

THE SECRETARY AND CNO ON 23–24 OCTOBER 1962

Setting the Historical Record Straight

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The Cuban missile crisis was a defining moment in the career of the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) at the time, Admiral George W. Anderson, Jr. His leadership of the Navy during the crisis has become the most prominent role accorded to him in history. Yet his relationship during the crisis with the Secretary of Defense, Robert S. McNamara, has been cited as the factor that brought to a premature end his tour as CNO and his naval career. Among the events that affected the admiral's relationship with the secretary during the crisis were those that took place on 23–24 October 1962 in CNO's Intelligence Plot (IP)—part of the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI), located adjacent to but separate from CNO's operational Flag Plot and charged with providing all-source intelligence to the CNO, cleared Navy staff, and others.

Unfortunately, much of what has been written about what went on in CNO IP during those two critical days is inaccurate in two significant aspects—first, what occurred between the admiral and the secretary during the evening of the 23rd; and second, what transpired between the IP staff and the secretary overnight and during the morning of the 24th.

With regard to the evening of the 23rd, the earliest book on the Cuban missile crisis, Elie Abel's *The Missile Crisis*, described an event that, in the context of his narrative, took place on 24 October.¹ That event had two parts. One involved Admiral Anderson taking the secretary aside and explaining why a destroyer was out of position. The second part involved a description of the secretary aggressively questioning the admiral about how the quarantine would be conducted and the admiral responding defensively and heatedly. The date of 24 October and the details of that event were repeated shortly thereafter by Graham Allison in his *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, long considered the definitive book on the subject.² In interviews with both authors and again in his

oral history collected by the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, the admiral acknowledged the first part of the story. But he said that his recollection of the words and actions attributed to him when questioned by the secretary about the quarantine operations were not as portrayed in the accounts.³ Both authors noted the admiral's denial but used the story, as told by Abel on the basis of unidentified sources, in their books.⁴

Thus the date of 24 October and the story of that event have been included, in some form, in almost all histories of the Cuban missile crisis. Indeed, despite subsequent interviews with both principals, they have even appeared in the official history of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, in a history of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), in the authorized biography of Admiral Anderson, and on the website entry recording his burial at Arlington National Cemetery.⁵ It is only recently that published research has shown that the event actually occurred on 23 October, not the 24th.⁶

With respect to what occurred on the morning of the 24th, Robert Kennedy, in his *Thirteen Days*, described how the president and his advisers gathered in the White House, tensely awaiting the arrival of the first Soviet ships at the quarantine line and worrying about how the presence of a Soviet submarine would affect events as the quarantine was enforced. The book recounts how, at the last minute, ONI informed the president and the group that the Soviet ships had turned back. That brought the reputed exclamation by Secretary of State Dean Rusk, "We're eyeball to eyeball and I think the other fellow just blinked."⁷ As a result of that story a number of historical accounts have suggested that IP, on behalf of Admiral Anderson and the Navy, did not adequately inform the secretary and president of the activities of the Soviet ships that had been approaching the quarantine line.⁸ Those accounts are based on clearly secondhand information by representatives of other intelligence agencies, individuals who had no direct knowledge of what occurred in IP.⁹

Thus it seems appropriate to set the record straight, on the basis of firsthand recollections (as complete and accurate as fifty-year-old memories will allow) of those who were actually in CNO IP with the admiral on those days and on official documentation prepared when memories were fresh.¹⁰

22 OCTOBER: THE FUSE OF CRISIS IS IGNITED

Monday, 22 October, was a day of final diplomatic, policy, and operational preparations before the president's evening speech announcing the establishment of what he would call a "quarantine" of Cuba. But for IP it was most significant as the day when the submarine presence in the area of the Navy's deploying quarantine forces became apparent. The first report was of a visual sighting of a Soviet Zulu-class (NATO designation) long-range, diesel-powered attack submarine

refueling from a naval support tanker, *Terek*. That submarine had been operating off the mid-Atlantic coast and was preparing to return to home waters. The Navy's underwater Sound Surveillance System (SOSUS) then gained contact on another submarine, which when sighted by a patrol aircraft was identified as a Foxtrot-class (NATO designation) diesel-powered attack submarine.¹¹

On the basis of those operationally derived reports,

CNO immediately alerted his Fleet Commanders to the possibility of submarine attack with: "I cannot emphasize too strongly how smart we must be to keep our heavy ships, particularly carriers, from being hit by surprise attack from Soviet submarines. Use all available intelligence, deceptive tactics, and evasion during forthcoming days. Good luck."¹²

At 7 PM that evening, President John F. Kennedy told the nation that "unmistakable evidence has established the fact that a series of offensive missile sites is now in preparation" in Cuba. Therefore, he announced, "to halt this offensive buildup, a strict quarantine on all offensive military equipment under shipment to Cuba is being initiated. All ships of any kind bound for Cuba from whatever nation or port will, if found to contain cargoes of offensive weapons, be turned back."¹³

Immediately after that speech and for the rest of the night, IP became a hotbed of briefing activity. Soon after the broadcast, a call came from the Defense Intelligence Agency watch in the Joint Chiefs of Staff situation room that Secretary McNamara was en route to IP with the CNO, the Secretary of the Navy, and others for a briefing on the submarine and merchant ship situation. The party was duly briefed on the merchant-shipping activity, as shown on the IP plotting boards. The submarine intelligence briefer, Lieutenant Commander John R. "Jack" Prisley, then briefed the secretary personally on the submarine situation, kneeling next to his chair and using a special handheld folding plotting board. That evening briefing established what was expected to be the regular schedule of formal IP briefings for the secretary: they were to occur each morning at about 9 AM, before he went to the White House, and at about 10 PM, before he retired to his office for the night. Following the briefing, Secretary McNamara visited the office of the CNO for discussions of the quarantine and the establishment of surveillance.¹⁴

23 OCTOBER: A DAY OF TENSE WAITING

At about 3 AM on Tuesday morning, 23 October, when all seemed quiet, the door to IP opened and in strode Secretary McNamara and a couple of his assistants. He did a quick tour and then dropped himself into a chair in front of the plotting board, on which was displayed an ocean chart and a map of Cuba. After staring at the plot for a few minutes he began to question the ONI duty officer,

Commander Robert E. “Bob” Bublitz. The secretary’s principal concern seemed to be the Cuban navy’s eight Soviet-supplied Komar (NATO designation) guided-missile boats. As part of his regularly assigned duties, Commander Bublitz had been responsible for the collection of intelligence on those boats, and he was able to respond fully and accurately to the secretary’s questions. Seemingly dissatisfied that the duty officer was so sure of himself, the secretary harrumphed, got out of his chair, and left the plot without another word.¹⁵

As the morning of the 23rd progressed, the atmosphere became tense as the Navy and IP waited to see what the Soviets would do in response to the president’s announcement. Would the Soviet merchant ships maintain their courses and speeds toward Cuba? How would they act as they approached the quarantine line? How would they react when challenged? How would the Soviet submarines now known to be taking up positions near the quarantine line act to support the merchant ships or respond when prosecuted by our operating forces?

