in Cuba, were in the regimental survey groups of the division.

The lack of the necessary number of interpreters influenced the work of the survey groups, in spite of the successful study of the Spanish language by the officers.

The survey showed that the central part of Cuba (the areas of the regiments of Cdes. SIDOROV and Cde. CHERKESOV) has very rugged terrain, poor natural camouflage, and lacks the necessary areas, and the existing roads do not support the passage of missile equipment without conducting a lot of excavation of rocks, the water tables lay at a depth of 150-200 meters, and counterrevolutionary groups operate in areas. Thus, it was established that it was not desirable or advisable to locate the regiments in these areas.

Henceforth, with the permission of the Commanding General of the Group of Forces, the main work of the survey groups was moved to areas in the terrain we newly identified and designated.

In the course of the work in the central part of Cuba (Matanzas, Santa Clara, and Trinidad) a total of 107 areas with a total area of 620 square kilometers were investigated, of which 20 with a total area of 110 square kilometers were surveyed, of which four were selected and approved:

- for the regiment of Cde. SIDOROV - in the area of Sitiecito and Calabazar de Sagua.

- for the regiment of Cde. CHERKESOV - the area of Remedios and Xilueta.

Forty-four areas with a total area of 300 square kilometers were investigated in the western part of Cuba (Pinar Del Rio, Artemisa, and Guanajay) and 15 with a total area of 65 square kilometers were surveyed, of which six areas were selected and approved.

- for the regiment of Cde. BANDILOVSKY - both areas 10 kilometers north of Los Palacios;

- for the regiment of Cde. SOLOV'YEV - the area of Santa Cruz de Los Pinos and Candelaria;

- for the regiment of Cde. KOVALENKO - the area of Guanajay (the Esperon plateau).

Thus, for the selection of 10 launch sites it was necessary to conduct a careful survey on foot of 151 areas with a total area of 900 square kilometers spread over the territory of the island from west to east for 650 kilometers.

The question of the housing of personnel in shelters instead of a tent camp was studied from the very first days of the arrival in Cuba.

Having carefully studied the texture of the soil and the climate conditions it was established that it was impossible to quarter the troops in shelters in tropical conditions in view of the large amount of rainfall and humidity [*ispareniya* - literally, transpiration or vapor].

Consequently, to house the personnel units were forced to build tent cities, which subsequently were one of the main signs giving away the deployment of troops on the island of Cuba.

Preparatory measures to meet the units were conducted simultaneously with the survey of the areas:

- all the previously-designated ports of disembarkation were surveyed.

[The following] were selected for the disembarkation of units from among the designated ports:

- the port of MARIEL - for the regiments of Cdes. BANDILOVSKY, SOLOV'YEV, and KOVALENKO;

- the port of CASILDA- for the regiments of Cdes. SIDOROV and CHERKESOV;

- the port of MATANZAS - for the headquarters of the division and as an alternate port of disembarkation for the regiments of Cdes. SIDOROV and CHERKESOV.

The ports of Mariel and Casilda were named for unloading the missiles.

- reconnaissance has been done and preparations made for the routes for transporting the missile equipment from the disembarkation ports to the field launch areas;

- in connection with the fact that the road network in the central part of Cuba did not support the passage of missiles and equipment, personnel of the Army and Ministry of Public Works of the Republic of Cuba created two through routes from the port of Casilda in a short time, each bypassing the 200-kilometer-long Escambray Range;

- before the troops' arrival it was planned to screen off all the PPR along the outer perimeter, but the command of the Cuban Army could only finish the barrier of the area of the unit of Cde. KOVALENKO (the Esperon plateau);

- the approach routes to all the field launch areas of the units (a total length of 52 kilometers) were rebuilt and improved by the men and equipment of the Cuban Army.

All the activity of the survey groups and the work which they did were covered by general and particular cover stories.

GENERAL COVER STORY - "agricultural specialists"

PARTICULAR COVER STORIES:

- the construction of the R-14 complex (the Esperon plateau) - "the construction of a training center for the Cuban Army by Soviet military specialists";

- THE WORK OF GEODETIC GROUPS: "geological exploration parties".

The movement of the survey groups was made in Cuban vehicles in small groups and often in Cuban uniforms.

The command of the Cuban Army assigned three officers to support the work of the survey groups.

Security of the groups was provided by officers and enlisted men of the personal security detail of Cde. FIDEL CASTRO's intelligence battalion.

The goal of the work which was done was kept in strictest secrecy. A strictly limited group of people of the Cuban Army knew about the arrival of the missile troops in Cuba. At the start of the work Cde. FIDEL CASTRO, Cde. RAUL CASTRO, and Cde. PEDRO LUIS, Chief of the Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Cuban Army, and subsequently 10, and by the moment of the end of the work, a total of 15 people were privy to these questions.

The selfless work of the Cuban people and Army while the road work was done during the preparatory work and while the ships were being met ought to be noted.

CONCLUSION:

1. The survey of the combat formations of the division and the preparatory work were concluded in a timely manner, and the reception of the units and their concentration in launch areas was ensured in a short time.

2. The experience of the work on the island of Cuba showed that the terrain greatly influences the amount of survey work. For each selected area in the central part of the island 20-22 were explored, and in the western part, seven or eight areas.

3. The areas found and surveyed - Aguacate, Madruga, and Mendoza - were the most suitable for RPs, but they were not approved, which subsequently sharply influenced the organization of the reception and preparation of the regiment of Cde. SIDOROV.

4. The method to which we are accustomed of the entrenchment and construction of shelters for housing personnel is impossible on the island of Cuba.

5. All the electric power stations on the island of Cuba, as in the US, generate electric power with a frequency of 60 Hz, which completely excludes the possibility of using local electrical power for the technical needs of the Soviet troops, which should have been known even before beginning the survey work.

