

Report

[undated, circa December 1962, prepared by the USSR Northern Fleet Headquarters]

About participation of submarines “B-4,” “B-36,” “B-59,” “B-130” of the 69th submarine brigade of the Northern Fleet in the Operation “Anadyr” during the period of October-December, 1962
/CARIBBEAN CRISIS/

1. The Navy carried out preparations for operation “Anadyr” under the codename operation “Kama.”
Preparations for the operation started in March-April, 1962.
2. For participation in the operation the 20th operative squadron of submarines was formed consisting of: the 69th brigade of diesel torpedo submarines “B-4,” “B-36,” “B-59,” “B-130” of project 641; division of 4/four/ diesel missile submarine of project 629 with three ballistic missiles on board of each [submarine] and a submarine shore base.
Flagman ship of the squadron—the floating submarine tender “D. Galkin.”
3. Commander of the squadron—Rear Admiral Rybalko L. F., Chief of Staff of the squadron—Captain First Rank Baranov N. M., Chief of the Political Department of the squadron—Captain First Rank Vasiliev B. A.

Commander of the 69th submarine brigade Rear Admiral Yevseyev suddenly got ill after the briefing in Moscow, and Captain First Rank Agafonov Vasili Naumovich was appointed commander of the brigade the day before the start of the operation. Chief of staff of the brigade—Captain Second Rank Arkhipov Vasili Aleksandrovich.
Deputy commander of the brigade for political issues—Captain Second Rank Smirnov B.N.

Commanders of submarines of the 69th submarine brigade: submarine “B-4” Captain Second Rank Ketov R. A., submarine “B-36” Captain Second rank Dubivko A. F., submarine “B-59” Captain Second rank Savitsky V. S., submarine “B-130” Captain Second Rank Shumkov N. A.

4. Preparations for the operation were completed on September 30, 1962 with loading 21 torpedos with conventional load and one torpedo with nuclear load onto each of the submarines.
5. Instructions to the commanders of the submarines and ceremony of launch were conducted by first deputy of the Supreme Commander of the Navy Admiral Fokin V. A. and Chief of Staff of the Northern Fleet Vice Admiral Rassokho A. I.

Admiral Fokin V. A. spoke to the personnel of the 69th submarine brigade and said that the brigade was given a special assignment of the Soviet government: to cross the ocean in secret and to arrive to a new basing point in one of fraternal countries. Several hours before the departure commanders of the submarines received “top secret” envelopes, which they could open only after leaving the Kola Bay. They were instructed to inform

the personnel of the submarines about the country of the new deployment only after the submarines reached the Atlantic Ocean. The submarines departed for the operation at 4am on October 1, 1962 from Saida [harbor]. The missile submarines, the headquarters of the 20th squadron, and the submarine tender "D. Galkin" were supposed to depart after the arrival of the submarines of the 69th brigade in Cuba, but the order for their departure was never issued. The shore submarine base of the 20th squadron was loaded onto the ships of the Merchant Marine Ministry, arrived in Cuba at Mariel harbor in October and remained there.

6. Having overcome the obstacles of the Norwegian and the Faero-Icelandic submarine barriers, and the barrier between Newfoundland and the Azores islands, four submarines of the 69th brigade of the Northern Fleet arrived to the assigned positions in the Sargasso Sea, to the east of Cuba, in the week of the 20th of October.

By the time of the submarines' arrival to the assigned positions, the Americans had discovered the deployment of the Soviet missiles in Cuba and Soviet-American relations reached the critical moment.

Beginning from October 22, a naval blockade of the island went into effect. To carry it out and to search for our submarines, the U.S. Navy employed over 200 combat surface ships, up to 200 planes of the base patrol aviation, four aircraft carrier search and assault groups with 50-60 planes on board and destroyers charged with discovering and destroying our submarines at the start of the military action. For discovering the brigade submarines they also used the stationary hydroacoustic system of underwater reconnaissance and observation "SOSUS," as well as the shore means of radio-electric resistance to create radio interference in the command and control systems of our submarines. Practically on every bandwidth, interference transmitters were turned on at the start of transmission of information from Moscow, which resulted in delays of reception of orders from the Headquarters of the Navy from several hours to a full day.

