

September 14, 1962

M. Zakharov and S. P. Ivanov to N.S. Khrushchev

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Summary:

Zakharov and Ivanov report to Khrushchev the extent of US surveillance in Cuba and request extra fortifications for Soviet ships in Cuban waters.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Personal memorandum to N. S. Khrushchev

The USA is conducting intensive air and naval patrols around Cuba, giving special attention to the reconnaissance of Soviet vessels.

The head of the Cuban counterrevolutionaries, Juan Manuel Salvat, announced in a press conference on September 7 that any vessel sailing under a Communist flag in Cuban territorial waters, regardless of its nationality, will be considered a military target and subject to attack without warning.

At present, Soviet vessels approaching the island of Cuba are systematically subjected to air-patrols by USA planes. In September of this year as many as 50 cases were recorded of Soviet vessels being air-patrolled. The patrols were carried out at critically dangerous altitudes (50-100 meters).

With the aim of ensuring the safety of our vessels from acts of piracy on the part of Americans and Cuban counterrevolutionaries, we ask to authorize the following:

1. On every transport vessel bound for Cuba with personnel and arms for one unit (of a formation), to place for self-defense, above and beyond each ship's own armaments, two 23 mm. anti-aircraft combination gun-mounts with a reserve supply of 2 complements (2,400 missiles) for each gun-mount. These gun-mounts are found on the arms of the airborne-landing forces, and they are a powerful strategic tool both for air targets at distances of up to 2,500 meters at heights of up to 1,500 meters, as well as for light-armoured naval targets at distances of up to 2,000 meters. On practice shootings the gun-mount has penetrated armour-plating 25 mm. thick. The gun-mount requires a three-man crew. All in all it is necessary to arm 34 vessels.
2. To confirm instructions given to the captain of the vessel and the head of the military echelon regarding the defense of transport vessels crossing the sea against acts of piracy committed by airplanes, ships, and submarines belonging to the USA and to the Cuban counterrevolutionaries.

M. Zakharov
S. P. Ivanov

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