

Report of Major-General Igor Demyanovich Statsenko, Commander of the 51st Missile Division, about the Actions of the Division from 07.12.62 through 12.01.1962

Following the directive of the General Staff, in mid-June of 1962 the division was tasked with switching to a new operating structure (command – 6/322; R-12 regiments – 6/332; R-14 regiments – 6/334; RTB [missile technical base] –6/333), to take the regiments of Cdes. Bandilovsky and Sidorov into the division; to take one launch battalion and one RTB assembly brigade into Cde. Cherkesov's regiment. The division command is to be fully staffed with personnel and equipment, and to be ready to deploy abroad to carry out a special government task.

1. The work of reconnaissance groups to select deployment sites.

To carry out this assignment, the advance reconnaissance team arrived on the island of Cuba on 07.12.62 on a Tu-114 airplane. I was in the group together with the head of the data preparation unit [отделение подготовки данных (опд)] of the division.

The reconnaissance groups of the regiments arrived on the island of Cuba on an IL-18 airplane on 07.19.1962.

Based on the study of the reconnaissance assignment, described in directives from the General Staff, on 07.14.62 a work plan was developed for the advance reconnaissance teams, which stipulated:

- to begin reconnaissance by flying over first the western, then the central part of the island of Cuba;
- to choose two field deployment position areas for each regiment, stationing the command of the regiment with one of the battalions;
- to separate the reconnaissance teams into groups by region in order to expedite the work process;
- to include officers from the Headquarters of the Commander of the Group of Soviet Forces in Cuba in the regiments' reconnaissance groups;
- to organize the interaction of the reconnaissance groups with the group of General Dementiev [top Soviet military adviser in Cuba] and the General Staff of the Cuban Army to provide support and security for the reconnaissance groups during their work.

After the arrival of the reconnaissance groups of the division's regiments on the island of Cuba, i.e. on 07.20.1962, they studied the work plan, and carefully studied maps of the area where they would be working, particularly the network of roads. They were given special

instructions on camouflaging their activities. They learned the necessary minimum of Spanish words and were told the Cuban government's conditions for selecting the areas:

- each area submitted to expropriation must be no greater than 400-450 hectares, and have a maximum of 6-8 families subject to resettlement.

The conditions presented by the Cuban government eventually led to the crowding of equipment in the field deployment areas [*polevye pozitsionnye raiony, PPR*].

In the period from July 21-25, 1962, the areas identified by the directive of the General Staff for deployment of the regiments were studied four times via helicopter overflights.

Helicopter overflights were used to study the western and central parts of the island of Cuba. It was concluded that the areas designated to station the regiments of Cdes. Sidorov, Cherkosov, and Bandilovsky have highly broken terrain, poor vegetation and a poorly developed road network. Therefore, they were ill-suited to station missile regiments. At the same time, several new areas were identified:

- Mendoza, Jaruco;
- Aguacate, Madruga;
- Coliseo, Limonar;
- Consolacion del Norte;
- Colón, Los Arabos.

On 07.22.62 the regiments' reconnaissance groups departed for the areas designated by the directive.

Officers from Group headquarters, headed by Deputy Commander of the Group of Soviet Forces in Cuba for Combat Training Cde. General L.S. Garbuz, were part of the division regiments' reconnaissance groups.

The lack of an adequate number of interpreters affected the work of the reconnaissance groups, despite the officers' successful study of the Spanish language.

Reconnaissance showed that the central part of the island of Cuba (Cdes. Sidorov and Cherkosov's areas) has highly broken terrain, poor vegetation, and a lack of necessary platforms; the existing roads would not allow the passage of missile technology without a large amount of rock excavation; the aquifers lie at a depth of 150-200 meters; and counterrevolutionary gangs are active in the area. Thus, it was determined that it would be highly undesirable and inexpedient to station the regiments in these areas.

Hereafter, with the permission of the Commander of the Group of Forces, the main work of the reconnaissance groups was moved to newly identified and outlined areas.

