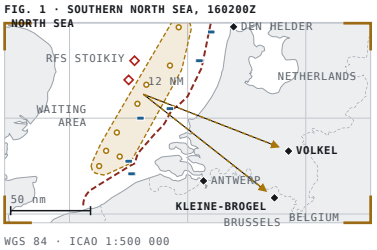
SECRET — REL NATO — EXERCISE — THIS IS A FICTIONAL DOCUMENT

OPERATION SWARM LINE

KLEINE-BROGEL

Drones from ships over seven sites: the end of one night, a short day and the night that decides, with two boarding teams and the law of the sea



D-DAY	DURATION	FORCE	ROE
16 DEC 2026 · 0200Z	21 HOURS	16 FIGHTERS · 5 SHIPS · 1 SUBMARINE	WEAPONS TIGHT

COMMAND: MODERN OPERATIONS · SCENARIO BY TOTOBIMBO · 2026 OPORD 26-071 · 151600ZDEC26

OPERATION ORDER 26-071

OPERATION SWARM LINE — PROTECT SEVEN SITES IN BELGIUM AND THE NETHERLANDS AGAINST DRONES FLOWN FROM SHIPS IN THE SOUTHERN NORTH SEA, FIND THOSE SHIPS, PROVE IT AND TAKE THEM WHERE THE LAW ALLOWS; 16 DEC 26

ORIGINATOR	The Chief of Defence of Belgium and the Chief of Defence of the Netherlands, acting jointly under the combined Benelux air and maritime command arrangements
DATE-TIME GROUP	151600ZDEC26
SERIAL	BNL/OPS/SL/26-071
ADDRESSEE	Commander, BENELUX SHIELD (COM BENELUX SHIELD), at the Control and Reporting Centre Glons (CRC GLONS)
INFO	10th Tactical Wing, Kleine-Brogel · 2nd Tactical Wing, Florennes · Volkel Air Base · Leeuwarden Air Base · Koksijde Air Base · Maritime Air Station De Kooy · Admiral Benelux, Den Helder · the commanding officers of the ships at Annex A · NATO CAOC Uedem · Allied Maritime Command, Northwood · NATO AEW&C Force, Geilenkirchen · SHAPE, Mons · MRCC Ostend · Netherlands Coastguard Centre · the two Ministries of Foreign Affairs (legal directorates)
REFERENCES	A. Combined Benelux air and maritime command arrangements, as in force B. Decision of the two governments of 15 DEC 26: release of a drone formation for engagement C. INTSUM BNL 26-349, 151200ZDEC26: eight vessels of interest D. United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982 E. Legal adviser's note of 15 DEC 26: boarding by zone F. Meteorological and astronomical forecast, 151200ZDEC26 G. NATO reinforcement allocation for 16 DEC 26
ANNEXES	A · B · C · D · E · F · G · H · J · K · L · M
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 Belgium and the Netherlands in December is UTC+1.
MAP REFERENCE	ICAO 1:500 000 aeronautical charts; nautical charts of the Belgian and Netherlands coasts and of the Western Scheldt · WGS 84 · positions in degrees and decimal minutes
COPY	Copy 2 of 24

RECORD OF CHANGES

NO	DTG	CHANGE	AUTHORITY	ENTERED BY
01	150900Z	Paragraph 4b and Annex D paragraph 3: **the ground-based air defence stands at its peacetime alert scale.** NASAMS VOLKEL has six missiles ready and no reloads; each Mistral detachment has four and no reloads. Nothing more can be brought forward before the end of the operation.	Both air staffs	Maj CLAES
02	151100Z	Paragraph 3d and Annex G: **a formation of drones is released for engagement by the two governments five minutes after it is first tracked**, reference B. Surveillance drones are not covered by that decision.	Both cabinets	Lt Col VERMEER
03	151400Z	Annex B paragraph 3: the list of vessels of interest is brought to eight. **The flag each one claims is given by CRC GLONS at H-hour** and is not printed here: three of them have changed in the last twelve months.	Joint N2 / A2	Lt Col VERMEER

DISTRIBUTION

ADDRESSEE	COPIES	MEANS
COM BENELUX SHIELD, CRC GLONS	1–3	Secure signal
10th Tactical Wing, Kleine-Brogel (VIPER 1–6)	4	Secure signal
2nd Tactical Wing, Florennes (LIGHTNING 1–4, SKYGUARD 1 and 2)	5	Secure signal
Volkel Air Base (ORANJE 1–4); Leeuwarden Air Base (ORANJE 5 and 6, REAPER 1)	6–7	Secure signal
Koksijde Air Base (NEPTUNE 1 and 2); Maritime Air Station De Kooy (KAIMAN 1–3)	8–9	Secure signal
Admiral Benelux, Den Helder, for LEOPOLD I, DE ZEVEN PROVINCIEN, HOLLAND, ZEELAND, FRIESLAND, DOLFIJN and the two boarding teams	10–15	Secure signal
Ground-based air defence, counter-drone detachments, radars and listening stations (Annex A)	16–18	Secure signal
CAOC Uedem; Allied Maritime Command; NATO AEW&C Force, Geilenkirchen; SHAPE	19–22	Secure signal, extract: paragraph 4, Annexes A and C
MRCC Ostend; Netherlands Coastguard Centre; the legal directorates	23	Liaison officers, extract: Annexes E and F
Joint registry	24	Registry

> This order is issued in peacetime. **Belgium and the Netherlands are at war with nobody, and neither is the Alliance.** Small drones have been over two of our air bases since before midnight. They come from the sea and go back to it. The ships that fly them are merchant ships, in waters where a merchant ship has every right to be, and two Russian naval units are in the same waters with the same right. **You will not shoot your way out of this. Find the ships, prove it, take them where the law allows, and tell the governments which they are.**

1. SITUATION

a. Adversary forces

(NR) No state of hostilities exists. The heading is doctrinal. **Nobody has claimed the drones, and nobody will**; whoever flies them counts on our being unable to show where they come from.

(NR) **What is known.** Small fixed-wing drones have orbited **Kleine-Brogel** and **Volkel** air bases since before midnight on 15 December; four are overhead as this order takes effect [B2]. They arrive from the west and leave to the west. **They are flown from ships: one ship launches them, another takes them back aboard, a third relays their control link** [B2]. Which three ships is not known. INTSUM reference C names **eight vessels of interest**, all merchant ships loitering in the economic zone off our coasts at 3 to 5 knots; Annex B paragraph 3.