2. THE CONCENTRATION OF THE DIVISION ON THE ISLAND OF CUBA

A total of 35 ships were planned to transport the division to Cuba.

The concentration of the division in Cuba only began on 9 September 1962 with the arrival of the diesel boat Omsk at the port of Casilda, the first ship of the regiment of Cde. SIDOROV.

Twenty-four ships arrived and were unloaded during the period from 9 September to 22 October 1962, including missile: □ □

□ □ □ □

at the port of CASILDA: □ □ □ □

□ □ □ □

six on the diesel boat Omsk □ □ □ □ □ □

- 9 September 1962; □ □ □ □

□ □ □ □

eight on the diesel boat Kimovsk □ □ □ □ □ □

- 22 September 1962. □ □ □ □

□ □ □ □

□ □ □ □ □ □

□ □ □ □

□ □ □ □

at the port of MARIEL: □ □ □ □

□ □ □ □

eight on the diesel boat Poltava □ □ □ □ □ □

- 16 September 1962; □ □ □ □

□ □ □ □

six on the diesel boat Krasnograd □ □ □ □ □ □

- 2 October 1962; □ □ □ □

□ □ □ □

seven on the diesel boat Orenburg □ □ □ □ □ □

- 6 October 1962; □ □ □ □

□ □ □ □

seven on the diesel boat Omsk □ □ □ □ □ □

- 16 October 1962 (two trips). □ □ □ □

The unloading of the missiles from the ship was only done at night in conditions of a complete blackout of the ships and ports. During the unloading of the missiles the outer approaches to the ports were guarded by a specially selected mountain battalion of 300 men transferred from the area of the Sierra Maestra.

The personnel of this battalion subsequently performed the perimeter [vneshnyaya] security of the PPR.

Personnel of the subunits which had arrived and operations officials selected by the staff of the Group performed security inside the perimeter of the ports. The approaches to the ships being unloaded were protected from the sea by combat vessels and cutters, and also specially-trusted and selected fishermen from among the local Cuban population. Every two hours specially-selected divers inspected the underwater parts of the ships and the bottom of the harbor in the area of the docks. The missile equipment and cargo of the units were transported to the launch areas only at night in small columns.

The concentration of missiles, the erectors, and the fueling equipment in the launch areas was organized and accomplished as follows:

- the missiles and large equipment were transported only at night between midnight and 0500;

- I planned the exact time of the departure of the columns with the missiles, but did not announce it beforehand;

- the routes the columns with the missiles moved was covered in advance by men of the Cuban Army and military police for the entire length;

- road accidents with evacuation of the “injured” and “exercised” of units of the Cuban Army were created and imitated;

- a specially-formed column of Cuban trawlers or heavy duty vehicles started on decoy routes an hour or hour and a half before the movements of the columns with the missiles;

- as a rule, the formation of a column with missiles was as follows:

1. Motorcyclists with radios.
2. An operational Cuban vehicle containing an operations official, translator, and a security guard.
3. Two automobiles of the column leadership.
4. A column escort vehicle [*mashina prikrytiya*].
5. The missiles and prime movers.
6. One crane and spare prime movers.
7. An escort vehicle with a Cuban security detail.
8. Motorcyclists with radios.

- all the personnel taking part in the preparation and transportation of the missiles at night were redressed into Cuban Army uniforms;

- discussions and the issuance of commands in Russian were categorically forbidden; all instructions were given beforehand and memorized Spanish words and phrases were widely used;

- when transporting the erectors and fueling equipment their outer shapes were changed by loaded heavy duty Cuban vehicles.

The concentration of the division on the island of Cuba practically ceased on 22 October 1962 with the announcement of the blockade of the island and the return to the Soviet Union of part of the ships heading to Cuba with personnel and equipment of the division.

As of 22 October 1962 the 51st Missile Division was concentrated in Cuba as follows:

- the headquarters of the division, signals battalion, independent combat engineer battalion, the regiment of Cde. SIDOROV and the regiment of Cde. BANDILOVSKY in full strength;

- the regiment of Cde. SOLOV'YEV, less two transport and fueling batteries; in addition, the chief of staff of the regiments, the deputy for the rear to the commander of the regiment, and a majority of the headquarters of the regiments were located on the diesel boat Yuriy Gagarin, which was returned to the Soviet Union;

- the regiment of Cde. KOVALENKO – part of the headquarters of the regiment headed by the commander of the regiment, the combat support battery, and one launch battery;

- the regiment of Cde. CHERKESOV – the combat support battery;

- the RTB's of Cdes. SHISHCHENKO, ROMANOV, KRIVTSOV, and KORENETS in full strength.

[The following] is the total of those who arrived in Cuba as part of the division: □ □

□□ □□

- officers □□ □□ □□

1404 □□ □

□□ □□

- enlisted men and non-commissioned officers □□ □□ □□

6462 □□ □

□□ □□

Soviet Army civilians □□ □□ □□

90 □□ □

□□ □□

TOTAL □□ □□ □□

7956 □□ □

□□□ □□□

□□□□ □□

□□□ □□□

- missiles □□□ □□□ □□□

42 (including six training [missiles] □□□ □□

□□□ □□□

- warheads □□□ □□□ □□□

36 □□□ □□

□□□ □□□

- one and a half fuelings of fuel components □□□ □□□ □□□

□□□ □□

□□□ □□□

- vehicles □□□ □□□ □□□

1695 □□□ □□

□□□ □□□

- radios □□□ □□□ □□□

72 □□□ □□

□□□ □□□

- construction materials and equipment □□□ □□□ □□□

9425 tons □□□ □□

□□□ □□□

- food, gear, and clothing □□□ □□□ □□□

More than 100 tons □□□ □□

CONCLUSION

1. The experience of preparing the division to fulfill a Special Government Mission showed that a mass replacement of officers, non-commissioned officers, and enlisted personnel dramatically influences the good organization of the units, the teamwork of the staffs and the combat crews, and reduces the combat readiness of the regiments and the formation as a whole (the division commander knew the professional aptitude of only one of the five regimental commanders, and about 500 officers and up to 1000 non-commissioned officers and enlisted personnel were replaced).