At about 9:45, with Lieutenant Thomas Rodgers on hand as the principal briefer and Lieutenant Commander Prisley as the submarine briefer, the secretary was apprised of the merchant-ship and submarine situations. The Flag Plot operations briefers covered the plans for Navy low-level overflights of Cuba. McNamara then went directly to the White House to meet with the president and his advisers.¹⁶

Meanwhile, reports had been arriving indicating that in the early morning hours of the 23rd, Moscow time, a message of very urgent precedence had been sent to a number of Soviet merchant ships. Also, the Soviet intelligence-collection trawler *Skhval*, operating in the Atlantic, had received and relayed a flash-precedence message. But the reports of those unusual communications offered no insights into their purposes, because in those days the National Security Agency (NSA) produced only “information, not intelligence.”¹⁷

Apparently as a result of those urgent messages, the ships began relaying urgent messages to others, and from others to Moscow, and reporting their own positions. Thus throughout 23 October, intelligence reporting provided the latest direction-finder (DF) positions of many ships, as well as their last reported true positions and previous DF positions.¹⁸ That information was plotted in IP and then “dead-reckoned” ahead to project estimated dates and times of arrival at the quarantine line. At that time, while the purpose of the unusual and urgent Soviet communication activity was unknown, it was assumed that it was related to instructions for the ships as to how they should approach the quarantine line and respond to U.S. intercept attempts.

Thus, during the National Security Council (NSC) meeting on that evening, the President instructed McNamara to review all details of instructions to the Fleet Commanders regarding procedures to be followed in the blockade. There was

extended discussion of actions to be taken under various assumed Soviet resistance activities such as (a) failing to stop, (b) refusing to be boarded, (c) ships turning around, heading in another direction, etc.¹⁹

Secretary McNamara then held a press conference in which he announced that an effective quarantine would be established at 10 AM Eastern Daylight Time on the 24th. He also announced that

the Joint Chiefs of Staff have designated Admiral George Anderson, Chief of Naval operations, as their Executive Agent for the operation of the quarantine and the quarantine forces. In turn, Admiral [Robert] Dennison, Commander in Chief, Atlantic is the responsible Unified Commander. And operating under him in direct charge of the quarantine force will be Vice Admiral Alfred Ward, Commander of the Second Fleet.²⁰

THE EVENING OF 23 OCTOBER: TENSION ERUPTS

Following that press conference, as the *CNO Report* briefly notes, “at 2045 [8:45 PM], Secretary McNamara had requested information concerning the first ships which would be intercepted, and Admiral Anderson consulted with Admiral Dennison on the matter.” That entry indicates that Secretary McNamara was interested in how the operations of the quarantine would be implemented, but its unusual brevity suggests that the details of how he expressed that interest and what went on after he did so would be inappropriate for an official report. Although, accordingly, what actually happened that night in Flag Plot and IP between Secretary McNamara and Admiral Anderson was not officially recorded, an account of what supposedly happened was provided by Abel and has long been included in almost every story of the Cuban missile crisis since. But it has always been said to have occurred on the 24th, not the 23rd, when at least some of what Abel and others have described actually happened.

Admiral Anderson later said that the event was “not even of sufficient importance for me to write down in my diary.”²¹ But others did the job for him. The best items of evidence that the event did not take place on 24 October but rather on the 23rd are, first, the brief, circumspect entry in the *CNO Report* for the 23rd indicating that a McNamara-Anderson meeting did occur; and second, the CNO’s *Office Log* for the 24th, which reports that by the time of the secretary’s arrival in Flag Plot that evening the admiral had already departed for home and that Admiral Claude V. Ricketts, the Vice Chief of Naval Operations, was the duty CNO. Thus, no McNamara-Anderson meeting could have occurred that night.²²

Additionally, though they date the event to the 24th, all the published accounts provide good internal evidence that the event actually occurred on the evening of the 23rd. The Abel story says, “McNamara asked about the first interception: exactly what would the Navy do?” The *History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense*

relates, “According to McNamara’s account, when the CNO informed him that a Soviet vessel would reach the quarantine line the following day, McNamara asked what he would do when it got there.” Since the quarantine was to be implemented on the morning of the 24th, questions about the “the [upcoming, in context] first interception” and “what he would do” when a Soviet ship reached the quarantine line the “following day” all must have been asked on the evening of the 23rd. They would not have been asked on the night of the 24th, by when it was clear

that the Soviet ships would not be penetrating the quarantine line.

There is no doubt that on the evening of the 23rd McNamara and Anderson had a meeting, one that Anderson termed an “incident” and Defense Department

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historians have called a “confrontation.” That event did include Anderson taking the secretary aside to explain a submarine contact, and it also included a contentious discussion of quarantine operations. But it occurred quite differently than Abel’s unnamed sources and the elaborations of others have reported. Certainly, as Abel originally said, “Witnesses only disagree.”

That evening, at the time of his regular evening brief, the secretary went to Flag Plot first, where he apparently began questioning whether a destroyer was out of place.²³ The admiral, not wanting to discuss that matter with the secretary in the crowded Flag Plot, took him into IP, accompanied by Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric, Secretary of the Navy Fred Korth, and their respective military executive assistants. It is possible that the Under Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, Arthur Sylvester, followed that group in. McNamara and Anderson sat in chairs at a small table in front of the sliding display boards, with others standing behind or to the sides.

