SECRET — REL NATO — EXERCISE — THIS IS A FICTIONAL DOCUMENT

OPERATION LANTERNE

GULF OF LION

The morning after the raid on Fos-sur-Mer and Barcelona: two launchers among forty ships, a Russian group coming to meet them, and the law of the sea

FIG. 1 · WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN, 050500Z



WGS 84 · ICAO 1:1 000 000

D-DAY	DURATION	FORCE	ROE
05 JAN 2027 · 0600Z	UP TO 48 HOURS	1 CARRIER · 4 FRIGATES · 1 SSN	SURFACE WEAPONS HOLD

COMMAND: MODERN OPERATIONS · SCENARIO BY TOTOBIMBO · 2027 — OPORD 27-005 · 050500ZJAN27

OPERATION ORDER 27-005

OPERATION LANTERNE — FIND, AMONG THE MERCHANT TRAFFIC OF THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN, THE TWO SHIPS THAT LAUNCHED THE DRONES ON FOS-SUR-MER AND BARCELONA, PROVE WHAT THEY ARE, AND STOP AND TAKE THEM BEFORE THEY LEAVE OUR REACH; 5–7 JAN 27

ORIGINATOR	The Maritime Commander Mediterranean (CECMED), Toulon, on the orders of the Chief of the Defence Staff (Planning and Conduct Centre, CPCO, Paris)
DATE-TIME GROUP	050500ZJAN27
SERIAL	CECMED/OPS/LTN/27-005
ADDRESSEE	Commander, Task Force 473 (COM CTF 473), embarked in FS CHARLES DE GAULLE
INFO	FS FORBIN · FS PROVENCE · FS LANGUEDOC · FS AUVERGNE · FS JACQUES CHEVALLIER · FS SUFFREN (by submarine broadcast) · Hyères naval air station · the carrier air wing · ALFAN, Toulon · CROSS Méd · the defence attachés in Madrid, Rome, Algiers and Tunis · the French liaison officers at the Spanish and Italian maritime headquarters · the legal adviser of the Ministry of the Armed Forces
REFERENCES	A. CPCO directive of 050330ZJAN27: Operation LANTERNE B. CECMED INTSUM 27-002, 050430ZJAN27: the raid of 0200Z C. United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982 D. Legal adviser's note of 05 JAN 27: right of visit, ships without nationality, disabling fire E. Rules of engagement, profile LANTERNE, 050400ZJAN27 F. Meteorological and astronomical forecast, 050300ZJAN27 G. Bilateral arrangements with Spain and Italy, as in force
ANNEXES	A · B · C · D · E · F · G · H · J · K · L
APPENDICES	B/1 Intelligence overlay · C/1 Operations overlay Bound as landscape sheets after Annexes B and C.
TIME ZONE	ZULU throughout. Local time in France, Spain, Italy, Algeria and Tunisia in January is UTC+1.
MAP REFERENCE	ICAO 1:1 000 000 aeronautical charts; nautical charts of the western Mediterranean · WGS 84 · positions in degrees and decimal minutes
COPY	Copy 1 of 18

RECORD OF CHANGES

NO	DTG	CHANGE	AUTHORITY	ENTERED BY
01	050415Z	Paragraph 4 and Annex A: **the two Atlantique 2 crews at Hyères have been recalled in the night. Neither aircraft will be ready before 0800Z.**	ALAVIA	CC MOREAU
02	050440Z	Paragraph 3d and Annex D: **surface weapons on HOLD for every unit**; a unit on HOLD does not fire even on an order, and is set TIGHT by its commander before it is ordered to engage.	CPCO	CC MOREAU
03	050450Z	Annex B paragraph 4: the Russian Mediterranean squadron's submarines, **not located since 28 December**, are added to the assessment.	CECMED N2	LV BERTRAND

DISTRIBUTION

ADDRESSEE	COPIES	MEANS
COM CTF 473, FS CHARLES DE GAULLE	1–3	Secure signal
FS FORBIN, FS PROVENCE, FS LANGUEDOC, FS AUVERGNE, FS JACQUES CHEVALLIER	4–8	Secure signal
FS SUFFREN	9	Submarine broadcast
Carrier air wing; Hyères naval air station (ATLANTIQUE 1 and 2)	10–11	Secure signal
ALFAN Toulon; CROSS Méd	12–13	Secure signal, extract: Annexes A, E, F
Liaison officers, Spanish and Italian maritime headquarters	14–15	Liaison, extract: paragraph 4d, Annex J
Defence attachés, Algiers and Tunis	16	Liaison, extract: Annex F
CPCO; joint registry	17–18	Registry

> This order is issued on the morning after an attack on French and Spanish soil. **France is not at war, and nobody has claimed the attack.** The ships that launched it are merchant ships, on the high seas, under borrowed names, among forty others that have done nothing. A Russian naval group is coming to meet them, in waters where it has every right to be. **Find them, prove it, stop them where the law allows, and do not be the first to fire at a Russian hull.**

1. SITUATION

a. Adversary forces

(NR) No state of hostilities exists. The heading is doctrinal. **Nobody has claimed the raid, and nobody will**; whoever sent it counts on the ships being gone before anyone can name them.

(NR) **What is known.** At about **050200Z** some twenty drones struck the industrial port of **Fos-sur-Mer** and the port of **Barcelona** [A1]. Their tracks lead back to sea, to an area some 150 nm south of Toulon, reference point **LAUNCH AREA 0200Z** at 40°36.0'N 006°00.0'E [B2]. **Two ships launched them** [B2]. AIS analysis shows that **six container ships** in that area were transmitting identities borrowed from other ships at 0200Z, and still are [B2]. **Three were heading east, three south**, at about 11 knots. Their real names are not known. Two of the six are the launchers; the four others have other reasons to hide — sanctioned cargo, false papers — and are not, by that alone, our business today.

WHAT	ON THE PLOT	REMARKS
THE SIX	Side MERCHANT, shown NEUTRAL, among forty-six merchant ships	Container ships. **On radar, any merchant ship. A unit that sees one close puts her real name on her**; Annex B paragraph 3. Unarmed; **never a target**; every act against one goes through the Special Actions
RUSSIAN GROUP	Side RUSSIAN NAVY, shown UNFRIENDLY	The frigate **RFS ADMIRAL ESSEN** (eight Kalibr anti-ship missiles), the corvettes **RFS MERKURIY** (eight Kh-35) and **RFS MYTISHCHI**, the tanker **RFS AKADEMIK PASHIN** and the intelligence ship **RFS IVAN KHURS**. Passed the Strait of Sicily westbound in the night; **north of Bizerte at 0500Z** [B2]
SUBMARINES	Not on the plot	The squadron usually keeps one or two Project 636.3 (Kilo) submarines in the Mediterranean. **Neither has been located since 28 December.** Their presence can be neither confirmed nor excluded [C3]

(NR) **The Russian group.** It is steaming west at 14 knots towards the Sardinia Channel. Its purpose is not known. The staff assesses that **it means to meet the eastbound ships and see them home** [C3]. Its units have broken no rule. Russian ships protect what they escort: by radio, by fire-control radars locked on, by placing themselves across a bow, by warning shots. **Whether they would go further is not known**; Annex B paragraph 4.

a. Adversary forces (continued) — most likely and most dangerous

(NR) **Most likely.** The six hold their courses at their best speed, mute on every channel. The southbound three make for the Algerian coast, inside whose 12 nm nobody can touch them; the eastbound three for the Sardinia Channel and the Strait of Sicily. The Russian group meets one or more of them before noon and stays with it. Each hour without a name is an hour for whoever sent them.

(NR) **Most dangerous.** A Russian warship fires on a French ship that is stopping a merchant ship under its protection; or a French weapon strikes a Russian hull first, and hands Moscow the incident it wants; or a submarine nobody has found is waiting where a frigate stops to do her work. *The staff notes that two of the three begin with something we do.*

b. Friendly forces

(NR) Task organisation at Annex A. **CTF 473**: FS CHARLES DE GAULLE with eighteen Rafale M, two E-2C Hawkeye, two helicopters; the air-defence frigate FS FORBIN; three FREMM, FS PROVENCE, FS LANGUEDOC and FS AUVERGNE, each with a Caïman; the replenishment ship FS JACQUES CHEVALLIER; the attack submarine FS SUFFREN ahead of the group. At Hyères, two Atlantique 2. **Nothing is airborne at H-hour and no mission is ready-made.**

(NR) **Two facts govern the search.** First: **radar gives a hull type, never a name.** A Rafale on patrol sorts a container ship from a tanker at long range, and that is all; **a camera close enough names her**: an Atlantique 2 or a Caïman at a few tens of miles, a frigate a little closer. Second: **the Atlantique 2 are not ready before 0800Z.**

c. Attachments and detachments

(NR) All units at Annex A are under the tactical command of COM CTF 473 for the operation, reference A. **On request**, Spain lends the frigate ESPS CRISTOBAL COLON, east of Menorca; Italy may lend the frigate ITS CARLO BERGAMINI, south of Cagliari, and a P-72A maritime patrol aircraft. Paragraph 4d; Annex J.

d. Civil considerations and environment

(NR) **Shipping.** Forty-six merchant ships are at sea in the area at H-hour, the six among them. Forty sail on six lanes: Gibraltar to the Sicily Strait, the Gulf of Lion to Algiers and to Genoa, Barcelona to Sardinia and the Tyrrhenian, the Balearics to Algeria. **They are ordinary traffic**, under their own names, and give no ground for anything. Annex B paragraph 5.

