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# REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

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## System To Warn U.S. Mariners Of Potential Political/Military Hazards: S.S. Mayaguez, A Case Study

Departments of State,  
Defense, and Commerce

A system to warn mariners concerning potential political/military hazards affecting U.S. shipping was reestablished in 1948. State Department has the primary responsibility for issuing special warnings.

More than 19 hours elapsed after Government agencies in Washington, D.C., learned of the S.S. Mayaguez seizure before mariners were advised to avoid the area. This delay was partially caused by a failure of State Department activities to promptly inform the office responsible for issuing special warnings. The seizure followed earlier incidents in the same general area.

Actions have been taken to identify problems and implement corrective measures. This report contains recommendations for further improving the warning system.

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COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

B-133001

The Honorable Dante B. Fascell  
Chairman, Subcommittee on International  
Political and Military Affairs  
Committee on International Relations  
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Your letter of June 9, 1975, asked us to review the system for warning U.S. mariners of potential political and military hazards and to discuss the system as it related to the Mayaguez incident.

The report notes that following the Mayaguez seizure some actions were taken to improve the system. Also included are our recommendations for further improving the effectiveness of the warning system. Therefore, as arranged with your Subcommittee staff, we will distribute the report to the Departments of State, Commerce, and Defense, other congressional committees; and other interested parties.

The Departments of State, Commerce, and Defense were provided the opportunity to comment on a draft of this report. The Departments of State and Commerce responded in writing, and the Department of Defense provided verbal comments. All comments were considered in preparing the final report.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Thomas A. Stearns".

Comptroller General  
of the United States

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ABBREVIATIONS

CRITIC      A message containing urgent intelligence information

DMAHC      Defense Mapping Agency Hydrographic Center

GAO         General Accounting Office

HYDRO  
LANTS/  
HYDRO-  
PACS        Radio navigational warnings broadcast in the  
                 Atlantic and Pacific Ocean areas

INR         Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department  
                 of State

NMCC        National Military Command Center

COMPTROLLER GENERAL'S REPORT  
TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL  
AND MILITARY AFFAIRS  
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL  
RELATIONS  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SYSTEM TO WARN U.S. MARINERS  
OF POTENTIAL POLITICAL/  
MILITARY HAZARDS:  
S.S. MAYAGUEZ, A CASE STUDY  
Departments of State, Defense,  
and Commerce

D I G E S T

The U.S. Government operates a radio system to broadcast to mariners regular navigational warnings and special warnings of matters affecting U.S. shipping. The Defense Mapping Agency has primary responsibility for issuing navigational warnings.

The State Department has primary responsibility for issuing special warnings although other Federal agencies may draft a special warning and request issuance.

Special warnings are used to disseminate to mariners political/military information affecting U.S. shipping and foreign maritime policy. Since reintroduction of special warnings in 1948, 45 plus 1 update have been issued. (See pp. 2 and 3.)

The S.S. Mayaguez was fired on and boarded by Cambodian armed forces on May 12, 1975. Mariners were not advised to avoid the area until more than 19 hours after Government agencies in Washington, D.C., learned of the seizure.

This delay can be attributed, in part, to the failure of various activities within State to promptly inform its Maritime Affairs office about the seizure. (See pp. 6 to 8.)

Incidents occurred off the Cambodian coast, prior to the Mayaguez seizure, but were not brought to the attention of State's Maritime Affairs office until after the Mayaguez seizure. (See pp. 10 to 11.) The Maritime Affairs office had not adequately informed other State Department activities and other

Government departments of the type of situation which should be brought to its attention. (See pp. 4 and 8.)

There are two broadcasts each day, but the warning system does not assure the timely receipt of information because U.S. merchant mariners are not required to monitor the broadcasts. (See p. 5.)

Following the Mayaguez seizure, actions were taken to identify weaknesses in the warning system and to implement corrective measures. (See p. 13 and 14.) GAO believes there is need to further institutionalize and formalize the warning system to strengthen its future effectiveness.

The Secretary of State should:

- Delegate specific responsibility for issuing special warnings to the Maritime Affairs office.
- Insure that internal guidelines are further developed to set forth specific procedures to be followed by Maritime Affairs in issuing or clearing for issuance special warnings.
- Insure that State's regional bureaus have a clear understanding of their responsibilities in promptly informing Maritime Affairs of political/military events affecting U.S. shipping and foreign maritime policy.
- Make sure that the Department's Bureau for Intelligence and Research keeps Maritime Affairs fully apprised of all intelligence matters affecting U.S. shipping.
- Enter into interagency agreements containing the above criteria and guidelines and the appropriate responsibilities.
- Direct that the Maritime Affairs office, after learning of political/military events affecting U.S. shipping, use the next available broadcast to alert mariners to the potential hazards.

The Secretaries of State and Commerce should jointly encourage U.S. steamship owners/operators to:

- Require their vessels to monitor at least one U.S. hydrographic broadcast each day.
- Supplement the broadcast of a U.S. special warning by transmitting the warning to their vessels which may be near the critical area. (See pp. 16 and 17.)

Both State and Defense Departments agreed there should be formal interagency agreements covering special warnings and State said it had taken action to prepare such an agreement.

State Department says GAO recommendations regarding U.S. steamship owners/operators are well taken but believes such actions fall within the purview of the Commerce Department and the Defense Mapping Agency. GAO believes that, because of the foreign maritime policy implications of U.S. shipping, the State Department should take an active part in encouraging the steamship companies to implement the suggested measures. (See pp. 17 to 19.)

## CHAPTER 1

### RADIO NAVIGATIONAL WARNINGS

The United States maintains a system for broadcasting long-range-radio hydrographic warnings to U.S. mariners on the high seas to give them navigational safety information as quickly as possible. There are two general types of warnings: (1) navigational warnings, which contain such information as changes in buoys, lights, and other navigational aids; floating dangers; and naval operations and (2) special warnings, which are more political/military in nature and include such things as declarations of hostilities and territorial sea claims. The Defense Mapping Agency Hydrographic Center (DMAHC) is responsible for originating and issuing navigational warnings.

The Department of State has the primary responsibility for issuing or approving the issuance of special warnings when information indicates that such warning may be justified. This responsibility, however, has not been formalized in any interagency agreement, and there are no written criteria and guidelines setting forth the conditions and circumstances which could warrant issuance of a special warning.

#### WARNING SYSTEM

Radio navigational warnings for the Atlantic Ocean, Mediterranean Sea, and contiguous areas are called HYDROLANTS. Radio warnings for the Pacific Ocean and East Asia and contiguous waters are called HYDROPACS. (See app. I.) The warnings are broadcast from U.S. naval radio stations in the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans by radiotelegraph to U.S.-flag merchant vessels and by radioteletype to U.S. naval vessels. Radio stations for Atlantic broadcasts are located in Norfolk, Virginia; Londonderry, Northern Ireland; Reykjavik, Iceland; and Thurso, Scotland. Radio stations for Pacific broadcasts are located in San Francisco, California; Honolulu, Hawaii; Guam; San Miguel, the Philippines; and Yokosuka, Japan.

Radiotelegraph broadcasts are made to merchant vessels twice daily at about 12:30 p.m. and 12:30 a.m. eastern daylight time, (1630 and 0430 Greenwich mean time). The time varies somewhat between stations due to the particular time zones the stations are broadcasting into. Specific broadcast times and frequencies for each station are contained in such publications as DMAHC's Radio Navigational Aids and the Naval Telecommunications Command's Naval Telecommunications Procedures. Each navigational warning (HYDROPAC



or HYDROLANT) is broadcast twice after it is received by the radio station, once on each of the next two scheduled broadcasts.

### SPECIAL WARNINGS

Special warnings are originated as a necessary supplement to regular navigational warnings. They are used to disseminate to all mariners information which is both political and maritime in nature and which may affect U.S. shipping and foreign maritime policy. Thus, these warnings inform U.S. mariners of political/military hazards and, when issued, are broadcast over both the HYDROLANT and HYDROPAC systems together with navigational warnings.

Special warnings are numbered consecutively irrespective of the year issued. Following initial broadcast, they are published in DMAHC's weekly Notice to Mariners and all editions of its Daily Memorandum. The texts of all special warnings still in effect are reprinted in the first January issue of the Notice to Mariners, and a numerical listing of those in effect is printed weekly in the Notice to Mariners.

### Genesis of special warnings

When Germany declared a blockade around England in 1939, the U.S. Government found it needed to disseminate certain official public announcements to all ships at sea but had no method for doing so. Officials from the State and Navy Departments and the Maritime Administration met to discuss the problem. Out of this meeting grew the concept for special warnings. It was decided that such warnings would cover political information proclamations of the United States and foreign governments which the State Department wanted to disseminate to all U.S. ships, but primarily those at sea. The results of this meeting, however, were not well documented. According to the State Department, the record is not clear as to what types of political developments or statements would be made subjects of special warnings. State was responsible for message content and, therefore, for drafting the message text, which was to be approved by the Office of Naval Operations and sent by the Navy's Hydrographic Office 1/ on its navigational warning broadcasts. After the end of World War II, issuance of special warnings was stopped.

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1/This office was the predecessor to DMAHC, which was established on July 1, 1972.

In early 1948 the State Department determined that such a system was still required and requested that special warning messages be reinstated. The reintroduction was made on May 27, 1948, with the same basic ground rules established in 1939.

#### Frequency of special warnings

Only 45 special warnings and 1 special warning update have been issued since reinstatement of the system was announced on May 27, 1948, with the broadcast of special warning 1. (See app. II.) Seven special warnings and the single special warning update remained in effect as of December 31, 1975.

Special warnings have generally tended to cluster around significant political/military events. For instance:

- On May 27 and 28, 1948, six special warnings were issued regarding actions of various Middle East countries following Israel's proclamation of independence. Three special warnings were subsequently issued which canceled the six special warnings.
- Between June 24, 1949, and February 10, 1950, five special warnings were issued pertaining to announcements and actions of the Chinese Government.
- In 1962 five special warnings were issued dealing with U.S. quarantine of offensive military equipment under shipment to Cuba.

#### RESPONSIBILITY FOR ISSUING WARNINGS

Due to the political sensitivity of special warnings, the State Department, through its Office of Maritime Affairs, has primary responsibility for issuing or approving the issuance of special warnings although there is no specific delegation of such responsibility. Other Federal agencies may, however, request or draft the text of a special warning. For example, the Chief of Naval Operations, acting for the Defense Department, normally prepares special warnings concerning military matters while the Treasury Department is responsible for items involving contraband or smuggling activity and the Commerce Department for items affecting U.S. foreign trade. The State Department retains responsibility for clearing such special warnings and authorizing their release for broadcast, although it acknowledges there have been instances where State clearance was not obtained before a special warning was issued.