The missile troops should be constantly at full strength and ready to perform any Government Mission at any time in the previous well-coordinated composition, even moved to any distance and on any territory.

2. When redeploying a formation it is necessary to provide for the forward movement of the division headquarters by one of the first transports, leaving only a minor operations group in the area of the previous deployment to support the dispatch of the units of the formation.

3. The movement of the division to the island of Cuba was excessively protracted, as a result of which:

- the regiments armed with R-14's were not able to reach [Cuba], and the regiment of Cde. SOLOV'YEV did not arrive completely;

- the sharply increased intensity of shipments led to only RP's being unloaded at all the ports of Cuba at a certain time, which complicated the concealment and could lead to a premature disclosure of the affiliation of the troops;

- the organization of the command of the units was hindered since the headquarters of the division arrived in Cuba only after the regiments of Cdes. SIDOROV and Cde. BANDILOVSKY were concentrated on the island;

- the period of heavy tropical rains was not taken into account at all.

In our view the transport of the units of the divisions needed to be done between the air defense units and started earlier, taking into account that September and October is a period of heavy tropical rains in Cuba. The first ships were required to send

combat engineer and geodesic platoons and also part of the units' headquarters, which I have reported. It was not advisable to send the missiles on the first ships.

3. THE ASSUMPTION OF COMBAT READINESS BY THE DIVISION

By a decision of the command of the Group of Soviet Forces on the Island of Cuba the division was brought into combat readiness at the following times: □ □

□□ □□

- regiments armed with R-12 missiles □□ □□ □□
by 1 November 1962; □□ □

□□ □□

- regiments armed with R-14 missiles, based on the timing of the conclusion of the construction and installation work □□ □□ □□
from 1 November 1962 to 1 January 1963. □□ □

Depending on the commissioning of the R-14 complexes and the arrival of the units, the division's plan provided for [the following] periods for bringing them into combat readiness: □ □

□□ □□

- the regiment of Cde. SIDOROV □□ □□ □□
- 20 October 1962 □□ □

□□ □□

- the regiment of Cde. BANDILOVSKY □□ □□ □□
- 25 October 1962 □□ □

□□ □□

- the regiment of Cde. SOLOV'YEV □□ □□ □□
- 1 November 1962 □□ □

□□ □□

- the regiment of Cde. KOVALENKO: □□ □□ □□

□□ □

□□ □□

the first battalion □□ □□ □□

by 7 November 1962; □□ □

□□ □□

the second battalion □□ □□ □□

by 1 December 1962; □□ □

□□ □□

- the regiment of Cde. CHERKESOV: □□ □□ □□

□□ □

□□ □□

the first battalion □□ □□ □□

by 1 December 1962 □□ □

□□ □□

the second battalion □□ □□ □□

by 1 January 1963 □□ □

The commissioning of the OPR's [Translator's note: expansion unknown, possibly "field repair detachment"] of the regiments armed with R-14's depended on the progress of the construction of the structures, the delivery of technical equipment, the installation, and tests, which were clearly prolonged (the installation teams were an entire month without equipment).

In connection with the abbreviated deadline for bringing the units into combat readiness established by General Staff Directive N° 76438 of 8 September 1962, the

engineering work was done day and night in the PPR. An inspection of the missile equipment and comprehensive drills were conducted only in darkness with full observation of all measures of concealment. With the announcement of the blockade of the island of Cuba all work was done only in darkness. The ground equipment for the functioning and ammunition of the missiles was inspected at the same time as the engineering work was done to equip the PPR's. By 15 October the warheads, which were concentrated at the Group depot, were fully inspected by the men of the division RTB.

By 20 October 1962 radiorelay communications with the regiments of Cde. BANDILOVSKY (100 km) and Cde. SOLOV'YEV (80 km) were prepared and tested, but not activated. It was impossible to establish radiorelay communications with the regiment of Cde. SIDOROV in view of the great distance (250 km). By this time all the radio equipment had been completely deployed and readied for operation. Around-the-clock operation of radio networks was established in standby mode beginning at 0000 20 October 1962 in connection with the instability and unreliability of telephone communications. Thus, in practice command of the units from the division command post and the command posts of the units was ready by the end of 20 October 1962.

On 20 October 1962 the regiment of Cde. SIDOROV was brought into full combat readiness.

The constant heavy tropical rains hindered the conclusion of the engineering work in the launch areas of the regiments of Cde. BANDILOVSKY and Cde. SOLOV'YEV, and an especially unfavorable situation arose in the regiment of Cde. BANDILOVSKY; two combat engineer battalions of the division were sent [to it] for reinforcement between 20 and 22 October 1962.

At 1800 22 October 1962 the US government announced a blockade of the island of Cuba.

At 0540 23 October 1962 the Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Cuba gave an order - all revolutionary armed forces were put on alert and martial law was declared in the Republic.

By 0800 23 October 1962 the units of the division were brought into increased combat readiness. The regiment of Cde. SIDOROV, brought into combat readiness on 20 October 1962, was ready to carry out the assigned mission. The regiment of Cde. BANDILOVSKY and the second battalion of the regiment of Cde. SOLOV'YEV were practically ready to carry out the assigned mission, in spite of the fact that not all the engineering work in the PPR had been finished.

At 1130 23 October 1962 two American fighters intruded into the airspace of Cuba at an altitude of 100-150 meters and passed over the combat formations of the regiments of Cde. SOLOV'YEV and Cde. BANDILOVSKY.