(NR) **Algeria and Tunisia** are neutral. **Algeria watches its 12 nm closely**, from the air base at Annaba and with two patrol ships; Annex F. A ship of the six inside Algerian or Tunisian territorial waters is out of our reach.

(NR) **Light and weather.** H-hour is at first light; sunrise about 0700Z, sunset about 1620Z, **dark from about 1720Z to 0555Z**, with a thin moon that sets in the afternoon: the nights are black. Half cloud, 13°C, **sea state 4**: helicopters fly and board throughout. Annex K.

2. MISSION

(NR) **COM CTF 473, from 050600ZJAN27 until ordered to stop, finds the two ships that launched the drones on Fos-sur-Mer and Barcelona among the merchant traffic of the western Mediterranean, obtains the evidence, and stops and takes them before they reach Algerian or Tunisian territorial waters or the meridian of 11° East, without firing first at a Russian unit and without harming a ship that had nothing to do with the raid, in order that France holds the ships, their crews and the evidence.**

3. EXECUTION

a. Commander's intent

(NR) Two ports burnt last night. The two ships that did it are four hours ahead of us and look like forty others. **For once we know where they started, which way they went, and roughly how fast.**

(NR) **Purpose.** Take the launchers, their crews and their launch rails, so that the attack has an author.

(NR) **Method. Find with cameras, not radars**: the Atlantique 2 and the helicopters name ships; the Rafale and the Hawkeye give the picture. **Sort before you act**: six ships hide, two launched; imagery of the deck at close range tells them apart, and it is the only thing Paris will authorise force on. **Act in order**: hail, warn, ask Paris, disable, board; each step on the right ship. **Be there first**: a launcher the Russian group has reached is a launcher under escort. **Hold what you take**: a ship stopped and left alone is a ship given back. **Never fire first at a Russian hull, and answer only the hull that fired.**

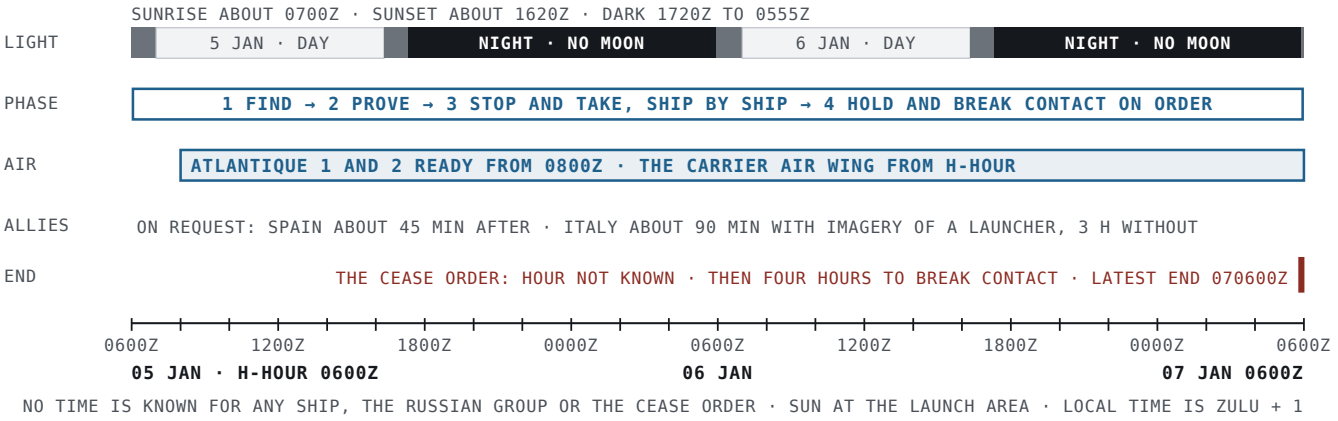
(NR) **End state.** When the order to stop comes, both launchers are held by French warships or are dead in the water with French ships beside them; Paris has the evidence; no innocent ship has been fired into or boarded for nothing; no French weapon has struck a Russian hull first; no unit has entered Algerian waters; and CTF 473 breaks contact as ordered.

(NR) **One launcher taken with its evidence is worth more than two ships fired on without it.** I accept a launcher that gets away before a Russian hull hit by us first.

b. Concept of operations

(NR) The operation runs until Paris and Moscow order both sides to stop, an hour nobody can give, and in any case no later than **070600Z**. Four phases, which overlap: the two directions do not move at the same pace. Annex C sets out phases, decision points and control measures; Appendix 1 to Annex C draws them.

SYNCHRONISATION



(NR) **Phase 1 — Find (from H-hour).** Picture first: Hawkeye up, the Rafale out to the south and east, the frigates detached towards the two directions, SUFFREN where she can listen. **From 0800Z the Atlantique 2**, one east and one south. Every container ship in the two directions named, one after the other. Ask Spain early; ask Rome when you have something to show.

(NR) **Phase 2 — Prove (as soon as one of the six is named).** Something of ours within 4 nm of her deck for five minutes. Imagery that shows rails is evidence: Paris will act on it. Imagery that shows nothing clears her.

(NR) **Phase 3 — Stop and take (as soon as there is evidence).** A frigate alongside, a helicopter over her. Hail, warn, ask Paris, disable, board. **Before the Russian group reaches her if you can; with the group beside her if you must**, accepting what it will do.

(NR) **Phase 4 — Hold and break contact.** Whatever is taken is held, with a warship within 5 nm, until the order to stop. On that order, nothing new is attempted and every French warship is **25 nm from every Russian warship within four hours**.

(NR) **Continuous — restraint.** Surface weapons on HOLD; nothing underwater unless a Russian torpedo is in the water; nothing within 12 nm of Algeria.

c. Tasks to subordinate elements

ELEMENT	TASK
RAFALE 01–08	Air defence of the force, two Meteor and four MICA NG each. **The picture**: they classify ships at long range. They do not name them unless flown low and close. A Rafale in flight within 2 nm of a ship can make the low pass of a warning.
RAFALE 09–14	One AM.39 Exocet each. **Held on deck.** Nothing is launched at a Russian unit unless it has fired; Annex D.
RAFALE 15–16	AREOS reconnaissance pod. Low and close, they name and photograph; at height they are fighters like the others.
RAFALE 17–18	Tankers, for the long legs to the south and the east.
HAWKEYE 1–2	Airborne early warning: the air and surface picture over the whole area, the Russian group, the Algerian coast.
CAIMAN 1 · PANTHER 1	Embarked in the carrier, surveillance. Name, photograph, hail; can put a team aboard and a marksman over her.
CAIMAN 2, 3, 4	In PROVENCE, LANGUEDOC, AUVERGNE: torpedoes, dipping sonar, sonobuoys. **The tool of the visit**: hail, marksman, team. Their ships stay within 20 nm of any boarding they make.
ATLANTIQUE 1, 2	Hyères; **not ready before 0800Z**. ATLANTIQUE 1 with torpedoes and sonobuoys, ATLANTIQUE 2 for surveillance. **The best cameras of the force**: they name ships at a few tens of miles.
FS CHARLES DE GAULLE	Flagship. Air operations. **No gun for a warning or a disabling shot.** Keeps clear of the six.
FS FORBIN	Air-defence frigate (Aster 15 and Aster 30). **Umbrella of the force** against missiles; within about 10 nm of any frigate that works under Russian eyes.
FS PROVENCE · LANGUEDOC · AUVERGNE	FREMM: towed sonar, Caïman, 76 mm gun, Exocet, Aster 15. **Detach towards the two directions**: hail, warning shot, disabling fire, boarding, and hold what is taken.
FS JACQUES CHEVALLIER	Replenishment ship. Stays with the carrier. **No gun for a warning or a disabling shot.**
FS SUFFREN	Attack submarine, at depth, radar silent. Listens ahead of the force; a sonar contact she classifies may give a name. Weapons on HOLD.

d. Coordinating instructions

1. (NR) **H-hour is 050600Z.** End of operation on order, and no later than 070600Z. The opening messages from CECMED at H-hour take precedence over this order.
2. (NR) **Surface weapons HOLD**, every unit, every mission, every unit lent by an ally. A unit on HOLD does not fire even on an order: **to engage a surface target, set that unit to TIGHT, then order the attack.** Air: TIGHT. Self-defence against incoming weapons is always allowed. Annex D.
3. (NR) **No French weapon is fired at a Russian unit unless a Russian unit has fired first.** Then: the unit that fired, and any that fires next. Proportion is expected; Paris will count what is sunk.

4. (NR) **Underwater. No weapon is dropped on an underwater contact unless a Russian torpedo is in the water.** Track, hold, report. Annex G.
5. (NR) **Missions you create** start with their own weapon settings. **Check them**, and set them as above before the first aircraft leaves.
6. (NR) **Merchant ships. Never mark a merchant contact hostile**: every ship of ours would then fire on every merchant ship in reach. **Every act against a merchant ship goes through the Special Actions**, by their exact names, Annex H paragraph 3; those that act on a ship need **one merchant contact selected on the map first**. Disabling fire and boarding by force are confirmed by a second click within ten minutes.
7. (NR) **The sequence on a ship** (Annex E): hail → warning → leave of Paris → disabling fire → boarding. **Paris authorises disabling fire only on a ship you hold imagery against.**
8. (NR) **Holding.** A ship stopped, disabled or taken keeps **a French warship within 5 nm** of her, or she will be got under way again.
9. (NR) **Algeria. No French ship or aircraft within 12 nm of the Algerian coast** (reference points TW LIMIT). Do not follow a ship in. Annex F.
10. (NR) **The order to stop.** At an hour that nobody can give, Paris will send CEASE. From then: no fire, nothing new attempted, and **within four hours no French warship within 25 nm of a Russian warship**. Ships already taken stay taken.
11. (NR) **Allies.** A unit lent by Spain or Italy arrives without orders and is commanded like ours.
12. (NR) PIRs at Annex B paragraph 7. Reports at Annex H. Every hail, every shot, every boarding is logged with its time: **the log is what the inquiry will read**.

