

OPERATION LANTERNE

CAMPAIGN EUROPE 2026 · SCENARIO 8

GULF OF LION, 2027

The Morning After — two launchers among forty ships, and a Russian group coming to meet them

START	DURATION	COMMAND	ROE
05 JAN 2027 · 0600Z	48 HOURS	CTF 473 · CHARLES DE GAULLE	WEAPONS HOLD

TITLE PLATE — THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN, 5 JAN 2027. SATELLITE IMAGERY: NASA EOSDIS WORLDVIEW (MODIS/VIIRS TRUE COLOUR), RENDERED MONOCHROME; PORTS, SHIPS, LIMITS AND ROUTES DRAWN OVER IT.

OPORD 27-005 · BRIEFING PACK · SERIAL 08

Gulf of Lion, 2027

The Morning After · Operation LANTERNE · 5 January 2027

Originator
The Maritime Commander Mediterranean (CECMED), Toulon, on the orders of the Chief of the Defence Staff

Support
CPCO Paris · the legal adviser · Spain and Italy, on request

For
Commander, CTF 473, embarked in FS CHARLES DE GAULLE

As of
05 JAN 27, 0600Z

Order
CECMED/OPS/LTN/27-005, DTG 050500ZJAN27

Campaign
Europe 2026 · scenario 8

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Four hours ago, drones launched from the sea set fire to Fos-sur-Mer and to the port of Barcelona. Two ships did it, and they are still at sea: two among six that hide under borrowed names, among forty that hide nothing. You command the carrier group that was at sea when it happened. The government wants the two ships, their crews and the proof, before they reach a coast where nobody can touch them, and without the shot that would turn a crime into a war.

THE SCENARIO, FOR THE PLAYER RATHER THAN THE COMMANDER

COMPLEXITY

5/5

A carrier air wing, four frigates, a submarine and two patrol aircraft; no mission ready-made; forty-six merchant ships to sort; eight special actions; a Russian group whose behaviour changes with yours.

DIFFICULTY

4/5

Radar does not name a ship. The distances are long and the ships you look for move apart. Every act of force against the wrong ship is paid for, and the Russian group is entitled to be there. No two games are alike.

DURATION

48 h

From first light on 5 January to 0600Z on 7 January at the latest; in practice the game ends four hours after an order to stop that nobody can predict. Several sessions at compressed time.

1 Situation

1.1 The raid

At about **0200Z on 5 January 2027**, some twenty drones came in low from the sea and struck the industrial port of **Fos-sur-Mer**, west of Marseille, and the port of **Barcelona**. Both are burning. Nobody has claimed the attack and nobody will.

Their tracks lead back to the same patch of sea, some **150 nautical miles south of Toulon**. The map shows it as the reference point **LAUNCH AREA 0200Z**, highlighted. The drones were fired from containers aboard merchant ships: **two ships did it**.

1.2 The six

Since 0200Z, the analysis of the ships' automatic identification signals (AIS) has shown **six container vessels** in that area transmitting identities borrowed from other ships, and they still are. Their real names are not known. **Three were heading east**, towards the Sardinia Channel and the Strait of Sicily; **three south**, towards the Algerian coast; all at about eleven knots.

Two of the six are the launchers. The four others have their own reasons to hide — sanctioned cargo, false papers — and are not, by that alone, the business of this operation. On a radar screen all six look like any of the forty other merchant ships at sea.

1.3 Why it is hard

The six are on the **high seas**, where a merchant ship answers to her flag state alone. A ship that transmits another ship's name and cannot account for it may be stopped and visited to verify her flag: that is your ground. Firing into her is another matter, and **only Paris can allow it**, ship by ship, on evidence.

A **Russian naval group** — a frigate, two corvettes, a tanker and an intelligence ship — passed the Strait of Sicily westbound in the night and was north of Bizerte at 0500Z. It is entitled to be where it is, and to escort a merchant ship if it chooses. You are not to fire first at a Russian hull, whatever happens to the ship it escorts. The Russian squadron usually keeps one or two submarines in the Mediterranean; neither has been located since 28 December.

And the clock is against you. The six had four hours' start, they are moving apart, and in less than a day the first of them can be inside African territorial waters, where nothing of yours may follow.

> ON THE PUBLIC RECORD, AND IN THIS EXERCISE
>
> **Reported in the real world** (taken from the scenario's design notes, which summarise press reporting without listing each source): drone overflights of airports and military sites across northern Europe since 2025, one of them over Copenhagen airport; a run of boardings and seizures of shadow-fleet tankers by the French Navy in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean in 2026, one of them off Sicily by a team fast-roped from a helicopter; a press report in September 2026 that Russia was preparing to fire Gerbera drones from containers aboard merchant ships, 200 to 300 km off the coasts of Spain, France or Italy, which Paris and Rome said they had not been warned of; an armed Gerbera recovered from the Baltic the same month.
>
> **This exercise:** the raid of 5 January 2027 and everything that follows; Operation LANTERNE and CTF 473; the six ships, which are invented, as are their names and histories; the Russian group, its orders and its position; the positions of every unit; every order, message and quotation.

1.4 At 0600Z

It is first light. The sun rises at about 0700Z. **CTF 473** — FS CHARLES DE GAULLE with her air wing, the air-defence frigate FS FORBIN, three FREMM frigates and the replenishment ship FS JACQUES CHEVALLIER — is steaming south at twelve knots, some **100 nautical miles north of the launch area**. The attack submarine FS SUFFREN is ahead, deep. At Hyères, the two Atlantique 2 crews were recalled in the night: **neither aircraft will be ready before 0800Z**.

Nothing is airborne and no mission is ready-made. Your surface weapons are on **HOLD**. The opening messages arrive in the first minute: the intelligence summary from CECMED, the word from Hyères, the rules of engagement. If you come to this morning from the earlier operations of the campaign, the Russian mood of the past months comes with you, and it weighs on how far the Russian group will go.

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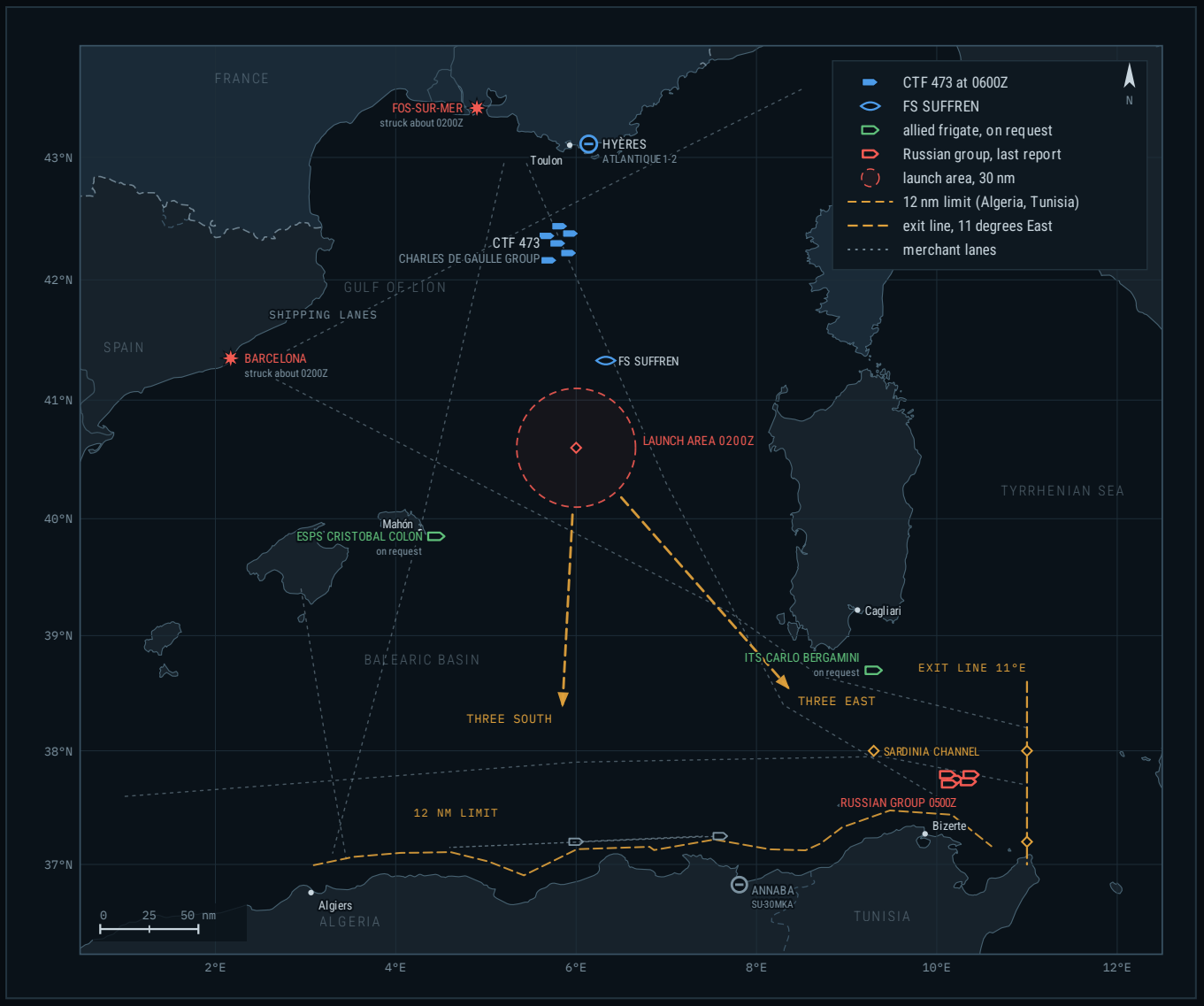
2 The theatre and the ways out