In total, during the work in the central part of the island of Cuba (Matanzas, Santa Clara and Trinidad) 107 areas totaling 620 km² were inspected, of which 20 were reconnoitered with a total area of 110 km². From those, 4 areas were selected and approved:

- for Cde. Sidorov's regiment – the region of Sitiecito and Calabazar de Sagua;
- for Cde. Cherkesov's regiment – the region of Remedios and Zulueta.

In the western part of Cuba (Pinar del Rio, Artemisa and Guanajay) 44 areas were inspected, totaling 300 km², 15 areas were reconnoitered, totaling 65 km². From those, 6 areas were selected and approved:

- for Cde. Bandilovsky's regiment – both regions 10 km north of Los Palacios;
- for Cde. Solovyov's regiment – the Santa Cruz de los Pinos region and Candelaria;
- for Cde. Kovalenko's regiment – the Guanajay region (plateau Esperon).

Thus, to select 10 missile launching areas, it was necessary to conduct thorough reconnaissance on foot of 151 regions, totaling 900 km² stretched across the island from east to west for 650 km.

The question of stationing personnel in dugouts instead of tent camps was studied from the first days of arriving in Cuba.

After carefully studying the composition of the soil and climatic conditions, it was found that it was impossible to station the troops in dugouts in the tropics because of the large amount of precipitation and humidity.

Therefore, to accommodate the personnel we had to build tent cities, which later became one of the main telltale signs of troop locations in Cuba.

Simultaneously with area reconnaissance, preparatory activities were carried out for the arrival of the [military] units:

- All previously designated ports of debarkation were reconnoitered. Out of the previously designated ports of debarkation, the following were chosen: the Port of Mariel for the regiments of Cdes. Bandilovsky, Solovyov, and Kovalenko; the Port of Casilda for the regiments of Cdes. Sidorov and Cherkesov; the Port of Matanzas for the division command and as a backup port of debarkation for the regiments of Cdes. Sidorov and Cherkesov. The Ports of Mariel and Casilda were identified for the unloading of missiles;
- The routes to transfer missiles and missile equipment from the ports of debarkation to the missile deployment areas were reconnoitered and prepared;
- Because the road network in the central part of Cuba did not provide passage for the missiles and equipment, in a short period of time the joint forces of the Army and

- Ministry of Public Works of the Republic of Cuba laid two through-routes, bypassing the Escambray mountain range, 200 km each;
- Before the arrival of the troops, it was planned to block off the outer perimeter of all field deployment areas, but the Cuban Army command was able to complete only the fence around Cde. Kovalenko's deployment area (plateau Esperon);
 - The Cuban Army re-built and improved road access to all field deployment areas (total length of 52 km).

All the activities of the reconnaissance teams and their work were covered by general and specific cover stories. The general cover was: "Agricultural specialists."

The specific cover stories:

- for the construction of the R-14 complex (plateau Esperon) – "construction of a training center for the Cuban army by Soviet military specialists";
- the work of the geodesic groups – "geological survey parties."

The reconnaissance teams were transported on Cuban vehicles in small groups, often wearing Cuban uniforms.

The Cuban army command allocated three officers to support the work of the reconnaissance teams. Security for the teams was provided by the officers and soldiers of the reconnaissance battalion from Cde. Fidel Castro's personal guard.

The purpose of the operations was held in the strictest confidence. A strictly limited number of members of the Cuban Army knew about the missile forces arriving in Cuba. The people who knew in the beginning were Cdes. Fidel Castro and Raul Castro, and the Chief of the Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Cuban Army, Cde. Pedro Luis. Later on, that number increased to 10 people; by the time the work was completed, a total of 15 people were told about the mission.

The selfless work of the Cuban people and army in carrying out road work projects in the preparatory phase and while meeting the ships should be noted.

Conclusion:

1. The reconnaissance of the division's deployment sites and preparatory work was completed on time. Everything was ready for the arrival of the units and their rapid concentration in the deployment areas.

