[redacted]
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CUBAN MIGS SCRAMBLE ON TWO U.S. NAVY PATROL PLANES

At approximately 1812Z (1212 EDT) 8 September, two Cuban Revolutionary Air Force (CRAF) MIG's scrambled on and intercepted 2 U.S. Navy patrol planes over international waters.

[redacted] at 1535Z two Navy S2F patrol planes, S2F-13 and S2F-16, departed in company from the Naval Air Station, Key West, Florida. At 1812Z while both planes were at position [redacted], NSA [redacted] Ground Control Intercept (GCI) informed S2F-16 of the presence of an unidentified moving radar target 23 miles from S2F-16. The unknown target was reported on a true course of 275 degrees with a speed of 300 knots at 9,000 feet. S2F-16 was flying at an altitude of 5,000 feet. At 1814Z the radar target, tentatively identified by the S2F pilots as a MIG-17, made an overtaking approach on the S2F-16 passing underneath and pulling up in front. When visually sighted the range was estimated at approximately 1,000 yards and opening at high speed. Key West radar further tracked the MIG through a 180-degree turn and observed it making another pass behind the patrol plane. At this time both objects [illegible]

At 1834Z while at position 23-16N 82-49W, [illegible] and the MIG making gunnery-type runs on the second Navy patrol plane. The MIG passed alongside S2F-13 at an approximate range of 100 feet on the initial run. On the third similar run the MIG, after pulling out, settled in front of the Navy patrol plane at an altitude of 500 feet. The MIG then executed a climbing right-hand turn and disappeared. The Navy pilots reported the MIG as being dark in color without obvious markings to reveal nationality [redacted]

Intercept of the CRAF tactical VHF frequency parallels this activity and reveals that pilots using suffixes 12 and 89 were involved in the GCI alert. Both planes were scrambled and controlled by San Antonio de los Banos GCI.

[redacted]

At 182ØZ suffix 12 broke off intercept and returned to base because his fuel was running low. While in flight both 12 and 89 passed a series of numbers, possibly grid coordinates pertinent to the target activity, to the GCI controller.

While in contact with GCI, suffix 89 reported that the target was "presenting combat" and requested authorization to "knock it down." Evidence suggests that his request was denied since no hostile action was initiated.

Suffix 89 was instructed to maintain his position and continue surveillance.

COMMENTS: In direct contrast to previously observed GCI operations, most of the information passed was from the interceptors to GCI. Only a minimum of tracking was required by the intercepting planes, indicating increased proficiency.

The term "presenting combat" used by 89 is not understood but most probably reflects the evasive action taken by the Navy planes.

Source: [redacted]