At 1132 a pair of American aircraft passed over the combat formations of the regiment of Cde. SIDOROV, and at 1200 over the combat formations of the regiment of Cde. CHERKESOV.

From this moment systematic free intelligence flights of American aircraft began with impunity over the territory of the island of Cuba and over the combat formations of the division at altitudes of 50-100 meters, which continued until 27 October 1962, that is, until the moment a U-2 aircraft was shot down at an altitude of 21 kilometers and an F-106 [was shot down] at low altitude by the air defense forces of the Cuban Army.

Later it was established that the US Air Force had conducted systematic intelligence and photography of Cuban territory beginning on 1 August 1962 with impunity, outside the range of the radar equipment of the Cuban Army's air defenses.

For example, in August 60 overflights were made over Cuban territory, but the Cuban Army's air defenses detected only 10.

In September - 23 overflights, but [only] seven were detected.

Seventy-one US overflights were made over Cuba before 22 October 1962.

In these difficult conditions of a sharp aggravation of the international situation, with the tangibility of a beginning of combat operations and the return of part of our ships to the USSR, to ensure the combat readiness of the regiment of Cde. SOLOV'YEV on

the night of 24 October 1962 I gave the order to remove the spares and part of the regular units of fueling equipment from the regiments of Cdes. SIDOROV and BANDILOVSKY and to transfer them to Cde. SOLOV'YEV, and to bring the regiment up to strength with the personnel it lacked [*nedostayushchiy*] from these same units and the regiment of Cde. KOVALENKO. Consequently, schedules of the preparation of the first salvo were worked out with consideration for the shortage of fueling equipment.

The manning of the regiment of Cde. SOLOV'YEV was completed by the end of 25 October 1962. Twenty officers, 203 noncommissioned officers and enlisted men, 10 8G131's [oxidizer tanks] and four 8G210's [hydrogen peroxide preheater], including 44 men, five 8G131's, two 8G210's, and three 8G113's [oxidizer refueling truck] were transferred from the regiment of Cde. SIDOROV to a distance of 480 km to bring the regiment up to strength.

On 24 October 1962 unit staffs practically organized cooperation with the motorized rifle regiments to defend the PPR's.

The regiment of Cde. BANDILOVSKY and the second battalion of the regiment of Cde. SOLOV'YEV were brought into combat readiness by the end of 25 October 1962.

The constant flights of American aircraft over the location of the units created a threat of revealing the combat formation of the division. With the purpose of getting the units out from under a possible strike, on 24 October the command of the division decided to choose new PPR's with the goal of performing a maneuver.

Lack of spare parts for the SP-6 [*sborno-razbornaya ploshchadka*, transportable pad system] systems prevented the accomplishment of the decision which had been made. On 25 October the engineers of the division developed a means of replacing the SP-6's with available embedded [*zakladnye*] parts suitable for field conditions.

On 26 October the decision was reported to the Deputy to the Commanding General of the Group of Soviet Forces and the Deputy Chief of Main Staff of the Missile Forces. And only the decision of the Government about the withdrawal of the division from Cuba halted the preparation for and accomplishment of this maneuver.

In connection with the threat of a bombing and strafing of these units of the division by US aircraft early on the morning of 24 October 1962 the command of the Cuban Army made a decision to remove a considerable part of the anti-aircraft equipment from the protection of the city of Havana and transfer it to protect the missile forces. At the same time the units were given an order to disperse all equipment in the PPR's.

Each launch battalion was protected by one 57-mm and two 37-mm anti-aircraft batteries; in addition, two 100-mm anti-aircraft batteries were activated to protect the port of La Isabella, where the diesel boat Aleksandrovsk, with warheads and a battalion of Cde. SIDOROV, was located at the same time.

Thus, [the following] is the total of what was allocated:

37-mm batteries - 12;

57-mm batteries - 4;

100-mm batteries - 2.

The command post of the division was protected by two 23-mm gun platoons taken from ships.

On the night of 26-27 October 1962 the regiment of Cde. SIDOROV moved the warheads 500 km from the Group depot to the PPR with the goal of reducing the time for the preparation of the first salvo.

By the end of 27 October 1962 the first battalion of the regiment of Cde. SIDOROV was also brought into combat readiness and the inspection of the missile ammunition was completed.

CONCLUSION:

1. When performing the Special Government Mission the personnel of the division displayed a high feeling of responsibility for the matter entrusted [to them] and selfless devotion to the Communist Party and Soviet Government.

2. In the difficult conditions of a sharp aggravation of the international situation, the blockade of Cuba, and the direct threat of air attack, the 51st Missile Division was brought into combat readiness earlier than the planned period with the selfless labor

of the personnel in unaccustomed tropical conditions.

- the regiment of Cde. SIDOROV was concentrated on the island of Cuba from the period of 9 September to 8 October 1962 and was brought into combat readiness on 20 October, 12 days after the arrival of the last ship in port.

- the regiment of Cde. BANDILOVSKY was concentrated in the period from 16 September to 15 October 1962, and was brought into combat readiness on 25 October, 10 days after the arrival of the last ship.

- the regiment of Cde. SOLOV'YEV was concentrated on the island of Cuba from the period of 6 October to 22 October 1962, one battalion was brought into combat readiness on 25 October, three days after the arrival of the last ship in port, before the announcement of the blockade, and another battalion was brought into combat readiness on 27 October in spite of the fact that part of the regiment's equipment had not arrived.

3. Thus, the 51st Missile Division was concentrated and brought into full combat readiness on the island of Cuba, 48 days from the moment of the arrival of the first ship, that is, on 27 October 1962 the division was capable of launching a strike with all 24 launchers [*starty*].