2. Our experience in Cuba showed that terrain dramatically affects the amount of reconnaissance work. To select one [usable] area, it was necessary to inspect 20-22 areas in the central part of the island, and 7-8 areas in the western part of the island.

3. The found and reconnoitered areas of Aguacate, Madruga and Mendoza were the most suitable as deployment areas for missile regiments, but they were not approved, which later on dramatically affected the organization of the arrival and preparations of Cde. Sidorov's regiment.

4. Our usual methods of entrenchment and construction of dugouts for shelter for personnel are impractical on the island of Cuba.

5. In Cuba, as in the U.S., electrical current is generated at 60 Hz, which makes it impossible to use local electricity for the technical needs of the Soviet troops. This should have been considered before the work of the reconnaissance groups began.

2. Deployment of the division on the island of Cuba

It was planned to use 35 ships to transfer the division to the island of Cuba.

The deployment of the division on the island of Cuba began only on 09.09.62 with the arrival of the motor ship [MS] "Omsk" in the Port of Casilda, the first ship of Cde. Sidorov's regiment. In the period from 09.09 through 10.22.62, 24 ships arrived and were unloaded, including missiles:

In the Port of Casilda:

6 [missiles arrived] on MS "Omsk" on 09.09.62;

8 on MS "Kimovsk" on 09.22.62;

In the Port of Mariel:

8 on MS "Poltava" on 09.16.62;

6 on MS "Krasnograd" on 10.02.62;

7 on MS "Orenburg" on 10.06.62;

7 on MS "Omsk" on 10.16.62 (second trip).

The missiles were unloaded from the ships only at night, under total blackout on the ships and in the ports. While the missiles were being unloaded, all external approaches to the ports were guarded by a specially assigned mountain rifle squadron consisting of 300 men, transferred from the Sierra Maestra.

From then on, people from this squadron ensured the external security of the field deployment areas.

Inside the enclosure of the ports, security was provided by the personnel of the arrived units, as well as by operatives designated by the General Staff. The approaches to the ships while being unloaded were guarded by war ships and motor boats, as well as specially tested and

selected fishermen from the local Cuban population. Every two hours, specially assigned scuba divers checked the underwater parts of the ships and the bottom of the harbor near the pier.

The missile equipment and parts were transported to the missile deployment areas only at night in small columns.

The deployment of missiles, launchers and fuelling equipment in missile deployment areas was organized and carried out in the following manner:

- missiles and large machinery were transported only at night between 00:00 and 05:00 hours;
- I planned the exact time when the missile convoys would start moving, but I did not announce it ahead of time;
- the entire length of the missile convoy transportation routes were blocked off ahead of time by the Cuban army and military police;
- when blocking off the routes, car accidents were staged and imitated, with evacuation of the “injured,” as well as “training” for Cuban army troops;
- About an hour to an hour-and-a-half before the missile convoy started moving, a decoy convoy of Cuban trailers or large trucks was sent down false routes;
- Generally, a missile convoy was organized as follows:
 1. Motorcyclists with radio equipment.
 2. A Cuban car with an operator , an interpreter, and a guard.
 3. Two cars with the convoy command.
 4. A convoy defense car.
 5. Missiles and trucks.
 6. One crane and reserve trucks.
 7. A guard car with Cuban guards.
 8. Motorcyclists with radio equipment.

At night all personnel involved in the preparation and transportation of the missiles changed into Cuban army uniforms.

Conversations and commands in Russian were strictly prohibited, all orders were given ahead of time; memorized Spanish words and phrases were widely used.

During transportation, the contours of launchers and fueling equipment were camouflaged to look like large loaded Cuban trucks.

In essence the deployment of the division on the island of Cuba ended on 10.22.62 with the announcement of the blockade and the return to the Soviet Union of some of the ships that were going to Cuba with the division’s equipment and personnel.