4. SERVICE SUPPORT

a. Aircraft and weapons

BASE	AIRCRAFT	CARRIED	IN THE MAGAZINE
FS CHARLES DE GAULLE	RAFALE 01–18, HAWKEYE 1–2, CAIMAN 1, PANTHER 1	Annex A	Meteor, MICA, Exocet AM.39, AREOS pods, MU-90 and more: enough to rearm the air wing several times over
FS PROVENCE, LANGUEDOC, AUVERGNE	CAIMAN 2, 3, 4	2 MU-90, sonar, buoys	Their ship
HYÈRES	ATLANTIQUE 1, 2	Annex A	**Two rearmings** of torpedoes and sonobuoys

(NR) The ships fight with what is in their launchers. **Each missile fired is reported and will be asked about.**

b. Fuel and endurance

(NR) FS JACQUES CHEVALLIER stays with the carrier. **Distances are long.** At H-hour the force is about 100 nm north of the launch area; the Sardinia Channel and the Algerian coast are both some 300 nm from it, about twelve hours at 25 knots for a frigate. Plan the legs, and the tankers for the aircraft.

c. Teams and marksmen

(NR) Every frigate and every helicopter of CTF 473 carries a visit team; **a team goes aboard from a warship within 1 nm or from a helicopter in flight within 1 nm**, and the visit takes about 25 minutes. **A team does not go aboard from a helicopter unless a French frigate is within 20 nm.** A helicopter can also put a marksman on a ship's engine: twenty minutes within 2 nm, and never with a Russian warship within 5 nm of her. Annex E.

d. Allies on request

REQUEST	WHAT COMES	WHEN
SPAIN	**ESPS CRISTOBAL COLON**, air-defence frigate, east of Menorca. Barcelona was struck: Madrid will say yes	About **45 minutes** after the request, under your tactical control, without orders
ITALY	**ITS CARLO BERGAMINI**, FREMM, south of Cagliari, and a **P-72A** maritime patrol aircraft on station south of Sardinia. Rome doubts the whole story	About **90 minutes** with imagery of a launcher sent with the request; **about three hours** without

(NR) Special Actions `Allies - Ask Spain for a frigate` and `Allies - Ask Italy for a frigate and a patrol aircraft`. Each request is a political act: Paris answers to two capitals for what their ships do.

e. Search and rescue, and the wounded

(NR) Search and rescue through CROSS Méd. A ship disabled by our fire is ours to look after: report her at once with her position, and keep a warship by her.

5. COMMAND AND SIGNAL

a. Command

(NR) COM CTF 473 exercises tactical command of every unit at Annex A and of any allied unit placed under him. Operational command remains with CECMED; **the leave to fire into a merchant ship is Paris's, not the Commander's**, and is asked ship by ship. Everything else is his own and is not delegated: each hail, each warning, each boarding, each request to an ally, and the order to any unit to fire back. Succession: COM CTF 473; the commanding officer of FS CHARLES DE GAULLE; the commanding officer of FS FORBIN.

(NR) **The merchant ships are under nobody's command but their masters'. The Russian units** are sovereign: nothing is ordered of them.

b. Signal

(NR) Annex H. COM CTF 473 reports to CECMED on the command net, info CPCO. Messages on the plot are signed by their sender: CECMED and CECMED INTELLIGENCE; N2; PARIS; HYÈRES; MADRID; ROME; ALGIERS; CHANNEL 16; SATELLITE PASS; IMAGERY; ESM; BRIDGE REPORT; BOARDING TEAM; SNIPER TEAM; STAFF; FLASH.

REPORT	WHEN	CONTENT
N2	at once	One of the six has just been named: her real name, her position, how many of six are found, which way she heads
SATELLITE PASS	through the morning	A container ship whose hull does not match her AIS, near a position: one pass, no second look
IMAGERY	after five minutes	What is on her deck: rails and scorch marks, or nothing unusual
CHANNEL 16	at once	What a ship answers to a hail; what a Russian warship says
PARIS	30–60 min	Leave for disabling fire: AUTHORISED or REFUSED
BRIDGE REPORT	on effect	A ship has lost way, dead in the water
BOARDING TEAM	25 min after	What the team found aboard
ESM	at once	A French ship tracked by Russian targeting data
FLASH	at once	A Russian unit has opened fire; a French ship hit; a torpedo in the water
STAFF	on request	The whole situation: Special Action `Staff - Situation`

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Acknowledge by secure signal to CECMED, serial CECMED/OPS/LTN/27-005, before 050545ZJAN27.

Vice-amiral d’escadre, Maritime Commander Mediterranean
CECMED, Toulon, on the orders of the Chief of the Defence Staff
Authenticated: CC MOREAU, N3 Operations

ANNEXES: A Task organisation · B Intelligence · C Operations · D Rules of engagement · E Merchant ship interdiction · F Law of the sea and the neutral coast · G Underwater · H Communications, reporting and Special Actions · J Allied and political coordination · K Meteorological and astronomical forecast · L References, charts and abbreviations

A

Task Organisation

ANNEX A TO OPORD 27-005 · DTG 050500ZJAN27 · CECMED/OPS/LTN/27-005

1. SHIPS — UNDER TACTICAL COMMAND OF COM CTF 473

> State at H-hour, 050600Z: the six surface ships steam south in company at 12 knots; FS SUFFREN is ahead. Every aircraft is on deck or on the ground, armed and ready. No mission. Surface weapons on HOLD, air on TIGHT, underwater on HOLD.

SHIP	CLASS	POSITION AT H-HOUR	REMARKS
FS CHARLES DE GAULLE	R 91 Charles de Gaulle, nuclear aircraft carrier	42°18.0'N 005°48.0'E	Flagship of CTF 473
FS FORBIN	D 620 Forbin, Horizon air-defence frigate	42°21.6'N 005°40.8'E	Aster 15 and Aster 30
FS PROVENCE	D 652 Provence, FREMM	42°13.2'N 005°55.2'E	CAIMAN 2 embarked
FS LANGUEDOC	D 653 Languedoc, FREMM	42°09.6'N 005°42.0'E	CAIMAN 3 embarked
FS AUVERGNE	D 654 Auvergne, FREMM	42°26.4'N 005°49.2'E	CAIMAN 4 embarked
FS JACQUES CHEVALLIER	A 725 Jacques Chevallier, fleet replenishment ship	42°22.8'N 005°56.4'E	No gun for warning shots
FS SUFFREN	S 635 Suffren, nuclear attack submarine	41°19.8'N 006°19.8'E	At 100 m, 5 kt, heading south-east; radar silent

2. CARRIER AIR WING — FS CHARLES DE GAULLE

CALLSIGN	AIRCRAFT	LOAD	REMARKS
RAFALE 01–08	Rafale M	2 Meteor, 2 MICA EM NG, 2 MICA IR NG, 3 tanks	Air defence; the picture
RAFALE 09–14	Rafale M	1 AM.39 Exocet Block II, 4 MICA NG, 2 tanks	Anti-ship; held on deck
RAFALE 15–16	Rafale M	AREOS reconnaissance pod, 4 MICA NG, 2 tanks	Reconnaissance
RAFALE 17–18	Rafale M	Buddy refuelling store, 2 MICA IR NG, 4 tanks	Tankers
HAWKEYE 1–2	E-2C Hawkeye 2000	—	Airborne early warning
CAIMAN 1	NH90 NFH Caïman	Surveillance	Camera; team; marksman
PANTHER 1	AS.565 Panther	Surveillance	Camera; team; marksman

3. EMBARKED IN THE FRIGATES

CALLSIGN	SHIP	LOAD	REMARKS
CAIMAN 2	FS PROVENCE	2 MU-90 torpedoes, dipping sonar, sonobuoys	Camera; team; marksman. **The tool of the visit**
CAIMAN 3	FS LANGUEDOC		
CAIMAN 4	FS AUVERGNE		

4. SHORE-BASED — HYÈRES NAVAL AIR STATION

CALLSIGN	AIRCRAFT	LOAD	REMARKS
ATLANTIQUE 1	Atlantique 2	8 MU-90, sonobuoys	**Not ready before 0800Z**: crews recalled in the night. The best cameras of the force; ten hours and more on task
ATLANTIQUE 2	Atlantique 2	Surveillance	

(NR) The magazine at Hyères holds two rearmings of torpedoes and sonobuoys for the two aircraft.