As usual, Prisley knelt next to McNamara with his plotting folder to give his submarine intelligence presentation, explaining also why the destroyer was out of the line. When Prisley had finished but was still kneeling beside him, McNamara took out his thin Eversharp pencil and used it as a pointer to tell Admiral Anderson to move certain destroyers to certain positions and to move aircraft surveillance to a certain area. The CNO tried three times to tell the secretary that Admiral Dennison, to whom he had given operational control, was experienced and capable, needing only to be told what the secretary wanted to accomplish—he would move the forces as necessary. Twice the admiral asked the secretary what it was he wanted to accomplish by those moves, so he could tell Admiral Dennison. Finally McNamara asked the CNO whether he knew what an order was, and the admiral replied, “Yes, sir”; McNamara repeated his directions, saying, “This is

an order,” and walked out. The CNO then took Prisley, along with his plotting folder, next door to Flag Plot to use the secure phone to give Admiral Dennison the secretary’s orders.²⁴

As a result of that telephone call, the *CNO Report* states,

they [Anderson and Dennison] decided that they should go after the Soviet vessels *Kimovsk* and *Gagarin*, effecting contact at about the same time on the 24th. The approximate locations of both ships were known by direction finder fixes and they felt search aircraft would have a good chance of spotting them. The [antisubmarine aircraft carrier] *Essex* group would be used to intercept them.

Another approaching ship, *Poltava*, was to be assigned for interdiction to [the heavy cruisers] *Newport News*, *Canberra*, and four destroyers. It was believed that the intercept would be made late on the 24th.

In a memorandum relating these plans, Admiral Anderson said that there was a hazard of possible submarines in interdicting the first two ships, but pointed out that the interception would be made by a Hunter/Killer Group.

In that memorandum to the Secretary of Defense, Admiral Anderson also made an attempt to avoid another operational decision-making session with the secretary, by stating, “From now on, I do not intend to interfere with Dennison or either of the admirals on scene unless we get some additional intelligence, which we are hoping for.”²⁵

The realization that this event occurred on 23 October makes it easier to understand how it developed as it did. The secretary’s support of the blockade had probably been the deciding vote in the president’s decision to establish a quarantine.²⁶ Just hours before he had been told by the president to “review all . . . instructions to the Fleet Commanders.” Thus, he was asking detailed questions and giving detailed orders because of what he viewed as his personal responsibility to ensure the success of the quarantine operation. The admiral, for his part, likely considered that, the president having reviewed the Navy’s plans for the quarantine on the 21st, the authority and responsibility for conducting the quarantine had been delegated to him and the Navy. The president had said, “Well, Admiral, it looks as though this is up to the Navy.” Anderson must have felt that his reputation was linked to the success of the operation, having replied to the president, “The Navy will not let you down.”²⁷ Furthermore, he and the secretary had again discussed the plans on the evening of the 22nd.²⁸ Finally, it must have seemed to the admiral that authority and responsibility for execution of the quarantine had just been publicly delegated to him and the Navy by the secretary’s just-concluded press conference.

In light of those differing beliefs about the operational chain of command and the fact that both men felt personally responsible for ensuring a favorable outcome to the operation, it is easy to understand how any discussion could have become contentious.²⁹ Both were tense and tired, awaiting a confrontation between a Soviet merchant ship and an American warship in just twelve hours—a confrontation that, given the presence of Soviet submarines, could spark an exchange of weapons leading to war. In such an event, the two men had different ultimate goals: the secretary wanted to ensure that when an interception occurred, armed confrontation was avoided, whereas the admiral wanted to be sure that if one occurred, the forces were adequately deployed and ready to handle it. Thus the secretary would have been angered by what he considered the admiral's evasive, unsatisfactory, and, some say, belligerent answers as he tried to carry out the president's directive to "review all . . . instructions to the Fleet Commanders" and to ensure caution. On the other hand, the admiral would have been angered at the secretary's apparent attempt to revise deployment plans and exercise operational control from Washington just twelve hours before the arrival of the merchant ships at the quarantine line and possible armed encounters with submarines. Understandably, tempers flared on both sides.

Admiral Anderson may have suspected that details of the meeting would become the stuff of leaks, rumors, and gossip. IP was immediately instructed by the CNO's executive assistant, Captain Isaac C. "Ike" Kidd, Jr., to make sure that no one except the secretary, deputy secretary, CNO, and senior flag officers from CNO's office were given admittance in the future. The CNO's *Office Log* for 25 October shows that Rear Admiral John McCain, Jr., then the Navy Chief of Information, discussed with Captain Kidd plans for Under Secretary Sylvester to have coffee with CNO and be briefed in Flag Plot. Captain Kidd said, "Flag Plot ok, but not IP."

THE NIGHT OF 23–24 OCTOBER: WHAT DID THEY KNOW, AND WHEN DID THEY KNOW IT?

Because of the purposeful arrival in IP of the admiral bringing the secretary from Flag Plot to explain the position of the destroyer, followed by the secretary's rapid departure, the usual evening intelligence brief covering the positions and movements of the approaching Soviet merchant ships was not given. Unfortunately, there are no notes of what that brief would have included.³⁰ But at about the scheduled time of that briefing, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) summarized the merchant-shipping situation: "Of the nine ships involved in the 'very urgent' encrypted communications yesterday two have already arrived in Cuban ports. We have not noted any unusual activity on the part of the seven other ships involved in these communications that would reflect any instructions they may have received."³¹

According to CIA, the latest “known position” for *Kimovsk* was roughly three hundred nautical miles (nm) east of the planned quarantine line, as of 3 AM Washington time. For *Poltava* the latest “known position” had been obtained at 11 AM Washington time, roughly eight hundred nautical miles northeast of the quarantine line. These reported known positions were based on the ships’ required daily position reports, rather than DF. Thus the most reliable positions at the time of the evening briefing were eighteen and ten hours old, respectively. Using those positions, a dead-reckoning (DR) plot in IP would have shown

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that *Kimovsk* would arrive at the quarantine line by about 1000 (or 10 AM) on the 24th, as expected. But a DR plot would have shown that *Poltava* could not arrive at the quarantine line as had been

expected—indeed, not until sometime on the 26th. There was no “known position” available for *Gagarin*, the third ship of primary interest.

In addition to those known positions, however, a DF position had been obtained on *Kimovsk* at 4:23 PM Washington time showing it still about three hundred miles from the quarantine line, or just about where it had been sixteen hours earlier.³² Clearly the ship had slowed or stopped for most of the day. But since the position had been derived from DF, the true position, course, and speed of *Kimovsk* could not be determined. Dead-reckoning *Kimovsk* westward at ten knots from that position would have made it clear that the ship could not arrive at the quarantine line by 1000 on the 24th, at that speed. However, if *Kimovsk* increased speed westward after reaching that position it could arrive sometime later in the day. Thus, on the evening of the 23rd the secretary would have been briefed (by the author, who was the briefer that evening) that *Kimovsk* had slowed or could have stopped during the day; that because information on the ship’s course and speed was not available, it could not be determined whether, where, or when the ship would arrive at the quarantine line; but that arrival sometime on the 24th could not be ruled out. The secretary would have been told also that *Poltava* had also stopped and could not arrive until the 26th, and that there was no position available for *Gagarin*.

