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DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
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MARITIME RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

As part of U.S. preparation for contingency operations, the following maritime rules of engagement have been issued to U.S. military commanders for their guidance should a future decision be made to initiate reprisal actions at sea against USSR and GDR shipping:

"PART I - GENERAL

1. Use minimum force required to accomplish mission assigned. Reprisal actions must be completely and successfully consummated with use of minimum force required to accomplish missions assigned. In this connection, a specific reprisal action shall not be initiated if it is obvious from the start that the unit against which the action is contemplated has the capability of taking successful evasive action.
2. Be alert and prepared for hostile reaction.
3. Ensure effective communications. Make SITREPS at Operational Immediate precedence, to immediate Operational Commander, appropriate Unified Commander and JCS.
4. Take action in a manner to minimize personnel casualties and render all possible assistance to personnel in distress.
5. Minimize interference with other shipping.
6. Record by all feasible means, including photography and voice recorders, the sequence of events in any reprisal action.
7. Nothing in these rules shall be construed as preventing any responsible commander from taking such action as may be necessary to defend his command.
8. Be prepared to take increasingly severe measures to enforce reprisal actions. In so doing, and recognizing language difficulties, allow sufficient time between actions for Soviet/GDR ship masters to realize full consequence for failures to respond properly to reprisal actions.
9. Take offensive action against enemy surface ships and aircraft in the immediate area of operations only as necessary to counter direct interference with carrying out assigned level of military actions.
10. Immediate pursuit of an enemy aircraft, who has committed a hostile act, is authorized up to Soviet Bloc territory.

11. Instructions

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11. Instructions for visit and search, boarding, and control crew in accordance with Naval Warfare Publication.

PART II - SPECIFIC REPRISAL ACTION

1. Close Surveillance

a. Harassment action, while keeping Soviet/GDR shipping under close surveillance, will be designed to annoy only and should involve no damage to property or personnel casualties.

2. Stopping of Ships for Visit and Search

a. Use all available communication means to signify intent to stop ship: International Code signals, flag hoists, blinking light, loudspeaker, radio, etc.

b. This failing, warning shot across bows may be used.

c. This failing, use minimum force required to cause ship to stop and submit to visit and search.

3. Diversion of Shipping

a. Diversion instructions shall be at the discretion of the reprisal force commander.

b. Ensure that ship responds to diversion as directed.

c. If ship fails to respond, stop ship, board, and declare intent to sequester ship by use of force.

4. Seizure of Ships

a. In the seizure of ships, the objective is to take these ships to a designated port without damage. The optimum would be to escort ships to port. If this cannot be done, the following actions are authorized:

(1) Put boarding party aboard to supervise ship's crew.

(2) Forceful boarding and control of ship's operation.

b. The above failing, destroy.

5. Destruction

a. If necessary to destroy, give ample warning of intentions to permit sufficient time for debarkation of ship's crew and passengers. Assist as operational conditions permit.

Part III -

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PART III - PURPOSE AND IMPLEMENTATION

1. Implementation of the preceding rules of engagement, if authorized, will be in pursuance of US politico-military strategy in current Berlin crisis. This strategy which has been approved at the highest levels, provides for the coordinated application of the various military as well as non-military techniques available to the US, against the Soviet Union, in a way which will force that government to enter into negotiations within a frame of reference acceptable to the US. Accordingly a carefully controlled use of progressively stern measures are visualized. You will therefore specifically be authorized by higher level authority to implement the actions contemplated above, in total or in part, as the situation warrants. Finally, while these instructions are limited to Soviet and GDR shipping, you should anticipate the probability of future expansion to cover Soviet bloc as well as other shipping.

2. Scene of action commander keep appropriate commanders advised.

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