5. ON REQUEST — SPAIN AND ITALY (PARAGRAPH 4D OF THE ORDER)

UNIT	TYPE	POSITION AT H-HOUR	REMARKS
ESPS CRISTOBAL COLON	F 105, air-defence frigate (Spain)	39°51.0'N 004°27.0'E	Stopped east of Menorca. About 45 minutes after the request
ITS CARLO BERGAMINI	FREMM (Italy)	38°42.0'N 009°18.0'E	Stopped south of Cagliari. About 90 minutes after a request with imagery of a launcher, three hours without
ITALIAN P-72A	ATR 72 maritime patrol (Italy)	38°36.0'N 009°36.0'E	Comes with the Italian frigate, airborne, on station south of Sardinia

(NR) Lent units come under the tactical control of COM CTF 473 **without orders**: give them a course. They are commanded like ours, surface weapons on HOLD.

6. NOT UNDER COMMAND

(NR) Forty-six merchant ships (side MERCHANT, NEUTRAL). The Russian group and any Russian submarine (side RUSSIAN NAVY, UNFRIENDLY). The Algerian air base at Annaba with two Su-30MKA and the patrol ships ANS ERRADII and ANS ADHAFER (side ALGERIA, NEUTRAL). **None is a target.**

7. WEAPONS THAT MATTER, IN BRIEF

SHIP	ANTI-SHIP	AIR DEFENCE	GUN	UNDERWATER
FREMM (3)	8 MM.40 Exocet Block IIIC	16 Aster 15	76 mm	MU-90 tubes, towed sonar, Caïman
FS FORBIN	MM.40 Exocet	Aster 15 and Aster 30	76 mm	MU-90 tubes
FS CHARLES DE GAULLE	Through her Rafale	Aster 15, Mistral	—	—
FS SUFFREN	Exocet SM39, torpedoes	—	—	F21 torpedoes

(NR) **A FREMM alone has sixteen Aster 15.** A full salvo of anti-ship missiles uses most of them. The Aster 30 of FS FORBIN reach further: keep her within about 10 nm of any frigate that works under Russian eyes.

B

Intelligence

ANNEX B TO OPORD 27-005 · DTG 050500ZJAN27 · CECMED/OPS/LTN/27-005

1. SUMMARY

(NR) Since 2025, drones have been seen over military sites, ports and airports in Europe, and the shadow fleet has been boarded more than once in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. In September 2026 a press report spoke of drones fired from containers aboard merchant ships against Spanish, French or Italian ports; two of the three governments denied having been warned. **Last night it happened** [A1]. The ships that did it are at sea, under borrowed names, and a Russian group is coming to meet them [B2].

2. THE RECORD

DATE	EVENT	GRADE
2025–2026	Drones over airports and military sites in northern Europe; ships of the shadow fleet boarded by the French Navy in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, one of them by helicopter off Sicily	A1
SEP 2026	Press report: drones to be fired from containers aboard merchant ships, 200 to 300 km off the coasts of Spain, France or Italy. Paris and Rome deny having been warned	C3
16 DEC 2026	Drones over Kleine-Brogel and Volkel, flown from ships off the Low Countries	A1
28 DEC 2026	Last contact on the squadron’s submarines	B2
04–05 JAN 2027	Russian group through the Strait of Sicily westbound in the night; north of Bizerte at 0500Z	B2
05 JAN, ABOUT 0200Z	**Some twenty drones strike Fos-sur-Mer and the port of Barcelona.** Fires at both; tracks traced back to sea, some 150 nm south of Toulon	A1
05 JAN, 0200Z ON	**Six container ships in that area transmit identities borrowed from other ships**, and still do	B2

3. THE SIX

WHAT IS KNOWN	REMARKS
WHERE THEY WERE	In the launch area at 0200Z, 40°36.0'N 006°00.0'E B2
WHAT THEY ARE	Container ships, feeders of one to three thousand boxes. Ten to twelve knots
WHICH WAY	**Three eastbound**, towards the Sardinia Channel and the Strait of Sicily; **three southbound**, towards the Algerian coast B2
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 C3

(NR) **Naming one.** When a unit of ours identifies one of the six by her real name — a camera, a close look, a submarine's classification — or simply comes within about 6 nm of her, N2 reports it at once: her real name, her position, her direction. **Proving what she is**: imagery of her deck from within 4 nm, held five minutes, by a ship or by an aircraft below 3000 m. A launcher shows containers open on the upper tier, rails inside, scorch marks; the others show a deck closed and lashed.

4. THE RUSSIAN GROUP

UNIT	CLASS	WHAT IT CARRIES
RFS ADMIRAL ESSEN	Admiral Grigorovich class frigate	8 Kalibr anti-ship missiles, Shtil SAM, 100 mm gun
RFS MERKURIY	Steregushchiy class corvette	8 Kh-35 anti-ship missiles, Redut SAM, 100 mm gun
RFS MYTISHCHI	Karakurt class corvette	Kalibr, Pantsir-M, 76 mm gun
RFS AKADEMIK PASHIN	Akademik Pashin class replenishment tanker	Unarmed
RFS IVAN KHURS	Yury Ivanov class intelligence ship	SIGINT

(NR) **What it will do** is not known. The staff's reading, from the most to the least likely C3: it meets one of the eastbound ships and escorts her to the Strait of Sicily; it keeps away from the six and waits for us to show our hand; it escorts a ship that is not a launcher, to draw us. **An escorted ship will be protected**: by radio, by fire-control radars, by warships across our bows, by warning shots. **A missile salvo on a French ship that stops one cannot be ruled out.** RFS IVAN KHURS can give the group a picture of our ships at any range.

5. THE SUBMARINES

(NR) The squadron usually keeps one or two **Project 636.3 (Kilo)** submarines in the Mediterranean. **Not located since 28 December**; presence neither confirmed nor excluded C3. A Kilo on batteries is almost silent; she is found by active sonar, a dipping sonar at close range, or at periscope depth. Where would one be? On a passage the six must use; near the carrier; or nowhere. Annex G.

6. ORDINARY TRAFFIC — FORTY SHIPS ON SIX LANES

LANE	ROUTE	SHIPS
1	Gibraltar — Sicily Strait, along 38°N	7
2	Gulf of Lion — Algiers	7
3	Gulf of Lion — Sardinia Channel — Sicily	7
4	Barcelona — Genoa	6
5	Barcelona — south of Sardinia — Tyrrhenian	7
6	Balearics — Algeria	6

(NR) Container ships and tankers under their own names, both ways, 12 to 18 knots. **They give no ground for anything.** A warning shot across an ordinary ship's bow, or worse, is paid for.

7. PRIORITY INTELLIGENCE REQUIREMENTS

1. **PIR 1** — What are the real names and positions of the six?
2. **PIR 2** — Which two carry launch rails?
3. **PIR 3** — Which ship does the Russian group mean to meet, and when?
4. **PIR 4** — Is a Russian submarine at sea in the area, and where?
5. **PIR 5** — What will the Russian group do when we stop a ship it protects?

8. NAMED AREAS OF INTEREST — PLOTTED AT APPENDIX 1

NAI	WHERE	WHY
01	The launch area, 30 nm round 40°36.0'N 006°00.0'E	Where the six were at 0200Z; the starting point of every search
02	The Sardinia Channel, round 38°00.0'N 009°18.0'E	Where the eastbound three must pass; where the Russian group is heading
03	The approach to the Strait of Sicily, west of 11°E	The last water in which an eastbound ship can be stopped
04	The Algerian 12 nm	Where the southbound three are heading; nothing of ours goes in
05	Round the carrier	Where a submarine would wait if it meant harm to the force

9. COLLECTION PLAN

ASSET	SEES	NAMES A SHIP
SATELLITE	A ship whose hull does not match her AIS, near a position; through the morning; **one pass, no second look**	No
HAWKEYE	Everything on the surface and in the air, at long range	No
RAFALE	Ships on radar at long range: the type	Only low and close
ATLANTIQUE 2 · P-72A	Radar and camera; hours on task	**Yes, at a few tens of miles**
CAÏMAN · PANTHER	Radar and camera	**Yes, at a few tens of miles**
FRIGATE	Radar and camera, towed sonar	Yes, at fifteen miles or so
FS SUFFREN	Sonar, at long range, unseen	Sometimes, by classification

10. INTELLIGENCE GAPS

(NR) Which two ships; their real names; the Russian group's purpose and orders; where the submarines are; when Paris and Moscow will stop it. **The satellite passes are not all right: one of them may be miles off.**

