

The boarding has been successful. The ship cooperated by making boarding arrangements. It will be some time before we determine what is on board. I would suggest, Mr. President, that we release now the information that we are on board. It won't be held long. There is information being transmitted in the clear. Single sideband radio.

Unidentified: We fully agree with—

President Kennedy: The only question that I've got is, how do we justify stopping this ship and then letting the East German one [the *Völkerfreundschaft*] go forward? What'll we say is the explanation for that?

McNamara: A general cargo ship.

Unidentified: It loaded at Riga. It loaded at Riga.

McNamara: Under charter of the Soviet Union.

Unidentified: Yes, it loaded at Riga with Soviet cargo.

President Kennedy: This Lebanese one [the *Marucla*]?

Unidentified: Yes, this Lebanese ship.

President Kennedy: All right. Do you want to have Pierre [Salinger] come in here, Mrs. [Evelyn] Lincoln?

Evelyn Lincoln: Yes.

President Kennedy: The Defense Department ought to announce this right now.

Bundy: That's right. It's all organized that way.

President Kennedy: Ros, do you want to just tell Pierre to call [Defense Department spokesman] Arthur Sylvester?

Now, the only question I've got is how do we still justify searching this ship. Will we have to announce that we let the other one through?¹⁰

McNamara: I don't believe we have announced it.

Bundy: We have tried to lick that. When it does come up, it's that we don't want to begin with a passenger ship seems to me the best way of explaining it. That is, in fact, exactly what controlled the decision, as I recall the discussion.

McNamara: I wouldn't go so far as to say we don't want to begin . . . but it was a passenger ship.

Bundy: It's not a target . . . Well.

Unidentified: We don't stop passenger ships.

President Kennedy: Just say there were passengers there.

Maxwell Taylor: We made no decision not to stop that thing.

10. In addition to the *Bucharest* and the *Völkerfreundschaft*, the British tanker *Suiaco*, bound for Jamaica, and a Polish ship bound for New Orleans had also been allowed to proceed through the quarantine line without inspection.