WHAT	ON THE PLOT	FLIES	REMARKS
SURVEILLANCE DRONE	Side INTRUDERS, shown UNFRIENDLY, named UAV and a number	Slow and low: about 60 knots, about 300 m; orbits a site for some time, then goes back to sea	Fixed wing, launched from a deck. Cameras and a control link. **Not hostile under the rules in force**, paragraph 3d
FORMATION	A group of slow contacts flying together, low, on a steady course for a site	Low, slow and straight	**Not seen so far; assessed as within the adversary's means** [C3]. Nobody knows what such a formation would carry. Released for engagement by the governments, paragraph 3d
THE SHIPS	Side SHIPPING, shown NEUTRAL, among forty-four merchant ships	—	A launcher, a recoverer, a relay. **Unarmed. Never a target.** A ship with something to hide watches her radar and her horizon
RUSSIAN UNITS	Side RUSSIA, shown UNFRIENDLY	—	The corvette **RFS STOIKIY** (with a Ka-27 helicopter, HELIX 27, embarked) and the intelligence ship **SSV-175 VIKTOR LEONOV**, in the economic zone, **where they are entitled to be**

(NR) **The Russian units.** At 151200Z both were about 50 nm north-west of Hoek van Holland, steaming slowly. They have broken no rule. **They will not fire first; fired on, they defend themselves** [B2]. The staff expects the corvette to place herself close to any merchant ship we take an interest in [C3]: no boarding is attempted while a Russian warship is within 5 nm of the ship.

(NR) **How a ship with something to hide behaves** [B3]. She sees a patrol vessel at 9 to 10 nm and a helicopter at about 1.5 nm; she does not see a submarine at periscope depth. **A warship closing inside 6 nm, or lying stopped inside 4 nm, alarms her within minutes.** Alarmed, she runs for the open sea; pressed further, she throws everything overboard, and a launcher sends off at once all she has left. **Shadow from 6 to 8 nm, and board by helicopter.**

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

(NR) **Most likely.** The overflights of Kleine-Brogel and Volkel go on to the end of this night, stop or thin out by day, and resume after dark, perhaps over other sites as well. The three ships stay in the economic zone, outside the 12 nm limit, among the ordinary traffic. The Russian units stay close enough to be in the way and far enough to have done nothing. Each hour that passes without a name is an hour gained by whoever sent them.

(NR) **Most dangerous.** A formation of drones flown from the sea at one of our military sites, in the dark, with a site defence at peacetime scale; or an act of ours that hands the adversary what he wants: a shot at a ship, a wreck on a town, a boarding party on the deck of a ship that had nothing to hide. *The staff notes that the second kind begins with something we do.*

b. Friendly forces

(NR) Task organisation at Annex A: **sixteen fighters** on four bases (six Belgian F-16s, **VIPER**, at Kleine-Brogel; four Belgian F-35As, **LIGHTNING**, at Florennes; six Dutch F-35As, **ORANJE**, at Volkel and Leeuwarden); **three MQ-9s** (SKYGUARD at Florennes, REAPER at Leeuwarden); **five NH90 helicopters** (NEPTUNE at Koksijde, KAIMAN at De Kooy); **two frigates, three patrol vessels and a submarine** at sea; **five radars**, **seven counter-drone systems**, **two NASAMS batteries**, **three Mistral detachments** and **three listening stations** ashore.

(NR) **Two facts about these forces govern everything else.** First: **the F-16s' radar does not pick up airframes this small; the F-35s find them, at about 24 nm, and engage on their own.** Do not count on the F-16s against drones. Second: **there are two boarding teams, no more**, and a team that has boarded is gone for three hours and forty minutes.

c. Attachments and detachments

(NR) All Belgian and Netherlands units at Annex A are under the tactical command of COM BENELUX SHIELD for the period, reference A. **Everything is on the ground or stopped at H-hour, armed and ready, and no patrol or mission has been prepared: the Commander builds his own.** NATO holds a P-8A and an E-3A that can be asked for, paragraph 4d.

d. Civil considerations and environment

(NR) **Shipping.** These are among the busiest waters in the world. **Forty-four merchant ships are on the plot at H-hour**: two traffic lanes running south-west to north-east along the coast, the approaches to Zeebrugge, to the Scheldt and to the Maas, two ferry lines, wind-farm supply vessels, ships at anchor off Vlissingen and off the Maas, trawlers. **Thirty-six of them are ordinary traffic and give no ground for suspicion.** MRCC Ostend and the Netherlands Coastguard recall that the lanes stay open. Annex B paragraph 5.

(NR) **Airports.** Brussels Airport, Antwerp-Deurne and Eindhoven Airport are open at H-hour. **A drone within 8 nm of an open airport can cause an incident with an airliner.** The Commander may close the three together and reopen them; every hour of closure costs money, and public patience after three hours. Annex H.

(NR) **Towns.** Whatever is brought down within 4 nm of a town falls on it. Fourteen towns are listed at Annex C paragraph 5, and the port of Antwerp counts as one. **Den Helder naval base and SHAPE lie inside 4 nm of a town.**

(NR) **Brussels and The Hague.** The two governments answer to their parliaments for what flies over the bases and for what falls on a town; to the flag states and the shipowners for every merchant ship stopped; to Moscow and to every allied capital for anything that happens near a Russian hull. **International legitimacy, public opinion and allied cohesion** are what this headquarters will be measured by, and the capitals will say so during the day. Governments that lose any one of the three do not survive it. Annex K.

(NR) **Light and weather.** H-hour is in full darkness with no moon. First light at about 0613Z inland and 0625Z at sea; sunrise 0736Z to 0750Z; **less than eight hours of daylight**; sunset 1530Z to 1536Z; full dark again by about 1700Z, with a half moon low in the west behind the cloud until after the end. Overcast, light rain, 5°C, **sea state 4**: boarding by helicopter is possible throughout. Annex L.

2. MISSION

(NR) **COM BENELUX SHIELD, from 160200Z to 162300ZDEC26, protects the seven sites of Annex A against the drones flown from the sea, finds the ships that launch, recover and control them, obtains the evidence, takes those ships where the law allows and names them to the two governments, without firing at any ship, without bringing a drone down on a town and without boarding a ship that had nothing to hide, in order that the overflights end and that Brussels and The Hague can attribute them on proof.**

3. EXECUTION

a. Commander's intent

(NR) We have been here before with nothing to show for it: drones over a base for several nights, an airport closed, shots fired from the ground, and not one airframe or one name to put before a parliament. **This time we know they come from ships, and we have the ships in front of us.**

(NR) **Purpose.** End the overflights by taking away the decks they fly from, and give the governments an attribution that holds in court.

(NR) **Method. The ships are the centre of gravity, not the drones**: a launcher in our hands launches nothing more. **Watch without being seen**: the submarine, the MQ-9s and a patrol vessel lying off at 6 to 8 nm hold a ship without alarming her. **Collect before you act**: a launch seen, a recovery seen, bearings that cross, a wreck taken apart; each one makes a flag state more willing and a name more solid. **Ask early**: a request for consent costs nothing and takes up to fifty minutes. **Board by helicopter, once, on the right ship. Keep the F-35s for a formation** and meet it over the sea. **Use jammers and airport closures as what they are**: protection that is paid for by the hour.

