

Ten seconds excised as classified information.

The *Gagarin* declared [its cargo as being] technical material at Conakry. This is a typical declaration of an offensive weapons-carrying ship from the Soviet Union. We have checked back the records, and this appears to be a typical way by which they propose to deceive. Both of these ships, therefore, are good targets for our first intercept. Admiral Anderson's plan is to try to intercept one or both of them today.

There is a submarine very close, we believe, to each of them. Between. One submarine relatively close to both of them. The submarine will be at the barrier tonight, late today. It's traveling 8 knots an hour, and therefore it should be 20 to 30 miles from these ships at the time of intercept.

And hence it's a very dangerous situation. The Navy recognizes this, is fully prepared to meet it. Undoubtedly we'll declare radio silence. And therefore neither we nor the Soviets will know where our Navy ships are for much of today.

And that, I think, summarizes our plan.

President Kennedy: Which one are they going to try to get? Both of them?

McNamara: They are concentrating on the *Kimovsk*, but we'll try to get both. The *Kimovsk* has the 7-foot hatches and is the most likely target.

President Kennedy: If the . . . one of our ships . . . what kind of ship is going to try to intercept? A destroyer?

McNamara: Last night, at about midnight, the plan was to try to intercept the *Kimovsk* with a destroyer. Previously it had been thought it would be wise to use a cruiser. But, because of the Soviet submarine, at the time of intercept, it's believed that it would be less dangerous to our forces to use a destroyer. The [aircraft carrier] *Essex*, with antisubmarine equipped helicopters, will be in the vicinity, and those helicopters will attempt to divert the submarine from the intercept point.⁶

McCone: Mr. President, I have a note just handed to me from . . . [unclear]. It says that we've just received information through ONI that all six Soviet ships currently identified in Cuban waters—and I don't know what that means—have either stopped, or reversed course.⁷

Rusk: What do you mean, Cuban waters?

6. The aircraft carrier USS *Essex*, a lead ship of Navy Task Force 136, commanded by Vice Admiral Alfred Ward, was directly responsible for implementing the quarantine under CINCLANT (Admiral Dennison) and the chief of naval operations (Admiral George Anderson).

7. The ONI was the U.S. Navy's Office of Naval Intelligence.