Although it seems to be generally understood that State's Maritime Affairs office has this overall responsibility, it

has not been formalized in any interagency agreement or memorandum of understanding. In fact, with each periodic personnel change in the Maritime Affairs office, it has been necessary for DMAHC to brief the new personnel on the functions of DMAHC and operation of the navigational and special warning system.

We also noted that State had not developed written guidelines and instructions concerning its special warnings responsibilities. The only statement outlining procedures for issuing special warnings was, according to State, contained in a February 1972 internal memorandum. (See pp. 40 and 41.) The memorandum, issued to State's four geographic bureaus, provided some general guidance on procedures for requesting issuance of a special warning. The memorandum, however, did not assign ultimate responsibility within State for the preparation and release of a special warning, nor did it provide for centralized collection of information on political/military events affecting U.S. shipping and foreign maritime policy.

DMAHC has primary responsibility for originating and issuing navigational warnings. These warnings normally deal with navigational safety matters, such as buoys and lights. On occasion, however, some HYDROLANT/HYDROPAC messages have contained political/military information. For example, in 1973 a navigational warning was issued which advised that the right of innocent passage might not be recognized and vessels might be detained if they entered Cuban territorial waters within 3 miles of Cuba's coast. Also, during the 1973 Israeli-Egyptian conflict, HYDROLANT messages were issued to advise mariners of several proclamations by Middle East governments concerning entry and safety in their territorial waters, but no special warning was issued. During the 1967 Israeli-Egyptian conflict no navigational or special warning was issued despite the fact that shipping in the area was endangered.

It appears that some political/military incidents may warrant a navigational rather than a special warning. State and DMAHC, however, have no written criteria and guidance for determining when an incident warrants a special warning or a HYDROLANT/HYDROPAC message.

#### RECEIPT OF WARNINGS

The Military Sealift Command requires that ships which it owns or has under contract copy 1/ at least one hydrographic

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1/The messages are in Morse Code and must be written down so that the text may be recorded.

broadcast daily. If it is in port, the vessel normally obtains copies of broadcasts from the local communications center.

U.S. merchant vessels not under the control of Sealift Command are not required to monitor, copy, or acknowledge receipt of U.S. hydrographic broadcasts to insure timely receipt of information. This matter is generally left to the ship operators/owners and vessel captains. A recent Maritime Administration survey of five U.S.-flag carriers revealed that only two companies specifically required their vessels to copy DMAHC's hydrographic broadcasts. DMAHC estimates that only about 50 percent of the U.S.-flag merchant fleet receives its navigational warning messages. As for the S.S. Mayaguez, its radioman monitored navigational information broadcast by a British radio station in Hong Kong.

### CONCLUSIONS

Our review of the U.S. navigational warning system showed that:

- The responsibility for issuing special warnings had not been formalized in any type of interagency agreement.
- There were no clear and formalized criteria and guidelines setting forth the conditions and circumstances which could necessitate issuance of a special warning.
- State had no written internal instructions or guidelines clarifying specific roles and responsibilities regarding special warnings and the procedures to be followed in issuing special warnings.

Furthermore, the current navigational warning system does not insure the timely receipt of information by U.S. mariners because they are not required to monitor any of the twice daily hydrographic broadcasts nor to acknowledge receipt of special warnings.

### AGENCY COMMENTS

The State Department agreed that the responsibility for issuing special warnings had not been formalized. In commenting on the matter of internal guidelines and instructions, State cited the February 1972 internal memorandum discussed on page 4 but acknowledged that it was not possible to determine whether the memorandum was definitive enough in its instructions.

## CHAPTER 2

### ISSUANCE OF SPECIAL WARNING 45

At about 3:18 a.m. <sup>1/</sup> on May 12, 1975, the S.S. Mayaguez was fired on and boarded by Cambodian armed forces approximately 6-1/2 nautical miles from the Cambodian island of Poulo Wai. The ship's radio officer sent several mayday calls, which gave the vessel's position and stated that it was proceeding to an unknown Cambodian port. The mayday was picked up locally, and a message about the seizure was received in the Washington, D.C.; area at approximately 5:12 a.m. More than 19 hours after receipt of this message in Washington, special warning 45 advising mariners to avoid the area of seizure was broadcast. The warning stated:

"SHIPPING IS ADVISED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE TO REMAIN MORE THAN 35 NAUTICAL MILES OFF THE COAST OF CAMBODIA AND MORE THAN 20 NAUTICAL MILES OFF THE COAST OF VIETNAM INCLUDING OFFLYING ISLANDS. RECENT INCIDENTS HAVE BEEN REPORTED OF FIRING ON, STOPPING AND DETENTION OF SHIPS WITHIN WATERS CLAIMED BY CAMBODIA, PARTICULARLY IN VICINITY OF POULO WAI ISLAND. THIS WARNING IN NO WAY SHOULD BE CONSTRUED AS UNITED STATES RECOGNITION OF CAMBODIAN OR VIETNAMESE TERRITORIAL SEA CLAIMS OR AS DEROGATION OF THE RIGHT OF INNOCENT PASSAGE FOR UNITED STATES FLAG VESSELS, OR DEROGATION OF THE FREEDOM OF THE HIGH SEAS."

At the time the Mayaguez was seized, various offices within the State and Defense Departments knew of prior incidents in which Cambodian forces had fired on or detained merchant vessels of other nations. However, the offices responsible for issuing special and navigational warnings were not informed, and U.S. mariners were not alerted to the potential hazards in the area until after the Mayaguez was seized.

#### RECEIPT OF INFORMATION BY STATE

The State Department maintains two 24-hour-watch centers to bring substantive matters to the attention of appropriate State officials as quickly as possible and to serve as liaison with operations centers of other Government agencies. State's Operations Center maintains one watch and has the primary responsibility for alerting State officials on all substantive matters coming to its attention

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<sup>1/</sup>All times are given in eastern daylight time.

except intelligence source material. State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) maintains the second watch and serves as State's primary link with the U.S. intelligence community. The INR practice was to alert State officials outside INR only on intelligence source material.

One of the Mayaguez's mayday messages was received by an employee of an oil exploration company in Indonesia who informed the American Embassy in Jakarta. The Embassy, in turn, informed Washington of the seizure about 5:03 a.m. on May 12, 1975, in a CRITIC (urgent intelligence information) message. Messages designated CRITIC are routed through the intelligence communications network directly to the National Security Agency and from there to various intelligence activities. The INR watch received Jakarta's initial CRITIC message about 5:12 a.m.

INR instructions provide for the officer on duty to immediately inform State's Operations Center watch officer of all incoming CRITICs. The INR watch officer erroneously assumed that, since the message originated from a U.S. Embassy, the Operations Center had also received a copy and therefore took no action. In accordance with standard procedures, the National Security Agency called the INR watch about 5:20 a.m. calling its attention to the CRITIC and a followup message. However, the INR watch still did not alert the Operations Center.

The National Military Command Center called the military representative at State's Operations Center about 6:00 a.m. and alerted him to the existence of the CRITIC messages. Since the Operations Center had not received them, the Command Center transmitted them via long-distance xerography. Upon receiving the copies, the Operations Center alerted the duty officer of State's Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs at 6:15 a.m. and made copies of the messages available for early morning pickup by State's Offices of the Secretary, Executive Secretariat, Deputy Secretary, Political Affairs, and East Asia. According to State, the item was also included in the telegraphic portion of the Secretary's morning summary.

The East Asia bureau's duty officer, in turn, alerted the country director for Cambodia at 6:35 a.m. The country director was unable to reach his counterpart in Defense's International Security Affairs office immediately but spoke with Defense on the telephone at 7:30 a.m. Following his arrival at State, the country director briefed a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the East Asia bureau on the CRITIC messages. This official, in turn, discussed the matter with his counterpart at Defense and briefed the

principal State official who would be representing East Asia at the Secretary's 8:00 a.m. staff meeting.

During this entire process, State's Maritime Affairs office was not alerted to the seizure because neither the Operations Center nor INR had been previously informed that the office should be informed of such matters.

#### OFFICE OF MARITIME AFFAIRS NOTIFIED

Officials in the Maritime Affairs office first learned of the Mayaguez seizure about 9:15 a.m. when the Cambodia country director called to inform them and to ask for certain information about the Mayaguez. A Maritime Affairs official called a local office of Sea-Land Service, Inc., which owned the vessel; obtained such information as crew size, type of cargo, and destination; and passed it to the country director. At that time, the country director asked whether any warning notice had been sent to mariners, since the seizure followed two previous incidents in the same general area. The Maritime Affairs official said his office had not issued a warning because this was the first notice they had concerning problems off the Cambodian coast.

The Maritime Affairs official then checked with personnel at DMAHC between 9:00 and 10:00 a.m. and was told that DMAHC had not issued any type of warning. He then discussed the matter further with the country director, and they decided that the Maritime Affairs office should prepare a warning message.

#### DMAHC AND MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND NOTIFIED

Officials at DMAHC first learned of the Mayaguez seizure when a Military Sealift Command official who had previously worked at DMAHC called about 9:00 a.m. and asked if they knew of the seizure and whether DMAHC had put out a warning. The Sealift Command official was told that the incident was in the nature of a special warning and was referred to specific individuals in the Ocean Affairs Branch of the Chief of Naval Operations (hereinafter referred to as Naval Operations) and State's Maritime Affairs office.

The Military Sealift Command first learned of the seizure at 7:15 a.m., when an officer from National Military Command Center called Sealift's Command and Control Center and said the Mayaguez had been fired on and boarded; however, he would not cite the information source. Prior to this, someone from the National Military Command Center had called the Sealift Command at 5:30 a.m. and asked if it had the Mayaguez on time charter but would not say

why he wanted the information. As previously noted, the Military Sealift Command called DMAHC at 9:00 a.m., inquiring about putting out a warning to mariners, and subsequently called Ocean Affairs Branch.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIAL WARNING TEXT

Sometime after 10:00 a.m., a person from the Maritime Affairs office called Naval Operations's Ocean Affairs Branch and asked for suggested language for a warning message. The caller was referred to an official at DMAHC who had already told Ocean Affairs Branch that DMAHC was working on a navigational warning message draft.