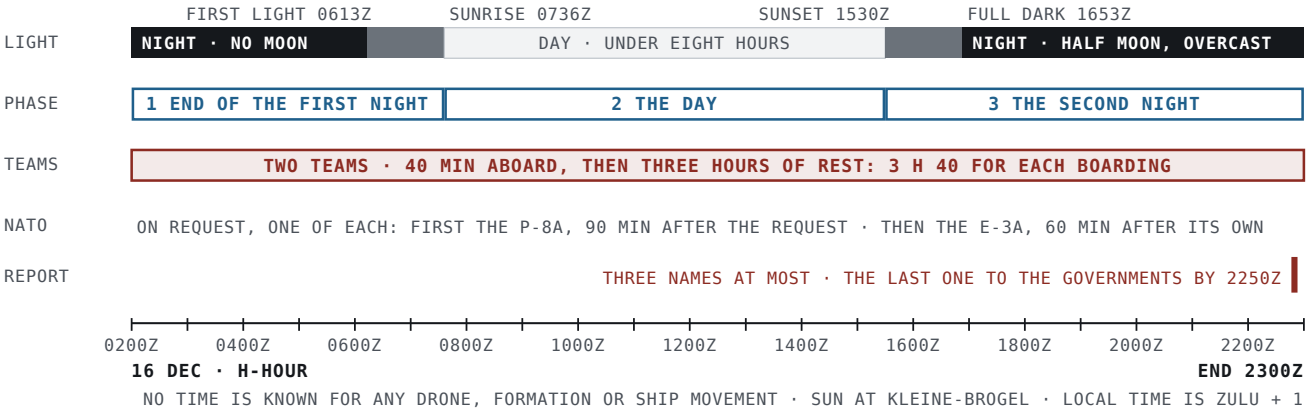
(NR) **End state.** At 162300Z the launcher, the recoverer and the relay are held for the prosecutor or have at least been seen in the act; up to three names, each with evidence, have gone to the governments; no site has been hit; no wreck lies in a street; no innocent ship has had a boarding party on her deck; nothing has been fired at a ship; the Russian units have been given nothing to complain of.

(NR) **One name with evidence is worth more than three guesses, and no name at all is better than a wrong one only by a little.** I accept a ship that gets away before a boarding that should not have happened.

b. Concept of operations

(NR) The operation runs twenty-one hours in three phases: the end of one night, a short day, and the night that decides. Annex C sets out phases, decision points and control measures; Appendix 1 to Annex C draws them.

SYNCHRONISATION



(NR) **Phase 1 — The end of the first night (160200Z to sunrise, about 0740Z).** Drones are overhead now and the listening stations are hearing their link. Get eyes on the eight vessels without alarming one: MQ-9s and helicopters airborne, patrol vessels to shadowing distance, the submarine where she is most useful. Put F-35s between the waiting area and the coast. Decide on the jammers at the two bases. Send the first requests for consent. Decide early whether to ask NATO for the P-8A. **Every drone that goes home tonight goes home to a ship: have something watching when it arrives.**

(NR) **Phase 2 — The day (to sunset, about 1530Z).** The drones have so far flown in the dark. Daylight is for the ships: answers from the flag states, close looks from the air, teams and helicopters in place, and the boardings for which there is a legal basis and a reason. Rest and rearm the fighters in turn. Know before dusk where each of the eight is, which of them has moved, and where the Russian units have gone.

(NR) **Phase 3 — The second night (to 162300Z).** Whatever the adversary still has, he uses in the dark. F-35s airborne on the barrier before sunset, with reliefs planned to the end. A team rested and within reach of the ship that matters most. **The names go to the governments before 2300Z**; a name cannot be withdrawn, so they go when the evidence is in, not before.

(NR) **Continuous — the sites.** The seven counter-drone systems watch; a jammer is switched on when the Commander judges it worth its price. **Continuous — the picture.** Every one of the eight held as a contact, by something that does not alarm her. **Continuous — restraint.** Weapons tight; nothing at a ship; nothing over a town.

c. Tasks to subordinate elements

ELEMENT	TASK
LIGHTNING 1–4	Belgian F-35As, Florennes. **The force against a formation**, with ORANJE: their radar finds a small drone at about 24 nm and they engage on their own once it is released. Barrier patrols between the waiting area and the coast; reliefs. AIM-120C-7 and AIM-9X.
ORANJE 1–6	Dutch F-35As, four at Volkel, two at Leeuwarden. As LIGHTNING. The Leeuwarden pair is the nearest to the northern part of the waiting area.
VIPER 1–6	Belgian F-16s, Kleine-Brogel. **Not to be counted on against drones: their radar does not pick up airframes this small.** Reserve. VIPER 1–4 carry AIM-120B, VIPER 5 and 6 AIM-9M only.
SKYGUARD 1, 2 · REAPER 1	MQ-9B at Florennes, MQ-9A at Leeuwarden, unarmed. **Hold ships from high up for hours**, at 6 to 10 nm, without being noticed. They never see a drone. They can witness a launch or a recovery.
NEPTUNE 1, 2	Belgian NH90s, Koksijde. **NEPTUNE 1 carries the Belgian boarding team.** A helicopter sees a ship only from close, and is seen by her at about 1.5 nm: it goes in to board or to look, not to loiter.
KAIMAN 1–3	Dutch NH90s, De Kooy. **KAIMAN 1 carries the Dutch boarding team.** As NEPTUNE.
LEOPOLD I	Belgian frigate, off Zeebrugge, stopped. Platform of the Belgian boarding team; her radars over the Scheldt approach. **Not inside 6 nm of a vessel of interest unless a boarding is under way.**
DE ZEVEN PROVINCIEN	Dutch air-defence frigate, off Den Helder, stopped. Platform of the Dutch boarding team; her radars over the northern area. Same restriction.
HOLLAND · ZEELAND · FRIESLAND	Dutch patrol vessels, stopped just outside the 12 nm limit, south, centre and north. Each a platform of the Dutch team. **They name a merchant ship at 9 to 10 nm, by night as well, and pick up a small drone at 10 nm or less.** Shadow at 6 to 8 nm; the suggested barrier lines are at Annex C.
DOLFIJN	Dutch submarine, at periscope depth in the middle of the waiting area, silent. **Holds a ship from about 8 nm and is never seen.** The one unit that can sit beside a vessel of interest for hours.
Radars (5)	Coastal radars at Zeebrugge, Vlissingen, Hoek van Holland and Den Helder: a small drone at 10 nm or less. RADAR SEMMERZAKE: the air picture inland. All radiating.
CUAV (7)	One counter-drone system on each site: a radar, cameras and a jammer. They report what is overhead. **The jammer is OFF until the Commander switches it on**, Annex H.
NASAMS (2) · MISTRAL (3)	Point defence of the port of Antwerp, Volkel, Kleine-Brogel, Florennes and SHAPE. On Weapons Tight: they fire at what is held hostile within their reach, one missile per target. **Few missiles, no reloads but at Antwerp**, paragraph 4b.
SIGINT (3)	Listening stations at Koksijde, Vlissingen and Den Helder. They see nothing; **they report bearings on the drones' control link while drones are airborne**, Annex B paragraph 7.

d. Coordinating instructions

1. (NR) **H-hour is 160200Z.** End of operation 162300Z, or on order. The opening message from CRC GLONS at H-hour takes precedence over this order.
2. (NR) **Weapons tight, everywhere.** Every unit fires only at a contact held HOSTILE, in the air, on the surface, under it and on land. Weapons Free is never ordered. Annex G.
3. (NR) **Surveillance drones are not hostile.** They are shown UNFRIENDLY and stay so; marking one hostile does not hold. **Nothing fires at one unless the Commander himself orders that unit to engage that contact**, **and never over a town**.