2.1 The western Mediterranean

The theatre runs from the Gulf of Lion to the African coast, and from the Balearics to the Strait of Sicily: some four hundred nautical miles across and three hundred from north to south. The force starts in the north, the launch area lies in the middle, and **every way out lies three hundred miles or more from where you start**.

Reference points on the map: LAUNCH AREA 0200Z, FOS-SUR-MER, BARCELONA and TOULON; **SARDINIA CHANNEL**, the passage between Sardinia and Africa; **EXIT LINE NORTH** and **EXIT LINE SOUTH**, highlighted, on the meridian of 11° East, the approach to the Strait of Sicily; and **TW LIMIT 01 to TW LIMIT 18**, which mark the 12 nm limit off the Algerian and Tunisian coasts.

FIGURE 1 — THE THEATRE, 5 JANUARY 2027

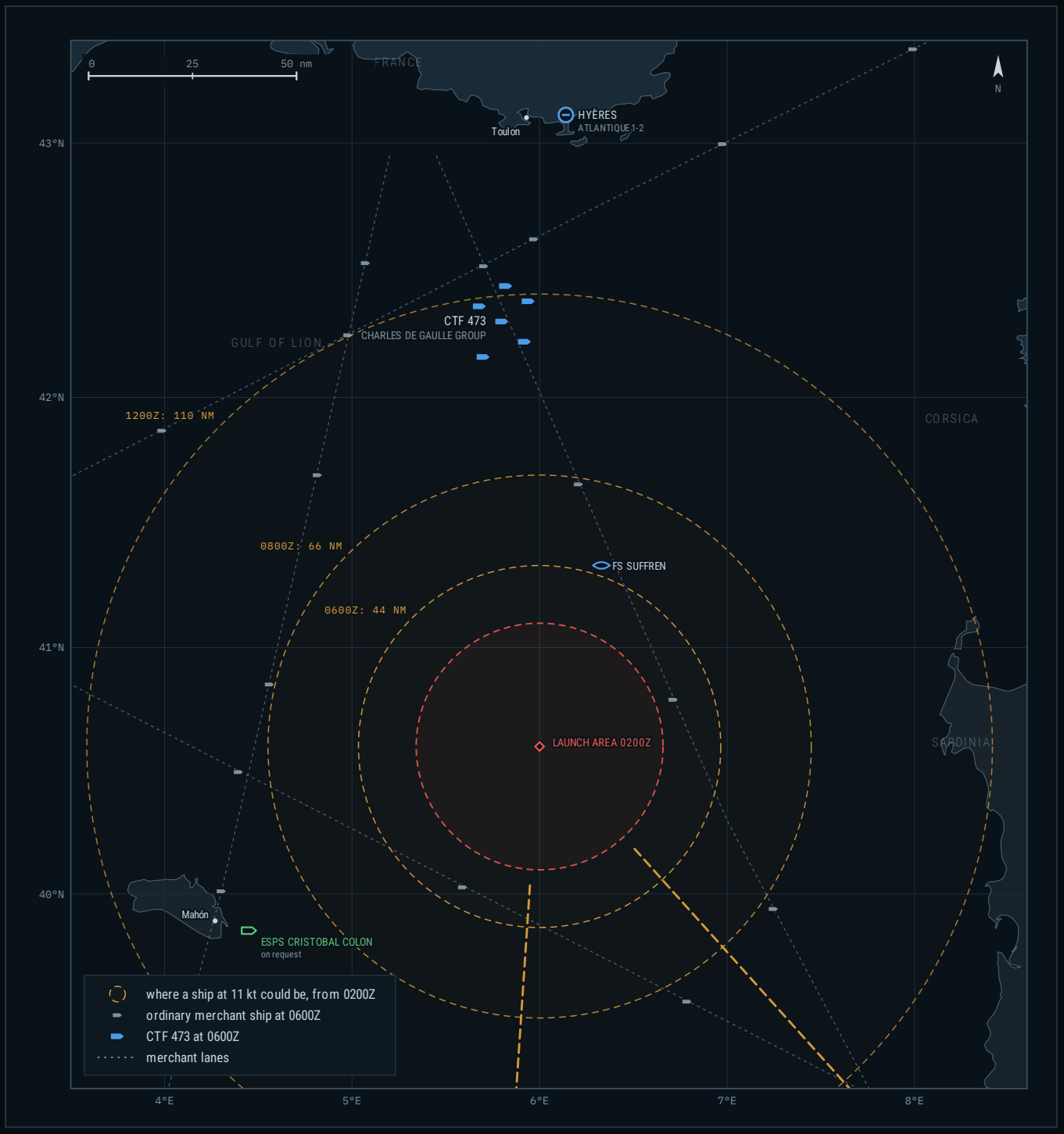


The two amber arrows are the two directions the six ships took from the launch area, as AIS showed them at 0200Z; nobody knows the course each has held since. CTF 473 is drawn at its start position; the Russian group where it was reported at 0500Z. The two allied frigates are lent only on request (section 3.6).

2.2 Where they can be

Nobody has seen the six since 0200Z. What you know is where they started and how fast a container ship of that size goes: about eleven knots. That makes a circle, and it grows by eleven miles an hour: **44 nm at 0600Z, 66 nm at 0800Z, when the Atlantique 2 can fly, 110 nm at noon**. The two directions tell you which half of it to search first.

FIGURE 2 — WHERE A SHIP OF THE SIX COULD BE



The rings are drawn from the centre of the launch area. The small grey marks are the ordinary merchant ships near you at 0600Z; they move, and more come in at the ends of the lanes all day. None of the six is drawn: their positions are not known.

