

Photo CAP

Known in Mid-September

Early Missile Reports Ignored, GOPers Say

By JACK STEELE

Two high-ranking House Republicans charged today that the Kennedy Administration as early as the middle of last September received—and ignored—intelligence reports that the Soviet was building "offensive" missile bases in Cuba.

This was more than a month before President Kennedy first disclosed in his Oct. 22 TV speech to the nation that the Russians had installed long range missiles in Cuba. This speech kicked off last fall's Cuban showdown.

REVELATION

Rep. Melvin R. Laird (R., Wis.) told The Washington Daily News and other Scripps-Howard newspapers that:

- Both Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara and John A. McCone, director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), had confirmed such intelligence reports had been received in mid-September.

- The reports came from U. S. intelligence "operatives" not from refugees or other Cuban sources which could be readily dismissed as "unreliable."

- The reports indicated long range missiles were being unloaded from Soviet ships in Cuba and that bases to fire these missiles from were under construction.

Rep. Gerald R. Ford (R., Mich.) fully supported Rep. Laird's charges.

FULL MONTH

He acted that this was a full month before the historic Oct. 11 aerial photo was obtained which the President claimed provided the first "hard evidence" of Soviet missile bases in Cuba. The framed photo now hangs on the wall of Mr. Kennedy's White House office.

Reps. Ford and Laird are both members of the House Defense Appropriations sub-

committee questioning Administration officials—including Messrs. McNamara and McCone—at closed-door hearings for several weeks.

Reps. Ford and Laird, who are rated among the ablest younger GOP House members, leveled two serious charges at New Frontier officials. They accused them of having:

- "Misinformed" and "misled" Congress and the American people last fall by repeatedly denying they had "any evidence" of Soviet offensive weapons in Cuba prior to the President's Oct. 22 speech.

- Failed to act—even by stepping up aerial surveillance

of Cuba—until a month after they had received intelligence reports that the Russians were moving long-range missiles into Cuba.

OPENS DOOR

Meanwhile, a Defense Department spokesman disclosed that the Defense Department took over responsibility for aerial surveillance of Cuba from the CIA only two days before the Oct. 14 photo was taken.

The spokesman denied, however, a published report that White House Assistant McGeorge Bundy had ordered this shift to end a two-week squabble between the Defense Department and CIA over Cuban aerial reconnaissance.