4. (NR) **A formation is released by the governments.** When several slow contacts fly together towards a site, CRC announces a NEW FORMATION and asks Brussels and The Hague. **Five minutes after the first track** the answer comes, ENGAGEMENT AUTHORISED, and the formation shows HOSTILE. **Hold fire until then.** The five minutes run from the first track: a formation that nobody tracks is released by nobody. Track it early, over the sea.
5. (NR) **Where it falls.** Engage over the sea or over open country. **Never over a town**, and not within 4 nm of one: hold the unit's fire, let the track pass, engage beyond. Annex C paragraph 5.
6. (NR) **Nothing is fired at a ship, merchant or Russian.** Not a warning shot, not a shot across the bows, not at a ship that runs. **A Russian unit destroyed ends the operation.**
7. (NR) **The Russian units.** They do not fire first. Fired on and hit, they defend themselves against anything of ours within reach, and go on for as long as they are fired on. Keep clear of them; do not close them; do not overfly them low.
8. (NR) **Boarding law, by zone** (Annex F). **Internal waters** (the Western Scheldt, the ports) and **territorial waters** (inside the 12 nm limit, reference points TW LIMIT 01 to 20): any merchant ship may be boarded. **Economic zone**, beyond: only with the consent of her flag state, or once her registry has disowned her; **a ship under the Russian flag cannot be boarded there at all**.
9. (NR) **Boarding, in practice** (Annex E). The ship stopped or under 8 knots; a rested team within 2 nm aboard a warship or within 1 nm aboard its helicopter, airborne; no Russian warship within 5 nm of her. Forty minutes aboard; then the team rests three hours. **Boarding the wrong ship is paid for.**
10. (NR) **Shadowing.** Warships stay **6 to 8 nm** from a vessel of interest and do not lie stopped inside 4 nm of her. Closer than that is a decision, taken when the boarding is ready.
11. (NR) **Special Actions.** Flag-state consent, stop orders, boardings, jammers, airports, NATO reinforcements and the report are ordered through the nine Special Actions, by their exact names, listed at Annex J paragraph 3. Those that act on a ship need **one merchant contact selected on the map first**. Three are confirmed by a second click within ten minutes.
12. (NR) **The report to the governments.** Before 162300Z the governments expect names, **three at most**, by Special Action `Report - Name the selected vessel`. A name cannot be withdrawn. The line to the cabinets closes a few minutes before 2300Z: **the last name is given by 2250Z**. Annex J paragraph 4.
13. (NR) **What fell where** is marked on the plot for 45 minutes: an orange marker for a wreck or wreckage, a red one for an explosion. They are markers, not targets.
14. (NR) PIRs at Annex B paragraph 8. Reports at Annex J. Every stop order, every boarding, every shot and every name is logged with its time: **the log is what the two parliaments will read**.

4. SERVICE SUPPORT

a. Fighter missiles

(NR) **Limited and counted.** Each fighter base holds what its aircraft carry and **two full rearmings** of it in its magazine; there is no resupply within the period. A drone costs between one and two missiles. Every missile fired is reported and will be asked about.

BASE	AIRCRAFT	MISSILES CARRIED	IN THE BASE MAGAZINE
KLEINE-BROGEL AB	VIPER 1–4 VIPER 5, 6	AIM-120B AIM-9M	Two rearmings for the six aircraft; 370-gallon drop tanks
FLORENNES AB	LIGHTNING 1–4	AIM-120C-7, AIM-9X	Two rearmings for the four aircraft
VOLKEL AB	ORANJE 1–4	AIM-120C-7, AIM-9X	Two rearmings for the four aircraft
LEEUWARDEN AB	ORANJE 5, 6	AIM-120C-7, AIM-9X	Two rearmings for the two aircraft

(NR) Koksijde, De Kooy and Geilenkirchen hold no air-to-air weapons. The MQ-9s are unarmed. The ships fight with what is in their launchers and magazines; guns are not rationed.

b. Ground-based air defence

PEACETIME ALERT SCALE: FEW MISSILES, NO RELOADS

(NR) The batteries were not mobilised for this operation and nothing more can reach them before it ends. **What is on the launchers below is all there is.** Each unit fires **one missile per target**.

UNIT	MISSILES READY	RELOADS	REMARKS
NASAMS ANTWERP	12	12	The only battery at full scale. The port of Antwerp
NASAMS VOLKEL	**6**	**none**	Engages inside 8 nm only. Volkel air base
MISTRAL KLEINE-BROGEL	**4**	**none**	Short range. Kleine-Brogel air base
MISTRAL FLORENNES	**4**	**none**	Short range. Florennes air base
MISTRAL SHAPE	**4**	**none**	Short range. SHAPE at Mons, 3 nm from the town

(NR) **Brussels Airport and the Den Helder naval base have no missile unit at all.** The counter-drone systems carry no weapon. The site defences will thin out a formation; they are not expected to stop one by themselves. Annex D.

c. Boarding teams

TEAM	WORKS FROM	AVAILABILITY
BELGIAN	LEOPOLD I (within 2 nm of the ship) or NEPTUNE 1 (airborne, within 1 nm)	Rested at H-hour. **A boarding takes 40 minutes; the team then rests three hours.** Either platform of a team will do; the team is not moved from one to another by any order. No helicopter boarding above sea state 5
DUTCH	DE ZEVEN PROVINCIEN, HOLLAND, ZEELAND or FRIESLAND (within 2 nm) or KAIMAN 1 (airborne, within 1 nm)	

(NR) **Two teams, three ships to take, twenty-one hours.** A team spent on the wrong ship is not there for the right one.

d. NATO reinforcements on request

(NR) NATO can spare a small number of reinforcements, counted as a pool; how many is shown by the first click of the request. Special Action `NATO - Request reinforcement`, run twice: the first click shows the cost and the arrival time, the second, within ten minutes, confirms.

REQUEST	COST	WHAT COMES	LIMITS
First	1 of the pool	**NATO P-8A**, a maritime patrol aircraft, entering from the north-west **90 minutes** after the request, heading for the middle of the economic zone, under the Commander's orders	One of each, in this order. Refused when the pool is empty, and when it would arrive as the operation ends. Both recover to Geilenkirchen
Second	1 of the pool	**NATO E-3A**, airborne from Geilenkirchen **60 minutes** after the request, heading for the Antwerp–Eindhoven area, under the Commander's orders	

e. Search and rescue, and what falls

(NR) Search and rescue at sea through MRCC Ostend and the Netherlands Coastguard Centre. **A drone on the ground is a wreck for the technical services**, who want one they can take apart: every kill and every crash is reported at once with its position.