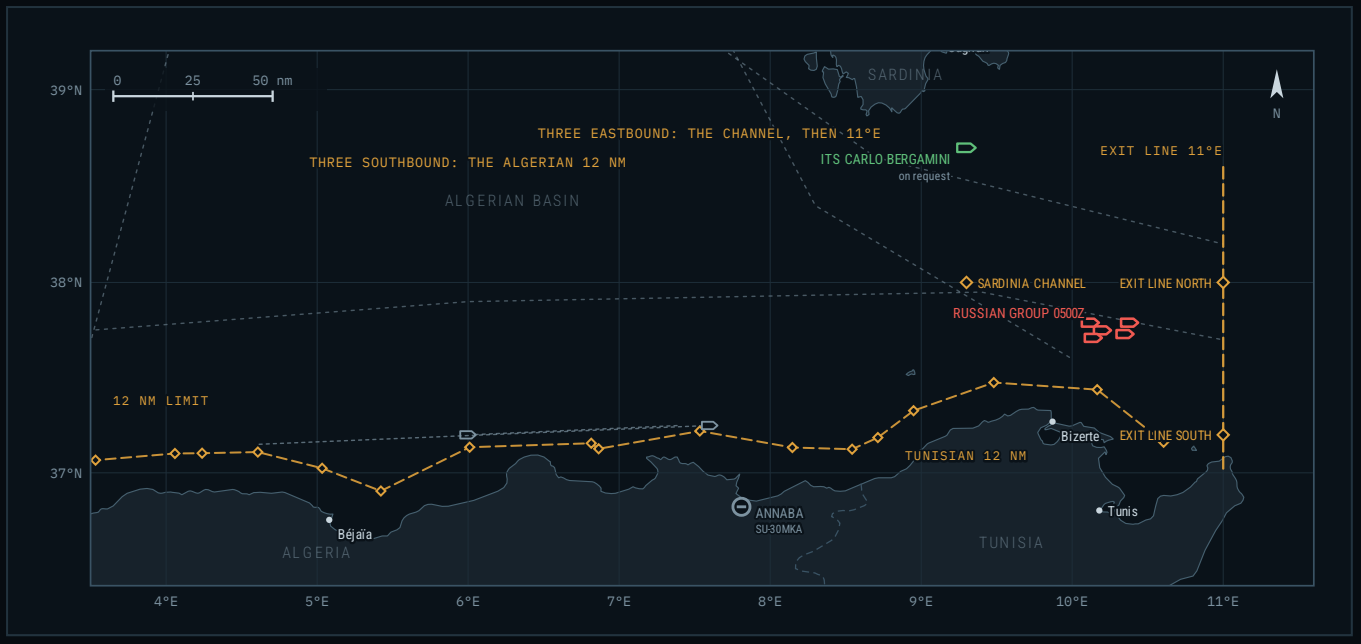
2.3 The ways out

Southbound, the way out is the **Algerian 12 nm**: a ship of the six inside Algerian territorial waters is out of your reach, and nothing of yours goes in after her. A ship that steers straight for the coast from the launch area can be there before the end of the first day.

Eastbound, the way out is longer: through the **Sardinia Channel** and on to the **meridian of 11° East**, the exit line. A ship that reaches it is gone, into the Strait of Sicily. The Tunisian 12 nm, along

the southern side of that passage, is out of reach too. An eastbound ship needs about a day to get to 11°E; it is also the way the Russian group came.

FIGURE 3 — THE WAYS OUT



The amber diamonds are the TW LIMIT reference points, 12 nm off the coast. Algeria keeps an air base at Annaba and two patrol ships off its coast (section 4.4). The exit line is drawn from EXIT LINE NORTH to EXIT LINE SOUTH.

2.4 The traffic

Forty-six merchant ships are at sea in the area at 0600Z, the six among them. Forty sail on six lanes: Gibraltar to the Strait of Sicily along 38°N; the Gulf of Lion to Algiers, and to Sardinia and Sicily; Barcelona to Genoa, and to the Tyrrhenian south of Sardinia; the Balearics to Algeria. They are container ships and tankers under their own names, both ways, at twelve to eighteen knots, and new ones keep coming in at the ends of the lanes. All are shown **NEUTRAL**. They give no ground for anything, and anything done to one of them is paid for.

2.5 Light, weather and the clock

Every time in this pack and in the game is **Zulu**; local time in France, Spain, Italy, Algeria and Tunisia is one hour later. H-hour, 0600Z, is first light. **The sun rises at about 0700Z and sets at about 1620Z; it is dark from about 1720Z until 0555Z**, twelve and a half hours. The moon is a thin crescent that sets early in the afternoon: **the nights are black**. The second day, 6 January, is the same to the minute. Half cloud, 13°C, sea state 4: **helicopters fly and put teams aboard ships throughout**.

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3 Your forces

You command **thirty-five units**: seven ships, a naval air station, and twenty-seven aircraft on a carrier, three frigates and an airfield. Two allied frigates and an Italian patrol aircraft can be added on request.

3.1 The ships

NAME	TYPE	GUN	WHAT IT IS FOR
FS CHARLES DE GAULLE	Nuclear aircraft carrier, flagship	No	The air wing. **Keeps clear of the six**: she is what a Russian salvo would look for
FS FORBIN	Air-defence frigate, Aster 15 and 30	Yes	The umbrella of the force against missiles. **Keep her within about 10 nm of any frigate that works under Russian eyes**
FS PROVENCE	FREMM frigate, CAIMAN 2 embarked	Yes	**The tools of the visit.** Towed sonar, 76 mm gun, Exocet, sixteen Aster 15 each. Detach them towards the two directions: hail, warning shot, disabling fire, boarding, and hold what is taken
FS LANGUEDOC	FREMM frigate, CAIMAN 3 embarked	Yes	
FS AUVERGNE	FREMM frigate, CAIMAN 4 embarked	Yes	
FS JACQUES CHEVALLIER	Replenishment ship	No	Fuel for the force. Stays with the carrier
FS SUFFREN	Nuclear attack submarine	—	Ahead of the force at 100 m, radar silent. Listens at long range, unseen. Weapons on HOLD

"Gun": a gun for a warning shot or disabling fire. At 0600Z the six surface ships steam south in company at twelve knots; SUFFREN makes five knots towards the south-east, some 45 nm north-north-east of the centre of the launch area. A FREMM at full speed covers the 300 nm to the Sardinia Channel or to the Algerian coast in about twelve hours: **the frigates cannot be everywhere; the aircraft must find, the frigates must take.**

3.2 The carrier air wing

CALL SIGN	AIRCRAFT	CARRIES	WHAT IT IS FOR
RAFALE 01–08	Rafale M	2 Meteor, 4 MICA NG, 3 tanks	Air defence, and **the surface picture**: their radar classifies a ship at long range. **It does not name her**
RAFALE 09–14	Rafale M	1 Exocet AM.39, 4 MICA NG, 2 tanks	Anti-ship. Held on deck: there is nothing to sink unless a Russian unit fires
RAFALE 15–16	Rafale M	AREOS reconnaissance pod, 4 MICA NG, 2 tanks	Reconnaissance: flown low and close, a Rafale names and photographs a ship
RAFALE 17–18	Rafale M	Buddy refuelling store, 2 MICA IR NG, 4 tanks	Tankers, for the long legs south and east
HAWKEYE 1–2	E-2C Hawkeye 2000	—	Airborne early warning: every ship and aircraft over the whole area. **Names nobody**
CAIMAN 1	NH90 NFH Caïman	Surveillance	Radar and camera: **names a ship at a few tens of miles**. Hails, carries a team and a marksman
PANTHER 1	AS.565 Panther	Surveillance	The same, at shorter legs

Every aircraft is on deck, armed and ready, at 0600Z. The carrier's magazine holds enough to rearm the air wing several times over.

3.3 The frigates' helicopters

CAIMAN 2, 3 and 4, aboard PROVENCE, LANGUEDOC and AUVERGNE, each carry two MU-90 torpedoes, a dipping sonar and sonobuoys, and a camera that names a ship at a few tens of miles. They are the tool of the visit: they hail, they put a marksman over a ship's engine, they put a team on her deck. A team goes aboard from a helicopter only with a French frigate within 20 nm, so **a helicopter works close to its ship**.

3.4 The Atlantique 2 at Hyères

ATLANTIQUE 1 (eight MU-90 torpedoes and sonobuoys) and **ATLANTIQUE 2** (surveillance) are the best cameras of the force: each **names ships at a few tens of miles** and stays on task for ten hours and more. Their crews were recalled in the night: **they cannot take off before 0800Z**. From Hyères it is 150 nm to the launch area. The air station holds two rearmings of torpedoes and sonobuoys for them.

