

High Cuban Intelligence Aide Defects

WASHINGTON — (AP) — Against a background of friction over Cuban seizure of a ship owned by American citizens, the State Department yesterday confirmed reports a Cuban intelligence officer has defected to the United States.

A department spokesman would say only that the unnamed Cuban had defected in London.

Reports from London described him as a senior official who brought with him plans for a new set-up for Cuban sponsoring of revolutions in South America.

The Daily Telegraph said the new efforts to export the Cuban revolutionary pattern will center in Santiago, capital of Chile, which recently has taken a Marxist turn in its government.

Cuban Alert

This development came while U.S. Navy patrol planes were reported scouting Caribbean waters yesterday to watch shipping for signs of new Cuban attacks — which the United States says it will not tolerate.

Havana radio reported Cuban naval and air units placed on alert, but said Cuba is preparing only to defend its territory and "does not threaten freedom of commerce and navigation in the Caribbean."

While the Pentagon refused to elaborate on a brief statement about "certain precautionary measures," sources indicated there have been only minor U.S. military aircraft and ship movements.

Any stronger U.S. military actions will depend on what the Cubans do, it was said.

U.S. View

There were indications any further Cuban assaults on shipping would bring out F4 Phantom and F8 Crusader jet fighters from the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo on Cuba's eastern tip.

The unarmed patrol planes were believed flying out of Roosevelt Roads in Puerto Rico, another major U.S. naval base.

Although two recent Cuban attacks on unarmed freighters involved ships flying the Panamanian flag, the State Department said this government considers the attacks "a clear and present threat to freedom of navigation and international commerce in the Caribbean and a threat to U.S. citizens."

Naturalized

Skipper of one of the Miami-based ships, Capt. Jose Villa, is Cuban-born but a naturalized American citizen. He was wounded and captured by a Cuban gunboat in the Bahamas.

Cuban radio claimed the two Panamanian-registered freighters were owned by Cubans living in the United States and that the ships had been used in raids against Cuba.

Owners denied such use of their ships. State Department spokesman Robert J. McCloskey said neither vessel was carrying arms or agents to Cuba. In any event, he said, "I can assure you neither vessel has any connection with the United States government."