In connection with the fact that the construction of building N^o 20 was not finished and the warheads were concentrated at the Group depot, 110 km from the regiment of Cde. SOLOV'YEV, 150 km from [the regiment of] Cde. BANDILOVSKY, and 480 km from [the regiment of] Cde. SIDOROV, and a shortage of fueling equipment, the readiness of the regiments according to the schedules developed was determined as:

- the regiments of Cde. SOLOV'YEV and Cde. BANDILOVSKY - 14-16 hours;

- the regiment of Cde. SIDOROV - 24 hours, and beginning 27 October 1962 after moving the warheads to the PPR's - 10 hours.

4. THE REDEPLOYMENT OF THE DIVISION TO THE SOVIET UNION

At 1500 28 October 1962 the Commanding General of the Group of Soviet Forces on the island of Cuba announced Directive N^o 7665 of 28 October 1962 in which he ordered the dismantling of the launch positions and that the division be entirely redeployed to the Soviet Union on the basis of a decision of the Soviet Government the Minister of Defense of the Soviet Union.

The units of the division completed the dismantling of the launch positions in the period from 29 to 31 October 1962.

During a meeting with Acting UN Secretary General U Thant at 1530 31 October 1962 Cde. ALEKSEYEV, the Soviet Ambassador in the Cuban People's Republic, and I reported that the launch positions had been completely dismantled.

A USSR Ministry of Defense directive arrived at 1200 1 November 1962 which ordered that firstly all missiles be loaded onto available ships and that they be sent back to the Soviet Union before 7 November 1962 and no later than 10 November 1962.

Load the missiles onto the decks of the ships. In implementation of the directive all missiles were concentrated in the ports of embarkation by 2 November 1962.

The loading of the missiles on the ships began on 3 November 1962 and was finished on 8 November 1962.

The shipping of the missiles took place in exceptionally complex and difficult conditions; circumstances developed such that by this time ships of old construction appeared on the island of Cuba whose decks were cluttered with various superstructures; heavy booms were lacking, as a rule, and the ports of embarkation were poorly equipped with crane facilities. Work to load the ships went on day and night.

First [to leave] the port of Mariel was the diesel boat Divnogorsk at 1530 5 November 1962 with four missiles on board.

The last eight missiles were shipped from the port of Casilda on the diesel boat Leninsky Komsomol at 0830 9 November 1962.

The decision of the Soviet Government and the order of the Minister of Defense of the Soviet Union about the withdrawal of the missiles from the island of Cuba was carried

out ahead of time.

During the period from 1 to 9 November 1962 12 ships, including one passenger [ship], were loaded, on which [the following] were sent to the Soviet Union:

- personnel - 3289 men;
- missiles - 42;
- equipment - 2056 pieces.

The redeployment of the division was divided into two stages in connection with the continued approach of the necessary ships.

The second stage began on 18 November 1962 with the loading of the diesel boat Chernyakhovsk.

[The following] were loaded on ships during the second stage and sent:

- personnel - 3716 men;
- equipment - 985 pieces.

It needs to be noted that the unloading of our ships arriving in the ports of Cuba with commercial cargo went very slowly: the ships stood idle from seven to 10 days under unloading at a time when loading took an average of two or three [days], a maximum of four with a lack of crane facilities, a survey, and the loading of ships with ballast.

[The following] were transferred to units of the Group and left in Cuba in implementation of Directive N^o 76676 of 1 November 1962 of the Minister of Defense of the Soviet Union:

- a motor vehicle company, a battalion automotive repair shop, a combat engineer battalion, and a field bakery in full strength;
- radios - 18.

The total transferred to units of the Group [was]: □ □□

□□□ □□□

officers □□□ □□□ □□□

- 14 □□□ □□

□□□ □□□

noncommissioned officers and enlisted men □□□ □□□ □□□

- 987 □□□ □□

□□□ □□□

Vehicles □□□ □□□ □□□

- 402 □□□ □□

The loading of personnel and equipment of units of the division onto the ships was concluded on [day left blank] December 1962.

CONCLUSION:

1. Thus a total of 24 ships were loaded, including four passenger [ships], on which [the following] were sent to the Soviet Union: □ □□

□□□ □□□

- officers □□□ □□□ □□□

- 1390; □□□ □□

□□□ □□□

- noncommissioned officers and enlisted men □□□ □□□ □□□

- 5525; □□□ □□

□□□ □□□

- Soviet Army civilians □□□ □□□ □□□

- 90. □□□ □□

□□□ □□□

TOTAL □□□ □□□ □□□

- 7005. □□□ □□

□□□ □□□

- □□□ □□□
□□□ □□
□□□ □□□
- missiles □□□ □□□ □□□
- 42; □□□ □□
□□□ □□□
- equipment □□□ □□□ □□□
- 2402 pieces. □□□ □□

The missiles and equipment were sent to the Soviet Union in technically sound condition.

The political and morale condition of the personnel is good and military discipline is satisfactory.

The overwhelming majority of the officers, noncommissioned officers, and enlisted men performed the Special Government Mission with a feeling of high responsibility and showed exceptionally good organization and discipline.

During the concentration and bringing the division into combat readiness the personnel spared neither effort nor time to become a formidable combat force for the American aggressors in the shortest possible time and were ready in the most difficult days for the cause of the Cuban Revolution to give their lives and obey any order of the Communist Party and Soviet Government with honor.

The high Communist consciousness, cohesion, good combat training, and devotion to the cause of Communism and proletarian internationalism – these qualities were instilled in our soldiers by the painstaking, purposeful work of the commanders, political workers, and Party and Komsomol organizations.

The regiments of Cde. SOLOV'YEV and Cde. SIDOROV were the best in organization, state of military discipline, and combat and political training. There were no extraordinary events or gross violations of military discipline here.

However, regimental commander Cde. BANDILOVSKY was removed from [his] post for an irresponsible attitude toward the assigned task, poor punctiliousness, carelessness, and complacency in the most serious period for the division, held accountable to the Party, and sent to the Soviet Union.