3.5 Teams and marksmen

Every frigate and every helicopter of CTF 473 can put a **visit team** aboard a ship: from a warship within 1 nm, or from a helicopter in flight within 1 nm. The search takes **about 25 minutes**. A helicopter can also put a **marksman** on a ship's engine. There is no limit on the number of visits, only on the distances, the delays and the law: section 7.

3.6 Allies, on request

ASK	WHAT COMES	WHERE AT 0600Z	WHEN
Spain	**ESPS CRISTOBAL COLON**, air-defence frigate. Barcelona was struck: Madrid will say yes	Stopped east of Menorca	About **45 minutes** after the request
Italy	**ITS CARLO BERGAMINI**, FREMM, and an Italian **P-72A** maritime patrol aircraft. Rome doubts the whole story	The frigate stopped south of Cagliari; the aircraft on station south of Sardinia	About **90 minutes** with evidence against a launcher; about **three hours** without

A lent unit comes under your tactical control **without orders**: give it a course at once. It is commanded like yours, under the same rules, and it can hail, warn, fire into an engine room and board like a French frigate. Each request is a political act: Paris answers to two capitals for what their ships do.

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4 The others, as known

4.1 The six

WHAT IS KNOWN	REMARKS
Where they were	In the launch area at 0200Z, round 40°36'N 006°00'E
What they are	Container ships, feeders of one to three thousand boxes. About eleven knots
Which way	**Three eastbound**, towards the Sardinia Channel and the Strait of Sicily; **three southbound**, towards the Algerian coast
Their names	**Not known.** Their AIS transmits the names of other ships. On radar they look like any merchant ship
Which two	**Not known.** Two launched; four hide for other reasons
How they behave	A ship with nothing worse than false papers usually stops when hailed. **A launcher does not answer.** She may stop for warning shots if she is alone; under escort, she will not

They are unarmed. They are never a target: everything you do to one of them goes through the Special Actions. A ship of the six stopped and left alone does not stay stopped; a launcher gets under way again sooner than the others.

4.2 The Russian group

UNIT	CLASS	WHAT IT CARRIES
RFS ADMIRAL ESSEN	Admiral Grigorovich frigate	**Eight Kalibr anti-ship missiles**, Shtil SAM, 100 mm gun
RFS MERKURIY	Steregushchiy corvette	**Eight Kh-35 anti-ship missiles**, Redut SAM, 100 mm gun
RFS MYTISHCHI	Karakurt corvette	Kalibr, Pantsir-M, 76 mm gun
RFS AKADEMIK PASHIN	Replenishment tanker	Unarmed
RFS IVAN KHURS	Yury Ivanov intelligence ship	Signals intelligence: can give the group a picture of your ships at any range

The group was north of Bizerte at 0500Z, steaming west at fourteen knots towards the Sardinia Channel. It is shown **UNFRIENDLY**. **What it will do is not known.** The staff's reading, from the most to the least likely: it meets one of the eastbound ships and escorts her to the Strait of Sicily; it keeps away from the six and waits for you to show your hand; it escorts a ship that is not a launcher, to draw you. Its units have broken no rule, and Russian warships protect what they escort (section 6.3).

4.3 The submarines

The Russian Mediterranean squadron usually keeps one or two **Project 636.3 (Kilo)** submarines in theatre. Neither has been located since 28 December: their presence can be neither confirmed nor excluded. A Kilo on batteries at a few knots is almost silent. She is found by active sonar — a frigate's hull sonar, a Caïman's dipping sonar, the active buoys of an Atlantique 2 — or when she comes up to periscope depth. If one is at sea, the staff would look for her on a passage the six must use, or near the carrier. **No weapon goes into the water before a Russian torpedo does** (section 6.4).

4.4 Algeria and Tunisia

Both are neutral. **Algeria watches its 12 nm closely.** Any French ship or aircraft inside it is warned off by Algiers; two Su-30MKA from the air base at Annaba come overhead and stay; one of the two patrol ships, ANS ERRADII or ANS ADHAFER, closes; Paris receives the ambassador. They do not fire, and they are never to be engaged. A ship of the six inside Algerian or Tunisian territorial waters is out of reach.

4.5 The ordinary ships

Forty of the forty-six merchant ships are what they say they are. A hail gets an answer at once, under the name on the hull. A warning shot across the bow of one of them is paid for; disabling fire into one of them is paid for dearly; Paris refuses leave to fire at one and a team will not board one. The work of the first hours is to sort them out of the way.

5 How to find them, and how to prove it

5.1 Radar gives a type, never a name

This is the first fact of the operation. **A radar return tells you there is a ship, and with a good radar what kind of ship; it does not tell you which ship.** A Rafale on patrol labels a container ship as a container ship at eighty miles and more, and the six are container ships, like many of the forty others. The Hawkeye shows you every hull over the whole theatre and names none of them.

Only a camera close enough puts a name on her: the camera of an Atlantique 2, of a Caïman or the Panther, of a frigate, of the Italian P-72A, or a Rafale flown low and close. SUFFREN's sonar sometimes classifies a ship well enough to name her. And **any ship of yours, or any aircraft of yours below 3000 m, that comes within about 6 nm of a ship of the six identifies her**.

FIGURE 4 — WHO PUTS A NAME ON A SHIP, AND FROM HOW FAR



Distances are approximate, as seen in play: they vary with the weather, the light, the angle and the size of the ship.

5.2 When one of the six is named

The moment one of your units puts the real name on a ship of the six, **N2** tells you: "The container vessel you have just identified at … is …, and that is not the name her AIS transmits. She is one of the six (… found so far), heading east" — or south. From then on her contact bears her real name on your map. A ship that is named and is not one of the six is simply an ordinary ship: there is nothing more to do with her.

Staff - Situation, a Special Action, lists at any time the ships found, which way each is heading, what you know about her deck and what Paris has said.

5.3 Satellite passes

From first light into the afternoon, **SATELLITE PASS** messages report a container vessel whose hull does not match her AIS, near a position, with her course. Each is one pass and no second look:

treat the position as probable, not certain. **One of them may be miles off.** A pass tells you where to send a camera, not what the ship is.

5.4 Imagery: the evidence

Naming a ship tells you she is one of the six. It does not tell you whether she launched. For that you need a look at her deck: **put a ship, or an aircraft below 3000 m, within 4 nm of her, and keep it there for five minutes without a break**. The **IMAGERY** message then reports one of two things:

IMAGERY REPORTS	IT MEANS
"Two containers on the upper tier stand open to the sky, rails inside, scorch marks on the lids. This is evidence. Paris will accept it."	**A launcher.** You hold evidence against her: Paris can authorise disabling fire, Rome will move faster, and a team may go aboard by force
"Deck cargo closed and lashed, nothing unusual on the upper tier. No evidence against her."	Not a launcher, as far as anyone can see. She hides something else. Leave her, and look for the next one

Five minutes at 4 nm is longer than it sounds for a fast jet: **a helicopter, an Atlantique 2 or a frigate does it best**. Imagery is taken only of a ship of the six that is named. It does not alert her.

5.5 A search, in outline

No search is ready-made. Annex C of the order suggests one; it is a suggestion and nothing more.

— **The picture**: a Hawkeye over the middle of the area from H-hour, relieved by the other.

— **East**: ATLANTIQUE 1 from 0800Z, a Caïman, RAFALE 15 low and close, a FREMM down the eastern side. The Sardinia Channel is where the Russian group goes.

— **South**: ATLANTIQUE 2 from 0800Z, a Caïman, RAFALE 16 low and close, a FREMM due south. The southbound three have the shortest way out.

— **Underwater**: SUFFREN towards the Sardinia Channel; the towed sonars of the frigates listening as they go.

— **The carrier**: FORBIN and a frigate with her until FORBIN goes south or east to cover a frigate at work.

— **Allies**: Spain early, CRISTOBAL COLON is close to the southern lanes; Italy when you have imagery of a launcher, BERGAMINI is close to the Sardinia Channel.