5. COMMAND AND SIGNAL

a. Command

(NR) COM BENELUX SHIELD exercises tactical command of every Belgian and Netherlands unit at Annex A and of any NATO reinforcement placed under him. National command remains with the two Chiefs of Defence. Succession of command: COM BENELUX SHIELD; the senior controller, CRC GLONS; the duty officer of Admiral Benelux.

(NR) **The merchant ships are under nobody's command but their masters'.** The Commander may ask a flag state for its consent, order a ship to stop, and put a team aboard her where the law allows; he cannot give her a course. **The Russian units** are sovereign: nothing is ordered of them and nothing is done to them.

(NR) **The release of a formation is the governments' act, not the Commander's.** Everything else is his own and is not delegated: the order to fire on a surveillance drone, each jammer, the airports, each request for consent, each stop order, each boarding and each name. Each is logged with its time.

b. Signal

(NR) Annex J. COM BENELUX SHIELD reports to the two Chiefs of Defence on the command net, info CAOC Uedem and Allied Maritime Command. Messages on the plot are signed by their sender: CRC GLONS or CRC; CUAV and the site; SIGINT and the station; SIGINT CELL; LEGAL ADVISER; RADIO and the unit; BOARDING PARTY; COUNTER-DRONE; AIRPORTS; AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL; SURFACE PICTURE; TECHNICAL INTELLIGENCE; NATO; REPORT; BRUSSELS / THE HAGUE; FLASH.

REPORT	WHEN	CONTENT
DRONES OVERHEAD	on arrival	From the CUAV of a site: how many inside 4 nm, and whether the jammer of that site is ON or OFF
BEARING	while drones fly	From a SIGINT station: a control-link burst on a bearing, drawn on the plot for 40 minutes
LAUNCH SEEN / RECOVERY SEEN	at once	From the unit that saw it: a small aircraft left, or was taken aboard, a named ship
CLOSE INSPECTION	after a close look	From a warship or a helicopter: what is on the deck of a vessel of interest
NEW FORMATION	first track	From CRC: slow contacts flying together; the governments are being asked; hold fire
ENGAGEMENT AUTHORISED	five minutes later	From CRC: the formation shows HOSTILE; number, heading, estimated target area
BOARDING PARTY	40 minutes after	What was found aboard, and whether ship and crew are held
FLASH	at once	An explosion on a site; a ship hit by our fire; the Russian units at action stations

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Acknowledge by secure signal to both Chiefs of Defence, serial BNL/OPS/SL/26-071, before 152000ZDEC26.

The Chief of Defence of Belgium
The Chief of Defence of the Netherlands
Acting jointly, combined Benelux air and maritime command arrangements
Authenticated: Lt Col VERMEER, Joint Operations, Plans

ANNEXES: A Task organisation · B Intelligence · C Operations · D Air defence plan · E Maritime interdiction · F Law of the sea: boarding by zone · G Rules of engagement · H Sites, jammers and airports · J Communications and reporting · K Allied and political coordination · L Meteorological and astronomical forecast · M References, charts and abbreviations

A

Task Organisation

ANNEX A TO OPORD 26-071 · DTG 151600ZDEC26 · BNL/OPS/SL/26-071

1. FIGHTERS — UNDER TACTICAL COMMAND OF COM BENELUX SHIELD

> State at H-hour, 160200Z: every aircraft on the ground on its base, armed and ready; every ship stopped at her position. No patrol, no mission. Everything on Weapons Tight.

CALLSIGN	AIRCRAFT	BASE	MISSILES	REMARKS
VIPER 1, 2, 3, 4	F-16AM, Belgium	KLEINE-BROGEL AB	AIM-120B	**Their radar does not pick up airframes this small.** Reserve
VIPER 5, 6	F-16AM, Belgium	KLEINE-BROGEL AB	AIM-9M	
LIGHTNING 1, 2, 3, 4	F-35A, Belgium	FLORENNES AB	AIM-120C-7, AIM-9X	**Find a small drone at about 24 nm and engage on their own** once it is held hostile
ORANJE 1, 2, 3, 4	F-35A, Netherlands	VOLKEL AB	AIM-120C-7, AIM-9X	
ORANJE 5, 6	F-35A, Netherlands	LEEUWARDEN AB	AIM-120C-7, AIM-9X	

2. REMOTELY PILOTED AIRCRAFT AND HELICOPTERS

CALLSIGN	AIRCRAFT	BASE	REMARKS
SKYGUARD 1, 2	MQ-9B SkyGuardian, Belgium	FLORENNES AB	Unarmed, reconnaissance fit. Hold a ship from high up; never see a drone
REAPER 1	MQ-9A, Netherlands	LEEUWARDEN AB	
NEPTUNE 1, 2	NH90 NFH, Belgium	KOKSIJDE AB	**NEPTUNE 1: helicopter of the Belgian boarding team**
KAIMAN 1, 2, 3	NH90 NFH, Netherlands	DE KOOY	**KAIMAN 1: helicopter of the Dutch boarding team**

3. AIR BASES

BASE	POSITION	REMARKS
KLEINE-BROGEL AB	51°10.1'N 005°28.2'E	10th Tactical Wing. F-16. **Overflown since before midnight.** Also a site to protect
FLORENNES AB	50°14.6'N 004°38.8'E	2nd Tactical Wing. F-35A and MQ-9B. Also a site to protect
VOLKEL AB	51°39.4'N 005°42.5'E	F-35A. **Overflown since before midnight.** Also a site to protect
LEEUWARDEN AB	53°13.7'N 005°45.6'E	F-35A and MQ-9A. The nearest fighter base to the northern waiting area
KOKSIJDE AB	51°05.4'N 002°39.0'E	NH90. On the coast by the French border, 25 to 35 nm from the three southernmost vessels of interest
DE KOOY	52°55.4'N 004°46.8'E	NH90. By Den Helder, about 35 nm from the northernmost vessel of interest
GEILENKIRCHEN AB	50°57.7'N 006°02.5'E	NATO AEW&C Force, Germany. Empty; recovery base of the NATO reinforcements

4. SHIPS AND SUBMARINE — UNDER TACTICAL COMMAND OF COM BENELUX SHIELD

SHIP	TYPE	POSITION AT H-HOUR	WATERS	TEAM
LEOPOLD I	Frigate, Belgian Navy	51°25.2'N 003°03.0'E	Territorial, off Zeebrugge	BELGIAN
DE ZEVEN PROVINCIEN	Air-defence frigate, Royal Netherlands Navy	52°54.0'N 004°24.0'E	Territorial, off Den Helder	DUTCH
HOLLAND	Patrol vessel, Royal Netherlands Navy	51°33.0'N 003°00.0'E	Economic zone, 15 nm off	DUTCH
ZEELAND	Patrol vessel	52°06.0'N 003°42.0'E	Economic zone, 14 nm off	DUTCH
FRIESLAND	Patrol vessel	52°36.0'N 004°12.0'E	Economic zone, 14 nm off	DUTCH
DOLFIJN	Submarine, Royal Netherlands Navy	52°00.0'N 003°12.0'E	Economic zone, 25 nm off, periscope depth	–