Because of poor organization of the march Lieutenant PLISKO and Private BORYUSHKIN died when transporting the erectors, and several people received wounds and serious injuries; there were 14 cases of absence without leave, cases of attempts disobey orders, and drinking bouts.

Cde. KOVALENKO, temporarily appointed commander of the regiment, managed to bring order in the units within a week.

On 5 November 1962 an absolutely extraordinary incident occurred in the unit of Cde. ROMANOV – a Cuban citizen was killed during a collision with our vehicle, and his vehicle burned.

The command and political department of the division took vigorous measures to bring order in this unit, but Cde. ROMANOV will be punished in a disciplinary and Party procedure in the [Soviet] Union.

Cde. Col. KRIVTSOV, who embarked on the path of drunkenness and undue familiarity, and displayed confusion and indecisiveness, also showed poor command qualities on Cuban soil.

The command of the division raised the question of his removal from the post [he] occupied, but the Party commission gave him a strict reprimand with entry into [his] Party card.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. With the selfless labor of its entire personnel when performing the Special and important Government Mission, the 51st Missile Division was brought into combat readiness in an exceptionally short time and at the order of the Soviet Government the division could launch a salvo 16 hours from the moment the signal was received.

2. The experience confirmed the possibility of moving strategic missile units and formations by rail and water to any distance and bringing them into combat readiness in a short time.

The division's operations on the island of Cuba showed that a formation armed with R-12's can make a maneuver and launch a strike from a newly-designated and poorly equipped PPR in 15-20 days.

3. It is necessary to create a ground equipment version and modify the SP-7's to increase the maneuverability of the regiments armed with R-14 missiles. Mobility and invulnerability of missile troops can be achieved with light and compact ground equipment and solid-fuel missiles.

4. Besides a fixed command post the division and regiments would need to also have an organic reserve command post of reduced size with full equipment and means of command, which [would] allow tactical control to be established immediately upon arrival, without waiting for the complete deployment and equipping of a fixed command post, and to subsequently use it as a reserve command post, without linking it to one of the regimental command posts.

5. The combat formation of the division on the island of Cuba was quite extensive. The experience of organizing and ensuring the command of the regiments showed that reliable command of the regiments located at a distance of more than 100-120 km was exceptionally complicated (the regiment of Cde. SIDOROV). A distance of regiments from the command post of 50-80 km is most advisable.

At the same time as this, the complete eradication of paper correspondence ought to be noted as one of the positive factors in command; all the necessary instructions were issued verbally or through liaison officers, brief signals, and cipher.

As an indicator of this, when home every month we received more than 800 papers and sent out 500; during operations in Cuba at a most tense and important period we received a total of 10 and sent out 15 papers. Accordingly, one could do without a big stream of papers and excessive correspondence.

6. Experience has shown that it is necessary to decisively change the table of organization of a missile formation. A division should consist of three or four brigades of battalions with three independent launch battalions and an RTB (the number of brigades according to the number of launch battalions). This will increase the mobility of the Missile Forces and allow a brigade to solve individual problems.

In the conditions of the Soviet Union have six to nine launch areas minimally prepared beforehand (the approach routes and roads inside the pads, geodetic fixation has been done and SP-6's installed) which contain only small security subunits.

Battalions go to these PPR's only upon announcement of a threatening situation in the country.

Have one battalion OPR at a distance of 5-10 km from the main housing area for training combat crews and performing combat duty. Field launch areas should be chosen far from population centers, and the distance between PPR's [should be] within the range of 20-40 km.

7. The existing regulation equipment and the means used for concealment cannot completely hide the locations of missile troops given the contemporary development of photoreconnaissance equipment.

Principally new means of concealment need to be created to ensure the complete and unquestionably reliable concealment of the facilities of the missile troops.

In my view this ought to be sources of invisible rays capable of distorting the terrain or completely fogging a film.

8. Experience has shown that when a division is operating in isolation [the following] need to be included in its table of organization:

- a combat training section which should firstly deal with the planning and organization of special training; the section should have an instructional chain [SIC, *instruktorskaya tsepochka*];
- a combat engineer battalion composed of two or three combat engineer companies and one or two road and bridge companies;

- an air defense post and a chemical defense platoon;
- when operating away from home territory a division should be given air defense equipment to directly protect the combat formations from low altitudes.

ATTACHMENT:

1. Some questions of operational and tactical concealment during the operation of the division on the island of Cuba, on nine sheets.
2. A map of the survey and launch areas of the division on the island of Cuba on the first sheet, only copy.

COMMANDER OF THE 51st MISSILE DIVISION

GENERAL-MAJOR

[signature] /STATSENKO/

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Attachment to the main document

Some questions of operational and tactical concealment during the operation of the division on the island of Cuba

The questions of operational and tactical concealment occupied one of the primary places from the very first days of the advance survey group's presence in Cuba, and subsequently with the arrival of the troops. Even the very first study of the island of Cuba, its geographic and climate conditions, population, and education showed that lengthy concealment under any cover story of the large quantity of the troops being landed, with their varied and especially large Missile Forces equipment, would be impossible.

This situation subsequently found its complete practical confirmation. We will dwell on a series of questions which have not been fully disclosed in the main report.

1. Namely, proceeding from the main factor, the factor of the impossibility of a lengthy, hidden embarkation and concentration of troops, the proximity to American borders, the broad agent network of the enemy, our overstretched communications, and the Cuban comrades still not having sufficiently established and organized protection of its borders from the air, land, and sea, they clearly show that, in the first place, in addition to everything else, it was necessary in this regard for a longer concealment of the movement of the troops, their occupation of launch areas, and the assumption of combat readiness to try to completely close the airspace over the island of Cuba and prohibit all flights of American reconnaissance aircraft.