Prior to this, DMAHC had checked on both the claimed ownership of Poulo Wai, near where the seizure occurred, and on territorial sea claims of Cambodia and Vietnam. Based on this information, DMAHC's draft message advised mariners to stay more than 12 nautical miles off the coasts of Cambodia and Vietnam, including offlying islands. According to DMAHC, the draft message was ready by 10:30 a.m.--in time to be issued as a HYDROPAC on the 12:30 p.m. hydrographic broadcast if DMAHC were to have been advised to do so. DMAHC modeled its draft message after the wording used in special warning 35.

This warning advised mariners of several recent ship detentions by the Somali Government and advised them to exercise extreme caution in waters off Somali. The warning also included a statement that it should not be construed as U.S. recognition of Somali's 12-mile territorial sea claim.

A Maritime Affairs official called DMAHC between 11:00 a.m. and noon and asked for its thoughts on the basic message, and DMAHC provided its draft. The draft text, as then written, was for 12 nautical miles, the territorial limit claimed by the former Cambodian Government. The Maritime Affairs official then discussed the text with the Cambodia country director, and it was decided that the suggested distance for remaining offshore should be 20 nautical miles, which would provide a safety factor for vessels sailing through the area and leave adequate navigational room. The Maritime Affairs official then called Naval Operation's Ocean Affairs Branch, read the draft text, and requested the necessary Defense Department clearances. The Maritime Affairs official spoke again with the Cambodia country director who suggested they hold up release of the message until they knew the results of the National Security Council meeting. At this point they had already missed the noon hydrographic broadcast.



Some time in the early afternoon of May 12, a Maritime Affairs official cleared the message with the National Security Council's Interagency Task Force on the Law of the Sea. The Task Force suggested that a phrase referring to derogation of the freedom of the high seas be added to the final sentence of the text. The Maritime Affairs official then cleared the message text with State's Legal Advisor office.

At about 4:30 p.m., the Ocean Affairs Branch informed the Maritime Affairs office that it had learned the Cambodians were apparently making exaggerated territorial sea claims, and it suggested staying 35 nautical miles off the Cambodian coast. The 20 nautical mile limit previously established for the Vietnamese coast was not changed.

By 6:30 p.m., the final drafting and clearances had been completed and at that time the Maritime Affairs official telephoned DMAHC and read the message text. The DMAHC official typed the message, verified it with Maritime Affairs, and carried it to the Naval Oceanographic Office communications center 1/ at 7:05 p.m. The center transmitted the message about 9:27 p.m. to HYDROPAC radio stations and about 10:23 p.m. to HYDROLANT stations. This was in time to make the hydrographic warning broadcast at about 12:30 a.m. although it was more than 21 hours after the Mayaguez was seized. State's communications center received its copy of the HYDROLANT message about 10:25 p.m. (See app. III.)

#### PRIOR INCIDENTS

Following the Mayaguez seizure, numerous allegations by news media claimed that the U.S. Government had been aware of problems encountered by merchant vessels off the Cambodian coast. Particular references were made to the firing on and pursuit of a South Korean vessel and the boarding and detention of a Panamanian vessel.

These particular incidents did occur and certain agencies within the U.S. Government did know of them before the Mayaguez seizure. However, the information was not brought to the attention of the Maritime Affairs office, Ocean Affairs Branch, and DMAHC, which have key roles in alerting mariners to political/military hazards, until after the Mayaguez was seized.

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1/The communications center is colocated with DMAHC and processes the outgoing messages for it since DMAHC has no communications center.

### Korean vessel

On Sunday, May 4, 1975, at 6:00 a.m., State's Operations Center received a phone call from the American Embassy in Korea inquiring about a Defense Department report concerning the possible capture of a South Korean vessel by a Communist ship. The Embassy had received a telephone call from a Korean Government official asking for U.S. Government assistance in rescuing the vessel. The Embassy asked that State's Korea country director be alerted to the situation.

The Operations Center called the country director at 9:20 a.m., and he in turn alerted a principal official of State's East Asia Bureau. At about 12:17 p.m., the Operations Center learned through military channels that the Korean ship had escaped the pursuing vessel and was apparently headed for a different port and, therefore, the case was considered closed.

At the time of this incident, State's Operations Center had not been instructed to alert the Maritime Affairs office concerning such events. Nor was the Korea country director aware of the Maritime Affairs office's responsibility for issuing special warnings to mariners and, therefore, of its implicit need to receive information on political/military hazards affecting U.S. mariners.

On May 5 the Foreign Broadcast Information Service wire service carried a report about the shelling by what was apparently a Communist boat. This information was received by the Operations Center but was not made available to the Maritime Affairs office. State told us that the information was reported in the INR afternoon summary on May 5, but Maritime Affairs was not briefed because INR was not aware of Maritime Affairs' responsibility for issuing special warnings.

### Panamanian vessel

On May 7 a Panamanian vessel en route to Thailand from Singapore was seized by Cambodian Communists and, according to public news accounts, was released about 36 hours later. This information was available within the U.S. intelligence community but apparently was not made available to the Maritime Affairs office and DMAHC until after the Mayaguez seizure.

### CONCLUSIONS

The decision to issue a warning to U.S. mariners concerning political/military hazards at sea is, to a large extent, a matter of judgment on the part of responsible officials in the State Department and in Naval Operations.

Such a decision depends on the timely availability of all relevant information pertaining to the situation. We believe that, if the offices responsible for issuing navigational and special warnings to U.S. mariners had known of the prior incidents and the seriousness of those incidents, some type of warning would have been issued before the Mayaguez seizure.

We believe that, given the responsibilities associated with issuing a special warning as discussed in chapter 1, the State Department should have responded in a more timely manner by issuing a navigational or special warning on the May 12 12:30 p.m. hydrographic broadcast rather than 12 hours later. As the situation became more clearly understood, State could have followed its initial warning or alert with more specific information.

#### AGENCY COMMENTS

State Department agrees that, if the appropriate responsible offices had known of the prior incidents, some type of warning would have been issued before the Mayaguez was seized.

Regarding the timeliness of issuing a warning following the seizure, State said the need to clear and coordinate the special warning with agencies involved, including the highest levels of the National Security Council, precluded its issuance on the 12:30 p.m. May 12 hydrographic broadcast. Undoubtedly certain clearance procedures are necessary before issuing a special warning, but we believe State's position further supports our conclusion that some type of advisory warning should have been issued on the 12:30 p.m. broadcast. Following this, there was ample opportunity to broadcast additional information as the situation clarified itself. In addition, we have no evidence that they cleared the special warning with the highest levels of the National Security Council or that it was necessary to do so.

### CHAPTER 3

#### ACTIONS TO IMPROVE WARNING

#### SYSTEM AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the Mayaguez seizure, the U.S. intelligence community established an interagency committee to identify procedural improvements to insure the timely dissemination of special warning information to U.S. merchant vessels. Agencies represented on the committee included Navy's Office of Naval Operations and Military Sealift Command; Defense Mapping Agency, including headquarters and DMAHC personnel; Maritime Administration; the Central Intelligence, Defense Intelligence, and National Security Agencies; and intelligence activities of the Navy and State Departments. As a result of this committee's work, DMAHC said it will implement the following procedural improvements in broadcasts of future special warnings.

- Increase broadcast time from twice on 1 day to twice a day for 3 days.
- Broadcast the special warning at the first of each hydrographic broadcast.
- At the time the warning is issued, it will also be transmitted to U.S. steamship companies. This will alert shipowners so they can also notify their ships if they desire to.
- Maritime Administration will be notified when a special warning is issued.

Additional changes are discussed below.

#### STATE DEPARTMENT

At the time the Mayaguez was seized, State had no procedures for alerting the Maritime Affairs office concerning incidents which could necessitate issuing a special warning to U.S. mariners. The Maritime Affairs office has now informed State's Operations Center and geographic bureaus about the types of situations that the Operations Center should bring to Maritime Affairs attention, including:

- Outbreak of hostilities involving any nation with a coastline.

- Any reports of hostile actions against the military or civil shipping of any nation when it appears that the shipping was on the high seas or engaging in innocent passage through territorial waters at the time it became the victim of hostile action.
- Any announcements or pronouncements by a foreign government that it has changed the extent of its territorial sea or intends to increase the defense of its sovereignty inside its declared territorial waters.

Following receipt of this criteria, the Operations Center and, according to State, INR prepared a watch instruction informing their watch officers of the need to alert the Maritime Affairs office to the above types of incidents.

As noted in chapter 2, the initial information regarding seizure of the Mayaguez was provided to various Government intelligence agencies and activities, including State, in CRITIC messages. Because of a misunderstanding by State's INR watch, the information was not immediately made available to the Operations Center. According to State, all future CRITIC messages will be immediately exchanged between State's INR watch and its Operations Center. The duty officers of each will then consult on the further alerting of State officials. The Operations Center and, according to State, INR have in turn issued watch instructions which provide for alerting the Maritime Affairs office to substantive CRITICs or other reports which suggest a Mayaguez-type affair; i.e., incidents at sea having political overtones.

State Department said in commenting on recommendations made in a draft of this report, that internal guidelines covering special warnings have been issued. The guidelines provide for recommending that DMAHC issue a navigational warning if a particular situation does not merit a special warning. These guidelines were developed in October 1975 by State's Maritime Affairs office and provided to State's Operations Center and to INR. (See pp. 42 to 44.)

These guidelines represent a step in developing internal procedures for issuing special warnings. They do not, however, set forth clearly the procedures to be followed by the Maritime Affairs office in issuing special warnings. The guidelines were not directed to State Department's regional bureaus, nor do they address the responsibilities such offices may have in keeping the Maritime Affairs office adequately informed of political/military matters affecting U.S. shipping and foreign maritime policy.

## MARITIME ADMINISTRATION

The establishment of the U.S. Flag Merchant Vessel Locator Filing System, although not a direct outgrowth of the Mayaguez seizure, was announced by the Maritime Administration on August 8, 1975. The idea of the locator system started taking shape in late 1973, and it became effective November 1, 1975. The purpose of the locator system is to keep national agencies and certain military authorities informed of arrivals, departures, and locations of U.S.-flag merchant vessels throughout the world.

The locator system applies to U.S. merchant vessels of 1,000 or more gross registered tons engaged in foreign commerce of the United States and not operating under control of the Military Sealift Command. These vessels are required to submit reports upon departure and arrival at all ports and every 48 hours while at sea. Reporting vessels have direct access to Navy and Coast Guard communications facilities, and no charge is applied to locator system messages. The receiving facilities in turn transmit the reports to the Naval Ocean Surveillance Information Center.