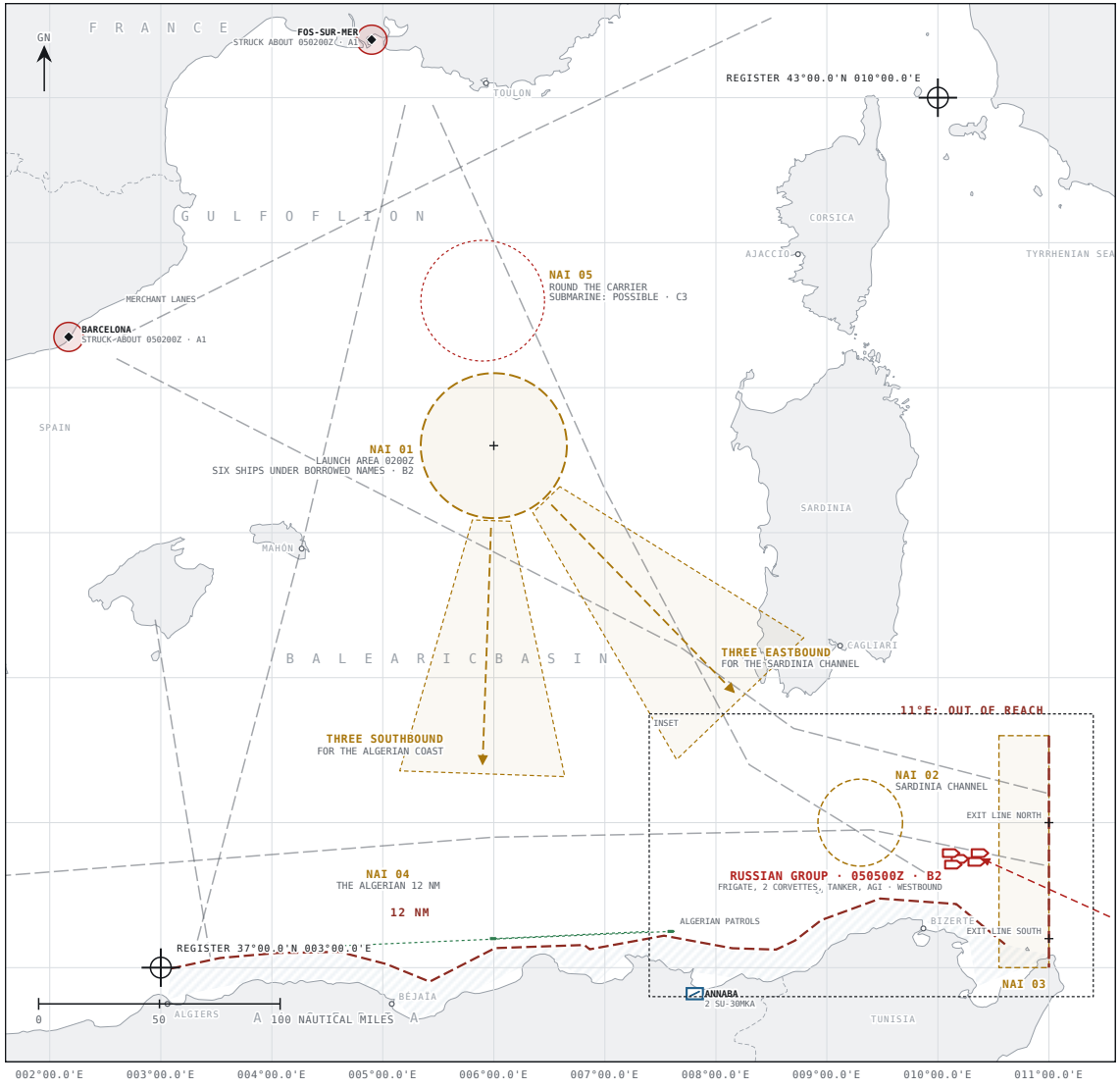
Source grading

A completely reliable · B usually reliable · C fairly reliable · 1 confirmed · 2 probably true · 3 possibly true

BOTTOM LINE

Six ships, two guilty, no names. Cameras find them; imagery tells them apart. The Russian group will be with one of them before long. Something may be under the water. **Start the search with what you have now; the Atlantique 2 join at 0800Z.**

ANNEX B TO OPORD 27-005 — PAGE B-3 OF B-3



COASTS AND BORDERS: NATURAL EARTH 10 M, FOR ORIENTATION ONLY · LAY ON THE CHART AND REGISTER ON THE TWO MARKS · DISTANCES IN NAUTICAL MILES

APPENDIX 1 TO ANNEX B

CHARTS	ICAO 1:1 000 000 · NAUTICAL CHARTS
SCALE	APPROX 1:4 400 000 · INSET LARGER
DATUM	WGS 84 · DEG AND DEC MIN
DTG	050500ZJAN27
ORIGINATOR	CECMED N2
SHEET	1 OF 1

INTELLIGENCE OVERLAY

OPORD 27-005 · OPERATION LANTERNE · 5 JAN 27
ASSESSMENT AT 050500Z · NO SHIP OF THE SIX IS PLOTTED

- NAI 01: LAUNCH AREA, 30 NM
- DIRECTION GIVEN BY THE AIS ANALYSIS
- NAMED AREA OF INTEREST
- RUSSIAN UNIT, LAST REPORT
- WHERE A SUBMARINE IS POSSIBLE
- MERCHANT LANE, BOTH WAYS
- 12 NM LIMIT · HATCHED: TERRITORIAL WATERS
- EXIT LINE, 11°E
- PORT STRUCK AT 0200Z
- AIR BASE (ALGERIA)
- TOWN, FOR ORIENTATION
- INSET FRAME

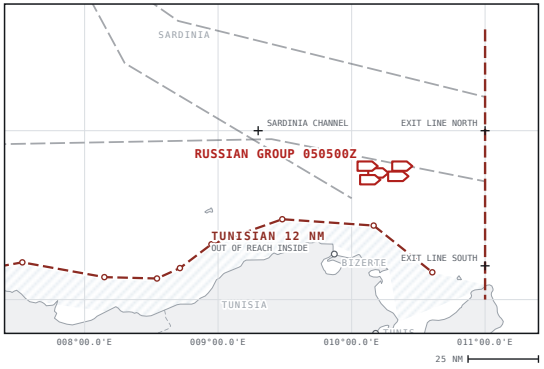
THE SIX · AIS ANALYSIS 050500Z
SIX CONTAINER SHIPS IN NAI 01 AT 0200Z
TRANSMIT IDENTITIES BORROWED FROM
OTHER SHIPS, AND STILL DO · B2
THREE EASTBOUND, THREE SOUTHBOUND
ABOUT 11 KT · REAL NAMES NOT KNOWN
TWO ARE THE LAUNCHERS · FOUR HAVE
OTHER REASONS TO HIDE

NAMED AREAS OF INTEREST
NAI 01 · THE LAUNCH AREA, 0200Z
NAI 02 · THE SARDINIA CHANNEL
NAI 03 · APPROACH TO THE SICILY STRAIT
NAI 04 · THE ALGERIAN 12 NM
NAI 05 · ROUND THE CARRIER

READING THE PLOT
MERCHANT CONTACT · NEUTRAL: NEVER
MARKED HOSTILE, NEVER A TARGET
RADAR GIVES A TYPE, NEVER A NAME
ONLY A CAMERA CLOSE ENOUGH NAMES HER
RUSSIAN UNIT · UNFRIENDLY

WHAT IS NOT KNOWN
WHICH TWO SHIPS · WHERE EACH IS NOW
WHAT THE RUSSIAN GROUP IS FOR
WHERE THE KILOS ARE
WHEN PARIS AND MOSCOW WILL STOP IT

INSET · NAI 02 AND NAI 03 · THE SARDINIA CHANNEL AND THE WAY EAST
WHERE THE EASTBOUND SHIPS AND THE RUSSIAN GROUP MEET, AND WHERE THEY LEAVE OUR REACH



C

Operations

ANNEX C TO OPORD 27-005 · DTG 050500ZJAN27 · CECMED/OPS/LTN/27-005

1. PHASING

PHASE	WHEN	WHAT IS EXPECTED	WHAT THE COMMANDER DOES
1 FIND	From H-hour	Six ships hiding among forty, moving apart at 11 knots: three east, three south. Satellite passes through the morning	Launches the picture (Hawkeye, Rafale); detaches frigates to the two directions; puts the Atlantique 2 on the two directions from 0800Z; names ships one by one
2 PROVE	As soon as one of the six is named	A deck that shows rails, or one that shows nothing	Puts a ship, or an aircraft below 3000 m, within 4 nm for five minutes; sends the imagery to Paris and, if needed, to Rome
3 STOP AND TAKE	As soon as there is evidence	A launcher that does not answer; the Russian group closing on the eastbound ones	Frigate alongside, helicopter over her: hail, warning, leave of Paris, disabling fire, boarding. Before the group arrives if possible
4 HOLD AND BREAK CONTACT	Until and after the cease order	Russian demands to release what we hold; the order to stop	Keeps a warship within 5 nm of what is held; on the order, nothing new, and 25 nm from every Russian warship within four hours

2. DECISION POINTS

DP	WHEN	DECISION
1	One of the six is named (N2)	Who shadows her, who looks at her deck, who keeps searching
2	Imagery shows rails	Ask Paris for disabling fire; ask Rome now that there is something to show
3	The Russian group is within about 30 nm of a ship you mean to take	Take her before it arrives, or plan for the escort: FORBIN close, no helicopter fire, no boarding by force
4	A Russian unit fires (FLASH)	Who answers, set TIGHT, attack the unit that fired and no other; or do not answer
5	The cease order (PARIS — CEASE)	How each ship opens to 25 nm from every Russian warship within four hours

3. CONTROL MEASURES

MEASURE	WHERE	RULE
12 NM, ALGERIA	Reference points TW LIMIT 01 to 18 (they also mark the Tunisian 12 nm)	**No ship or aircraft inside.** Algeria answers each entry, with two Su-30 overhead
EXIT LINE 11°E	EXIT LINE NORTH 38°00.0'N 011°00.0'E, EXIT LINE SOUTH 37°12.0'N 011°00.0'E	An eastbound ship that reaches it is out of reach
PL AMBER	39°N, about half way to the African coast	A ship of the six not named by the time she crosses it is getting late
BP 1	Blocking position in the Sardinia Channel, round 38°21.0'N 008°45.0'E	A frigate and her helicopter, early, if the eastbound ships are not found in time
5 NM	Round a ship stopped, disabled or taken	A French warship always within 5 nm, or she will be got under way
25 NM	Round every Russian warship, after the cease order	No French warship nearer, within four hours of the order

4. REFERENCE POINTS ON THE PLOT

(NR) LAUNCH AREA 0200Z 40°36.0'N 006°00.0'E · FOS-SUR-MER · BARCELONA · TOULON · EXIT LINE NORTH and EXIT LINE SOUTH (11°E) · SARDINIA CHANNEL 38°00.0'N 009°18.0'E · TW LIMIT 01 to 18, 12 nm off the Algerian and Tunisian coasts.