But the secretary did not take that brief. The author completed his twelve-hour shift as briefer and retired, leaving his notes for the overnight crew.

On this the critical night before the quarantine was to be initiated, IP was fully manned with highly qualified hands. In addition to the IP watch officer and the ONI duty officer, Commander Howard W. “Howdy” Holschuh would have been present. Early in the crisis he had been relieved of all his regular duties in ONI and assigned to IP on a twenty-four-hour basis as the officer responsible for plotting and analyzing merchant-shipping intelligence and briefing members of

the CNO's staff on it. His efforts provided the basis for the merchant-shipping portions of the regular briefings to the CNO and secretary. Furthermore, Captain Maurice H. "Mike" Rindskopf, the Assistant Director of Naval Intelligence (DNI) for Production, was also present that night. Early in the crisis he had been assigned to represent the DNI in overseeing ONI's activities related to the missile crisis. Finally, IP would have been in close touch via secure phone with the Naval Field Operational Intelligence Office (NFOIO) colocated with NSA in order to receive speedy analysis of the Naval Security Group (NSG) reporting.

The official NSA history states, "Late the same day NSG direction finding indicated that some of the Soviet merchant vessels heading for Cuba had stopped dead in the water, while others appeared to be turning around. At this point, the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) felt that this information had to be verified before it was reported."³³ On the basis of the NSA account, it would appear that during the night of 23–24 October, aside from *Kimovsk*, NSG reported DF positions on additional ships that showed them near their previous known positions.³⁴

Then, the NSA history continues, citing the account of Dino Brugioni, "John McCone [the Director of Central Intelligence] was awakened in the middle of the night and informed that the Navy had unconfirmed information [presumably that the ships had slowed or halted], but this was not passed to the White House or the secretary of defense until noon [actually, as we will see, it was passed earlier, certainly by 1030] of the following day, once ONI had 'confirmed' the information. When he found out, McNamara was furious, and he subjected Admiral Anderson, the Chief of Naval Operations, to an abusive tirade." The NSA account concludes that "so many years have passed that it is impossible to determine why the Navy held up information that seemed critical to the president's decisions."

That brief account does not fully or accurately describe the activities of the night and has led at least one historian of the crisis to conclude that it "illuminates a failure of intelligence cooperation" and negligence on the part of ONI.³⁵

In his fuller account, Brugioni states, "The CIA Watch Officer, Harry Eisenbiess, checked with the Office of Naval Intelligence. They were also in receipt of the NSA information but could not confirm change of course. On-the-spot visual verification would have to wait until morning. The Navy thought it might be a Soviet plot."³⁶ To check with ONI, the CIA watch officer would have communicated with IP, where the new positions already would have been plotted by the watch officer, analyzed by the duty officer and Commander Holschuh, and discussed with NFOIO.³⁷ That night, while of course interested in all the ships, IP was mostly focused on supporting the CNO, Flag Plot, and the quarantine forces with information on those of immediate high interest—*Kimovsk*, *Poltava*, and *Gagarin*. The rationale for waiting for visual confirmation would likely have been that it was already known that *Kimovsk* would not be arriving at the quarantine

line on time and that *Poltava* had stopped and would not be arriving on the 24th at all. *Gagarin* was unlocated but like the other ships was farther east and not expected at the quarantine line the next morning. Visual surveillance of them all by quarantine force aircraft at first light would leave plenty of time to confirm their courses, speeds, and expected times and places of arrival at the quarantine line and then for the on-scene commander to position forces for intercept. Thus, for the IP watch, there was no need to alert decision makers in the middle of the night to give them inconclusive information when good information for decision making by the on-scene commander and Washington was not yet available but could come early in the morning.

Despite the ONI view, according to Brugioni,

Eisenbiess was convinced of the validity of the NSA information and in the wee hours of the morning of 24 October went to McCone's home. McCone[,] aroused from a sound sleep, was told that at least five of the Soviet ships had changed course and were headed back to Russia but that the Navy could not verify the NSA information. McCone said he would convey the information to the White House immediately.³⁸

Given McCone's statement, he must have intended to call the White House himself or to have a senior agency official check with the CIA watch and then inform the White House Situation Room. That would have been required, because during the early days of the Cuban missile crisis

the Situation Room began taking a more active hand in crisis alerting and in keeping the president informed. It was basically an arm of the CIA, however. All SIGINT [signals intelligence] products of interest to the president and the National Security Council staff passed through CIA, which forwarded key items after it had taken off the NSA header. . . . [B]ut NSA was not directly involved.³⁹

McCone was not the only decision maker awake that night. As he had done the night before, Secretary McNamara came to IP about 3 AM. There is no full record of what ensued, but one of the officers present would have given him a briefing, using the notes prepared for the earlier, aborted brief. Thus the secretary would have certainly been told now what he could have learned at 9 PM—that *Kimovsk* had slowed or stopped during the day but that lack of information on the ship's course and speed made any estimate of its arrival at the quarantine line on the 24th inconclusive, though arrival on that day could not be ruled out; that *Poltava* had also stopped and could not arrive until the 26th; and that no position was available for *Gagarin*. Other DF positions on additional ships having apparently been obtained, they would also have been reported. Given that all these reports were based on DF positions, which can indicate general location but not course or speed, it is unlikely that without further confirmation a naval intelligence briefer would conclude that the ships had reversed course.

But because of the secretary's keen interest in the operational aspects of the quarantine he would have asked questions, so that the possibility of a standstill or turnaround must have been discussed. As a senior officer with considerable planning and operational experience, Rindskopf would have assured the secretary that aerial surveillance from *Essex* was expected to provide firm visual updates on most of the ships at first light. If the ships had turned, that could be confirmed well in advance of their expected arrivals at the quarantine line. If the secretary went next door to Flag Plot and expressed concern, he would have received a similar assurance there. But while those assurances may have been given, Rindskopf has repeatedly recalled, "I found myself . . . reporting to SECDEF [Secretary of Defense] McNamara . . . at 0300 [3 AM] . . . that the Soviet ships carrying missiles to . . . Cuba and the accompanying F-class submarines had actually reversed course."⁴⁰ That would have been his personal "estimate" of the situation, and it is unknown to what extent the secretary accepted it.