As of 10.22.62, the 51st missile division was deployed on the island of Cuba in the following composition:

- The division command, communications battalion, separate engineering-sapper battalion, Cde. Sidorov's regiment and Cde. Bandilovsky's regiment deployed in full;
- Cde. Solovyov's regiment was missing two transportation and refueling units; besides that the regiment's chief of staff, deputy regiment commander for the rear, and a large part of the regiment's command were on the MS "Yuri Gagarin," which was sent back to the Soviet Union;
- [From]Cde. Kovalenko's regiment – a part of the regiment command together with the commander of the regiment, the combat support battery, and one launch battery;
- [From]Cde. Cherkesov's regiment – combat support battery;
- Missile technical bases of Cdes. Shishchenko, Romanov, Krivstov and Korenets in full.

In total, the division arrived in Cuba comprised of:

Officers – 1404;

Soldiers and sergeants – 6462;

Civilian service personnel of the Soviet Army – 90;

Total: 7956 people.

Missiles: 42 (including training [missiles] – 6);

Warheads – 36;

One and a half amounts of fuel components;

Cars – 1695;

Radio transmitters – 72;

Construction materials and equipment – 9425 tons;

Food, equipment and clothing – over 1000 tons.

Conclusion

1. The division's experience in carrying out the special government task showed that the mass replacement of officers, sergeants, and soldiers dramatically affects the organization of the troops, the coordination between headquarters and combat units. It reduces the combat readiness of the regiments and of the division as a whole (the division commander knew the work skills of

only one regiment commander out of five, and around 500 officers and up to 1000 sergeants and soldiers were replaced).

Missile forces must always be fully equipped and ready to carry out any government assignment at any moment, even with deployment to any distance and any territory, and maintain their coherent work order.

2. When relocating forces it is necessary to make sure that the division command deploys on one of the first transports, leaving only a small task force in the previous location to ensure the dispatch of the division forces.

3. The division's deployment to Cuba took too long, which resulted in [the following]:

- the regiments armed with R-14 missiles did not reach Cuba, and Cde. Solovyov's regiment did not arrive in full;
- the dramatically increased intensity of traffic created a situation where at a given time only the missile regiments were being unloaded in all Cuban ports, which made disguise more difficult and could have led to premature discovery of the nature of the troops;
- the organization of command of the units was impeded because the division headquarters arrived in Cuba after the deployment of Cdes. Sidorov and Bandilovsky's regiments on the island;
- the tropical storm season was not taken into account at all.

In our view, the transfer of the division's troops to Cuba should have taken place in between deployment of units of the Air Defense Forces and should have started earlier, taking into consideration the fact that the months of September and October are a period of heavy tropical rains. The first ships should have brought the engineer-sapper platoons and geodesic teams, and part of the headquarters, as I had reported. It was inexpedient to send the missiles on the first ships.

3. The division assumes combat readiness

Following the decision of the command of the Group of Soviet Forces in Cuba, the division had the following schedule for achieving combat readiness:

- regiments armed with R-12 missiles – by 11.01.62;
- regiments armed with R-14 missiles – depending on the time of the completion of construction and installation works, in the period from 11.01.62 through 01.01.63.

Depending on when the R-14 complexes would become operational and when the troops would arrive, the division planned the following dates to assume combat readiness:

Cde. Sidorov's regiment – 10.20.62;

Cde. Bandilovsky's regiment – 10.25.62;

Cde. Solovyov's regiment – 11.01.62;

Cde. Kovalenko's regiment:

1st battalion by 11.07.62;

2nd battalion by 12.01.62;

Cde. Cherkesov's regiment:

1st battalion by 12.01.62;

2nd battalion by 01.01.63.

The combat readiness of the main deployment areas [OPR] of the regiments armed with R-14 missiles depended on the progress of construction work, the delivery of equipment, installation and testing, which were clearly delayed (the installation crews had no equipment for a whole month).

Following the General Staff's directive No. 76438 from September 8, 1962, to bring the troops into combat readiness as quickly as possible, engineering works were conducted at the field deployment areas around the clock. The testing of missile equipment and comprehensive training were conducted only at night in full compliance with all measures of camouflage. When the blockade of Cuba was announced, all work was conducted only at night. Simultaneously with the engineering works on the field deployment area equipment, the ground-based equipment was checked for operability and number of the missiles. By October 15, all the warheads stored at the group storage facility were thoroughly tested by the division's missile technical base.