A patrol mission flown by Rafales alone will fill your map with container ships and give you no names. **Send cameras where the radars point.**

6 Rules of engagement and the Russian group

6.1 Five rules

France is not at war. Nobody has claimed last night's raid, and the ships that launched it are merchant ships on the high seas. The rules of engagement of Operation LANTERNE come in the opening message; here they are in plain words.

RULE 1 · YOU DO NOT FIRE FIRST AT A RUSSIAN UNIT

Whatever it does short of firing: a protest, a radar locked on, a warship across your bow, warning shots, a ship taken back. A French weapon that strikes a Russian hull first, **or that is fired and shot down by Russian air defence**, is an act Paris has not authorised.

RULE 2 · WHEN A RUSSIAN UNIT FIRES, YOU MAY ANSWER THE UNIT THAT FIRED

And any Russian unit that fires next; no other. **Proportion is expected**: Paris will count what is sunk. Self-defence against an incoming weapon is always allowed.

RULE 3 · SURFACE WEAPONS ON HOLD, EVERY UNIT, EVERY MISSION

A unit on HOLD does not fire at a ship **even when you order it to**. To engage a surface target, set that unit to TIGHT, then order the attack; set it back afterwards. Air: TIGHT. Missions you create start with their own weapon settings: **check them before the first aircraft leaves**.

RULE 4 · NOTHING INTO THE WATER BEFORE THEIR TORPEDO

No weapon is dropped or fired at an underwater contact unless a Russian torpedo is in the water. Track, hold, classify, report.

RULE 5 · MERCHANT SHIPS ARE NEVER TARGETS

Never mark a merchant contact hostile. Everything you do to a merchant ship, from a hail to a boarding, goes through the Special Actions; disabling fire only with the leave of Paris. Nothing of yours inside the Algerian 12 nm.

6.2 HOLD, in practice

The whole force starts with surface weapons on **HOLD**, air on **TIGHT**, underwater on **HOLD**. Your ships still defend themselves against missiles with their Aster and their guns: that is the air setting, and it is TIGHT. What HOLD stops is a frigate firing an Exocet at a Russian corvette because the corvette was shown as a target, or an aircraft on patrol dropping a torpedo on the first submarine contact it holds.

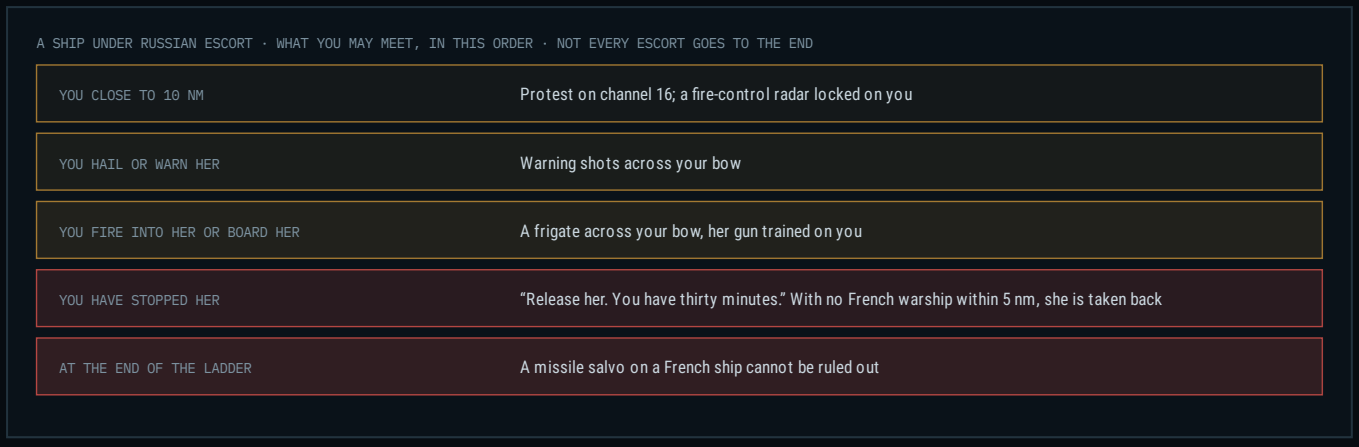
A mission you create in the Mission Editor carries **its own weapon settings**, which may not be those of the side. Open its doctrine and set surface and underwater to HOLD, every time. If you ever mark a merchant contact hostile by mistake, CECMED resets the merchant ships to UNFRIENDLY and reminds you why.

When a Russian unit fires, **FLASH** tells you so, and CECMED reminds you that your units are still on HOLD. To answer, choose the units that will fire, set them to TIGHT, and attack the unit that fired. Nothing obliges you to answer.

6.3 A ship under Russian escort

If the Russian group meets one of the six, it takes station round her: CECMED tells you when it does. From then on, that ship is the hard case. Russian warships protect what they escort, and they do it step by step.

FIGURE 5 — WHAT AN ESCORT DOES AS YOU CLOSE



Each step is set off by something you do. Not every escort goes to the end of the ladder, and you will not know beforehand how far this one will go. **ESM** tells you when a French ship is being tracked by Russian targeting data.

Three things follow. **Keep FORBIN close** to any frigate that works under Russian eyes: her Aster 30 reach further than a FREMM’s Aster 15, and a FREMM alone has sixteen of those. **No helicopter fire and no boarding by force** with a Russian warship within 5 nm of the ship: under those guns, it takes a frigate. And **what you stop, you hold**: a French warship within 5 nm of her until the end, or she is taken back.

If you can, **take her before the group arrives**. A launcher the Russian group has reached is a launcher under escort.

6.4 Underwater

A contact under the water may be a Russian submarine, a whale or nothing. Whatever it is, **nothing is fired at it until FLASH — TORPEDO IN THE WATER**. From that message, underwater contacts may be attacked, with units you set to TIGHT for underwater. Before it, a submarine sunk is a submarine sunk in peacetime, and Paris will have to explain it. What you can do is find her, hold her, and keep the frigates that stop ships out of her way.

6.5 Algeria

The TW LIMIT reference points mark the Algerian 12 nm. **No ship and no aircraft inside, ever, not even to follow a ship of the six.** Each entry brings a protest from Algiers, two Su-30MKA over the intruder for as long as it stays, and a patrol ship closing. Mind your aircraft too: an Atlantique 2 that follows a ship towards the coast at low level is inside before you know it.

6.6 The order to stop

At an hour nobody can give you, **Paris and Moscow will order both sides to stop**. The message is PARIS — CEASE. From then: **no fire at all, nothing new attempted** (every Special Action that acts on a ship answers “The cease order is in force. Nothing new is to be attempted.”), and **within four hours no French warship within 25 nm of a Russian warship**. Ships already taken stay taken, if you hold them. The game ends four hours after the order.

6.7 What mistakes cost

Nothing in this pack puts a number on a mistake, but all of these are counted and none is forgotten: a French weapon on a Russian hull first; fire after the order to stop; a submarine sunk before her torpedo; force against a ship that had nothing to do with the raid, or against a launcher without the leave of Paris; a warning shot across an ordinary ship’s bow; a ship boarded for nothing; an entry into Algerian waters; a French ship lost or hit; a force still close to the Russians when the four hours are up. Some cost little; a few undo a good day.

7 Special Actions guide

7.1 How they work

The command interface cannot hail a merchant ship, ask Paris for leave or put a team on a deck. Those acts are **Special Actions**, in the Special Actions window of the **Game** menu. There are **eight**, in three families: the vessel, the allies, the staff. The answer to each comes back as a message, and when an action cannot be carried out the message says why. The names below are exactly those of the game.

