

possible, from those who are knowledgeable about the sea and know just how to proceed on this.

But say they shoot, and the boat stops. Then they try a signal for a boarding party, and they say they're not going to permit a boarding party aboard. The ship is drifting. Then I don't think we can probably get aboard if we don't want to go through a machine gun operation. The destroyers aren't equipped. We haven't got . . . The other ship may be tough to get aboard. You have a real fight aboard there.

Gilpatric: Well, the cruisers have helicopters. [*Unclear.*] Can try a helicopter.

McNamara: Unless these freighters are carrying substantial security guards—and I don't believe we have evidence they are—it shouldn't be too difficult. I suppose that under some circumstances there may be a firefight but it ought to be a small one. The normal crew—

Bundy: We're not [*unclear*] a PT boat.

McNamara: Something of that kind.

McCone: It won't be easy.

McNamara: It could be difficult.

Rusk: It's a good reason to send this letter to Mr. Khrushchev and tell him to turn them around.

Robert Kennedy: Do we have the answer on the use of the foreign-built vessels? Do you want to get on to that difference?

President Kennedy: All right. In other words, we've sent off, we're sending instructions to approach, to proceed with all these in connection [with the quarantine] and the likely eventualities which they may face. They may not all realize . . .

McNamara: Admiral [George] Anderson [chief of naval operations] is in constant communication with the [*unclear*].

President Kennedy: First, we want to be sure that nobody on our boats have cameras.

Bundy: That's right.

McNamara: That specific order went out today, Mr. President.

President Kennedy: And the second thing is, that they are to understand what's liable to be the response, first they're liable to stop, or not to stop. Secondly, when we do the actions we do, they're liable not to permit you aboard.

Now, what do we say if there is machine gun fire, et cetera—and then our vessel is trying to board them. What do we say to them then? Do we let them drift around? I think—

McNamara: I think at that point, Mr. President, we have to leave it to the local commander. Depending on the seas, and whether there is a sub-