5. THE SEVEN SITES AND THEIR DEFENCES

SITE (REFERENCE POINT)	POSITION	COUNTER-DRONE	MISSILE UNIT	NEAREST LISTED TOWN
Kleine-Brogel air base (SITE KLEINE-BROGEL)	51°10.1'N 005°28.2'E	CUAV KLEINE-BROGEL	MISTRAL KLEINE-BROGEL	Hasselt, 15 nm
Volkel air base (SITE VOLKEL)	51°39.4'N 005°42.5'E	CUAV VOLKEL	NASAMS VOLKEL	Eindhoven, 16 nm
The port of Antwerp (SITE ANTWERP)	51°20.7'N 004°16.2'E	CUAV ANTWERP	NASAMS ANTWERP	**The port itself counts as a town**
Brussels Airport (SITE BRUSSELS)	50°54.1'N 004°29.0'E	CUAV BRUSSELS	none	Brussels, 6 nm
The Den Helder naval base (SITE DEN HELDER)	52°57.3'N 004°46.8'E	CUAV DEN HELDER	none	**Den Helder, under 1 nm**
Florennes air base (SITE FLORENNES)	50°14.6'N 004°38.8'E	CUAV FLORENNES	MISTRAL FLORENNES	Charleroi, 13 nm
SHAPE at Mons (SITE SHAPE)	50°30.2'N 003°59.1'E	CUAV SHAPE	MISTRAL SHAPE	**Mons, 3 nm**

(NR) A counter-drone system is a radar, cameras and a jammer, with no weapon. Missiles ready and reloads: paragraph 4b of the order.

6. RADARS AND LISTENING STATIONS

UNIT	TYPE	POSITION	GIVES
RADAR ZEEBRUGGE	Coastal radar, 3D	51°18.0'N 003°13.5'E	Ships out to the horizon; **a small drone at 10 nm or less**
RADAR VLISSINGEN	Coastal radar, 3D	51°27.3'N 003°36.0'E	
RADAR HOEK VAN HOLLAND	Coastal radar, 3D	51°58.5'N 004°07.8'E	
RADAR DEN HELDER	Coastal radar, 3D	52°57.0'N 004°45.6'E	
RADAR SEMMERZAKE	Long-range air surveillance radar	50°56.4'N 003°40.2'E	The air picture over Belgium. Not to be counted on against small drones
SIGINT KOKSIJDE	Listening station	51°06.0'N 002°39.0'E	Bearings on the drones' control link, while drones are airborne. They see nothing by themselves
SIGINT VLISSINGEN	Listening station	51°27.0'N 003°34.8'E	
SIGINT DEN HELDER	Listening station	52°56.7'N 004°45.3'E	

7. ON REQUEST — NATO (PARAGRAPH 4D OF THE ORDER)

(NR) NATO P-8A (P-8A Poseidon, maritime patrol; enters near 53°24.0'N 003°00.0'E) · NATO E-3A (airborne early warning, from Geilenkirchen). Both recover to GEILENKIRCHEN AB.

8. NOT UNDER COMMAND

(NR) Forty-four merchant ships (side SHIPPING, NEUTRAL) · RFS STOIKIY, SSV-175 VIKTOR LEONOV and HELIX 27 (side RUSSIA, UNFRIENDLY). **Never a target.**

B

Intelligence

ANNEX B TO OPORD 26-071 · DTG 151600ZDEC26 · BNL/OPS/SL/26-071

1. SUMMARY

(NR) Since the autumn of 2025 small drones have appeared over military bases, ports and airports in north-western Europe, by night, without anybody being able to say where they took off. **This time there is an answer: they are flown from merchant ships in the economic zone, by a method that needs three ships** [B2]. The same method can send a formation instead of a pair [C3].

2. THE RECORD

DATE	EVENT	GRADE
SEP–OCT 2025	Drones over airports and military sites in Denmark; Copenhagen airport closed for hours. France boards a tanker of the shadow fleet off its Atlantic coast, suspected of a link with those flights	A1
NOV 2025	Drones over **Kleine-Brogel** on several nights; Brussels Airport closed for a time. Drones over **Volkel**, fired on from the ground; none recovered. Eindhoven Airport suspended	A1
15 DEC 2026	From before midnight: fixed-wing drones in pairs over Kleine-Brogel and Volkel, arriving from the west and leaving to the west. **Four overhead at 160200Z**	B2
15 DEC 2026	The three listening stations take bearings on short bursts of a control link. The bearings point out to sea	B2

3. THE EIGHT VESSELS OF INTEREST — INTSUM BNL 26-349

> In the order of the INTSUM. All eight were in the economic zone at their last report, loitering at 3 to 5 knots. The flag each claims is given by CRC GLONS at H-hour.

NO	NAME	TYPE	LAST REPORTED	WHY SHE IS ON THE LIST
1	MV ARKHON	Bulk carrier	31 nm north-west of Westkapelle 51°51.0'N 002°48.0'E	AIS switched off for thirty hours; drifting with no declared destination
2	MT LYRA PACIFIC	Tanker	37 nm west of Hoek van Holland 52°09.0'N 003°09.0'E	Owner under EU sanctions; waiting "for orders" for three days
3	MV NORD VARANGER	Container ship	32 nm west of IJmuiden 52°33.0'N 003°42.0'E	AIS switched off; slow box courses clear of the traffic lanes
4	MV HALDEN FJORD	Supply vessel	31 nm west of Den Helder 52°57.0'N 003°51.0'E	Chartered through a shell company; no offshore work declared in this area
5	MT AURELIA SPIRIT	Tanker	37 nm north-west of Hoek van Holland 52°21.0'N 003°18.0'E	Changed name and flag twice this year; loitering
6	MV MERIDIAN LOTUS	Container ship	23 nm north-west of Ostend 51°30.0'N 002°30.0'E	Declared for Antwerp; has refused two earlier pilot slots
7	MV TAMAR WILLOW	Bulk carrier	28 nm north-west of Ostend 51°39.6'N 002°37.2'E	Declared for Antwerp; unexplained aerials reported by a pilot last month
8	MV CASSIOPE	Ro-ro ship	21 nm north-west of Zeebrugge 51°36.0'N 002°51.0'E	Declared for Antwerp; crew list changed at sea, AIS intermittent

(NR) **Being on this list proves nothing**: every reason above has an innocent explanation, and most of these ships have one. Three are declared for Antwerp and will go up the Scheldt at an hour that is not known.

4. THE RUSSIAN UNITS

UNIT	TYPE	POSITION, 151200Z	ASSESSMENT
RFS STOIKIY	Corvette, with a Ka-27 helicopter (HELIX 27) embarked	52°36.0'N 003°06.0'E	Armed. Expected to stand close to merchant ships we approach C3. **No boarding within 5 nm of her**
SSV-175 VIKTOR LEONOV	Intelligence ship	52°24.0'N 003°00.0'E	Listens and watches. Where she chooses to wait is worth noting C3

(NR) Both are warships of a foreign state in the economic zone: they enjoy the freedoms of the high seas and complete immunity. **They do not fire first.** If one of them is hit they go to action stations and return fire at anything of ours within reach, for as long as they are fired on and for some time after.