According to the Maritime Administration, the U.S. Flag Merchant Vessel Locator Filing System reporting mechanism should provide a more positive accounting of U.S.-flag merchant vessels engaged in commerce and allow more positive action in crises.

### Maritime satellite system

A commercial maritime communications satellite system is being established. The system will include communications satellites stationed over the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans; shipboard terminals comprised of such equipment as an antenna equipped with automatic steering to keep it locked on the satellite at all times, a console with communications and control equipment, and a teleprinter and telephone; and shore stations on U.S. east and west coasts to operate with the system. According to the Maritime Administration, the system will be capable of providing high-quality commercial teletype, data, and voice communications via satellites 24 hours a day to ships and offshore facilities. It was expected that the Atlantic satellite would be fully operational by the end of 1975 and the Pacific satellite by mid-1976.

At least one large international oil company has leased several shipboard terminals to provide communications with its tankers while at sea. The Maritime Administration has

leased six terminals, to be installed aboard six U.S.-flag merchant vessels as part of a cooperative cost-sharing program between the Administration and the vessel owners. Maritime officials estimate it will be 10 to 15 years before the satellite communications capability of the merchant fleet becomes widespread. Basic problems revolve around convincing merchant mariners of the need to upgrade their communications capabilities and determining how the sophisticated equipment and additional personnel required onboard the ships will be paid for.

### Selective calling system

Various international groups have been working on the development of an adequate and standardized maritime selective calling system for a number of years. In 1972, U.S.-flag shipping companies asked the Maritime Administration to use its resources to coordinate and initiate the development of a selective calling system to meet current and future needs of the industry.

Upon installation of equipment both on ship and at shore facilities (including commercial and selected Coast Guard radio stations), the system will, according to the Maritime Administration, allow shore-based radio stations to selectively alert ships which are in potentially dangerous areas. This is accomplished by attaching a selective calling unit to the ship's high-frequency radio receiver which is preset to prescribed frequencies. A signal from a shore radio station on the ship's assigned frequency will set off an alarm on the ship. Since radio receivers on merchant ships are not continually manned, the alarm will serve to alert the vessel's captain or radioman to an important incoming message.

The Military Sealift Command is planning to install 63 selective call units on ships which it owns, and the Maritime Administration plans to assist in installing about 100 units in shore facilities and U.S. merchant vessels. According to the Maritime Administration, the cost of each unit, about \$4,000 plus installation costs and costs of upgrading communication equipment to interface with the system, may serve to slow universal adoption of the system.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Some actions have been initiated to identify and correct weaknesses in the warning system. However, because of the infrequency of special warnings and personnel changes, we believe there is a need to further institutionalize and formalize the system to insure its future effectiveness. We recommend, therefore, that the Secretary of State:

- Delegate specific responsibility for issuing special warnings to the Maritime Affairs office.
- Insure that internal guidelines are further developed to set forth specific procedures to be followed by Maritime Affairs in issuing or clearing for issuance special warnings.
- Insure that State's regional bureaus have a clear understanding of their responsibilities in promptly informing Maritime Affairs of political/military events affecting U.S. shipping and foreign maritime policy.
- Insure that the Bureau for Intelligence and Research keeps Maritime Affairs fully apprised of all intelligence source material affecting U.S. shipping.
- Enter into formal interagency agreements which set forth responsibilities together with the criteria and guidelines.
- Direct that the next available hydrographic broadcast, after learning of political/military incidents affecting U.S. shipping, be used to alert mariners of potential hazards. If necessary, this initial alert could be followed by more specific language as the situation becomes clarified.

In addition, we recommend that the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Commerce jointly encourage U.S. steamship owners/operators to:

- Require their vessels to monitor at least one U.S. hydrographic broadcast each day.
- Supplement the broadcast of a U.S. special warning by transmitting the warning to their vessels which may be near the critical area.

#### AGENCY COMMENTS AND ACTIONS

In addition to the previously discussed changes, State Department said it is also considering the possibility of distributing to all diplomatic posts a standard operating procedure for informing it of situations that may necessitate the issuance of a special warning. We agree that this should be done.



State agrees that its Bureau for Intelligence and Research should keep the Maritime Affairs office apprised of all intelligence material affecting U.S. shipping. Both INR and the Operations Center have developed internal instructions to insure that such intelligence material is brought to Maritime Affairs attention.

State and Defense Departments agree that there should be interagency agreements which set forth responsibilities, together with criteria and guidelines. State said it had initiated the formalization of such an agreement with members of the National Security Council staff.

State said that it would incorporate our recommendation on using the next available hydrographic broadcast, after it learns of political/military incidents affecting U.S. shipping, as part of its standard operating procedures for issuing special warnings.

The State Department said that our recommendations involving U.S. steamship owners/operators were well taken, but it believes such actions fall within the purview of the two Government agencies most closely associated with their implementation--DMAHC and the Department of Commerce (Maritime Administration). We believe, however, that because of State's interest in the foreign maritime policy implications of U.S. shipping, it should play an active role in encouraging the steamship companies to implement the suggested measures.

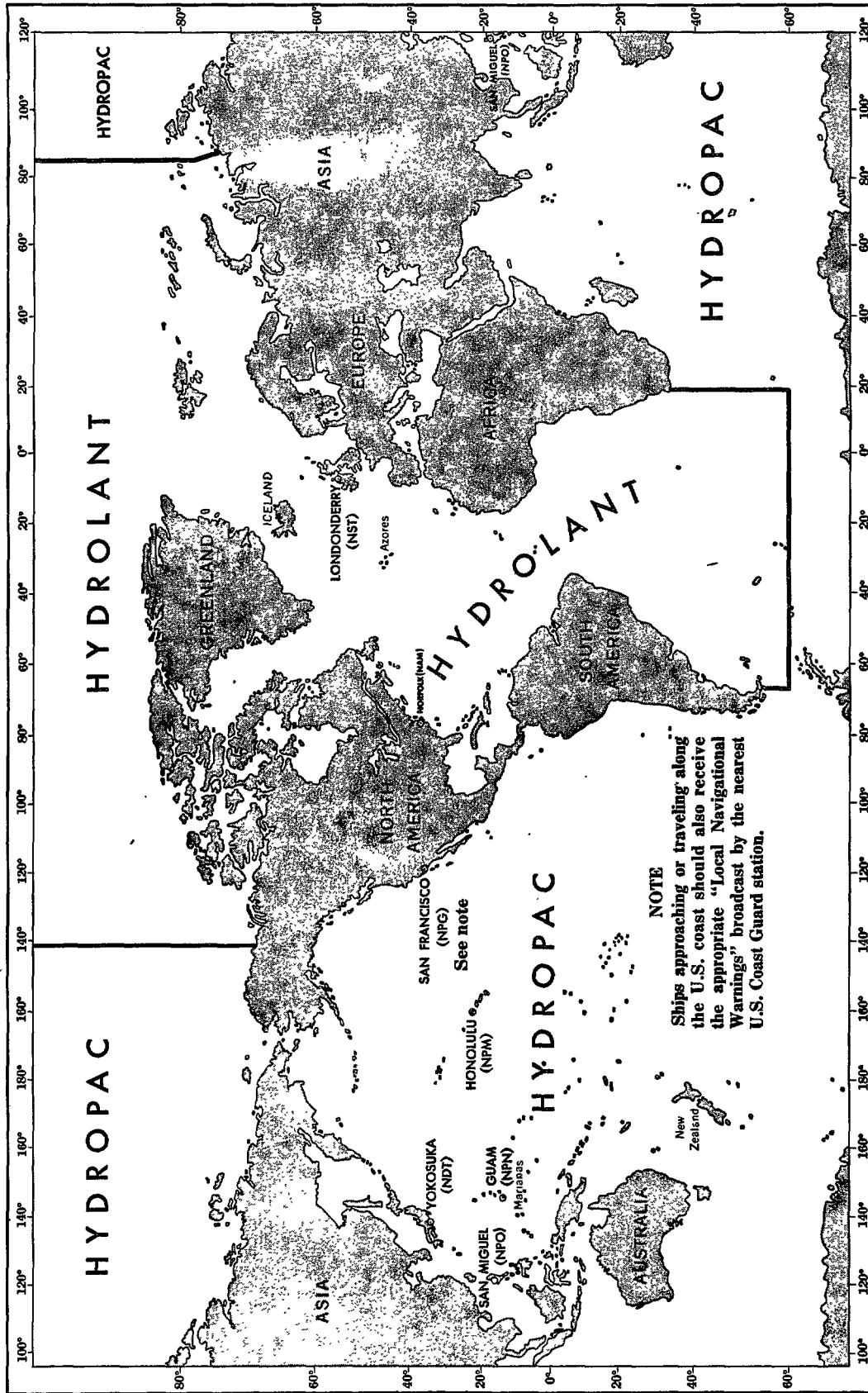
Commerce Department agrees that the Secretaries of State and Commerce should jointly encourage U.S.-flag steamship operators to require their vessels to monitor at least one U.S. hydrographic broadcast each day. It said the Maritime Administration will take steps to call the attention of all U.S.-flag steamship operators to the need of copying radio navigational warning messages.

Commerce recognizes that the effectiveness of disseminating special warnings requires validation of their receipt. Future special warnings will, therefore, include the request that U.S.-flag merchant ships in the general area of the incident acknowledge to DMAHC receipt of the special warning. Since the Maritime Administration has already asked operators of U.S.-flag merchant ships to cooperate by having their vessels honor the request, we are no longer making a specific recommendation on this matter.

Commerce has also suggested that, since the Maritime Administration has a specific interest in political/military incidents which could affect U.S. shipping, it should be immediately notified by State's INR of any incident that would be normally reported to Maritime Affairs.

State and Commerce comments on our conclusions and recommendations are included on pages 35 to 39 and 46 to 48, respectively.

