

Journal - Office of Legislative Counsel
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6. [redacted] Met with Mr. John Reddan, Counsel, My Lai Special Investigation Subcommittee, House Armed Services Committee, who told me that General Cushman's appearance had gone quite well and had included some difficult areas of questioning.

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7. [redacted] Met with Charles Johnson, Staff Director, House Post Office and Civil Service Committee, and reviewed the current status of S. 782 with him. In brief, he feels it would be well if we were to touch base with each of the Subcommittee members before the Subcommittee meets on the bill. I thanked him for his advice.

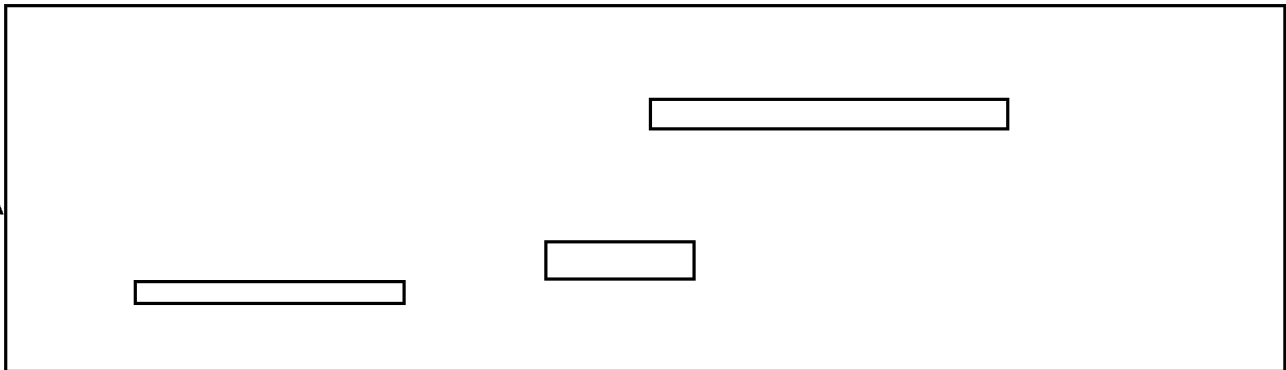
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8. [redacted] Met with Frank Slatinshek, Assistant Chief Counsel, House Armed Services Committee, and briefed him on the Vietnamese infiltration rate for June, Soviet intercept squadron defense mission in Egypt, Cambodian political situation, and the Soyuz 9 mission.

Mr. Slatinshek gave me a copy of correspondence between the Air Force and Representative Lucien Nedzi (D., Mich.) concerning press reports that Soviet long-range aircraft flying into Cuba are not tracked. At least in one instance after these aircraft left the vicinity of Iceland they were not located again until they were later photographed on the ground in Cuba. He asked whether we could shed any additional light on U.S. inability to track long-range Soviet aircraft headed in our direction, which the Committee feels should be a matter of interest to the Agency as the leader in the intelligence community.

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USAF review(s) completed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20330



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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Dear Mr. Nedzi:

Recently, a member of your staff, Mr. Samuel H. Black, requested our comments on an article which appeared in the Detroit News on May 18, 1970, regarding the flight of Russian aircraft from the Soviet Union to Cuba.

The incident referred to was officially reported to the Washington press corps on April 30, by Mr. Jerry Friedheim, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), and later the same day by Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, Chief of Naval Operations, in a speech to the American Ordnance Association. The information was repeated to members of the Aviation/Space Writers Association in Las Vegas, Nevada, by Mr. Daniel Z. Henkin, Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs).

As the article by Mr. Edwin G. Pipp, staff writer for the Detroit News, correctly infers, the Air Force has no capability for tracking aircraft out of range of our shore-based radar. We have no radar coverage of the Atlantic region involved and can only track flights which enter the coastal Air Defense Identification Zone. The Russian long-range naval reconnaissance planes in question did not penetrate this zone off our East Coast. Those intercepted near Iceland were not carrying air-to-surface missiles, although some Soviet long-range planes have this capability. In theory, such missiles could be launched from outside our radar coverage. Furthermore, low-flying aircraft could penetrate well into our present radar defenses before being discovered.

It is hoped the above information will be helpful to you. If we can be of any further assistance, please let us know.

Sincerely,

Samuel H. Black

Samuel H. Black, Colonel, USAF
Congressional Inquiry Division
Office of Legislative Liaison

Attachment

Honorable Lucien N. Nedzi

House of Representatives

Soviet A-bomber flights to Cuba elude U.S. radar

By EDWIN G. PIPP

News Aerospace Writer

LAS VEGAS—Four big Russian bombers flew nonstop from the Soviet Union to Cuba last month, it was learned here today.