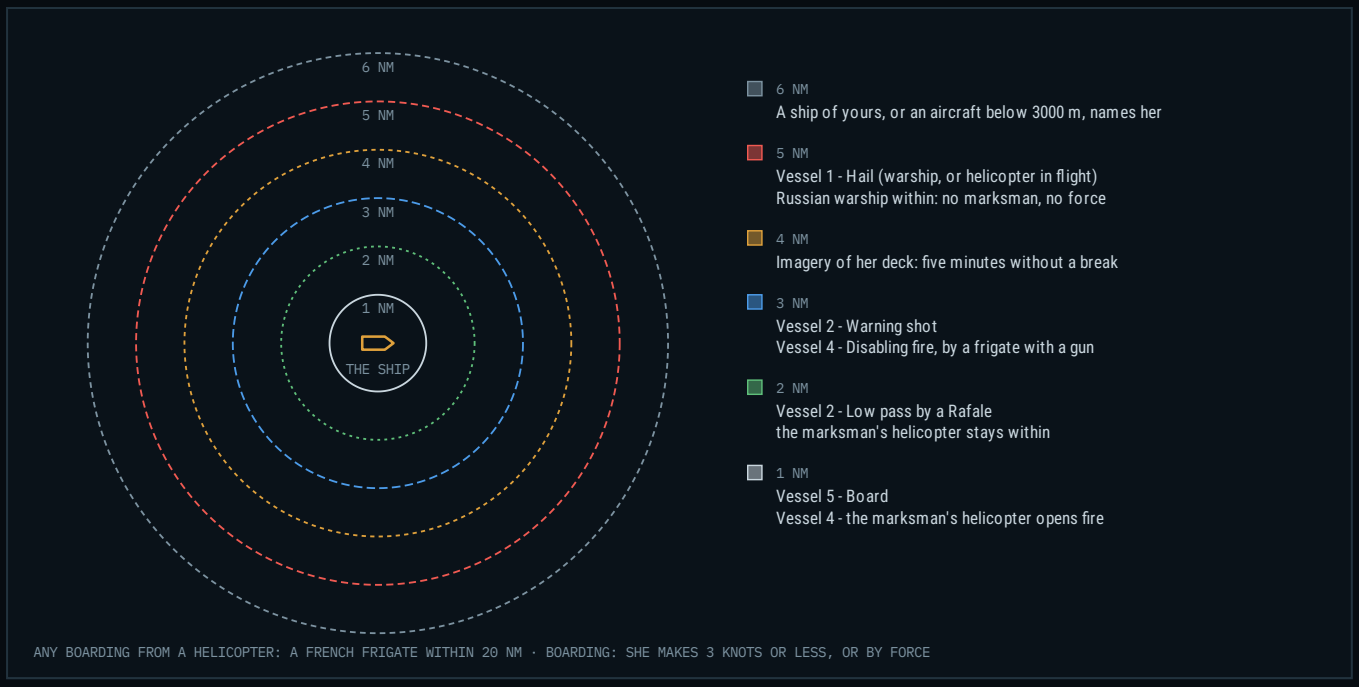
The five vessel actions act on one merchant ship: select her first. Click the ship's contact on the map, one ship only, then run the action. With nothing selected the action answers "Nothing usable is selected. Select one merchant contact on the map (click it), then run the action again."; with a unit that is not a merchant ship selected, it says so.

Two acts need two clicks: Vessel 4 - Disabling fire, and Vessel 5 - Board when it has to go in by force. The first click changes nothing: it checks the conditions, says who would act and what Paris has said, and ends with "To CONFIRM, run this same action once more within 10 minutes." The second click, on the same action with the same ship selected, carries it out. Wait more than ten minutes and the confirmation is forgotten: start again.

Before the clock is started every action answers "Start the clock first."; once the operation has ended, "The operation is over."

FAMILY	ACTIONS	SELECT FIRST	CLICKS
The vessel	Vessel 1 - Hail Vessel 2 - Warning (shot or low pass) Vessel 3 - Ask Paris for disabling fire Vessel 4 - Disabling fire Vessel 5 - Board	One merchant contact	1 1 1 2 1, or 2 by force
The allies	Allies - Ask Spain for a frigate Allies - Ask Italy for a frigate and a patrol aircraft	Nothing	1 1
The staff	Staff - Situation	Nothing	1

FIGURE 6 — THE DISTANCES OF THE VESSEL ACTIONS



Every distance is measured from the selected ship to the nearest of your units that can do the act.
A helicopter counts only in flight; an aircraft below 3000 m.

7.2 The vessel

Vessel 1 - Hail

Calls the selected ship on channel 16 and orders her to stop for a flag verification.
Needs: a French warship, or a French helicopter in flight, within **5 nm** of her.
Answers: CHANNEL 16. An ordinary ship answers at once, under the name on her hull. A ship of the six with nothing worse than false papers usually answers after a long minute and stops; sometimes she answers that you have no right to stop her, and holds her course. **A launcher does not answer.**
Costs: nothing.
When: always first, on any ship of the six you reach. Its silence is a clue in itself. A ship that stopped and that nobody boards gets under way again after a while.

Vessel 2 - Warning (shot or low pass)

Two rounds across her bow from a frigate, or a low pass at masthead height, with flares, by a Rafale.
Needs: a French frigate with a gun within **3 nm** (FORBIN, PROVENCE, LANGUEDOC, AUVERGNE, or a lent frigate; not the carrier, not the replenishment ship), or a Rafale in flight within **2 nm**.
Answers: a ship with only false papers stops. **A launcher on her own may stop; a launcher under escort will not**, and her men film you from the bridge wing. A ship stopped this way does not stay stopped if nobody comes to hold her.
Costs: nothing on a ship of the six. **Done to an ordinary ship, it costs you**: she stops, protests on every channel, and the owners and the flag state remember.
When: after a hail that got no answer, on a ship that is named. The Rafale pass gets there first; the frigate must be there anyway to hold her.

Vessel 3 - Ask Paris for disabling fire

Asks the minister for leave to fire into her engine room.
Needs: a merchant contact selected; nothing near her. **Paris says yes only if you have shown evidence against that ship**: imagery of her deck (section 5.4). Without it the request goes up anyway, and comes back refused. For an ordinary ship under her own name, Paris refuses at once: no grounds.
Answers: at once, an acknowledgement saying whether your imagery is attached; **30 to 60 minutes** later, **PARIS — AUTHORISED** or **REFUSED**.
Costs: nothing.
When: the moment the imagery shows rails. Ask early: the answer is slow, and the leave, once given, stays.

Vessel 4 - Disabling fire

Stops her for good. **Run it twice**: the first click shows who will fire and whether Paris has said yes; the second, within ten minutes, fires.
Needs: a French frigate with a gun within **3 nm**: aimed single rounds into the engine room, and she is **dead in the water about ten minutes later**. Or, with no frigate close enough, a French helicopter in flight within **1 nm** puts a **marksman** on her engine: about **twenty minutes**, the helicopter staying **within 2 nm** all the time, and **not with a Russian warship within 5 nm** of her.
Answers: the firing unit reports it has opened fire; **BRIDGE REPORT** when she has lost way. If the marksman's helicopter strays beyond 2 nm before the engine is hit, **SNIPER TEAM** reports that nothing was done: run the action again.
Costs: this is force against a merchant ship. **Without the leave of Paris it costs you dearly, and against the wrong ship more still.** A ship disabled by your fire is yours to look after: keep a warship by her.
When: on a launcher that will not stop, with the leave of Paris, before the Russian group reaches her.

Vessel 5 - Board

Puts a visit team aboard her.
Needs: a French warship within **1 nm**, or a French helicopter in flight within **1 nm**; the ship **stopped or nearly so, 3 knots or less**; for a team from a helicopter, **a French frigate within 20 nm** in support.
Answers: "The team from … is aboard …"; **about 25 minutes** later, **BOARDING TEAM** reports what it found: launch rails, airframes, a control station and a crew that is not the crew on the list, and she is **seized**; or nothing, and she is released with a complaint from her owner. A team will not board an ordinary ship under her own name: no grounds.
By force: a ship **under way** can only be boarded by a team fast-roped from a helicopter within 1 nm, **against a ship you hold evidence against**, with **no Russian warship within 5 nm** and a frigate within 20 nm. Two clicks. It does not always work: a team driven off has wounded and **needs an hour** before it tries again.
Costs: an innocent ship boarded is paid for; a boarding by force driven off too.
When: once she is stopped or disabled, with a frigate close. Then **hold her**: a warship within 5 nm until the end.