5. EMPLOYMENT OF THE FORCE — SUGGESTED

TASK	SUGGESTED	WHY
PICTURE	HAWKEYE 1 over the middle of the area from H-hour; relieved by HAWKEYE 2	Every ship, the Russian group, the Algerian coast, at once
SEARCH EAST	ATLANTIQUE 1 from 0800Z; a Caïman; RAFALE 15 low; a FREMM down the eastern side	The Sardinia Channel is where the Russian group goes
SEARCH SOUTH	ATLANTIQUE 2 from 0800Z; a Caïman; RAFALE 16 low; a FREMM due south	The southbound three have the shortest way out
UNDERWATER	FS SUFFREN towards the Sardinia Channel; towed sonars of the FREMM on	PIR 4
THE CARRIER	FORBIN and a FREMM with her until FORBIN goes south or east to cover a frigate at work	NAI 05
ALLIES	Spain early: CRISTOBAL COLON is close to the southern lanes. Italy when there is imagery: BERGAMINI is close to the Sardinia Channel	Paragraph 4d

(NR) The search areas and BP 1 at Appendix 1 are suggestions. **Missions you create start with their own weapon settings: set surface and underwater to HOLD before the first aircraft leaves.**

6. DISTANCES AT H-HOUR, IN NAUTICAL MILES

FROM ↓ / TO →	LAUNCH AREA	SARDINIA CH.	EXIT 11°E	ALGERIAN 12 NM	RUSSIAN GROUP
CTF 473	102	304	351	308	340
Hyères	151	339	378	357	371
FS SUFFREN	46	242	294	250	280

> Exit 11°E taken at 38°N; Algerian 12 nm taken at 6°E; Russian group at 0500Z.

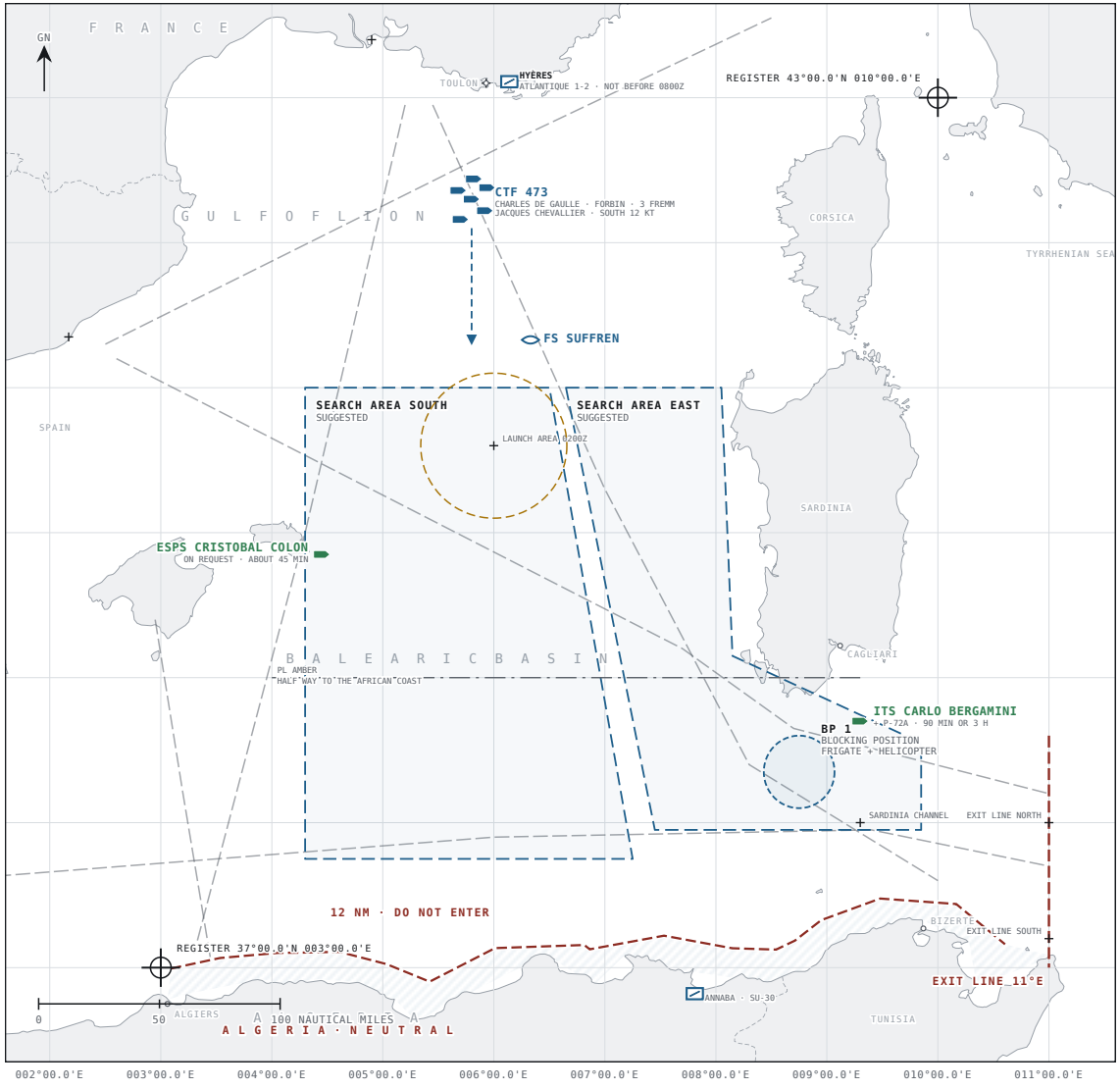
(NR) At 11 knots, a ship of the six covers 260 nm a day. At 25 knots, a frigate covers the 300 nm to the Sardinia Channel or to the Algerian coast in about twelve hours. **The frigates cannot be everywhere: the aircraft must find, the frigates must take.**

7. DECONFLICTION

(NR) Aircraft that close a ship to name or photograph her fly **below 3000 m**; that is what lets them see. The Rafale that make a low pass for a warning come within 2 nm. Helicopters stay close to their frigate: a boarding from a helicopter needs a frigate within 20 nm. Nothing of ours flies inside the Algerian 12 nm.

BOTTOM LINE

Find them with cameras, take them with frigates, hold them with a warship alongside, and be gone 25 nm when Paris says stop.



COASTS AND BORDERS: NATURAL EARTH 10 M, FOR ORIENTATION ONLY · LAY ON THE CHART AND REGISTER ON THE TWO MARKS · DISTANCES IN NAUTICAL MILES

APPENDIX 1 TO ANNEX C

CHARTS	ICAO 1:1 000 000 · NAUTICAL CHARTS
SCALE	APPROX 1:4 400 000
DATUM	WGS 84 · DEG AND DEC MIN
DTG	050500ZJAN27
ORIGINATOR	CECMED N3
SHEET	1 OF 1

OPERATIONS OVERLAY

OPORD 27-005 · OPERATION LANTERNE · 5 JAN 27
CTF 473 AT H-HOUR, 050600Z · MEASURES SUGGESTED, NOT ORDERED

- FRENCH WARSHIP AT H-HOUR
- FS SUFFREN
- AIR BASE
- SUGGESTED SEARCH AREA
- BP 1: BLOCKING POSITION
- PHASE LINE AMBER, 39°N
- 12 NM LIMIT: DO NOT ENTER
- EXIT LINE, 11°E
- REFERENCE POINT ON THE PLOT
- MERCHANT LANE
- LAUNCH AREA, 30 NM

DECISION POINTS · ANNEX C PARA 2

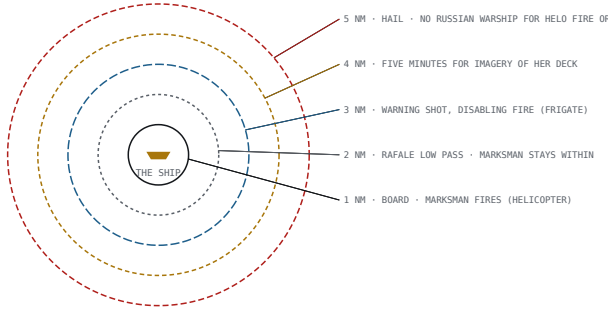
DP 1 · A SHIP OF THE SIX NAMED:
WHO SHADOWS HER, WHO LOOKS
DP 2 · EVIDENCE ON A SHIP:
ASK PARIS · ASK ROME
DP 3 · RUSSIAN GROUP WITHIN 30 NM
OF A SHIP YOU HOLD: STOP HER
BEFORE, OR PLAN FOR THE ESCORT
DP 4 · RUSSIAN FIRE: WHO ANSWERS,
SET TIGHT, ATTACK THE FIRER ONLY
DP 5 · THE CEASE ORDER: BREAK
CONTACT, 25 NM IN FOUR HOURS