5. ORDINARY TRAFFIC — THIRTY-SIX SHIPS

WHERE	SHIPS	BEHAVIOUR
North-east-bound and south-west-bound traffic lanes, LANE SW to LANE NE	15	10 to 16 knots along the lanes, 20 to 45 nm off the coast, through the waiting area
Approach to Zeebrugge	3	In and out, 10 to 14 knots
The Scheldt: PILOT STATION, VLISSINGEN ROADS, Antwerp	4	In and out under pilotage, 10 to 12 knots
Approach to the Maas	4	In and out, 10 to 13 knots
Ferries: Hoek van Holland–England, Zeebrugge–north of England	2	18 knots, across the lanes
Wind-farm supply, off Zeebrugge and Borssele	2	10 knots, short runs
At anchor: ANCHORAGE VLISSINGEN, ANCHORAGE MAAS	4	Stopped throughout
Trawlers: Flemish banks, off Noordwijk	2	5 knots, in loops

(NR) **Any of the forty-four can be named in the report, stopped, or boarded. The INTSUM gives a reason to look at eight.** A ship of the ordinary traffic that is ordered to stop obeys and waits ninety minutes.

6. WHAT SEES WHAT

SENSOR	A SMALL DRONE	A MERCHANT SHIP	SEEN BY THE SHIP
F-35A	**About 24 nm**, and engages on its own	Yes	—
F-16	**Not at all**	Yes	—
Coastal radar	10 nm or less	Yes	—
Patrol vessel	10 nm or less	Names her at 9 to 10 nm, by night as well	**At 9 to 10 nm**
Counter-drone system	Inside about 10 nm of its site	—	—
MQ-9	**Never**	Holds her at 6 to 10 nm from high up	Hardly ever
NH90	**Never**	From about 1.5 nm, with its camera	**At about 1.5 nm**, by night as well
Submarine, periscope depth	**Never**	Holds her at about 8 nm	**Never**
Listening stations	See nothing. Bearings on the control link only, paragraph 7		

(NR) **Nobody sees a launch as such**: a drone appears on the plot when a sensor first holds it. **Between the coast and the sites there is no cover against airframes this small**: what crosses the coast untracked is next seen close to its target.

7. LISTENING

(NR) While drones are airborne, each station reports now and then a **bearing** on a burst of the control link, drawn on the plot as two reference points (the station, and a point 70 nm along the bearing) that stay forty minutes. **One bearing is a line; two that cross give an area, not a name.** The listening cell names a ship only when the crossings have fallen on the same contact several times over, **and only if that contact is held on the plot at the time**. No drones airborne, no bearings.

8. PRIORITY INTELLIGENCE REQUIREMENTS

PIR	QUESTION	INDICATOR
PIR 1	**Which ship launches?**	LAUNCH SEEN by a unit holding her; a new drone appearing beside a ship; a close inspection that reports a rail or crates aft
PIR 2	**Which ship recovers?**	RECOVERY SEEN; a drone followed home by an aircraft; a drone track that ends on a ship
PIR 3	**Which ship relays?**	Bearings from two stations that cross on the same held contact, again and again
PIR 4	What flag does each of the eight really fly?	The answer of the flag state to a request: consent, refusal, or no record of the ship
PIR 5	What are the Russian units doing, and near whom?	Their positions through the day, against those of the eight
PIR 6	Is a formation coming, and for which site?	Several slow contacts together, low, on a steady course from the sea
PIR 7	When do the three ships declared for Antwerp go in?	A vessel of interest leaving her loiter and steadying for the PILOT STATION

9. NAMED AREAS OF INTEREST — PLOTTED AT APPENDIX 1

NAI	WHERE	WHY
NAI 01	The waiting area: the economic zone from 20 to 35 nm off the coast, between Ostend and Den Helder	All eight vessels of interest loiter there, among the traffic of the two lanes
NAI 02	PILOT STATION and the fairway to VLISSINGEN ROADS	Where a ship bound for Antwerp crosses the 12 nm limit and comes under our law
NAI 03	The Western Scheldt and the berths of the port of Antwerp	Internal waters. A ship alongside is stopped, in a port, and a mile and a half from a site
NAI 04	The coast from Zeebrugge to Den Helder	Whatever flies from the waiting area to a site crosses it; the last line on which the coastal radars can see it

10. INTELLIGENCE GAPS

- Which three ships. The staff believes they are among the eight [B3]; it cannot show that the list is complete.
- How many drones the launcher carries, and whether any of them is armed.
- Whether, when and against which site a formation would be sent.
- What the Russian units have been told to do if a merchant ship is boarded.

11. COLLECTION PLAN

SENSOR	LOOKS AT	GIVES
DOLFIJN	One vessel of interest at a time, from about 8 nm	Her position for hours, unseen; a launch or a recovery seen from close
SKYGUARD, REAPER; NATO P-8A if asked for	Two or three vessels each, from high up	Positions; a launch or a recovery seen from further than any ship can
HOLLAND, ZEELAND, FRIESLAND	The vessels within 10 nm of their station	Names; positions; drones leaving or returning low; a launch or a recovery seen
NEPTUNE, KAIMAN	One ship, close	A close inspection of her deck, at the price of being seen
F-35As on the barrier	The air between the waiting area and the coast	Drone tracks out and home: **where a track begins and ends is a ship**
SIGINT stations	The control link	Bearings; with the contact held, in time, a name
Legal adviser	The registries	What each flag is worth