7.3 The allies

Allies - Ask Spain for a frigate

"Barcelona was hit: Madrid agrees quickly." **ESPS CRISTOBAL COLON**, east of Menorca, comes under your orders about **45 minutes** later; **MADRID** gives you the time.
Costs: a little political credit: Paris answers to Madrid for what she does.
When: early. She is the closest frigate to the southern lanes at 0600Z.

Allies - Ask Italy for a frigate and a patrol aircraft

"Rome doubts the whole story." **ITS CARLO BERGAMINI**, south of Cagliari, and a **P-72A** come under your orders about **90 minutes** later if you already hold evidence against a launcher; about **three hours** later without. **ROME** gives you the time.
Costs: the same as Spain.
When: as soon as you hold imagery of a launcher; earlier only if the eastern side is empty of your ships.

Each request is made once. A lent ship arrives stopped and without orders: give her a course, and check her weapon settings like any of yours.

7.4 The staff

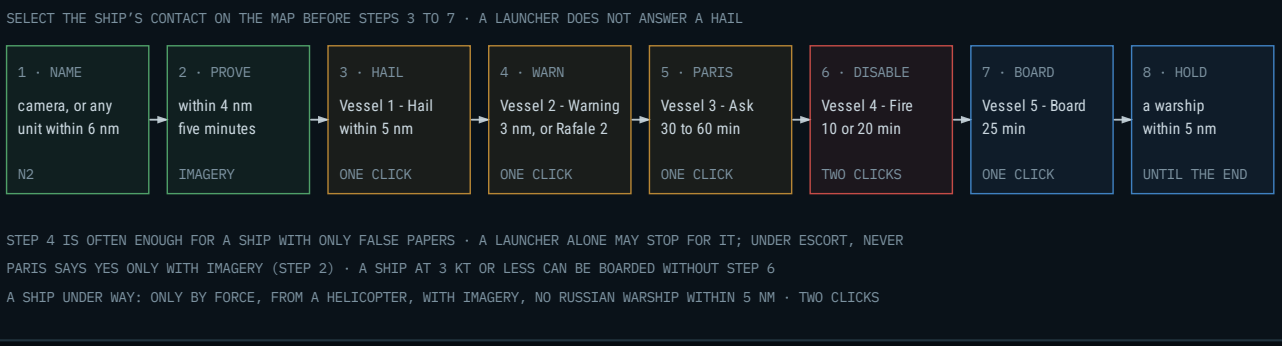
Staff - Situation

What the staff knows, at any time and at no cost: how many of the six are found; for each, which way she heads, what has been done to her, what her deck showed and what Paris said; what the Russian group has done so far, and whether you may return fire; the allies asked for; and, once given, the cease order and the time by which you must be clear of the Russians.

7.5 A worked sequence

The whole of section 7 in one ship: a launcher, found at sea, with a frigate and its helicopter on her.

FIGURE 7 — THE SEQUENCE ON A SHIP



1 **Name her.** The Atlantique 2 that found her holds her at twenty-five miles; a FREMM closes at full speed and launches her Caïman when 30 nm out.

2 **Prove it.** The Caïman settles within 4 nm of her and stays five minutes. IMAGERY: rails. At once, **Vessel 3 - Ask Paris for disabling fire**, and if you have not done so, **Allies - Ask Italy ….**

3 **Hail her.** The Caïman, within 5 nm: **Vessel 1 - Hail**. No answer.

4 **Warn her.** A Rafale overhead, or the frigate within 3 nm: **Vessel 2 - Warning (shot or low pass)**. If she stops, go straight to step 6.

5 **Disable her.** Paris has said yes. The frigate within 3 nm: **Vessel 4 - Disabling fire**, twice. Ten minutes later, BRIDGE REPORT: dead in the water.

6 **Board her.** The frigate within 1 nm, or the Caïman in flight within 1 nm with the frigate in support: **Vessel 5 - Board**. Twenty-five minutes later, BOARDING TEAM: seized.

7 **Hold her.** The frigate stays within 5 nm. The Caïman goes home to refuel. The Atlantique 2 goes to look for the other one.

7.6 Common refusals, and what to do

THE MESSAGE SAYS	WHY	DO
"Nothing usable is selected"	No merchant contact is selected, or the click did not take	Click the ship's contact, one only, then run the action again
"No French warship or helicopter within 5 nm"	The hail needs a unit close; the message gives the distance of the nearest	Close in, or launch the helicopter
"No French frigate within 3 nm … and no Rafale in flight within 2 nm"	Warning: the carrier and the replenishment ship have no gun for it	Bring a frigate with a gun, or a Rafale low over her
"A Russian warship is within 5 nm … This needs a frigate."	No marksman and no fast-roping under Russian guns	Bring a frigate within 3 nm for disabling fire, or catch her away from the escort
"… under way and you hold no evidence against her"	Boarding by force needs imagery of her deck	Stop her first, or take the imagery
"No French frigate within 20 nm …"	A team does not go aboard from a helicopter without a warship in support	Bring the frigate closer before launching the team
"… sails under her own identity. No grounds: refused."	An ordinary ship: there is nothing against her	Leave her, look for the six
"The team that was waved off … needs an hour"	A boarding by force was driven off	Stop her by fire, or wait the hour
"The cease order is in force."	Paris and Moscow have ordered both sides to stop	Nothing new. Open to 25 nm from the Russians

7.7 What they do not do

The Special Actions move nothing and change no weapon setting. The frigate that will fire, the helicopter that will put a team aboard, the warship that will hold a ship: you put them there, with

the ordinary commands of the game, before you click. And none of them can be undone: a shot fired is fired, a request sent is sent.

8 The forty-eight hours

The operation runs from **0600Z on 5 January** until four hours after the order to stop, and in any case no later than **0600Z on 7 January**. Nobody can give you the hour of that order. What is fixed is the light, the delays of your own means, and the distances.

FIGURE 8 — THE FORTY-EIGHT HOURS



Times of light are for the launch area; at Toulon and in the Sardinia Channel they differ by a few minutes. No time is shown for anything the six or the Russians will do: none is known.

PERIOD	LIGHT	WHAT TO EXPECT	WHAT TO DO WITH IT
0600Z – 0800Z The first two hours	First light, sunrise about 0700Z	The six are 44 to 66 nm from the launch area, and you are 100 nm north of it. The first satellite pass. CECMED INTELLIGENCE on the Russian submarines. No Atlantique 2 yet	The picture: a Hawkeye up. Rafales south and east, and the reconnaissance pair low. Frigates detached. Missions ready for the Atlantique 2. Ask Spain
0800Z – 1200Z The morning	Daylight	The Atlantique 2 on task. The first names. More satellite passes. **By about noon the Russian group can be in the Sardinia Channel**	Name the six one by one; imagery on each as soon as she is named; ask Paris at the first rails; ask Rome
1200Z – 1720Z The afternoon	Daylight, sunset about 1620Z	The southbound three close the African coast. The group with whatever it has met. The last satellite pass	**The time to take them.** Frigates alongside, helicopters over them, before dark and before the escort
1720Z – 0555Z The first night	Black: no moon	A southbound ship not taken by now may reach the Algerian 12 nm in the evening. The eastbound three press on towards 11°E	Cameras still work; the helicopters still fly. Hold what you have taken. Watch the Algerian line
6 January The second day	The same light	An eastbound ship not taken is near the exit line. **The order to stop may come at any hour**	Have everything you hold held, and know how each ship will open to 25 nm

PERIOD	LIGHT	WHAT TO EXPECT	WHAT TO DO WITH IT
After the order Four hours	—	Nothing new may be attempted. The Russian group stands down	Every French warship 25 nm from every Russian warship. Keep what you hold

Forty-eight hours are longer than any crew's day and any aircraft's fuel. An Atlantique 2 stays ten hours on task and then goes home; a Caïman much less. Plan the reliefs, and the tankers for the long legs.