CONTROL MEASURES

NO SHIP OR AIRCRAFT IN ALGERIAN 12 NM
FRIGATE WITHIN 20 NM OF ANY BOARDING
FROM A HELICOPTER
NOTHING DROPPED UNDERWATER WITHOUT
A RUSSIAN TORPEDO IN THE WATER
NEVER MARK A MERCHANT CONTACT HOSTILE

SCHEMATIC · THE DISTANCES OF THE SPECIAL ACTIONS

ROUND THE SELECTED SHIP · NOT TO SCALE BEYOND 5 NM · ANNEX E



BOARDING: SHIP AT 3 KT OR LESS · UNDER WAY: BY FORCE ONLY, HELICOPTER, WITH EVIDENCE
6 NM · A SHIP, OR AN AIRCRAFT BELOW 3000 M, CAN NAME HER
20 NM · A FRIGATE WITHIN 20 NM FOR ANY BOARDING FROM A HELICOPTER
25 NM · AFTER THE CEASE ORDER, NO WARSHIP NEARER A RUSSIAN ONE, WITHIN 4 H

D

Rules of Engagement

ANNEX D TO OPORD 27-005 · DTG 050500ZJAN27 · CECMED/OPS/LTN/27-005

ROE LANTERNE · SURFACE WEAPONS HOLD · NO WAR · YOU DO NOT FIRE FIRST	
L-01	**Surface weapons HOLD** for every unit, every mission and every lent unit. **Air: TIGHT. Underwater: HOLD.** Self-defence against incoming weapons is always allowed.
L-02	**A unit on HOLD does not fire even when ordered to.** To engage a surface target, set that unit to TIGHT, then order the attack. Set it back to HOLD afterwards.
L-03	**No French weapon at a Russian unit unless a Russian unit has fired first.** 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.
L-04	**When a Russian unit has fired** (FLASH): you may return fire against the unit that fired, and against any Russian unit that fires next. **Proportion is expected**: Paris will count what you sink.
L-05	**No weapon on an underwater contact unless a Russian torpedo is in the water** (FLASH — TORPEDO IN THE WATER). Then underwater contacts may be attacked.
L-06	**Merchant ships are never targets. Never mark one hostile.** Every act against a merchant ship goes through the Special Actions, Annex E.
L-07	**Disabling fire** on a merchant ship needs the leave of Paris, asked ship by ship, and given only on evidence. Aimed at the engine room; never at the bridge or the accommodation.
L-08	**No ship or aircraft inside the Algerian 12 nm.** Algerian aircraft and ships are neutral: they are not engaged.
L-09	**CEASE**: from the order, no fire at all, nothing new attempted, and every French warship 25 nm from every Russian warship within four hours.

WHAT THE PLOT SHOWS

SHOWN AS	MEANS	UNITS ON HOLD (SURFACE)
NEUTRAL	Merchant ships; Algeria; Spain and Italy until they lend a ship	Never engaged
UNFRIENDLY	The Russian group	Not engaged unless it has fired, and then only by a unit you set TIGHT
HOSTILE	Should not appear on a ship. A merchant contact marked hostile is reset to UNFRIENDLY by CECMED, with a reminder	—

SELF-DEFENCE

(NR) **A ship on HOLD for surface targets still defends herself against missiles** with her Aster and her guns: her air setting is TIGHT. The air-defence umbrella of FS FORBIN reaches further; a FREMM alone has sixteen Aster 15, which a full salvo may exhaust.

BOTTOM LINE

You never fire first at a Russian ship. When one fires, you answer that one, with a unit you set TIGHT, and no more. Nothing goes into the water before their torpedo does.

E

Merchant Ship Interdiction

ANNEX E TO OPORD 27-005 · DTG 050500ZJAN27 · CECMED/OPS/LTN/27-005

1. SEQUENCE

(NR) **Name, prove, hail, warn, ask Paris, disable, board, hold.** Each step is ordered by Special Action on **one merchant contact selected on the map**, and each answer comes back as a message. Annex H paragraph 3 gives the exact names.

STEP	SPECIAL ACTION	NEEDS	EFFECT
NAME	—	A camera, or any ship or low aircraft within about 6 nm	N2: her real name, “one of the six”
PROVE	—	A ship, or an aircraft below 3000 m, within **4 nm for five minutes**	IMAGERY: rails, or nothing
HAIL	`Vessel 1 - Hail`	A warship, or a helicopter in flight, within **5 nm**	Channel 16: an order to stop for a flag verification
WARN	`Vessel 2 - Warning (shot or low pass)`	A frigate with a gun within **3 nm**, or a Rafale in flight within **2 nm**	Rounds across the bow, or a low pass with flares
ASK PARIS	`Vessel 3 - Ask Paris for disabling fire`	Nothing; evidence for a yes	Answer in **30 to 60 minutes**
DISABLE	`Vessel 4 - Disabling fire`	A frigate with a gun within **3 nm**; or a helicopter in flight within **1 nm**, no Russian warship within 5 nm. **Two clicks**	Dead in the water **10 minutes** later (frigate) or **20 minutes** (marksman, within 2 nm all the time)
BOARD	`Vessel 5 - Board`	A warship, or a helicopter in flight, within **1 nm**; the ship at **3 knots or less**; from a helicopter, a frigate within 20 nm	The team’s report **25 minutes** later

2. WHAT THE SHIPS DO

SHIP	HAILED	WARNED	BOARDED
ORDINARY	Answers at once, under her own name	**Stops and protests: it is paid for**	No grounds: refused
ONE OF THE SIX, NOT A LAUNCHER	Often stops, her master unable to explain the name she transmits; sometimes refuses	Stops	Nothing found; released; her owner complains
A LAUNCHER	**Does not answer**	Alone, may stop; **within 5 nm of a Russian warship, will not**	Taken: rails, airframes, control station, a crew that is not the crew on the list

(NR) **A ship stopped by a hail or a warning does not stay stopped for ever.** If nobody comes, she gets under way again; a launcher sooner than the others. A ship disabled stays dead in the water. **A ship taken stays taken while a French warship is within 5 nm.**

3. DISABLING FIRE

(NR) The 76 mm gun alone does not stop a container ship: she burns and keeps going. Disabling fire is aimed single rounds into the engine room, by a frigate within 3 nm, for about ten minutes; or a marksman in the door of a helicopter, on the engine, within 1 nm to start and 2 nm throughout, for about twenty. **A helicopter does not hover beside a ship that a Russian warship is within 5 nm of: under those guns, it takes a frigate.** The first click shows who will fire and whether Paris has said yes; the second, within ten minutes, fires.

(NR) **Without the leave of Paris it is paid for dearly, and on the wrong ship more still.**

4. BOARDING BY FORCE

(NR) A ship under way can be boarded only by a team fast-roped from a helicopter within 1 nm, **against a ship you hold imagery against**, with no Russian warship within 5 nm and a frigate within 20 nm. Two clicks. It succeeds more often than not; when it fails, men are hurt and the team needs an hour before it tries again.

5. THE ESCORTED SHIP

(NR) A ship under Russian escort is the hard case. Expect, as you close: a protest and a fire-control radar locked on at 10 nm; warning shots if you hail or warn her; a frigate across your bow if you fire into her or board her. If you stop her, **Moscow will demand her release within thirty minutes**; a ship that no French warship holds within 5 nm by then is taken back. And at the end of that ladder, a missile salvo cannot be ruled out. **Keep FORBIN close.**

> **BOTTOM LINE**
> Prove before you ask, ask before you fire, fire before you board, and never leave what you hold alone.

F

Law of the Sea and the Neutral Coast

ANNEX F TO OPORD 27-005 · DTG 050500ZJAN27 · CECMED/OPS/LTN/27-005

1. THE HIGH SEAS

(NR) The six are on the high seas, where only their flag state has authority over them, except in the cases the law allows. **A ship that transmits the identity of another ship, and whose master cannot answer for it, may be visited** to verify her flag: that is the ground for a hail and for a visit, reference D. A ship that turns out to carry the launchers of last night is held, and her crew with her.

2. DISABLING FIRE

(NR) Force against a merchant ship that refuses to stop is lawful only when it is necessary and proportionate, **on a ship we have grounds against**, and as the last step. That is why Paris decides, ship by ship, on imagery.

3. TERRITORIAL WATERS

(NR) Inside 12 nm of the Algerian or Tunisian coast, the coastal state alone has authority. **A ship of the six inside is out of our reach**; nothing of ours follows her in.

COAST	ITS 12 NM ON THE PLOT	WHAT IT DOES
ALGERIA	The western TW LIMIT points, from Algiers to the border at about 8°30′E	Watches closely. **Any French ship or aircraft inside is warned off by Algiers**; two Su-30MKA from Annaba come overhead and stay; a patrol ship closes. Paris receives the ambassador. They do not fire
TUNISIA	The last points, from the border to Cap Bon	A ship of the six that reaches it is out of reach

4. THE RUSSIAN UNITS

(NR) Russian warships are sovereign. They have the right to be where they are, and to escort a merchant ship; they have no right to fire on ours. **We have no right to fire first on them.**

5. ALLIES

(NR) A Spanish or Italian ship lent to CTF 473 acts under French tactical control and under these rules; her government answers for her too, and will ask.

BOTTOM LINE

On the high seas, a false identity is our ground; imagery is our proof; Paris decides force. Inside 12 nm of Africa, nothing.