And they did it without being discovered on U.S. radar, although their flight path would have taken them anywhere from 20 miles to 600 miles from the U.S. East Coast on the way from Iceland to Cuba.

Actually, they were intercepted near Iceland, and again near Cuba, but for the bulk of the flight they flew in secrecy and isolation, it was learned from Air Force officers at the Aviation-Space Writers Association meeting here.

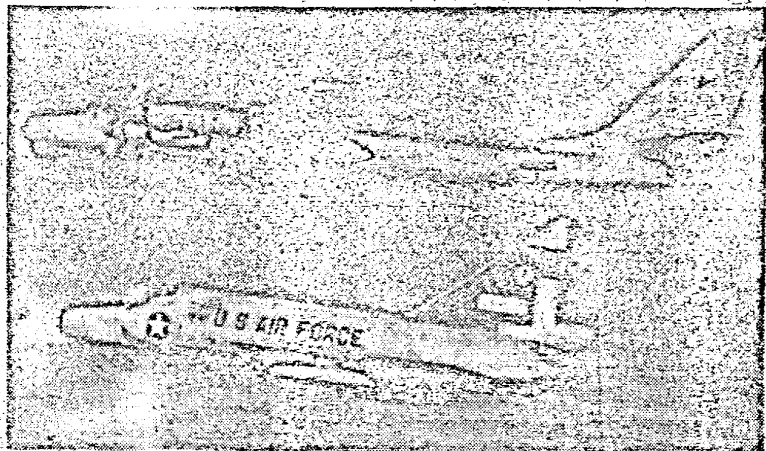
Had the Russians wished, it would have been a simple matter to launch missiles at American cities—if they had flown as low as 100 to 500 feet above the Atlantic and thus escaped detection by coastal radar.

Air Force officials admit they lost track of the Russian Bear bombers from the time they were sighted near Iceland until they were spotted in the Cuban airport.

There were two bombers in each of two flights. The flights marked the first time since the Cuban crisis that the Communists have openly flouted American defenses.

It is not known if the bombers carried nuclear weapons.

During the flights any city on the East Coast and several hundred miles inland was open to attack with no measures taken to protect them.



—Defense Dept. Photo via UPI Telephoto

U.S. F-102 interceptor tracks a Russian bomber like one flown to Cuba

... was
open to attack with no measures taken to protect them.

This is the sequence of events as described here.

During the recent worldwide Russian military maneuvers, two of the bombers were spotted as they approached Iceland.

Two American F-102 jet interceptors were sent aloft from Keflavik, Iceland, to identify the planes. The identification was made, but no shots fired because the bombers did not penetrate the defense area surrounding Iceland.

The interceptor pilots flew so close to the bombers that they were able to copy the numbers on the tails of the planes.

When the interceptors left, the Russian planes were flying south over the Atlantic.

Four days later two more of the Russian Bears were intercepted near Iceland and their tail numbers copied before they continued south.

During the next few days two flights of the bombers again were intercepted near Iceland. This time they were northbound, heading toward Russia.

The planes' tail numbers correspond with those copied by the interceptor pilots when the planes were heading south.

In the meantime, Air Force reconnaissance planes, which routinely photograph Cuba, returned with photographs showing Russian Bear bombers parked at the Cuban airport.

This is the first time this type of Russian plane has been identified as being in Cuba.

Air Force sources say there is little question that the planes photographed in Cuba were the same ones spotted near Iceland.

They said that from the time the bombers were identified near Iceland until photographs showed them in Cuba there was no contact with the bombers.

The Russian Bear bomber has four turbo prop engines. Its range is 8,000 miles.

Each plane can carry two 500-mile-range air-to-surface nuclear missiles. Also the planes are capable of carrying 25,000 pounds of bombs.

Defense officials said it is not unusual for the bombers to go from Russia to Iceland, where they are intercepted, and then apparently return to Russian bases.

However, last month was the first time the Russians have made nonstop flights to Cuba.

The Russians are known to have 150 to 200 Bear bombers. In addition they have several

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Soviet A- bombers elude U.S. radar on Cuban trips

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hundred medium-range bombers, some supersonic and capable of in-flight refueling.

The bear can be used both as a bomber and as an aerial tanker plane for the shorter-range bombers.

U.S. defense officials have known of the capabilities of these aircraft for several years. They know there is nothing to prevent the Communists from sending a number of these planes to Cuban bases, where they could

threaten the Eastern and Gulf coasts of the United States.

Radar in the Southern United States has proved to be extremely weak. A Russian MIG piloted by a Cuban defector recently flew from Cuba and was not detected until it was over Homestead Air Force Base, near Miami, and ready to land.

To further complicate the problem, U.S. austerity moves in recent years have reduced the number of interceptor jets capable of downing manned bombers when they are detected by radar.