Therefore, the U.S. Navy concentrated forces, which were hundred times stronger than ours in their combat capabilities, to counter our four diesel submarines. It is natural that in the situation of such concentration of anti-submarine forces in a small area of the ocean, discovering the diesel submarines that had to surface to recharge their accumulator batteries was just a question of time, which happened soon.

Submarine "B-130," which came to the surface for repairs of all three of its failed diesel engines (factory defects), was discovered by the anti-submarine aviation, and then also by the surface ships.

When the fact of the presence of our submarines in the Sargasso Sea became obvious, the activity of anti-submarine warfare was stepped up even more.

As a result, the following submarines were discovered, pursued for several days, and then came to the surface because of fully discharged accumulator batteries:

--submarine "B-36" by the anti-submarine aviation and destroyer of the radiolocation patrol unit "Charles P. Cecil," ship No. 545.

--submarine "B-59" by carrier aviation and destroyers "Berry," "Lowry," "Beale," "Beich," "Bill," "Eaton," "Cony," "Conway," "Murray," and the anti-submarine aircraft carrier "Randolph."

--submarine "B-4" was discovered by anti-submarine aviation, but thanks to having fully charged accumulator batteries, was able to evade the pursuit and did not come to the surface.

In the course of search and pursuit of the submarines by anti-submarine warfare forces, they actively used explosive sources [sic] of the location systems "Julie-Jezebel," the blasts of which are impossible to distinguish from explosions of depth bombs. It is possible that depth bombs were actually used because three of the submarines suffered damage to the parts of radio systems antennas, which made reception and transmission of information substantially more difficult.

During one of the pursuit episodes, the hydroacoustic systems of submarine "B-36" identified the noise of torpedo propellers launched against the submarine, and when the torpedo did not home on the target because the submarine was submerging very fast, the destroyer attempted to ram [the submarine] and passed over the command room [rubka] and the conning tower of the boat. Luckily by that moment the boat already had submerged to the depth of 30 meters. When submarine "B-36" came up to the surface, the guns and the torpedo launchers of the destroyer were opened and aimed at the submarine.

When submarine "B-59" came up to the surface, airplanes and helicopters from the aircraft carrier "Randolph" flew over the submarine 12 times at the altitude of 20-100 meters. With every overflight they fired their aviation cannons /there were about 300 shots altogether/, and in the course of the overflight above the boat, they turned on their search lights with the purpose of blinding the people on the bridge of the submarine.

Helicopters lowered floating hydroacoustic stations along the route of the submarine and dropped explosive devices, hovered over the conning tower of the submarine and demonstratively conducted filming. The destroyers maneuvered around the submarine at a distance of 20-50 meters demonstratively aiming their guns at the submarine, dropped depth bombs and hydroacoustic buoys when they crossed the course of the submarine, lifted flag signals and shouted in the loudspeaker demanding that the[submarine] stops. Similar actions were undertaken also in regard to submarine "B-130."

The fact that the submarines of the 69th brigade were not designed [nepriposobleny] to be used in tropical conditions also contributed to their discovery:

--absence of air conditioning systems when the outside temperature was above 30 C

--absence of cooling systems for charging accumulator batteries

--high humidity in the sections and the salinity of the outside water

--temperature at some of the combat positions /hydroacoustics, electricians, engine operators/ which reached 50-60 degrees.

All this led to failure of the equipment /decrease in resistance of the insulation of the antennas, salinization of water refrigerators, unsealing of hermetic hull openings [orifices] and cable openings and other issues/, and also to heat strokes and fainting among the sailors. Limited reserves of fresh water did not permit us to give more than 250 grams of water per person per day—and that in the conditions of the strongest sweat production and dehydration of organism. The impossibility to wash off sweat and dirt led to 100% of personnel developing rashes in the most serious, infected form. To alleviate these conditions, the captains were forced to partially surface to ventilate the submarine sections [otsek] and the accumulator battery, which [...] could lead to their discovery. [...]

[Translated by Svetlana Savranskaya for the National Security Archive]