By 10.20.62, the radio-relay communication system was prepared, tested, but not employed with the regiments of Cdes. Bandilovsky (100 km) and Solovyov (80 km). It was not possible to establish radio-relay communications with the regiment of Cde. Sidorov because of the large distance (250 km). By that same time, all radio facilities were deployed and operational. Due to the instability and unreliability of telephone communications, starting from 00:00 hours of 10.20.62, the radio networks operated on 24-hour listening reception. Thus, for all intents and purposes the command of the troops from the division's control post and control posts of individual units was ready by the end of the day of 10.20.62.

On 10.20.62, Cde. Sidorov's regiment achieved full combat readiness.

Continuous tropical rains delayed the completion of engineering work in the deployment areas of Cde. Bandilovsky's and Solovyov's regiments. Cde. Bandilovsky's regiment was in a

particularly adverse situation; from October 20-22 two companies of the division's engineering-sapper battalion were deployed to assist it.

At 18:00 hours on 10.22.62, the U.S. government announced the blockade of Cuba.

At 05:40 hours on 10.23.62, the Prime Minister and the Commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Cuba gave an order to bring all the Revolutionary Armed Forces to combat readiness. A state of military emergency was declared in the republic.

By 08:00 hours of 10.23.62, the division units were put on high alert. Cde. Sidorov's regiment, which achieved combat readiness on 10.20.62, was ready to carry out its assigned task. Cde. Bandilovsky's regiment and the 2nd battalion of Cde. Solovyov's regiment were in essence ready to carry out their assigned tasks, even though the engineering works on the field deployment areas were not completely finished.

At 11:30 hours on 10.23.62, two American fighter jets flying at an altitude of 100-150 meters entered Cuba's airspace and flew over the battle formations of Cdes. Solovyov and Bandilovsky's regiments.

At 11:32 hours two American airplanes flew over the battle formations of Cde. Sidorov's regiment, and at 12:00 hours over the battle formations of Cde. Cherkesov's regiment.

From that moment on, American airplanes began flying systematic, unimpeded reconnaissance flights over the territory of Cuba and the division's battle formations with impunity at altitudes of 50-100 m. These flights continued until 10.27.62, i.e. until the moment when the U-2 plane was shot down at the altitude of 21 km, and the F-106 aircraft at a low altitude by the air defense forces of the Cuban army.¹

It was later established that the U.S. Air Force had engaged with impunity in systematic reconnaissance and photography of Cuban territory starting from 08.01.62 while flying outside the range of the Cuban Army's air defense radars.

Thus, in August they made 60 sorties over Cuban territory, while the Cuban air defense forces registered only 10. In September they made 23 sorties, and 7 were discovered. Up until 10.22.62, U.S. airplanes made 71 flights over Cuba.

In these difficult conditions of a sharply deteriorating international situation, the realistic possibility of an outbreak of hostilities, and the return of part of our ships to the USSR, in order to ensure Cde. Solovyov's regiment's combat readiness, on the night of 10.24.62, I gave an order to withdraw the reserve and a part of the regular fueling equipment units from the regiments of Cdes. Sidorov and Bandilovsky and to transfer them to the regiment of Cde. Solovyov. Cde. Solovyov's regiment also received additional personnel from the same units and Cde.

¹ Information about shooting down a U.S. F-106 is not confirmed by the available U.S. records

Kovalenko's regiment to account for the missing personnel. Because of this arrangement, optimized schedules of preparation for the first launch were worked out for each regiment, taking into account the shortage of fueling equipment.

By the end of the day of 10.25.62, Cde. Solovyov's regiment was fully staffed and equipped. To equip the regiment, 20 officers, 203 sergeants and soldiers, 10 units 8G210 and 6 units 8G113, including 44 people, 5 units 8G131, 2 units 8G210 and 3 units 8G113 were transferred from Cde. Sidorov's regiment from a distance of 480 km.