MORNING, 24 OCTOBER: THE DAY OF RECKONING

That morning the *CNO Report* indicates that at "about 0900, SECDEF received a standard merchant ship briefing." Deputy Secretary Gilpatric also attended that briefing, and his handwritten notes show that the intelligence that the secretary could have gotten on the evening of the 23rd and presumably did get in the early morning hours of the 24th had not changed.⁴¹ With regard to *Kimovsk*, the secretary was told of the DF position late on the 23rd and that the ship had not been sighted. Given the anxiety that all must have felt as the time for implementation of the quarantine approached, the unexpectedly inconclusive position of *Kimovsk* and the lack of a sighting report from the quarantine force must have elicited some comment from the briefer, question from the secretary, or perhaps a remark by Vice Admiral Charles D. Griffin, the Deputy CNO for Operations and CNO representative that morning, about the uncertainty and probable delay of the arrival time of the ship at the quarantine line. Nevertheless, for some reason Gilpatric noted that the ship was "due 10:30 AM inside the barrier." *Gagarin* had not been sighted but was assumed to be behind *Kimovsk*. Apparently, a DF position had been obtained on *Poltava* that placed it within eighty miles of its last known position and 850 miles from the quarantine line; thus the deputy secretary noted that its arrival time was estimated to be 4 AM on the 27th. The notes also show that the secretary was informed that there was one submarine in the vicinity of the barrier.

Thus, on the basis of what transpired during the night of 23–24 October in CNO IP, the belief of historians that there was a "failure of intelligence cooperation" and their perplexity as to why ONI held up information critical to the president's decisions appear to be unfounded. CIA and IP cooperated on the analysis

of the incoming DF messages during the night. While ONI originally did not intend to wake the CNO and secretary to report a possible turnaround based on inconclusive and unconfirmed DF reports, once the secretary appeared in IP the senior person present who agreed with the CIA view told him of the possibility. Thus, two key decision makers—McCone and McNamara—had been informed in some manner and to some degree of a changing situation with respect to the merchant ships. CIA may have passed its views to the White House Situation Room. Regardless of all that, it is unclear what the president’s decision could have been until definitive information was received from the quarantine forces about the positions and activities of the Soviet ships.

The *CNO Report* indicates, “At the same time [probably as the briefing was going on, i.e., about 9:30], Flag Plot [actually, IP] received the first directional fix report that some Soviet ships bound for Cuba had reversed course. This information was inconclusive and Mr. McNamara was not informed.”

Since DF reports had been coming in all night, this was likely the first report confirming that a ship had actually turned back, by providing a new DF position well to the east of both the last known and previous DF positions, which had been considered inconclusive. Since that information apparently was received in IP while the briefing to the secretary was going on, the watch officer, a lieutenant (junior grade), had to wait to gain access to the boards to plot the incoming report and would have wanted a more senior officer to consider it and discuss it with the NFOIO before informing the Secretary of Defense. The secretary departed the briefing and went directly to the White House to await the implementation of the quarantine at 1000.

1000, 24 OCTOBER: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE QUARANTINE

The *CNO Report* indicates that the CNO was meeting with the JCS as

the moment of the quarantine’s beginning arrived and passed, and matters continued without untoward incident until . . . [Commander Task Group] 44.3 in [the attack transport] *Cambria* [APA 36] reported a disappearing radar contact and that he suspected he was being followed by a submarine. The information was passed immediately to CNO, who left the JCS meeting and returned to his office.

At about the same time, it became apparent from radio directional fixes that some of the Soviet ships en route to Cuba had either slowed down or had altered or reversed their courses. Initial indications of these facts were confirmed by separate plots maintained in Flag Plot [IP] and in the Navy Field Operational Intelligence Section [*sic*—Office, i.e., NFOIO] at Fort Meade. The duty officer set about to notify the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Navy, and CNO, through the Director of Naval Intelligence, of the possibility that some of the Soviet ships were not going to penetrate the quarantine line.

The CNO's *Office Log* also shows that

NSA [actually NFOIO, colocated with NSA] notified Flag Plot [IP] that the Russian ships had turned back. The word was received by message and plotted. Flag Plot [IP] notified SECDEF, JCS, and SECNAV [the Secretary of the Navy—likely their offices by telephone]. RADM Lowrance [Rear Admiral Vernon L. Lowrance, the Director of Naval Intelligence] who was there decided to deliver the report in person to CNO and left for the latter's office. RADM Lowrance arrived before the CNO [who was walking back to his office from the JCS spaces so as to be available, because of the submarine contact report] and gave the report to VADM Griffin [the CNO representative] who left immediately for Flag Plot [IP] with ADM Lowrance. Neither told anyone else of the report.⁴²

Meanwhile, the members of the NSC were gathered at the White House, awaiting the implementation of the quarantine. According to the firsthand account of the attorney general, Robert Kennedy:

It was now a few minutes after 10:00 o'clock. Secretary McNamara announced that two Russian ships, *Gagarin* [consistently reported as unlocated, farther to the east, and never briefed as possibly arriving by IP] and *Komiles* [*sic*—*Kimovsk*] were within a few miles of our quarantine barrier. The interception of both ships would probably be before noon Washington time. Indeed the expectation was that one of the vessels would be stopped and boarded between 10:30 and 11:00 o'clock.

Then came the disturbing Navy report that a Russian submarine had moved into position between the two ships. . . .

I think these few minutes were the time of gravest concern for the President. . . .

Then it was 10:25—a messenger brought a note to John McCone. "Mr. President, we have a preliminary report which seems to indicate that some of the Russian ships stopped dead in the water."

Stopped dead in the water? Which ships? Are they checking the accuracy of the report? Is it true? I looked at the clock. 10:32.⁴³

Kennedy says that McCone stepped out of the room to get more information and that upon returning he reported, "The report is accurate, Mr. President. Six ships previously on their way to Cuba at the edge of the quarantine line have stopped or have turned back toward the Soviet Union. A representative from the Office of Naval Intelligence is on his way over with the full report."

The representatives arriving from ONI with the information were likely to have been Commander George Stroud, the head of IP, and Lieutenant Thomas Rodgers, who had just completed the briefing and was the person most current on the information.

