

Newsmen Crash Blockade--Briefly

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MATTHEW TOWN, Great Inagua Island, Bahamas—The signal lights of a Soviet freighter wallowing through the blockade sea lanes northeast of Cuba blinked furiously to establish recognition as our plane flew overhead.

A United Press International news and photographic team checking the blockade line in a chartered seaplane sighted the Russian cargo vessel late Thursday about 100 miles northeast of Cuba. It was headed toward the northeast, obviously aiming for the crooked island passage through the southeastern Bahamas.

Pilot **Dean H. Franklin** of Miami made a low pass with the Grumman Goose amphibian. The name of the vessel was unreadable on the gray hull, but the Soviet red flag with crossed hammer and sick-

le painted on the smokestack was clearly distinguishable.

And the dozen crew members on the bridge obviously were nervous. Most had binoculars raised to their eyes to identify and follow the progress of the plane. They walked across the bridge as the plane flew over and circled the ship.

At least six military vehicles could be counted on the deck of the vessel. On the afterdeck was a long mound of cargo covered by tarpaulins.

It was impossible to determine the contents of the deck cargo by aerial inspection. Judging from the waterline, the vessel appeared to be about half loaded.

No armament was visible.

About 50 miles to the south of the Soviet vessel, another cargo ship was headed on the same northeast course away from Cuba. It could not be identified from the air, and held few items of interest on deck.

Whereas Thursday's flight of some 500 miles over the sea lanes failed to show any sign of U.S. warships or planes, a return to the area Friday morning turned up a U. S. Navy light cruiser about 10 miles off the southeastern tip of Cuba. The cruiser was heading north through the Windward Passage between Cuba and Haiti with a PV Neptune submarine-hunter plane on its flank.

As the charter plane circled the cruiser, the Navy plane buzzed by several times. The Navy pilot called Franklin on the radio and demanded identifications of those aboard and an explanation of what the charter plane was doing.

Franklin explained that his plane's radio direction indicator was malfunctioning and that he was heading for Great Inagua. The Navy plane then took up a position alongside and escorted the smaller Grumman amphibian to the island.

It was obvious the Navy doesn't want newsmen cluttering up the blockade area.

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clear bases have been dismantled.

While the Navy concentrated on its missile-counting and maintained its blockade against any inbound offensive weapons, there still was no word on the 20 or more Ilyushin-28 medium jet bombers Moscow is known to have sent to Fidel Castro.

At the U.N., it was reported that the Cuban delegate, Carlos Lechuga, has told U. S. delegates that Cuba regards the bombers as its property and will not give them up.

Another Cuban delegate, Juan Juarbe, told the U.N. General Assembly that all weapons remaining in Cuba are "anti-colonial, anti-imperialistic and defensive." He added, "Cuba is not a colony."