On 10.24.62 the troops' headquarters were practically finished organizing interaction with motorized infantry regiments to defend the field deployment areas.

By the end the day of 10.25.62, Cde. Bandilovsky's regiment and the second battalion of Cde. Solovyov's regiment were brought to combat readiness.

Incessant U.S. aircraft flights over the location of our troops created the danger of revealing the division's deployment. In order to remove the troops from the danger of a possible attack, the division command made a decision on 10.24.62 to select new field deployment areas to maneuver.

The implementation of this decision was hindered by the lack of spare sets of SP-6 . On 10.25.62, the division engineers found a way to replace the SP-6 with available spare parts that could be used in field conditions.

On 10.26.62 the decision was reported to the Deputy Commander of the Soviet Group of Forces and the Deputy Commander of the Headquarters of the Missile Forces. Only the government's decision to withdraw the division from Cuba suspended the preparation and implementation of this maneuver.

Due to the threat of a bombing and striking attack by the U.S. aircraft on the division, early in the morning on 10.24.62, the command of the Cuban army decided to remove a significant part of Havana's air defense systems and transfer them to cover the missile regiments. At the same time, the troops were given an order to disperse all the equipment [from central storage] to the field deployment areas.

Every launch battalion was covered by one 57-mm and two 37-mm anti-aircraft batteries. Additionally, two 100-mm anti-aircraft batteries were used to cover the port of La Isabela, where at the time the MS "Aleksandrovsk" was stationed with warheads, and the battalions of Cde. Sidorov.

Thus, the total assigned number was:

37-mm batteries – 12;

57-mm batteries – 4;

100-mm batteries – 2.

The division control post was covered by two platoons of 23-mm guns, taken from the ships.

In order to reduce the amount of time to prepare for the first launch by Cde. Sidorov's regiment, on the night of the 26th-27th of October the warheads were moved over a distance of 500 km from the group storage facility to the field deployment area.

By the end of the day of 10.27.62, the first battalion of Cde. Solovyov's regiment was brought to combat readiness and the inspection of the missiles was completed.

Conclusion

1. In carrying out the special government task, the division personnel exhibited a high sense of responsibility for the task, selfless devotion to the Communist Party and the Soviet government.

2. In the adverse situation of a sharp escalation of tensions in the international arena, the blockade of Cuba and the immediate threat of an air strike, the personnel worked selflessly in uncustomary tropical conditions to bring the 51st missile division to combat readiness ahead of schedule:

- Cde. Sidorov's regiment deployed on the island of Cuba in the period from September 9 through October 8th, 1962, and 12 days after the arrival of the last ship, on October 20th it reached full combat readiness.
- Cde. Bandilovsky's regiment deployed on the island of Cuba from September 16th through October 15th, 1962, and 10 days after the arrival of the last ship, on October 25th it reached full combat readiness;
- Cde. Solovyov's regiment deployed on the island of Cuba in the period from October 6th through October 22nd, 1962. Three days after the last ship reached the port, before the blockade was announced, one battalion reached combat readiness by October 25th and the second battalion by October 27th despite the fact that some equipment did not arrive.

3. Therefore, the 51st missile division concentrated in Cuba and reached full combat readiness 48 days from the moment of arrival of the first ship; i.e. on October 27th, 1962, the division was able to deliver a strike from all 24 launchers.

Due to the fact that structure No. 20 was not completed and the warheads were stored at a group storage facility at a distance of 110 km from Cde. Solovyov's regiment, 150 km from Cde. Bandilovsky's regiment, and 480 km from Cde. Sidorov's regiment, as well as the deficiency of

fuel resources, the regiments' [combat]readiness was determined according to the [newly] prepared schedules:

- Cde. Solovyov's and Bandilovsky's regiments – 14-16 hours;
- Cde. Sidorov's regiment –24 hours, and after October 27th, 1962, when the warheads were dispersed to the field deployment area – 10 hours.