U.S. LONG RANGE RADIO NAVIGATIONAL WARNING SYSTEM



Source: Defense Mapping Agency Hydrographic Center, Publication 117B (Radio Navigational Aids)

LIST OF SPECIAL WARNINGS TO U.S. MARINERS1948 to 1975

<u>Warning number</u>	<u>Issued</u>	<u>Canceled</u>	<u>Subject</u>
45 update	6/14/75		Hostile activities between Khmer and Vietnamese air and surface forces have been noted in the vicinity of Poulo Wai and other nearby islands.
45	5/12/75		Shipping to remain more than 35 nautical miles from Cambodia and more than 20 nautical miles from Vietnam due to recent incidents reported concerning the firing on, stopping, and detention of ships within waters claimed by Cambodia.
44	12/17/73		Supersedes and cancels special warning 41 whereby Departments of Commerce and Transportation permit U.S. carriers to call at People's Republic of China but does not change the prohibition against calling at other Communist ports in North Korea or Communist-controlled areas of Vietnam.
43	8/ 8/72	12/12/74	Reminder that special warning 42 is still in effect and repeats the subject matter.
42	5/ 8/72	12/12/74	Ports of North Vietnam mined and will activate on May 11, 1972. Entry at own risk. U.S. and South Vietnam will take measures to stop all sea-borne supplies to North Vietnam.
41	2/17/72	12/17/73	U.S. ships and aircraft may not enter any ports of China, North Korea, or Communist areas of Vietnam. This supersedes and cancels special warning 19.
40	12/10/71	12/12/72	The Pakistan Government announced that all merchant ships entering Pakistani ports should exhibit navigational lights to avoid collision, and specified other lighting procedures listed in the special warning.  This is a supplemental warning and does not in any way change special warnings 37, 38, and 39.
39	12/ 9/71	12/12/72	Neutral ships may be subject to visit and search on the high seas or in port of either India or Pakistan. India and Pakistan institute contraband procedures. This special warning includes lists of each country's items of contraband.
38	12/ 8/71	12/12/72	Merchant ships in Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea will be unable to communicate with Indian ports by radio. Ships destined for Indian ports should give itinerary to closest Indian Mission, Embassy, or consulate in the country of last port of call before proceeding to India.
37	12/ 4/71	12/12/72	State of war between India and Pakistan. India has contraband procedures "on supplies intended for Pakistani ports, which could help in the prosecution of war against it." Ports in East Pakistan occupied by West Pakistan have been blocked. Indian attacks on Pakistani merchant ships. Two ships heavily damaged.

<u>Warning number</u>	<u>Issued</u>	<u>Canceled</u>	<u>Subject</u>
36	7/29/71		Same warning as 35, except the wording "or as derogation of the right of innocent passage for U.S. ships" was added. This special warning cancels and supersedes special warning 35.
35	7/20/71	7/29/71	Several recent incidents of ship detentions by Somali Government. Extreme caution to be used in waters off Somalia, which claims a 12-mile territorial sea.
34	11/20/62	11/20/62	Quarantine established pursuant to Presidential proclamation of October 23 is terminated. This cancels special warnings 30, 31, 32, and 33.
33	10/27/62	11/20/62	In connection with quarantine of Oct. 23, a clearance system has been instituted "clearcert" to avoid unnecessary shipping delays. Applies to ships going to foreign ports and foreign ships going to Cuban ports with no offensive weapons or associated material.
32	10/25/62	11/20/62	In connection with October 23 quarantine, use of international submarine identification procedures will be in effect in the waters near Cuba.
31	10/25/62	11/20/62	Reference special warning 30. The prohibition of surface-to-surface missiles includes propellants and chemical compounds capable of being used to power missiles.
30	10/24/62	11/20/62	Reactions to quarantine of offensive military equipment may make windward passage of Yucatan channel and Florida Straits dangerous. Alternate routes specified.
29	3/ 1/62		Embargo effective Feb. 7, 1962, on all importation from Cuba and Treasury licenses to authorize importation of Cuban goods will not normally be issued.
28	3/16/60	3/16/60	Cancels special warning 25 and this order.
27	11/ 3/58	11/ 3/58	Cancels special warning 26 and this order.
26	7/15/58	11/ 3/58	Lebanese Government requested U.S. military aid in restoring order in Lebanon. U.S. aircraft and warships will commence intensive operations to a distance of 150 miles seaward. Ships in this area should adhere closely to standard recognition procedures.
25	6/ 7/57	3/16/60	Cuban authorities advise navigation in Cuban waters is now under Cuban naval control from Santiago west to Pilon. All navigation there must be cleared by Commander, Naval District, Oriente, Cuba.
24	10/19/55		Israel announced that, as of Sept. 11, 1955, the maritime frontier of Israel is a distance of 6 miles from the coast at the low waterline along with the above airspace.

<u>Warning number</u>	<u>Issued</u>	<u>Canceled</u>	<u>Subject</u>
23	5/10/55		Due to repeated attacks on offshore islands near the China mainland, but which belong to Taiwan, defensive mine fields have been laid in the territorial waters of such islands.
22	12/28/54	12/28/54	Naval blockade of Korean coast suspended by Article 15 of Armistice Agreement. Cancels special warning 18 and this warning.
21	11/ 4/52	11/ 4/52	Cancels special warning 20.
20	10/ 3/52	11/ 4/52	Cancels special warnings 8 and 17; 11, 13, 14, 15, and 16 are superseded by special warning 19.
19	12/22/50	2/17/72	Secretary of Commerce announced that no aircraft or ship registered in the U.S. shall enter any Chinese Communist port or any other place under their control. Any cargo headed for such ports shall be returned to port of origin or to U.S. or Japanese territories.
18	7/ 4/50	12/28/54	Naval blockade of Korean coast ordered by U.S. President.
17	4/17/50	10/ 3/52	Egyptian Government announces Alexandria harbor closed from sunset to sunrise. Ships entering Egyptian territorial waters during such time may be fired upon. Special warning 2 canceled.
16	2/10/50	10/ 3/52	Chinese Government announces that effective Feb. 12, 1950, certain special territorial waters will be closed temporarily.
15	12/29/49	10/ 3/52	Chinese Government announces the mining of the approaches to the Yangtze River and Shanghai. No channel has been left free of danger.
14	12/17/49	10/ 3/52	U.S.-flag ship Sir John Franklin was fired upon by 2 Chinese vessels while approaching Port of Shanghai. This is now rendered to be an extremely hazardous area to shipping. American lives and property should not be exposed to such risks.
13	11/14/49	10/ 3/52	Chinese Government announces that certain specified territorial waters and some specified ports will be temporarily closed effective Nov. 7, 1949.
12	10 6/49	11/ 4/52	Special warnings 1, 2, 8, 11, and 12 remain in effect. Warnings 4, 5, 6, and 7 are canceled.
11	6/24/49	10/ 3/52	Chinese Government announced on June 20, 1949, that effective June 25, certain specified territorial waters will be closed temporarily and that vessel entry will be strictly forbidden; otherwise prompt action will be taken. Also 5 previously open ports are now closed.
10	5/27/49	5/27/49	Cancels special warning 3 and this message after action. Lebanese Government has canceled restrictions.
9	12/31/48	10/22/49	Greek Government announced 5-mile shipping limit along certain sections of the coast. Ships will be stopped and if there is resistance will be sunk. Passenger vessels on regular routes are excepted.

## APPENDIX II

## APPENDIX II

<u>Warning number</u>	<u>Issued</u>	<u>Canceled</u>	<u>Subject</u>
8	7/13/48	10/ 3/52	Navigational lights along Palestine coast may be extinguished without warning. Vessels are cautioned accordingly.
7	5/28/48	10/ 6/49	Reference special warning 5. The U.S. protests the action of the Syrian Government in attempting to prohibit the freedom of navigation of the high seas of the Mediterranean. The U.S. does not recognize these actions.
6	5/28/48	10/ 6/49	Reference special warning 4. Same message as in 7, but applies to Egypt.
5	5/27/48	10/ 6/49	Government of Syria proclaimed blockade of regional waters of Palestine, stating that foreign ships shall avoid exposure to dangers resulting from engagement of Arab forces in disciplinary operations against the Zionists.
4	5/27/48	10/ 6/49	Egyptian Government announced dangers exist for all ships approaching Palestine coast because of exposure to measures Egypt is taking to insure security of its troops in Palestine.
3	5/27/48	5/27/49	Lebanese Government announces that effective May 16, 1948, use of territorial waters "within 6 miles from coast" is prohibited from sunrise to sunset. Use is prohibited entirely from Tyre to Ras Nakura.
2	5/27/48	4/17/50	Egyptian Government announces Alexandria harbor and all territorial waters closed as of May 19, 1948, from sunrise to sunset. Specific navigational instructions given as to how to enter the harbor and identification procedures.
1	5/27/48		Reintroduction of special warning series because need exists to disseminate general interest information. This is in addition to regular navigational warnings.

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS LEADING TO ISSUANCE  
OF SPECIAL WARNING 45

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time (eastern daylight)</u>	<u>Principals involved</u>	<u>Event</u>
5/ 2/75	not available	Thai fishing boats	Seven Thai fishing boats with 27 fishermen were seized and later released by Khmer Communists.
5/ 4/75	not available	South Korean freighter.	A South Korean freighter was fired upon by Khmer Communists but escaped capture.
5/ 7/75	not available	Panamanian vessel	A Panamanian vessel was detained but released the following day by Khmer Communists.
5/12/75	3:18 a.m.	Oil exploration company	A representative of an oil exploration company in Jakarta, Indonesia, received a mayday call from the Mayaguez stating "Have been fired upon and boarded by Cambodian armed forces at 9 degrees 48 minutes north/102 degrees 53 minutes east. Ship is being towed to unknown Cambodian port."
	4:00 a.m. to 5:00 a.m.	U.S. Embassy, Jakarta	The oil exploration company's representative notified the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta after losing radio contact with the Mayaguez.
	5:03 a.m.	U.S. Embassy, Jakarta	U.S. Embassy in Jakarta sent an unclassified CRITIC message to the National Security Agency in Washington, D.C., informing it of the seizure of the Mayaguez.
	5:07 a.m.	U.S. Embassy, Jakarta	U.S. Embassy in Jakarta sent a followup message to the National Security Agency informing it that the exploration company's representative was still in contact with the Mayaguez. The message stated "Vessel under own power. Following one gunboat to Sihanoukville. Proceeding very slow. Ship owned by Sea Land. No casualties. Crew does not feel to be in immediate danger. Troops on board do not speak English. Crew standing by for any instructions."
	5:12 a.m.	Intelligence and Research Bureau (INR), State Department	The unclassified CRITIC message from the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta was received by INR's intelligence watch but was not passed to State's Operations Center.