Despite the tension in the White House concerning the imminence of a confrontation at the quarantine line, as described by Robert Kennedy, it does not seem that either McCone, McNamara, or the White House Situation Room had told the president or the assembled group about the anomalous ship position reports received during the night, about which they all had been informed. Although the information they had been given was not conclusive, it surely suggested that the situation with regard to ships approaching the quarantine line was at least uncertain and that their arrivals were not imminent. For his part, McNamara,

There is no doubt that on the evening of the 23rd McNamara and Anderson had a meeting, one that Anderson termed an “incident” and Defense Department historians have called a “confrontation.”

in his briefing, as reported by Kennedy, did not accurately provide the information from the briefing that he had just attended and did not include any of the uncertainty that had been conveyed to him by ONI. For his part, McCone

seems to have been surprised, despite allegedly having been awakened the night before and been informed that some ships had stopped.⁴⁴

It was at this meeting that, Abel and Allison report, the Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, said, “We’re eyeball to eyeball and I think the other fellow just blinked.”⁴⁵ That literal face-off, of course, never happened. While those in Washington were awaiting information, out in the Atlantic, as expected by IP, the operational forces had now visually sighted *Kimovsk*, *Gagarin*, and *Poltava* and determined that they had turned back. At 0930, when it was expected to be nearing the quarantine line, *Kimovsk* was already more than seven hundred miles northeast of the line, heading northeastward at sixteen knots.⁴⁶

Secretary McNamara was undoubtedly unhappy about not having been the bearer of the good news to the president, since it came from Defense Department organizations—NSA and ONI. Having just come to the White House from an IP briefing, certainly he would have liked to have brought the available news to the White House.⁴⁷ But as for Brugioni’s story of McNamara subjecting Anderson to an “abusive tirade,” there is no record or independent confirmation that it happened. Seemingly, the appropriate time for it to have happened would have been that day. But there is no record of the two men meeting on 24 October.⁴⁸ If such an incident had occurred, however, Admiral Anderson could have remarked that the secretary had known about the turnaround before he did.⁴⁹

While Secretary McNamara may not have been satisfied with the performance of IP, Admiral Anderson felt differently. The CNO’s *Office Log* indicates that on the morning of 26 October “CAPT Kidd called ADM Lowrance to tell him the CNO had taken note of the tremendous job his people were doing in coming up with

info on merchant ships. He asked if there was an objection to kudos for the job that particular section was doing.”

NOTES

1. Elie Abel, *The Missile Crisis* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1966), pp. 154–55.
2. Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971), p. 131.
3. George W. Anderson, Jr., interview by Joseph E. O’Connor, 25 April 1967, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library [hereafter JFK Library] Oral History Program.
4. For the admiral’s disclaimers see Abel, *Missile Crisis*, p. 151, and Allison, *Essence of Decision*, p. 309 note 132.
5. For the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Lawrence S. Kaplan, Ronald D. Landa, and Edward J. Drea, *History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense*, vol. 5, *The McNamara Ascendancy: 1961–1965* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 2006), pp. 5–7. Interviews with both McNamara and Gilpatric are cited; the interview with the secretary took place on 24 July 1986. Also cited are interviews with Admiral Anderson by Walter S. Poole on 7 November 1978 and by Maurice Matlof and Roger Trask on 31 May 1984. For the JCS, Walter S. Poole, “Cuban Missile Crisis: How Well Did the Joint Chiefs of Staff Work?,” Naval History Center *Colloquium on Contemporary History Project*, available at www.history.navy.mil/. Also Walter S. Poole, “How Well Did the JCS Work?,” *Naval History* (Winter 1992). Poole, who interviewed both Gilpatric and Anderson, noted that there were “two totally irreconcilable versions of what took place.” For Anderson: Lawrence Korb, “George Whelan Anderson, Jr.,” in *The Chiefs of Naval Operations*, ed. Robert William Love, Jr. (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1980). Korb interviewed Admiral Anderson on 5 September 1968. “George Whelan Anderson,” *Arlington National Cemetery*, www.arlingtoncemetery.net/gwanders.htm.
6. Michael Dobbs, *One Minute to Midnight: Kennedy, Khrushchev and Castro on the Brink of Nuclear War* (New York: Random House, 2008).
7. Robert Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969).
8. Regrettably, those accounts include *American Cryptology during the Cold War, 1945–1989* (Washington, D.C.: National Security Agency, n.d.), book 2, document 3, p. 325. The entire six-book document is accessible in redacted form on the NSA website at www.nsa.gov/public_info/_files/cryptologic_histories/cold_war.pdf; it has also been posted more accessibly as “National Security Agency Releases History of Cold War Intelligence Activities,” Briefing Book 260, *George Washington University: National Security Archives*, www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB260/index.htm (or directly at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB260/nsa-3.pdf). See especially the introduction to that posting: Matthew W. Aid, “Commentary,” 14 November 2008. See also Dino Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball* (New York: Random House, 1991), pp. 389, 399.
9. The NSA account in *American Cryptology*, book 2, p. 329, draws mainly on Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, p. 399, augmented by a 1984 interview with Lt. Gen. Gordon A. Blake, USAF (Ret.). Brugioni’s account is un-sourced except for one CIA memo said to be in the JFK Library but that cannot be located by the library’s staff or the author. During the missile crisis Brugioni was the deputy chief of the National Photographic Interpretation Center, a busy, full-time job that involved no direct connection with IP. His sources would have been secondhand. During the crisis Lieutenant General Blake was the director of NSA and in that position would have been passed on reports of IP activities from his NSA subordinates unhappy with what they considered delays in the Navy’s confirmation of the meaning of the individual reports they were providing.