It is indicative that the air defense radar system of the Cuban Army provided an opportunity to observe the reconnaissance flights of American aircraft only at altitudes up to 8-10 km. American reconnaissance aircraft flew constantly at altitudes higher than 8-10 km, unchallenged and with impunity.

For example, during the period from 1 August to 22 October 1962 the Cuban air defense system detected a total of 20% of all US reconnaissance aircraft which flew over the entire territory of the island.

The international overflight routes of foreign aircraft through air corridors over the island of Cuba were actually not respected, which completely permitted the Americans to photograph all the territory of the island not only from high, but also from low altitudes (150-200 meters).

The air defense system of the Group of Forces on the island of Cuba was brought into combat readiness by 1 October 1962 and was on combat duty; however, for some

reason only beginning 26 October 1962 was it permitted to turn on its radar surveillance system and on 27 October had already shot down a U-2 aircraft at an altitude of 21 km.

Thus, the landing of troops on the island of Cuba and their operations occurred on a territory constantly monitored from the air, which naturally allowed the US to partially discover the grouping and location of our troops in the most important and tense period.

2. When assessing the natural concealment capacity available in Cuba it was a mistake to think that the palm groves (forests) were suitable for placing missile equipment in them. However, in reality their use for the purpose of concealment from aerial observation was almost impossible since their concealment possibilities were extremely limited.

Measurements made on site clearly showed that on average there were 50 palm trees per hectare, that is, the distance between individual palm trees was 12-15 meters. The size of the palm crowns was three or four meters in diameter.

Thus, on an area of one hectare the forest cover was only 1/16 of it. With such concealment possibilities of palm groves it was impossible to covertly place large missile equipment in them without conducting additional and considerable concealment work.

The very launch areas of the missile battalions themselves were located in an area of six to 10 square kilometers. On this limited territory concealment measures had to be conducted not just to hide the existing equipment and personnel, but also to conceal the entire set of engineering measures being conducted to equip the launch area and the housing of the personnel, and to conceal the combat formation and the very combat activity of the launch battalion.

The exceptionally great amount of engineering work done in relatively small areas in a limited time, and also the accumulation of a large amount of equipment nearby greatly complicated the timely performance of all the concealment work we had envisioned.

Of the standard concealment equipment the division had only camouflage nets with the aid of which the concealment could be made only of individual items of equipment, but the color of the polyvinyl chloride film was completely unsuitable to the local conditions.

The performance of the work to conceal the launch areas was further complicated by the fact that, besides the installation of the SP-6 areas as a consequence of the special conditions of the soil and terrain, and also the meteorological conditions, we were forced to make a crushed stone perimeter path of the pads and even the pouring a concrete lining of strips for the erectors and transporters [*telezhki*] with the item [*izdelie*] [Translator's note: the missile]. Such equipping of launch pads sharply increased the amount of concealment work (compared to the ordinary installation of an SP-6 on the ground) and changed the very nature of the concealment of the pads. Here it was not enough to conceal individual vehicles located at a launch position; it was necessary to conceal the entire launch site, the basis of the concealment of which was not the concealment of individual types of equipment, but first and foremost the concealment of the launch pad and the approaches to it.

A certain time, which we absolutely did not have in these conditions of the situation, was needed to perform the entire set of concealment measures to conceal the launch areas.

It is known that the missile units had exceedingly little time to equip their launch areas and to assume combat readiness in connection with the fact that the division was redeployed to the island of Cuba last (after other units and formations).

The deadlines envisioned by the plan for the units to assume combat readiness faced us with the necessity of performing work to build launch areas around the clock. In the conditions of an aggravation of the international situation the combat readiness was assumed by the missile units ahead of time, but this did not allow [them] to conclude the entire set of engineering and concealment work.

For example, toward the morning of 23 October 1962 units of the division assumed increased combat readiness, and all the special equipment was deployed at the

launch sites. The ground cable network in service limited the dispersed placement of the special vehicles at the launch positions and hindered their concealment in some launch areas, especially [those] poor in vegetation.

The regions named by the General Staff directive for the selection of PPR's were in difficult mountain ranges of the Sierra del Rosario and Sierra del Escambray, with poor vegetation and little concealment capacity for the placement of missile equipment.

As a result of the work of the survey groups, with the permission of the Commanding General of the Group of Forces, several new areas not provided by the directive were designated and chosen. The selected areas are the best and located in a hilly area with rich natural vegetation.

Flat surfaces concealed from the outside observation by high hills (40-50 meters and more) from all four sides allowed the launch areas and all the ground equipment of the battalion to be located freely. The areas were lightly populated and there were few cultivated areas.

The proposed areas were not approved twice: the first time - the areas of the cities of Aguacate, Ceiba Mocha, Mendoza for the reason that they did not meet the General Staff directive; the second time - the areas of the cities of Coliseo, Limonar, Agramonte, and Jaguey Grande since they were located in the zone of an international air route.

Based on the situation that developed and our capabilities and in the conditions of the unceasing reconnaissance flights of American aircraft, all the unloading of missiles at the ports of Mariel and Casilda, and also their transportation to field launch areas was considered exceptionally carefully and organized. All the missiles were unloaded only at night. The transportation of the missiles and large equipment to the regiments' PPR's was done under various cover stories and only at night (between 0100 and 0500).

This and only this, as it seemed to us, provided an opportunity to covertly unload and move all the ammunition and all the large equipment, shelter them in launch areas, and to prepare ourselves for combat operations in a short time in the period from 9 September 1962 to 22 October 1962.

Without exception all the work at the launch sites associated with the transport, erection, and installation of the missiles on mounts was conducted only in conditions of limited visibility (at night) with the observation of all measures of concealment.

3. Cuba itself is an island of volcanic origin and rocky soil predominates in it, coated in some places with an light layer of red earth. In connection with the special climate conditions (tropical lines) and the nature of the soil opportunities to build earth-and-timber structures on the island of Cuba are extremely limited. The personnel of the battalions and staffs were quartered in camp housing (tents).