<u>Date</u>	<u>Time (eastern daylight)</u>	<u>Principals involved</u>	<u>Event</u>
5/12/75	5:17 a.m.	Naval Command Support Center	Unclassified CRITIC message received by the duty captain from the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta.
	5:20 a.m.	Intelligence and Research Bureau, State Department	The National Security Agency called the INR Watch to call its attention to the CRITIC messages, but INR did not tell State's Operations Center about the call.
	5:30 a.m.	Military Sealift Command, Defense	An officer on the staff of the National Military Command Center (NMCC) telephoned the Sealift Command duty officer and asked him if it had the Mayaguez on time charter. The duty officer replied that they did not, and provided the NMCC officer with background information on the ship.
	6:00 a.m.	Operations Center, State Department	The military representative in State's Operations Center received a telephone call from NMCC alerting him to the U.S. Embassy messages. Since the INR watch had not provided copies of the messages to the Operations Center, NMCC transmitted copies to it.
	6:15 a.m.	Operations Center, State Department	Upon receipt of the copies from NMCC, the Operations Center alerted the East Asia Bureau's duty officer.
	6:35 a.m.	East Asia Bureau, State Department	East Asia Bureau's duty officer telephoned the country director for Cambodia who was unable to reach his counterpart at Defense.
	7:15 a.m.	Military Sealift Command, Defense Department	Military Sealift's Command and Control Center received another telephone call from NMCC and was told that the Mayaguez had been fired on and boarded. The caller declined to provide the source of the information but said it should be taken as factual.
	7:20 a.m.	Intelligence and Research Bureau, State Department	The INR watch officer briefed the Director of INR preparatory to the Secretary's 8:00 a.m. staff meeting.
	7:30 a.m.	East Asia Bureau, State Department	East Asia Bureau's country director for Cambodia notified one of East Asia Bureau's deputy assistant secretaries of the incident. This official, in turn, discussed the situation with the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs and briefed another East Asia Bureau Deputy Assistant Secretary.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time (eastern daylight)</u>	<u>Principals involved</u>	<u>Event</u>
5/12/75	7:40 a.m.	The White House	The President was informed of the seizure of the Mayaguez.
	8:00 a.m.	State Department	Secretary of State's daily staff meeting was held.
	8:50- 9:00 a.m.	Defense Mapping Agency Hydro-graphic Center (DMAHC)	An official of the Military Sealift Command's Cargo Division telephoned a DMAHC official to check whether any warning had gone out to U.S. mariners. The official replied that none had gone out and that this was his first notification of the incident. He gave the Sealift Command official telephone numbers of people to contact: those of Maritime Affairs office and Naval Operations, Ocean Affairs Branch.
	9:00 a.m.	Ocean Affairs Branch, Naval Operations	The DMAHC official telephoned the Ocean Affairs Branch and said he had just received a call from the Sealift Command concerning seizure of a U.S. ship off the coast of Cambodia and asked whether a special warning would be issued. The Ocean Affairs officer said he would find out what he could and get back to him.
	9:15 a.m.	Maritime Affairs Office, State Department	State Department's Cambodia country director telephoned an official at Maritime Affairs and told him of the seizure of the Mayaguez and asked him to obtain information on the vessel's cargo.
	9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.	Maritime Affairs Office, State Department	An official in Maritime Affairs talked to DMAHC and was told that no warning had been issued. (The DMAHC official had called Maritime Affairs at 9:10 a.m. but line was busy).
	9:50 a.m.	Ocean Affairs Branch, Naval Operations	A Military Sealift Command official telephoned Ocean Affairs and asked whether some type of warning was going to be issued. The Sealift Command official said it planned to put something out to their ships.
	10:00 a.m.	DMAHC	An Ocean Affairs officer telephoned the DMAHC official and provided him with additional information on the seizure.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time (eastern daylight)</u>	<u>Principals involved</u>	<u>Event</u>
5/12/75	10:00 a.m.	Maritime Affairs Office, State Department	Shortly after 10:00 a.m. an official in the Maritime Affairs office called the Ocean Affairs Branch seeking suggested language for a warning message and was referred to DMAHC.
	10:10 a.m.	DMAHC	The DMAHC official alerted the Naval Oceanographic Office's message center that DMAHC would probably be going out with a special warning sometime that day.
	10:30 a.m.	DMAHC	DMAHC had a draft warning message ready for the noon hydrographic broadcast in the event it would have been asked to issue a HYDROPAC.
	11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon	Maritime Affairs Office, State Department	A Maritime Affairs official called DMAHC to obtain its thoughts on a proposed message and was given the text of the draft warning prepared by DMAHC. The draft text was discussed with State's Cambodia country director, and it was decided to change the mileage limit for remaining offshore from 12 to 20 nautical miles. The Ocean Affairs Branch was requested to obtain the necessary Navy Department clearances.
	12:00 noon	State Department	The Deputy Assistant Secretary of the East Asia Bureau briefed the Deputy Secretary on the Mayaguez situation in preparation for the upcoming National Security Council meeting.
	12:00 noon to 12:45 p.m.	National Security Council	National Security Council meeting to discuss Mayaguez seizure.
	1:00 p.m.	Ocean Affairs Branch, Naval Operations	An Ocean Affairs officer called Maritime Affairs and said the draft of the special warning had been cleared with the appropriate Navy offices.
	1:50 p.m.	The White House	First official public announcement of the Mayaguez seizure.
	Early after- noon	Maritime Affairs Office, State Department	The Maritime Affairs official cleared the draft warning text with the Interagency Task Force on the Law of the Sea and State's Legal Adviser.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time (eastern daylight)</u>	<u>Principals involved</u>	<u>Event</u>
5/12/75	4:30 p.m.	Ocean Affairs Branch, Naval Operations	Additional information became available to Ocean Affairs which dictated increasing the distance in the text for staying off the Cambodian coast. The recommendation was passed to the Maritime Affairs office.
	5:00 p.m.	Maritime Affairs, Office, State Department	A Maritime Affairs official discussed extension of the standoff distance with State's Geographer to determine whether a 30- to 35-mile range would give mariners a navigational problem.
	6:30 p.m.	DMAHC	A Maritime Affairs official finished coordinating and clearing language of the special warning within State and Ocean Affairs Branch. At that time he telephoned a DMAHC official and dictated the final draft of the special warning to him.
	6:30 p.m. to 7:05 p.m.	DMAHC	The DMAHC official typed the message text, verified it with Maritime Affairs, and carried it downstairs to the Naval Oceanographic Office's message center.
	9:27 p.m.	Naval Oceanographic Office	The Oceanographic Office's communication center transmitted the message to Navy radio stations broadcasting HYDROPAC warnings.
	10:23 p.m.	Naval Oceanographic Office	The Oceanographic Office's communication center transmitted the message to Navy radio stations broadcasting HYDROLANT warnings. This was in time for broadcast to U.S. mariners on the 12:30 a.m. hydrographic broadcast.
	10:25 p.m.	Communications Center, State Department	A copy of special warning 45 was received at State's communications center.
5/13/75	12:30 a.m.	Navy radio stations	Special warning 45 was broadcast to U.S. mariners over the hydrographic system.



## DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

DEC 11 1975

Mr. J. K. Fasick  
Director  
International Division  
U. S. General Accounting Office  
Washington, D. C. 20548

Dear Mr. Fasick:

I am replying to your letter of November 11, 1975, which forwarded copies of the draft report: "Seizure of the USS Mayaguez and the System to Warn U.S. Mariners of Potential Political/Military Hazards."

The enclosed comments and list of proposed corrections to the draft report were prepared by the Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Transportation and Telecommunications, Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs.

We appreciate having had the opportunity to review and comment upon the draft report. If I may be of further assistance, I trust you will let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "D. Williamson".

Daniel L. Williamson  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
for Budget and Finance

Enclosures:

1. Comments
2. List of proposed corrections.

Enclosure 1Department of State Proposed Corrections  
to the GAO Draft Report

Page i - Change last sentence of paragraph 4 to read: "A memorandum circulated from the Office of Maritime Affairs to the Department of State's Regional Bureaus in February 1972 (Annex 1 to Enclosure 3)[40 & 41] outlined maritime warning procedures. It is not possible to determine whether the memorandum was definitive enough in its instructions; nor is it possible to determine whether the memorandum was circulated internally by the geographic bureaus. In any case, even though the memorandum existed, there was no issuance of a warning prior to the seizure of the Mayaguez. Maritime warnings requiring State Department action have been relatively rare. The previously reported incidents of Cambodian harassment of two foreign vessels (not normally involved in long-standing local disputes in the area) were not brought to the timely attention of the Office of Maritime Affairs. However, these incidents were of brief duration and involved no reported loss of life or property. It was not readily apparent to those throughout the government who were aware of these incidents that American ships happening to pass in the area might be in any danger." [GAO comment: See p. 4.]

Page ii - (See GAO note 2, p. 39.)

Page 1 - (See GAO note 2, p. 39.)

Page 2 - (See GAO note 2, p. 39.)

Page 3 - (See GAO note 2, p. 39.)

Page 4 - (See GAO note 2, p. 39.)

Page 5 (See GAO note 2, p. 39.)

Page 5 - Recommend the following rewrite of second and third sentences, second full paragraph: "Moreover the only statement outlining the procedures for Special Warnings was contained in an internal memorandum (Rein memorandum of 1972) to four geographic bureaus on what procedures to follow for warnings to U.S. merchant ships at sea. A copy of that memorandum was in the file "SPECIAL WARNINGS TO MARINERS" in the Office of Maritime Affairs and was used as a guideline for action taken when the Office was first apprised of the Mayaguez incident at 0915, May 12, 1975."  
[GAO comment: See p. 4.]

Page 8 - (See GAO note 2, p. 39.)

Page 9 - (See GAO note 2, p. 39.)

- Page 9 - (See GAO note 2, p. 39.)
- Page 9 - (See GAO note 2, p. 39.)
- Page 9 - (See GAO note 2, p. 39.)
- Page 10 - (See GAO note 2, p. 39.)
- Page 10 - (See GAO note 2, p. 39.)
- Page 12 - Change first sentence, paragraph 2, to read: "A Maritime Affairs official read a draft of the proposed Special Warning to the Naval Operations Ocean Affairs office between 10:00 and 11:00 a.m. and requested that office to get immediate "in-house" clearances and call the Maritime Affairs office when they were obtained." [GAO comment: This statement varies slightly from the chronology provided by other agencies. See pp. 9 and 28.]
- Page 12 - (See GAO note 2, p. 39.)
- Page 13 - (See GAO note 2, p. 39.)
- Page 13 - (See GAO note 2, p. 39.)
- Page 15 - (See GAO note 2, p. 39.)



Page 17 - Change first sentence under State Department (bottom of Page 17) to read: "Prior to the Mayaguez seizure, a memorandum (the Rein memorandum) had been circulated from the Office of Maritime Affairs to the Department of State's Regional Bureaus in February 1972 outlining maritime warning procedures. It is not possible to determine whether the memorandum was definitive enough in its instructions; nor is it possible to determine whether the memorandum was circulated internally by the geographic bureaus. In any case, even though the memorandum existed, there was no issuance of a warning prior to the seizure of the Mayaguez."