10. This article is drawn from a manuscript prepared for the history files of the Office of Naval Intelligence, covering the history of the Chief of Naval Operations IP for the period 1961–63, when the author was assigned to that organization. It is based on the author’s direct observation, on firsthand accounts of others assigned there, and on documentation created by the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV) at the time. The OPNAV documentation consists of, first, *The CNO Report on the Quarantine of Cuba* (an after-action report compiled from information in logs maintained by representatives of Flag Plot and Intelligence Plot—hereafter cited as *CNO Report*); and second, the CNO’s *Office Log* (apparently maintained contemporaneously by a petty officer in the CNO’s office). Both the author and Dobbs worked with the *CNO Report* and the *CNO Office Log*. Both of these documents are available at the Operational Archives Branch of the Naval History and Heritage Command, Washington, D.C. Additionally, the *CNO Report* is available online at *Naval History and Heritage Command*, www.history.navy.mil/. Dobbs posted the pertinent *Office Logs* for the period online at www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nsa/cuba_mis_cri/dobbs/oct%2024%20navy%20logs.pdf. Additionally, the information developed in the preparation of the original manuscript was compared with numerous published histories of the Cuban missile crisis. A number of differences were noted as to events in the CNO IP during the crisis between accounts derived from those primary sources and those of certain published histories. Several of the more important of those differences are highlighted by this article.
11. This was the first SOSUS detection during the crisis. That is indicated by a 26 October Commander in Chief, Atlantic message reporting the “Current ASW Status” and listing SOSUS contacts and visual confirmations on Soviet submarines since 22 October, suggesting that the 22nd was the date of the original contact. A Commander Oceans System Atlantic (COS) message of 27 October provided an “Appreciation of SOSUS Activity in Western Atlantic from 230001Z to 273100Z [*sic*, 271300Z]” that again suggests that SOSUS contacts began on 22 October. For copies of these messages, see “The Submarines of October,” endnotes 9 and 11, *George Washington University: National Security Archives*, www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB75/index2.htm. SOSUS contacts are lines of bearing. Lines of bearing from several stations are required to define a good “SOSUS probable area,” in which the submarine is, in order to direct aircraft to it. Nevertheless, SOSUS Naval Facility Grand Turks is usually credited with making this first contact.
12. *CNO Report*.
13. “President John F. Kennedy’s Speech Announcing the Quarantine against Cuba, October 22, 1962,” available at www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/kencuba.htm.
14. *CNO Report*.
15. Cdr. R. E. Bublitz, e-mail exchanges with the author, June 2009, February and March 2010.
16. *CNO Report*. The reference to “overflight” concerns the operations briefer’s discussion of plans for the first Navy low-level photo-rece missions by Light Photographic Squadron 62 flying F8U-1P Crusaders. See Norman Polmar and John D. Gresham, *DEFCON-2: Standing on the Brink of Nuclear War during the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley, 2006), pp. 139–44.
17. *American Cryptology*, book 2, document 3, p. 352.
18. These messages originated from the Naval Security Group station USN 22. Each contained all three elements. They were not received directly but were forwarded by NSA after being checked for validity. Some of these messages reporting ship positions on the 23rd are available at *National Security Agency*, www.nsa.gov/public_info/cuban_missile_crisis/23_october_soviet_vessels.pdf.
19. “McCone, Memorandum for the File: Executive Committee Meeting on 23 October 1962, 6:00 p.m.,” in *CIA Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis 1962*, ed. Mary S. McAuliffe (Washington, D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, 1992).
20. *CNO Report*.
21. See Anderson, interview (JFK Library).
22. By comparing the *CNO Report* for the 23rd with the *Office Log* for the 24th, it is evident that a meeting of the secretary and admiral did occur on the 23rd and that one could not have occurred on the 24th, because the

CNO left the Pentagon early that evening. The pertinent entries in the CNO's *Office Log* on the 24th are: "1855: CNO put out word for maximum relaxation in the office for the night because he didn't expect anything important was going to happen. 2035: CNO departed for the night. At 2120, Mr. McNamara called Admiral Ricketts, the duty CNO. . . . About 2145 Mr. McNamara and Mr. Gilpatric visited Intelligence Plot." Only Dobbs, *One Minute to Midnight*, p. 72, gets it right: "Most accounts of the missile crisis claim, for example, that the confrontation took place on Wednesday evening . . . —after the quarantine had already come into effect. But a study of Pentagon diaries and other records demonstrates that this is impossible. Anderson was not even in the building on Wednesday evening at the time he is alleged to have had his acrimonious encounter with McNamara."

23. Dino Brugioni, the only historian who offers an account of a meeting on the evening of the 23rd, records, "At 9:45 PM on October 23, Secretary McNamara was briefed in Flag Plot on the location of the Russian merchant ships and the location of blockading forces. He expressed particular interest in the location of the aircraft carriers *Enterprise* and *Essex* and their nine destroyer escorts" (*Eyeball to Eyeball*, p. 387). While Brugioni provides this information on what may have been the start of the 23 October meeting, he follows Abel's lead in describing the rest of that meeting, including additional details, as occurring on 24 October (pp. 415–17).
24. Capt. John R. Prisley, USN (Ret.), e-mail exchanges and interview with the author, June and October 2009. The author was present, standing nearby, during this encounter and can confirm that there were no raised voices and that the admiral, arguing his case, was not disrespectful. There is disagreement over what was said as the two left the room. See Anderson's JFK Library interview, in which he says that he made a remark intended to be humorous, and Gilpatric's recollection in Kaplan, Landa, and Drea, *History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense*, pp. 5–7, which indicates that the admiral used "some sort of strong expletive." With regard to Gilpatric's version, Poole says, "Anyone who has interviewed Admiral Anderson knows how vehemently he rejected this account." See Poole, "Cuban Missile Crisis."
25. *CNO Report*.
26. On 16 October, McNamara was advocating air strikes. See "20th Century #18 Cuban Missile Crisis: Transcript of a Meeting at the White House, Washington, October 16, 1962, 11:50," *Yale Law School: Avalon Project—Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy Project* [hereafter *Avalon Project*], www.avalon.law.yale.edu. The first indications of McNamara's change of position were apparent to CIA director McCone on 18 October. See "Memorandum for File, 19 October 1962," in *CIA Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis 1962*, ed. McAuliffe. For McNamara's support of the blockade and the president's decision, see "20th Century #34: Minutes of the 505th Meeting of the National Security Council, 20 October, 2:30–5:10 PM," *Avalon Project*.
27. For a summary of Admiral Anderson's presentation to the NSC, see "20th Century #38 Cuban Missile Crisis: Minutes of 506th Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, October 21, 1962, 2:30–4:50 PM," *Avalon Project*. See also Curtis A. Utz, *Cordon of Steel: U.S. Navy and the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Washington D.C.: Naval Historical Center, 1993), inside front cover, available at www.history.navy.mil/.
28. As noted above from *CNO Report*.
29. According to Korb ("George Whelan Anderson, Jr.," in *Chiefs of Naval Operations*, ed. Love, p. 328), "The conflict between Anderson and McNamara concerned the Navy's conduct of the blockade. Although Anderson enthusiastically supported the decision to create a blockade, he found three aspects of it disturbing. First, the blockade line was drawn too close to Cuba. . . . Second, the blockade was conducted in a manner that violated two sacred naval doctrines: going through the chain of command to convey orders, and the autonomy of the commander on the scene. . . . Third, the blockade was not enforced in accordance with standard naval procedures." See page 324 of the cited source for Anderson's views on the relationship of the office of the secretary and the services.
30. After the crisis, the IP handwritten briefers' notes, the daily message series known as *CNO Briefing Notes*, and other materials were

turned over to those preparing the official *CNO Report*, who, unfortunately, do not appear to have saved them upon completion of that effort. However, most CIA memos have been preserved by the agency and the JFK Library. Likewise, all of the Daily Intelligence Summaries of the Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet covering operational aspects of the quarantine are preserved in the operational archives at the Naval History and Heritage Command. As Dobbs found, “The U.S. Navy has done the best job of the four armed services in making its missile crisis records available to the public, despite the fact that its budget for historical research is only a fraction of the amount available to the Air Force. I spent a couple of weeks combing through the records at the Naval Historical Center [now the Navy History and Heritage Command], which include . . . daily intelligence summaries.” Unfortunately, these holdings do not include CNO IP intelligence summaries.

