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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum

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THE CRISIS
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Information as of 0600

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PREPARED FOR THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
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DIPLOMATIC DEVELOPMENTS AND BLOC REACTION

First Deputy Foreign Minister Kuznetsov yesterday protested to Ambassador Stevenson and Mr. McCloy, on instructions from his government, over "very unpleasant events" which had taken place with respect to Soviet ships sailing from Cuba to the USSR. The masters of three Soviet ships--the ALEKSANDROVSK, DIVNOGORSK, and VOLGOLES--had reported to Moscow that they had been asked by US destroyers to open their hatches under threat of force if they did not comply with this "illegitimate demand."

Kuznetsov complained that such action on the part of the US vessels was in "gross contradiction" with the US-Soviet understanding on inspection. He further emphasized that the interference had occurred outside the quarantine zone.

He also noted that the DIVNOGORSK and VOLGOLES were missile-carrying ships and had been visually observed by US vessels prior to the incident. The ALEKSANDROVSK, he said, was not carrying missiles and not included in the Soviet list of ships subject to visual observation.

Late yesterday Mr. McCloy advised Kuznetsov that while a complete report was not available, the interpreter involved in at least one of the incidents was not well qualified in Russian, and that any misunderstanding regarding the opening of hatches probably resulted from poor translation.

He then pointed out that since some of the Soviet ships carried a different number of missiles than the US had been advised, the Soviets should be liberal with us as to what ships are observed.

U Thant's new proposal for on-site verification, as was suspected, turned out to be use of the five Latin American ambassadors still in Cuba. Bunche on 3 November showed the US delegation the draft of a letter from the Secretary General to Castro suggesting these ambassadors be invited to serve as an inspection team. The Cuban UN delegate asked for and received a copy of the draft letter, but made no comment on its contents.

Mass demonstrations to express support of Cuba continue "across the breadth and length of China," according to the Peiping press. The Chinese may keep up the popular rallies while Mikoyan is in Cuba, with a view to encouraging Castro to resist Soviet pressures.