[GAO comment: See p. 4.]

Page 18 - (See GAO note 2, p. 39.)

Page 18 - (See GAO note 2, p. 39.)

Page 18 - (See GAO note 2, p. 39.)

Page 18 - (See GAO note 2, p. 39.)

[17]Page 22 - Change line 7 to read "...that the Department's Operations Center and Bureau for Intelligence...."  
[GAO comment: Our emphasis is on intelligence source material.]

Page 22 - (See GAO note 2, p. 39.)

Page 31 - (See GAO note 2, p. 39.)

Page 32 - (See GAO note 2, p. 39.)

Page 32 - (See GAO note 2, p. 39.)

Page 35 - (See GAO note 2, p. 39.)

Enclosure 2Department of State Comments on GAO  
Conclusions and RecommendationsConclusion

[5]  
The Draft Report concludes on Page 7 that "the responsibility for issuing special warnings had not been formalized in any type of interagency agreement."

Comment

The Department of State agrees that this responsibility had not been formalized on an interagency basis beyond the point of a determination made by State, Navy, the Maritime Administration, and Navy Hydrographic Office officials that such a warning system was required. The Department's reaction to this is covered further on in our comments on the recommendations.

Conclusion

[5]  
The Draft Report concludes on Page 7 that "there were no written criteria and guidelines setting forth the conditions and circumstances necessitating issuance of a special warning."

Comment

The Department of State notes that a memorandum was circulated from the Office of Maritime Affairs to the Department of State's Regional Bureaus in February 1972 outlining maritime warning procedures. It is not possible to determine whether the memorandum was definitive enough in its instructions; nor is it possible to determine whether the memorandum was circulated internally by the geographic bureaus. In any case, there was no issuance of a warning prior to the seizure of the Mayaguez. Maritime warnings requiring State Department action have been relatively rare. The previously reported incidents of Cambodian harassment of two foreign vessels (not normally involved in long-standing local disputes in the area) were not brought to the timely attention of the Office of Maritime Affairs. However, these incidents were of brief duration and involved no reported loss of life or property. It was not readily apparent to those throughout the government who were aware of these incidents that American ships happening to pass in the area might be in any danger."

Conclusion

[11 and 12]

The Draft Report concludes on Page 16 that:

"We believe that if the offices responsible for issuing navigational and special warnings to U.S. mariners had known of prior incidents, and the seriousness of those incidents, some type of warnings would have been issued prior to the Mayaguez seizure";

"We believe the State Department should have responded in a more timely manner by issuing a navigational or special warning on the 12:30 p.m., May 12, hydrographic broadcast rather than 12 hours later";

"As the situation became more clearly understood, State Department could have followed its initial warning or alert with more specific information".

Comment

The Department concurs with the conclusion that had the appropriate responsible offices known of the prior incidents, some type of warning would have been issued prior to the Mayaguez incident.

Comment

Although the Department of State will, in the future, continue to avoid any unnecessary delay in sending a special warning to the DMAHC for broadcast (even if it necessitates sending an initial alert message to be followed up with more specific information), it must be noted that in the case of the Mayaguez, the need to clear and coordinate the special warning with agencies involved, including the highest levels of the National Security Council, precluded its issuance on the 12:30 p.m., May 12 hydrographic broadcast.

Recommendations

[16 and 17]

The Draft Report makes the following recommendations on Page 22:

Recommendations 1 and 2

The Secretary of State "develop criteria and guidelines regarding the situations which require a special warning

and those which may be covered by a regular HYDROPAC/HYDROLANT warning."

The Secretary of State "develop internal guidelines and instructions for issuing Special Warnings."

Comment

In addition to the existence of the Rein memorandum of 1972, the Department of State has issued since the Mayaguez seizure, memorandums dated May 23, 1975 (Annex II to Enclosure 3); June 27, 1975 (Annex III to Enclosure 3); and July 25, 1975 (Annex IV to Enclosure 3), notifying the recipients that they should alert the Office of Maritime Affairs whenever certain specific types of maritime safety-related incidents come to their attention. The Operations Center has incorporated the memorandum of May 23 in their watch manual, two copies of which are kept at all times by the watch. This manual provides the guidance for the day-to-day functioning of the Operations Center. A copy of how the Center responds to Incidents at Sea is attached as [See GAO note 3, Annex V to Enclosure 3. In addition, the Office of Maritime Affairs has completed a document (Annex VI to Enclosure 3) which sets forth "Procedures within the Department of State, Office of Maritime Affairs, Concerning Special Warnings to Mariners". Copies of this document were cleared with and are held by the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (State), the State Operations Center, the Office of Emergency Plans within the Maritime Administration, and the Office of CNO within the Department of Defense. The Department is also investigating the possibility of distributing to all diplomatic posts a standard operating procedure for informing the Department of situations that may necessitate the issuance of a Special Warning.]

Recommendation 3

The Secretary of State "ensure that the Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research keeps Maritime Affairs fully apprised of all intelligence matters affecting U.S. shipping."

Comment

Both the State Operations Center and the Bureau of Intelligence and Research have promulgated

internal instructions that insure that the Office of Maritime Affairs is apprised of intelligence matters affecting U.S. shipping.

Recommendation 4

The Secretary of State "enter into formal interagency agreements which set forth responsibilities together with criteria and guidelines".

Comment

The Department of State supports this recommendation and has initiated the formalization of such an interagency agreement with members of the National Security Council staff.

Recommendation 5

The Secretary of State "direct that the next available hydrographic broadcast, after learning of political/military incidents affecting U.S. shipping, be used to alert mariners of potential hazards. If necessary, this initial alert could be followed by more formalized language as the situation becomes clarified."

Comment

The Department of State (Office of Maritime Affairs) will incorporate this recommendation as part of its standard operating procedures in the issuance of Special Warnings.

Additional Recommendations

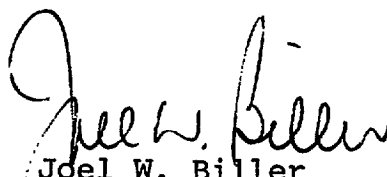
The Draft Report also recommended that the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Commerce jointly encourage U.S. steamship owners/operators to:

- require their vessels to monitor at least one U.S. hydrographic broadcast each day;
- supplement the broadcast of a U.S. Special Warning by transmitting the warning to their vessels which may be near the critical area; and

(See GAO note 2, p. 39.)

Comment

While the Department of State believes that these three recommendations are well taken, it also believes that such actions fall within the purview of the two government agencies most closely associated with their implementation -- DMAHC and the Department of Commerce (Maritime Administration). The Department does not have the facilities to invoke, monitor or enforce these recommendations.



Joel W. Biller  
Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary  
for Transportation and  
Telecommunications

- GAO notes:
1. The numbers in brackets refer to pages in this final report on which the matter is discussed.
  2. The deleted comments pertain to matters omitted from or revised in the final report.
  3. The content of these memorandums is covered on pp. 13 and 14 of this final report.

February 9, 1972

TO: NEA - Joseph J. Sisco  
FROM: E/TT - Bert W. Rein  
SUBJECT: Warnings to US Flag Vessels at Sea

The attached information on the procedure for issuing broadcast warnings to vessels at sea may be of interest to desk officers within your area. Please circulate the attached as appropriate.

NOTE: Special Warnings have previously been issued in connection with events in India, Pakistan, China, Somalia, Israel and the UAR.

Attachment:

Broadcasts to US Flag Vessels at Sea

E/MA:JABarcas:mm

## BROADCASTS TO UNITED STATES FLAG VESSELS AT SEA

On several recent occasions the Department has called upon the Naval Oceanographic Office for assistance in broadcasting warnings of various types to US flag vessels at sea. Because such requests are rare, some confusion as to the procedure involved has resulted. Officers requesting such broadcasts should keep in mind the following:

1. There are two general types of broadcasts:
  - a. Navigational Warnings - Messages of this type are navigational in nature and contain information about changes in buoys, naval operations, gunnery practice, mine fields, etc. Messages of this type are fairly routine and can generally be cleared within the Naval Oceanographic Office.
  - b. Special Warnings - These are more political in nature and include such things as declarations of hostilities, contraband orders, or territorial sea claims. Messages of this type are more sensitive and should be cleared in L. They also require clearances by one or more offices in the Navy Department.
2. All such requests for broadcast warnings must be cleared in E/MA, ext. 20703, 20704, 20705. Under normal circumstances E/MA will transmit the message to the Naval Oceanographic Office. Broadcast requests are sent by telegram with appropriate clearances, with ACTION to Naval Oceanographic Office. The SUBJECT line should read Special (or Navigational) Warning. The telegram should read "Please issue following Special (or Navigational) Warning..." followed by the text of the message in quotes.
3. Messages should be kept short and clear as they are hand copied by radio operators aboard ship.
4. Warnings are broadcast twice a day on a regular schedule. Requests for broadcasts should carry a PRIORITY precedence only. A higher precedence will not result in earlier broadcast of the message.
5. All warnings must be unclassified.
6. Info copies of the telegram should be addressed to appropriate posts.



OCT 7 1975

MEMORANDUM

**SUBJECT: Procedures Within the Department of State, Office of Maritime Affairs, Concerning Special Warnings to Mariners**

The issuance of a Special Warning message to mariners involves timely receipt and dissemination of intelligence to the appropriate decision maker who can evaluate the information in the proper context and decide whether or not to initiate a Special Warning message.

Within the DOS, the process of disseminating intelligence on a department-wide basis (including the Office of Maritime Affairs, Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs) is handled by the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR). The Office of Maritime Affairs receives most of its intelligence from that source. In addition, the Operations Center and INR within the Department have been notified by the Office of Maritime Affairs to alert the Office of Maritime Affairs to situations that indicate:

- (a) outbreak of hostilities involving any nation with a coastline;
- (b) any reports of hostile actions against military or civil shipping of any nation when it appears that the shipping was on the high seas or engaged in innocent passage through territorial waters at the time it became the victim of hostile action; or
- (c) any announcements by a foreign government that it has changed the extent of its territorial sea or intends to increase the defense of its sovereignty inside its declared territorial waters.

If any of the above occur after working hours, the Operations Center has been directed to notify the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs Duty Officer, who has instructions on the procedures for contacting someone with Maritime Affairs.