One of the telltale signs of the location of the units was this tent housing, which could in no way be concealed from aerial observation.

The movement from the Soviet Union to the island of Cuba of reinforced concrete structures was also one more characteristic telltale sign revealing the affiliation of the missile forces (arches for the building of N^o 20 structures, etc.), although there was no need for such movement. Cuban factories manufacturing reinforced concrete structures were able to fill all orders of the missile units connected with the building of launch sites, and the structures themselves should have been replaced.

When equipping the areas of the R-14 missiles the concealment measures done by the Construction Directorate of the Group were clearly insufficient. The construction areas for the manufacture of structural elements were deployed close to the launch sites, the places of storage of the construction materials were located in the open and insufficiently concealed. The construction work was predominantly done only done in daylight hours.

4. The advance survey group was sent from Moscow on the first scheduled airplane as "specialists of the Civil Air Fleet", which was officially reported in the Soviet press (Pravda of 14 July 1962).

On arrival in Cuba the survey group was represented as "agricultural specialists". The participants of the "TU-114 aircraft technical flight" were not informed en route of the

change to a new cover story.

The appropriate Cuban bodies and the Soviet Embassy were not warned of the arrival in Cuba of the lead survey group in a timely manner. Consequently the reception of the "specialists" who had arrived was not prepared beforehand, and on arrival in Cuba the participants of the survey were on the premises of the Havana city airport for three hours, after which it was decided with difficulty to quarter them in the houses for air defense specialists.

After some time these "agricultural specialists" were moved from there and quartered in the city of Havana, "*punto uno*" (the Reserve Command Post of the Cuban Army) in a group of buildings belonging to military organizations of the Cuban Army well known to the Cuban population.

It seems to us that the operational security in these questions was not carefully thought out and thought through.

5. In our view, the very decision to move units of the division, after the arrival in Cuba of almost all units and formations in the Group of Forces, was not sufficiently justified. As a consequence it led to mainly only ships with subunits and the equipment of the missile troops arriving in the ports of Cuba in September and October. In itself the large accumulation of special vehicles and large equipment in the ports of disembarkation could not have failed to attract the attention of the local population, and accordingly of a spy network.

The climate conditions of the island of Cuba were insufficiently taken into account during the planning for the redeployment of the division. Missile units did the unloading, the concentration in the PPR's, and the construction work during the height of the heavy tropical rains, which naturally delayed our the timeframes for assuming combat readiness, influenced the concealment, and put the troops in the most difficult conditions. It is known that that the missile forces require significant more time to assume combat readiness than the subunits and units of other branches of the Armed Forces.

We think that the units of the division needed to redeploy considerable earlier (August-September), together and between the units of the other troop arms and branches of the Armed Forces (with units of the ZURS [anti-aircraft guided missiles] and others).

All the construction materials (timber, hardware, cement, etc.) needed to be shipped separately from military shipments, as commercial cargo, to make it much easier for the troops, and to accordingly sharply reduce the time for their readiness.

For the work in the units to unload and receive construction materials it was unreasonable and to the detriment of the main matter, and a large amount of effort and time was spent by the personnel.

6. A careful study of the aerial photography shown in issue 18 the American magazine "Time" on 2 October 1962 confirms:

- the complete impunity of the free flights of American reconnaissance aircraft and the inferiority of the Cuban air defense system. All the pictures in the magazine were given dates when the aircraft were not detected over the territory of Cuba according to air defense information;

- the systematic photography and monitoring of the entire territory of the island began long before the arrival of the missile troops in Cuba;

However, without interpretation of the concealed special equipment and weapons the pictures taken from high altitudes give only a general picture of the locations of the troops and characteristic local objects.

And only after 22 October 1962, when flying over the combat formations of the units when all the main work had already been performed and the units were practically combat ready and with repeated photography from low altitudes (150-200 meters), did the Americans receive indirect confirmation of the presence of missile troops on the island of Cuba.

The pictures taken from these altitudes are completely interpreted with a determination of the character and affiliation of all equipment and facilities, even of that which was concealed (photographs of the PPR's of the unit of Cde. BANDILOVSKY).

It ought to be noted that our camouflage nets adapted for the vegetation of middle latitudes yield a completely different tone against the background of the harsh and brilliant tropical foliage: even the cells of the nets themselves are easily interpreted with a resolution of the photographs of 100 or more lines per millimeter.

However, in spite of all the accomplishments of modern photography the Americans were not able to get pictures of our missiles neither during their transport from the ports of disembarkation nor at the field launch areas.

CONCLUSION:

In our view the strategic operation to land troops in Cuba with the involvement of missile units needed to be planned in a shorter timeframe and, it would seem, involving fewer troops, and to be conducted with more mobility and more suddenly.

Perform the landing of the missile troops in two stages: in the first stage - land the units armed with the R-12 missiles and bring [them] into combat readiness only after the conclusion of an open military agreement with the Cuban Government; and in the second stage land the units armed with the R-14 missiles and bring [them] into combat readiness.

The entire operation should have been preceded by at least a minimal familiarization and study of the economic capabilities of the country, the local physical and geographic conditions, and the military and political situation in the country by those who were to carry out this mission in practice, which would have allowed part of the especially important problems and questions, like the landing of the troops itself as well as bringing them into combat readiness, to be solved more simply and rapidly.

The question of a vigorous search for completely new technical means of concealing the troops from aerial photography should have been given immediate and sufficient attention.

Nothing said above in any way minimizes the end results of the operation which was conducted or those genuinely heroic efforts of all the personnel of the division.

COMMANDER OF THE 51ST MISSILE DIVISION
GENERAL-MAJOR

[signature] /STATSENKO/