

NYTimes  
**Owners Deny Seized Freighter Had Any Secret Mission**

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Special to The New York Times

MENLO PARK, N.J., May 16 —The owners of the American merchant ship Mayagüez said categorically today that the vessel, seized by Cambodian gunboats on Monday and freed last night by American marines, contained "no arms, no ammunition, no hazardous or secret cargo of any type."

Michael R. McEvoy, chairman of the board of Sea-Land Service, Inc., which owns the Mayagüez, insisted repeatedly during a news conference at the company's headquarters here, that neither the ship nor its crew was involved in anything other than the "peaceful mission of trading with friendly nations."

He described as "ludicrous" allegations that the Mayagüez was a "spy ship" and speculation that the company was "under charter to or in some way working for the Central Intelligence Agency."

He said that the Mayagüez would be "opened to the world" when it arrives in Singapore on Saturday.

"The world will see this

ship, its cargo and its men," Mr. McEvoy declared. "They will see that Sea-land and its employees were not involved in any spying activities."

Asked at least twice whether he could "state categorically" that the Mayagüez was not involved in "some Government mission," spying or otherwise, Mr. McEvoy replied:

"The mission of the ship was purely peaceful. The extension of trade with friendly nations was its only mission."

The ship's contents, insured for about \$5-million, Mr. McEvoy said, consisted of 107 containers of routine commercial cargo, 77 containers of military cargo and 90 empty containers.

The commercial goods ranged from aspirin tablets to food, he said, while the military cargo was broken down as follows: two containers of mail; 26 of machine parts, supplies and replacement equipment; three of subsistence supplies, including refrigerated cargo; eight of additional commissary supplies, and 38 of liquor, beer, soft drinks and other post-exchange items.

Mr. McEvoy said the com-

pany was "very dismayed and discouraged" by charges that the ship was engaged in espionage.

"It was a very peaceful ship," he declared repeatedly.

Mr. McEvoy also said at the news conference, conducted at the company's offices of the Executive Plaza Building here, that the Mayagüez was now enroute to Singapore.

#### Exchange of Messages

A message received here this morning from Capt. Charles T. Miller, the Mayagüez's commanding officer, described the crew as "alive and well" and estimated that the vessel would arrive in Singapore at 3 P.M. Saturday, local time, after a journey of 46 hours.

Company officers immediately radioed back:

"Your conduct and that of the crew is in the highest tradition of the American merchant marine."

The crew was also told that Sea-Land and R. J. Reynolds Industries, Inc., the parent company, would fly home any members that wanted to join their families after their ordeal.

Mr. McEvoy said that the company had not entered the Government's policy-making process during the ship's captivity and had not put pressure on Washington to take steps on behalf of the captured Mayagüez.

R. J. Reynolds officials nevertheless applauded President Ford's action in dispatching United States marines to recover the ship.

In a telegram to President Ford, Colin Stokes, board chairman of R. J. Reynolds Industries, and J. Paul Sticht, president, said:

"We are very grateful for your action in recovering the crew of our ship, Mayagüez, and we mourn the loss of our men in our armed forces who sacrificed their lives in this operation. We are seeking the names of those families. We are also attempting through the Defense Department to fly a new crew at our expense to the ship and return the ship's crew to their families as soon as possible. For the personnel of our Sea-Land subsidiary and ourselves, we are very grateful to you and our Government."

5-16-75