The operation also ends when both launchers have been dealt with and all has been quiet for two hours. Its closing report, **THE MORNING AFTER**, tells you how the government reads the operation.

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9 The first thirty minutes, and how you will be judged

9.1 A checklist for the first thirty minutes

Pause the game after the first minute, when the opening messages have arrived, and work through this. Menu names are those of Command: Modern Operations 1.10 and may differ slightly on your build.

1. **Read the opening messages to the end**: CECMED INTELLIGENCE, HYÈRES, RULES OF ENGAGEMENT.
2. **Look at the map.** LAUNCH AREA 0200Z, the two directions, the exit line, the TW LIMIT points. Forty-six NEUTRAL merchant contacts, or fewer: those your sensors do not yet hold are not on the map.
3. **Get the picture up.** Open the Mission Editor (**F11**, or the **Missions + Ref. Points** menu), create a support mission for **HAWKEYE 1** over the middle of the area, and keep HAWKEYE 2 to relieve it.
4. **Set the weapon settings of every mission you create**: surface **HOLD**, underwater **HOLD**. Do it now, before the first aircraft leaves.
5. **Send Rafales south and east** on patrol to classify the container ships, and **RAFALE 15 and 16** low, to name them. Keep the anti-ship Rafales on deck.
6. **Detach the frigates.** Plot a course (**F3**) for one FREMM due south and one or two towards the Sardinia Channel, at their best speed. Keep FORBIN and a frigate with the carrier for now.
7. **Prepare the Atlantique 2.** Create their missions now, one east and one south: they will take off when ready, at 0800Z. Check their weapon settings: ATLANTIQUE 1 carries torpedoes.
8. **Place SUFFREN.** Towards the Sardinia Channel, deep, to listen.
9. **Ask Spain for her frigate. Allies - Ask Spain for a frigate**: one click, about 45 minutes.
10. **Keep the helicopters on deck** until there is a ship within their reach to name, hail or board.

11 **Leave everything else on HOLD.** There is nothing to change.

9.2 How you will be judged

At the end, the government reads the operation under three heads: what happened to the two launchers, how it was done, and what it cost. No figures are given here. What it wants is this.

THE GOVERNMENT WANTS	WHICH MEANS
The two launchers taken	Boarded and seized, with their crews, and held by a French warship until the end. A launcher dead in the water and held is a good result too; a launcher sunk is not what was asked; a launcher gone is a failure
The evidence	Imagery of each launcher's deck. It is what Paris will show the world
No innocent ship harmed	No disabling fire into a ship that had nothing to do with the raid, no warning shot across an ordinary ship's bow, no ship boarded for nothing
No French shot first	The gravest fault of the operation. A French weapon on a Russian hull first, or a submarine sunk before her torpedo, hands Moscow the incident it wants
Proportion	If a Russian unit fires, an answer to that unit, not to the group
The neutral coast respected	Nothing of yours inside the Algerian 12 nm
The order to stop obeyed	No fire after it, and every French warship 25 nm from every Russian warship within four hours
The force intact	Every ship and aircraft lost or hit is counted, the carrier above all

Two launchers fired into and nothing proven is not a success. Two launchers left alone to keep the peace is not one either. The order asks you to take them, lawfully, and to keep the incident from becoming a war.

If you play the campaign, the grade, the shots exchanged with the Russians, what was learnt of the launchers and of the submarines, and what you lost go with you to the next operation.

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10 Setting up, versions and credits

10.1 Building the scenario

The scenario is not delivered as a file: it is built in a minute by a script, the **builder** ("Gulf of Lion, 2027 - Builder.lua"), which creates the sides, the units, the merchant traffic, the reference points, the Special Actions and the engine. There is one version of the scenario.

1 Start Command: Modern Operations and open the **Scenario Editor** with a **new, empty scenario** on the DB3000 database, v519.

2 Open the **Lua script console** (Editor menu), paste the whole text of the builder into it and **run** it. Run it **once only**: a second run on the same scenario stops by itself.

3. Read the end of the console output. Every line begins with **[S08]**. The last line counts the operations and must show no failure; the control lines above it must show **35** units created for the player, **6** ships under a borrowed identity and **40** other merchant ships.
4. Check the manual settings of section 10.2.
5. **Save the scenario as "Gulf of Lion, 2027.scen" without starting the clock.** The game sets itself up during the first minute of play: a save made after the clock has run is a game in progress, not the scenario. To play again, start again from the save made here.
6. Load the save in normal play, on the side FRANCE, and start the clock. The opening messages arrive within the first minute.

10.2 Manual settings to check

WHERE	SETTING	VALUE
Scenario time	Current time **and** start time	**05/01/2027 06:00:00 Z**. The script sets them and says in the console whether it succeeded; check both
Scenario time	Duration	**2 days**, set by the script
Scenario	Title; player side	Gulf of Lion, 2027; FRANCE
Scenario	Complexity; difficulty	5 / 5; 4 / 5
Editor > Scenario Features & Settings	Unlimited base magazines	**Not ticked**
	Aircraft damage	**Ticked**
	Detailed gun fire control	**Ticked**
Editor > Add/Edit Sides	ITALY, SPAIN, RUSSIAN NAVY, MERCHANT, ALGERIA	Each set to **"Computer-only"**
	FRANCE	Awareness **Normal**

10.3 Versions

ITEM	VERSION
Command: Modern Operations	v1.10, build 1900.20
Database	DB3000 v519
Builder	v0.2.11
Campaign	Europe 2026, scenario 8; played after scenario 7, Kleine-Brogel, 2026. It can also be played on its own
In-game text	English; console output of the builder in French

Stand-ins in the game. The launch rails, the imagery, the hails, the warnings, the disabling fire and the boardings are the scenario's own, written by its engine; no drone flies during the operation. The two allied frigates are on the map from the start, on their own sides; they change to yours when the request is answered. The Italian P-72A is created at that moment.

10.4 Words used in this pack

AIS The automatic identification signal every merchant ship is supposed to transmit, with her name.

CECMED The Maritime Commander Mediterranean, Toulon: your superior. Signs CECMED and CECMED INTELLIGENCE.

CPCO The planning and conduct centre of the Chief of the Defence Staff, Paris. In the game, PARIS.

CTF 473 The carrier strike group: your command.

Disabling fire Aimed fire into a ship's engine room, or at her engine, to stop her without sinking her.

ESM Electronic support measures: what your ships hear of other ships' radars.

Exit line The meridian of 11° East, between EXIT LINE NORTH and EXIT LINE SOUTH.

FLASH The highest precedence: a Russian unit has fired, a French ship is hit, a torpedo is in the water.

FREMM The multi-mission frigates PROVENCE, LANGUEDOC and AUVERGNE.

High seas The sea beyond 12 nm, where a merchant ship answers to her flag state.

Kilo The Russian Project 636.3 diesel-electric submarine.

N2 The intelligence cell of your staff.

Territorial waters The sea within 12 nm of the coast: here, the Algerian and Tunisian 12 nm.

The six The six container ships transmitting borrowed identities since 0200Z.

UNFRIENDLY A contact that is watched but not engaged.

WEAPONS HOLD / TIGHT The unit does not fire / fires only at contacts shown hostile.

[A1], [B2], [C3] Reliability of a report: the letter for the source, the figure for the information.

ZULU UTC. Local time in the western Mediterranean in January is Zulu plus one hour.

Gulf of Lion, 2027 — The Morning After, eighth scenario of the *Europe 2026* campaign for Command: Modern Operations. Designer: totobimbo. Written from inside the picture of Commander, CTF 473, at 0600Z: what the commander is told, not what is true. The raid of 5 January 2027, its orders, ships, events, messages and quotations are invented; the real-world reporting recalled in section 1 is summarised from the scenario's design notes. State borders and coastlines: Natural Earth 1:10 m. Title plate imagery: NASA EOSDIS Worldview.