G

Underwater

ANNEX G TO OPORD 27-005 · DTG 050500ZJAN27 · CECMED/OPS/LTN/27-005

1. THE THREAT

(NR) One or two Project 636.3 (Kilo) submarines, **not located since 28 December**, may be in the area C3. A Kilo on batteries at a few knots is almost silent: passive sonars, even a towed array, may not hear her at a few miles. She is found by **active sonar** (a frigate's hull sonar, a Caïman's dipping sonar, active buoys from an Atlantique 2), or when she comes up to periscope depth. Her torpedoes reach a few miles; she needs a target held by her own sonar or by her group's radars.

2. THE RULE

(NR) **No weapon is dropped on an underwater contact unless a Russian torpedo is in the water.** Track, hold, classify, report. **A mission you create starts with its own weapon settings, which may not be the ones you expect**: check that underwater is on HOLD before the first aircraft leaves, or an Atlantique 2 on patrol may drop a torpedo on the first contact it holds.

(NR) When CECMED signals **FLASH — TORPEDO IN THE WATER**, underwater contacts may be attacked: set the units you choose to TIGHT underwater, and order the attack.

3. WHERE TO LOOK

WHERE	WHY	WITH
ROUND THE CARRIER	NAI 05: where a submarine would wait if it meant harm to the force	The towed sonar of the FREMM that stays; a Caïman dipping ahead
WHERE A FRIGATE STOPS	A frigate stopped beside a merchant ship is the easiest target at sea	Her own Caïman dipping round her before she slows; her hull sonar active
THE SARDINIA CHANNEL	NAI 02: a passage the eastbound ships must use	FS SUFFREN; ATLANTIQUE 1

4. WHAT A CONTACT MEANS

(NR) A submarine held and classified is **intelligence** the campaign keeps; a submarine sunk without a Russian torpedo in the water is **an act of war France has not decided**.

BOTTOM LINE

Look for them where you stop, hold them if you find them, and let them fire first.

H

Communications, Reporting and Special Actions

ANNEX H TO OPORD 27-005 · DTG 050500ZJAN27 · CECMED/OPS/LTN/27-005

1. NETS

(NR) Command net CECMED – COM CTF 473, info CPCO. Channel 16 for merchant ships. Bridge to bridge with the Russian group if it calls. Algiers speaks through Paris. Radars radiate, sonars listen, FS SUFFREN is silent. **Every act is logged with its time.**

2. WHO SPEAKS ON THE PLOT

SENDER	ABOUT
CECMED · CECMED INTELLIGENCE	The situation; the Russian group's moves; a ship out of reach; reminders of the rules
N2	One of the six named: real name, position, direction, how many found
SATELLITE PASS	A probable position through the morning
IMAGERY	What is on a ship's deck
CHANNEL 16	What a ship answers; what a Russian warship says
PARIS	Leave for disabling fire; an unauthorised act; the cease order
HYÈRES · MADRID · ROME · ALGIERS	The Atlantique 2; the allies' answers; Algerian protests
BRIDGE REPORT · BOARDING TEAM · SNIPER TEAM	A ship dead in the water; what was found aboard; a lost firing position
ESM · FLASH · STAFF	A French ship tracked by Russian targeting; Russian fire; a torpedo; the situation on request

3. THE EIGHT SPECIAL ACTIONS

(NR) Game menu, Special Actions. **For the five vessel actions, select one merchant contact on the map first.** The two marked ■ are confirmed by running the same action again within ten minutes.

SPECIAL ACTION (EXACT NAME)	DOES
Vessel 1 - Hail	Calls the selected ship on channel 16 and orders her to stop. A warship or a helicopter in flight within 5 nm
Vessel 2 - Warning (shot or low pass)	Rounds across her bow from a frigate within 3 nm, or a low pass by a Rafale within 2 nm
Vessel 3 - Ask Paris for disabling fire	Asks Paris; the answer in 30 to 60 minutes; yes only with imagery of her deck
Vessel 4 - Disabling fire ■	Into her engine room from a frigate within 3 nm, or a marksman from a helicopter within 1 nm
Vessel 5 - Board	Puts a team aboard from a warship or helicopter within 1 nm; by force if she is under way ■
Allies - Ask Spain for a frigate	ESPS CRISTOBAL COLON under your orders in about 45 minutes
Allies - Ask Italy for a frigate and a patrol aircraft	ITS CARLO BERGAMINI and a P-72A, in 90 minutes with imagery of a launcher, 3 hours without
Staff - Situation	The ships found, the evidence held, the answers of Paris and the allies, what the Russian group has done

(NR) After the cease order the vessel actions answer that nothing new is to be attempted. **Full guide: Briefing Pack, section 7.**

J

Allied and Political Coordination

ANNEX J TO OPORD 27-005 · DTG 050500ZJAN27 · CECMED/OPS/LTN/27-005

1. WHAT PARIS STANDS ON

(NR) Two ports struck, on French and Spanish soil. **An attack needs an author**: a launcher held, her rails and her crew, is that author. A Russian hull hit by us first makes us the aggressor in every capital. An innocent ship fired into is a gift to whoever sent the six.

2. THE ALLIES

CAPITAL	POSITION	WHAT IT LENDS
MADRID	Barcelona was struck. Wants the ships taken and will say yes at once	ESPS CRISTOBAL COLON, east of Menorca
ROME	Denied in September having been warned; doubts the whole story; wants proof	ITS CARLO BERGAMINI and a P-72A, sooner with imagery of a launcher
ALGIERS	Neutral. Will not have French ships or aircraft in its waters, and says so loudly	Nothing
TUNIS	Neutral	Nothing

3. MOSCOW

(NR) Moscow will say its ships escort merchant ships on the high seas, as they may. It will protest every hail near them. It will say, of anything that happens next, that France began it. **Do not give it the first shot.** At an hour nobody can give, Paris and Moscow will agree to stop; the order will come as **PARIS — CEASE**.

4. LINES TO TAKE

1. “French ships are verifying the identity of merchant ships transmitting false identities, as the law of the sea allows.”
2. “Force is used only on ships against which there is evidence, and only with the authority of the government.”
3. “French forces have not fired, and will not fire, on Russian ships unless fired upon.”
4. “France respects the territorial waters of Algeria and Tunisia.”

BOTTOM LINE

Madrid is with us, Rome wants proof, Algiers wants us out of its waters, and Moscow wants us to shoot first.

K

Meteorological and Astronomical Forecast

ANNEX K TO OPORD 27-005 · DTG 050500ZJAN27 · CECMED/OPS/LTN/27-005

1. AREA FORECAST — WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN, 050600Z TO 070600Z

(NR) Half cloud, cloud base high; good visibility by day; 13°C at sea level. Wind moderate; **sea state 4** throughout. No change expected. Helicopters fly and land on deck; teams go aboard by rope.

2. SUN — TIMES IN ZULU; LOCAL TIME IS ONE HOUR LATER

PLACE	NAUTICAL DAWN	SUNRISE	SUNSET	NAUTICAL DUSK
Toulon 43°06.0'N 005°55.8'E	0600Z	0708Z	1615Z	1723Z
Launch area 40°36.0'N 006°00.0'E	0554Z	0700Z	1622Z	1727Z
Sardinia Channel 38°00.0'N 009°18.0'E	0536Z	0639Z	1616Z	1719Z

> The same within a minute or two on 6 and 7 January.

3. MOON

(NR) A thin waning crescent, two days before new moon; it rises about 0520Z and sets in the early afternoon. **The two nights are without moon.**

4. WHAT THE LIGHT MEANS

PERIOD	FOR THE SEARCH
0600Z — 0700Z	First light: cameras begin to work; the Atlantique 2 are not yet ready
0700Z — 1620Z	Daylight: the best hours to name ships and photograph decks
1720Z — 0555Z	Black night: infrared and radar; a ship close aboard is still seen; boarding at night is possible but slower to set up

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L

References, Charts and Abbreviations

ANNEX L TO OPORD 27-005 · DTG 050500ZJAN27 · CECMED/OPS/LTN/27-005

1. CHARTS AND REFERENCE POINTS

(NR) ICAO 1:1 000 000; nautical charts of the western Mediterranean; WGS 84. Positions in degrees and decimal minutes. Reference points on the plot: Annex C paragraph 4.

2. OVERLAYS

(NR) Appendix 1 to Annex B, intelligence overlay; Appendix 1 to Annex C, operations overlay. Lay on the chart and register on the two marks, 37°00′N 003°00′E and 43°00′N 010°00′E.

3. ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS ORDER

ABBR.	MEANING	ABBR.	MEANING
AIS	Automatic Identification System	NAI	Named Area of Interest
AGI	Intelligence-gathering ship	N2, N3	Naval intelligence, operations
BP	Blocking position	PIR	Priority Intelligence Requirement
CECMED	Maritime Commander Mediterranean	PL	Phase line
CPCO	Planning and Conduct Centre, Paris	ROE	Rules of engagement
CTF	Commander Task Force	TW	Territorial waters (12 nm)
DP	Decision point	FREMM	Multi-mission frigate
ESM	Electronic support measures	nm	Nautical mile, 1852 m

4. NAMES

(NR) Unit names, Special Actions and reference points are written exactly as on the plot.

Provenance

> Operation LANTERNE, CTF 473 as here organised, the raid of 5 January 2027, every name of a merchant ship, every message and every figure of this order are invented for a game. The ports, the coasts, the ships' classes and the law of the sea are real; the presence of any unit on these dates is a projection. Coasts and borders: Natural Earth (public domain).

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