31. “Soviet Shipping to Cuba,” CIA memorandum, 24 October 1962, reporting the “known positions” of “Soviet Ships Currently Enroute to Cuba: As of 2100 [9 PM] 23 October 1962,” box 46, National Security Files, Countries: Cuba, Subjects: CIA Memoranda, 10/23/62–10/25/62, JFK Library. This memo was dated 24 October, indicating that it was not completed and signed until after midnight but also suggesting that no additional significant positions had been received at the last minute.
32. The NSG report of this DF position has not been located. But evidence of its existence can be inferred from a CIA memo in the JFK Library: “The Crisis USSR/Cuba; 26 October; Report of Soviet Ships to/from Cuba: Course Reversed.” It indicates that the “Reversed Time/Dist from Cuba” for *Kimovsk* was “10/232023Z” at “815 nm.” The irregular time suggests that this position was the result of a DF. At the time of intercept the course of the ship would have been unknown. Only on the 26th, by postanalysis of earlier and subsequent position reports, would it have indicated that the ship had “reversed.”
33. *American Cryptology*, book 2, p. 329.
34. None of these messages have been found by the author.
35. Aid, “Commentary.”
36. Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, p. 389.
37. Adm. B. R. Inman, USN (Ret.), was a lieutenant at NFOIO during that period. When asked whether IP and NFOIO would have been in contact that night, his reply was “almost certainly yes.” Admiral Inman, e-mail to author, 23 January 2010.
38. Brugioni, *Eyeball to Eyeball*, p. 389. He documents his account in endnote 16 of chapter 6 by citing a “Central Intelligence Agency Memorandum: The Crisis USSR/Cuba, October 25, 1962, John F. Kennedy Library.” Unfortunately, comprehensive searches of the forty pages of CIA Cuban missile crisis memos in National Security Files, Countries: Cuba, Subjects: CIA Memoranda, 10/23/62–10/25/62, box 46, at the JFK Library by the library staff and the author could not locate that memo. Nor is it included in *CIA Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis 1962*, ed. McAliffe. Nevertheless, according to Kenneth Absher, during the crisis Brugioni was chief of a unit responsible for providing all-source collateral information to photo interpreters and thus probably was involved in liaison with the CIA watch and would have been aware that this occurred. Kenneth Michael Absher, *Mind-Sets and Missiles: A First Hand Account of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Carlisle, Pa.: U.S. Army Strategic Studies Institute, September 2009), p. 38.
39. *American Cryptology*, book 2, p. 352. Dobbs, *One Minute to Midnight*, says that it was only after the turnaround that “NSA received urgent instructions to pipe its data directly into the White House Situation Room” (p. 91).
40. Rear Adm. Maurice H. Rindskopf, USN (Ret.), “Reflections of a URL Intelligence Subspecialist,” *Naval Intelligence Professionals Quarterly* (Fall 2004), p. 13. In an e-mail to the author in February 2010 he described his memory of this briefing as “vivid” and provided background.
41. In his research Dobbs uncovered these notes, and he has posted them at *National Security Archive*, www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nsa/cuba_mis_cri/dobbs/gilpatric%20/oct%20/24pdf.
42. Although this entry in the CNO’s office log was recorded as having been entered at 1040, it summarizes activity that occurred earlier, probably between 1000 and 1030.

43. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days*, pp. 68–72.
44. A review of the transcript of the tapes of this meeting suggests that McCone had not been expecting this information. The tapes are in the Scripps Library at the University of Virginia, at *Miller Center for Public Policy*, millercenter.org/scripps/archives/presidentialrecordings/kennedy1962/24_62. Because the White House Situation Room was staffed by CIA personnel, the staffer delivering the information from ONI naturally took the note to McCone. But the transcript of the tapes indicated that upon McCone's return to the room the president asked, "Where did you hear this?" and that McCone replied, "From ONI."
45. Abel, *Missile Crisis*, p. 152; Allison, *Essence of Decision*, p. 131.
46. See Dobbs's analysis and plot, *One Minute to Midnight*, pp. 88–91. Dobbs says, "This is the first book to use archival evidence to plot the actual positions of Soviet and American ships on the morning of October 24, when Dean Rusk spoke of the two sides coming 'eyeball to eyeball'" (p. xiv). He also says, "The mistaken notion that Soviet ships turned around at the last moment in a tense battle of wills between Kennedy and Khrushchev has lingered for decades. The 'eyeball to eyeball' imagery served the political interests of the Kennedy brothers emphasizing their courage and coolness at a decisive moment in history" (p. 88). Finally, he says, "The myth of the 'eyeball to eyeball' moment persisted because previous historians of the missile crisis failed to use those records to plot the actual positions of Soviet ships on the morning of Wednesday, October 24" (p. 91).
47. Dobbs, *One Minute to Midnight*. "ExComm members were disturbed by the lack of real-time information. McNamara in particular, felt the Navy should have shared its data hours earlier, even though some of it was ambiguous. He had visited Flag Plot before going to the White House for the ExComm meeting, but intelligence officers had termed the early reports of course changes 'inconclusive' and had not bothered to inform him" (pp. 89–90). Dobbs adds, "Communications intercepts started arriving direct from the National Security Agency following complaints from Kennedy and McNamara about the delay in reporting the turnaround of Soviet ships" (p. 108).
48. According to the *CNO Report*, at "about noon, Mr. McNamara returned to Flag Plot for a briefing on the information received concerning the Russian ships reversing course." But, according to the *CNO Office Log*, at that time the CNO was in his office, first with General Taylor and then with the DNI waiting to receive a draft of an intelligence message, which he then took to the Secretary of the Navy. At 1528, the *Office Log* indicates, the secretary arrived in Flag Plot and Vice Admiral Griffin went to meet him. At the time Admiral Anderson was in a JCS meeting. Later in the evening the *Log* shows that the CNO left for home at 1818; the *CNO Report* shows that Secretaries McNamara and Gilpatric did not visit IP until 2124.
49. While the secretary learned of the turnaround at the White House around 1030, the *CNO Office Log* shows that the admiral heard of it, by phone from General Taylor, only at 1043, because he had been walking back to his office from the JCS meeting in response to the report of the submarine contact, to be on hand in Flag Plot.



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