To both supplement and complement this manner of collection, (i.e. information received either from INR or the Operations Center), the Office of Maritime Affairs

has, at present, three officers cleared for access to compartmental intelligence; it receives the Foreign Broadcast Information Service messages on matters that are of interest to maritime affairs; and it receives both solicited and unsolicited information on maritime matters from other geographic and functional desks within the Department. In addition, other agencies, both public and private, inform the Office of Maritime Affairs of events it believes are of an interest to maritime matters. Since the Office of Maritime Affairs relies to a large extent on outside sources of information, it can only act once this information is received.

Upon receipt of information, the Office of Maritime Affairs discusses this information with other interested offices within the Department. The Office of Maritime Affairs then decides whether or not it should draft a warning message, have it cleared through the appropriate agencies, and then have it relayed to the Defense Mapping Agency, Hydrographic Center (DMAHC) for transmittal. This procedure in no way detracts from the fact that any agency, government or otherwise, can draft a navigational or special warning. If this procedure is followed, the message should be cleared through the DOS. Of the 45 Special Warnings issued to date, 19 have been drafted and released by the US Navy, JCS, or other Defense agencies. In most cases, State Department clearance was obtained.

Having collected and evaluated all available information, the Office of Maritime Affairs has two basic options. It can do nothing because the event does not merit the issuance of a warning; or, it can recommend to the DMAHC the issuance of a Navigational Warning or a Special Warning. The Office considers the Navigational Warning to contain information about changes in buoy location, removal/addition of buoys, naval operations, gunnery practices, the location of minefields and other navigational matters that concern safety of life at sea. Within the context of the latter, a navigational warning would be the appropriate warning in the case where several nations, known for their mutual hostility, become involved in seizures/shootings between their respective commercial/ naval vessels. The Office considers a Special Warning to be more political in nature and would include such things as declaration of hostilities, contraband orders, territorial sea claims, and certain vessel seizures.

It must be emphasized that a number of variables must be taken into account when making a decision as to which warning should be issued -- navigational or special. Most of the warnings are recommended to be navigational warnings, saving the issuance of a Special Warning for special cases where the facts clearly dictate that one should be issued. In either case, the proposed text is cleared through appropriate State offices and also with CNO, who acts as the agent for the Department of Defense.

Once the message is drafted and cleared, the Office will either telephone the proposed message to DMAHC or send a message of the proposed text to DMAHC. The exigency of the situation dictates which procedure will be followed. If there is a need to discuss proper format or administrative procedures, these matters are discussed usually by telephone, to the mutual satisfaction of all parties.

After relaying the message to DMAHC, the Office of Maritime Affairs relays the message to the Division of Emergency Plans within the Office of Policy and Plans at the Maritime Administration.

EB/TT/MA:REJohe:bst  
10/7/75 ext 21313

EB/TT/MA:RKBank  
MARAD - Mr. Phillips  
OPNAV - LCDR. McCoy  
INR(DOS) - Mr. Chapman  
OPCenter (DOS) - Mr. Kuchel



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**The Assistant Secretary for Administration**  
Washington, D.C. 20230

December 22, 1975

Mr. Victor L. Lowe  
Director, General Government Division  
U. S. General Accounting Office  
Washington, D. C. 20548

Dear Mr. Lowe:

This is in reply to your letter of November 11, 1975,  
requesting comments on the draft report entitled  
"Seizure of the USS Mayaguez and the System to Warn  
U. S. Mariners of Potential Political/Military Hazards."

We have reviewed the enclosed comments of the Assistant  
Secretary for Maritime Affairs and believe they are  
responsive to the matters discussed in the report.

Sincerely,

Guy W. Chamberlin, Jr.  
Acting Assistant Secretary  
for Administration

Enclosure





**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**The Assistant Secretary for Maritime Affairs**  
 Washington, D.C. 20230

DEC 13 1975

Mr. Victor L. Lowe  
 Director, General Government Division  
 United States General Accounting Office  
 Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Lowe:

I refer to your letters of November 11, 1975, addressed to the Secretary of Commerce and to me, requesting our comments of your draft report entitled, "Seizure of the SS MAYAGUEZ and the System to Warn U.S. Mariners of Potential Political/Military Hazards."

(See GAO note 2, p. 39.)

The historic mission of the Department of Commerce is to "foster, promote and develop the foreign and domestic commerce" of the United States. This mission is supplemented by the provisions of the Merchant Marine Act, 1936, as amended, which furthered the development and maintenance of an adequate and well-balanced American merchant marine. It is within this context that the Maritime Administration has and will continue to exhibit leadership in those matters which affect the U.S. flag merchant shipping.

The Secretary of Commerce has authorized the Assistant Secretary for Maritime Affairs to concur in your recommendations that the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Commerce jointly encourage U.S. flag steamship operators to require their vessels to monitor at least one U.S. Hydrographic broadcast each day. The recommendation that vessels be required to acknowledge receipt of the Special Warning, if they are in the critical area, does not identify the agency which should have this responsibility. I believe that implementation of this recommendation should be considered as the exclusive responsibility of the Maritime Administration. This is particularly appropriate should a national emergency be declared. The Maritime Administration, as the National Shipping Authority, is responsible for the allocation and operation of all U.S. owned or controlled merchant shipping. This approach to the matter will also serve to remove any ambiguity concerning responsibility for positive action to achieve improved communications to and from our U.S. flag merchant ships.



As noted in the draft report, the Maritime Administration has been engaged in several activities which will enhance effective communications with U.S. flag merchant vessels at all times. In addition to the items noted in the draft report, the Maritime Administration and the Defense Mapping Agency Hydrographic Center jointly developed a procedure to be utilized in disseminating Special Warnings to U.S. merchant ships. These procedures, which will be followed by the Defense Mapping Agency Hydrographic Center when the next Special Warning is broadcast, are as follows:

- a. Initial dissemination of Special Warning messages will continue by the Radio Navigational Warning System during regular scheduled broadcasts. In addition, Special Warnings will be repeated in such broadcasts twice a day for three days and then once each week on Fridays for five weeks. By that time all U.S. ships should have received a printed copy of the Special Warning by means of the Weekly Notice to Mariners.
- b. Special Warnings will also be broadcast by all U.S. Coast Guard Radio Stations during their Local Radio Navigational Warning Broadcasts.
- c. When a Special Warning is released by Defense Mapping Agency Hydrographic Center, through the Radio Navigational Warning System, it will also be forwarded by commercial telegram to U.S. steamship companies for their notification.

The above information (a, b, and c) has been disseminated to all U.S. flag steamship operators through our MarAd Advisory No. 75-6, dated July 25, 1975.

In view of the important nature of these Special Warnings, the effectiveness of their dissemination requires validation. Also included in the MarAd Advisory No. 75-6 was a request that all U.S. flag merchant ships (in general area of incident) acknowledge the receipt of Special Warning messages to Defense Mapping Agency Hydrographic Center through U.S. Government radio facilities.

While the foregoing actions do not assure the receipt and acknowledgment of warning messages, efforts to improve on this system through the cooperation of the steamship operators, the applicable Maritime Labor Unions, and the Navy will continue. The immediate steps to be undertaken in this area by the Maritime Administration will be the issuance of a further MarAd Advisory to all U.S. flag steamship operators calling their attention to the need of copying the Radio Navigational

Warning messages and the need to acknowledge Special Warnings. It is planned to follow this MarAd Advisory with a meeting of the maritime industry and the Maritime Administration to further identify and define problem areas and explore potential action.

Since the Maritime Administration has a specific interest in political/military incidents that could affect U.S. flag merchant shipping, it is felt that the draft report should include a recommendation that this Agency be immediately notified by the State Department, Bureau of Intelligence and Research of any incident that would be normally reported to the State Department, Office of Maritime Affairs.

Your interest in permitting me the opportunity to comment on the draft report is appreciated. If I can be of any further assistance to you in this matter, please let me know.

Sincerely,



ROBERT J. BLACKWELL  
Assistant Secretary  
for Maritime Affairs

Enclosure



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
Maritime Administration  
Washington, D.C. 20230

JUL 25 1975

**MARAD ADVISORY NO. 75-6**

**To: U. S. Flag Steamship Operators**

**Gentlemen:**

**Subject: Improved Procedures for Disseminating Special Warnings  
to U. S. Flag Merchant Ships**

Special Warnings originate from the United States Department of State and are used for disseminating information relating to important international matters to the mariner.

Special Warnings differ in content from normal Navigational Warnings such as HYDROLANTs and HYDROPACs in that they relate to Government policy or political incidents rather than normal notification of navigational dangers to shipping. The content of Special Warnings is the responsibility of the Department of State (Maritime Affairs) and is coordinated with the Chief of Naval Operations through Ocean Affairs of the Politico Military Policy Division. Under certain conditions a Special Warning may be originated by the Navy or any Federal Agency but in such cases it must be approved by the State Department. The Defense Mapping Agency Hydrographic Center (DMAHC) is the disseminating agency for such messages since its Radio Navigational Warning Broadcast System can be received by all U. S. Flag Merchant ships. Presently U.S. Navy Radio Stations, worldwide, broadcast Special Warning messages on the next two scheduled Navigational Warning Broadcasts after the message is received by the Radio Station from DMAHC. Normally such broadcasts are scheduled 12 hours apart at 0430 and 1640 GMT each day.





The procedures utilized in disseminating Special Warnings to U. S. merchant ships were recently reviewed jointly by the Maritime Administration and the Defense Mapping Agency, Hydrographic Center. The following procedures (developed during the review) will be incorporated by DMAHC when the next Special Warning is broadcast:

- a. Initial dissemination of Special Warning messages will continue by the HYDROLANT and HYDROPAC Radio Navigational Warning System during regular scheduled broadcasts. In addition, Special Warnings will be repeated in such broadcasts twice a day for three days and then once each week on Fridays for five weeks. By that time all U. S. ships should have received a printed copy of the Special Warning by means of the Weekly Notice to Mariners.
- b. Special Warnings will also be broadcast by all U. S. Coast Guard Radio Stations during their Local Radio Navigational Warning Broadcasts.
- c. When a Special Warning is released by DMAHC, through the Radio Navigational Warning System, it will also be forwarded by commercial telegram to U. S. steamship companies. This will inform the ship owners of the Special Warning which they may wish to forward to their ships by appropriate methods.

In view of the important nature of Special Warnings the effectiveness of their dissemination requires validation. To assist in evaluating these new procedures each future transmission of a Special Warning will include the following request: "All U. S. Flag Merchant Ships (in general area of incident) acknowledge receipt of this message to DMAHC through U. S. Government radio facilities." The cooperation of U. S. steamship companies in having their ships honor this request would be most helpful.

Sincerely,



BURT KYLE

Director, Office of Domestic Shipping

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