12. READING THE PLOT — WHAT WOULD SHOW WHAT

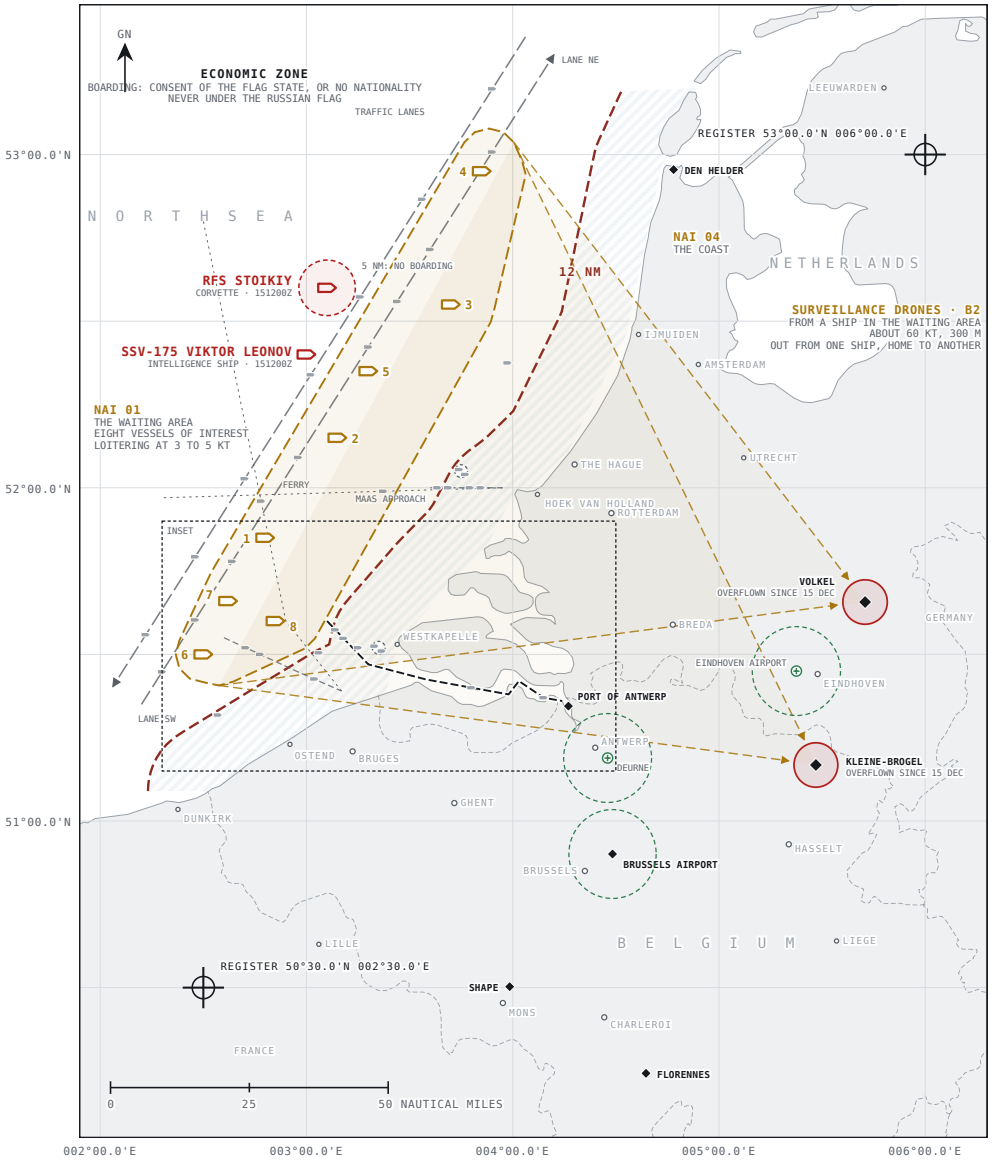
WHAT IS SEEN	WHAT IT SUGGESTS	WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT
A new drone contact that first appears beside a merchant ship	She launched it	Hold her, from far. A unit watching her at the next launch has the proof
A drone track that runs out to sea and ends at a ship	She recovers	The same; or follow the next drone home with an aircraft
Bearings from two stations that cross near the same contact, more than once	The relay may be there	**Keep that contact held**; the cell does the rest
A vessel of interest alters course to seaward and works up speed	She has seen something of ours too close	Open the distance. She has not thrown anything away yet
Her crew throwing crates over the side	The evidence is gone; a launcher sends off what she has left	A boarding finds nothing now. Look to the air
A vessel of interest steadies for the PILOT STATION	She is going up to Antwerp	Inside 12 nm no consent is needed. Have a team within reach
RFS STOIKIY closes a merchant ship and stays with her	No boarding of that ship for now	Note which ship, and for how long
Several slow contacts together, low, steady from the sea	A formation	Keep the track; fighters to it; fire at ENGAGEMENT AUTHORISED

Source grading

> Reliability of the source A to F, credibility of the information 1 to 6. A1: confirmed by an official source or by several. B2: a usually reliable source, probably true. B3 and C3: possibly true, not confirmed. C2: a fairly reliable source, probably true. Reports on the plot carry the same marks.

BOTTOM LINE

Three ships among forty-four, and a list of eight to start from. The drones will tell you which, if something of yours is watching when they leave a deck and when they come back to one. The ships will tell you nothing if they see you coming.



APPENDIX 1 TO ANNEX B

CHARTS	ICAO 1:500 000 · NAUTICAL CHARTS
SCALE	APPROX 1:1 900 000 · INSET LARGER
DATUM	WGS 84 · DEG AND DEC MIN
DTG	151600ZDEC26
ORIGINATOR	JOINT N2 / A2
SHEET	1 OF 1

INTELLIGENCE OVERLAY

OPORD 26-071 · OPERATION SWARM LINE · 16 DEC 26
ASSESSMENT AT 151200Z · SHIPS AT THEIR LAST REPORT · NO TIME IS KNOWN

- VESSEL OF INTEREST, 1 TO 8: ALL DRAWN ALIKE
- NAI 01: THE WAITING AREA
- RUSSIAN UNIT, WHERE SHE IS ENTITLED TO BE
- 5 NM ROUND THE CORVETTE: NO BOARDING
- ORDINARY MERCHANT SHIP AT 160200Z (36)
- TRAFFIC LANE · SHORT DASHES: APPROACH
- FERRY LINE
- THE SCHELDT ROUTE, PILOT STATION TO ANTWERP
- 12 NM LIMIT · HATCHED: TERRITORIAL WATERS
- SURVEILLANCE DRONES: WHERE THEY MAY COME FROM
- SITE OVERFLOWN SINCE 15 DEC, 4 NM
- SITE TO PROTECT (SEVEN)
- AIRPORT · GREEN RING: 8 NM
- TOWN, FOR ORIENTATION
- INSET FRAME

VESSELS OF INTEREST · INTSUM BNL 26-349

1 MV ARKHON · BULK CARRIER
31 NM NORTH-WEST OF WESTKAPELLE
2 MT LYRA PACIFIC · TANKER
37 NM WEST OF HOEK VAN HOLLAND
3 MV NORD VARANGER · CONTAINER SHIP
32 NM WEST OF IJMUIDEN
4 MV HALDEN FJORD · SUPPLY VESSEL
31 NM WEST OF DEN HELDER
5 MT AURELIA SPIRIT · TANKER
37 NM NORTH-WEST OF HOEK VAN HOLLAND
6 MV MERIDIAN LOTUS · CONTAINER SHIP
23 NM NORTH-WEST OF OSTEND
7 MV TAMAR WILLOW · BULK CARRIER
28 NM NORTH-WEST OF OSTEND
8 MV CASSIOPE · RO-RO SHIP
21 NM NORTH-WEST OF ZEEBRUGGE

NAMED AREAS OF INTEREST · ANNEX B PARAGRAPH 9

NAI 01 · THE WAITING AREA, 20 TO 35 NM OFF THE COAST
NAI 02 · PILOT STATION AND THE FAIRWAY TO VLISSINGEN
NAI 03 · THE WESTERN SCHELDT AND THE BERTHS OF ANTWERP
NAI 04 · THE COAST, ZEEBRUGGE TO DEN HELDER

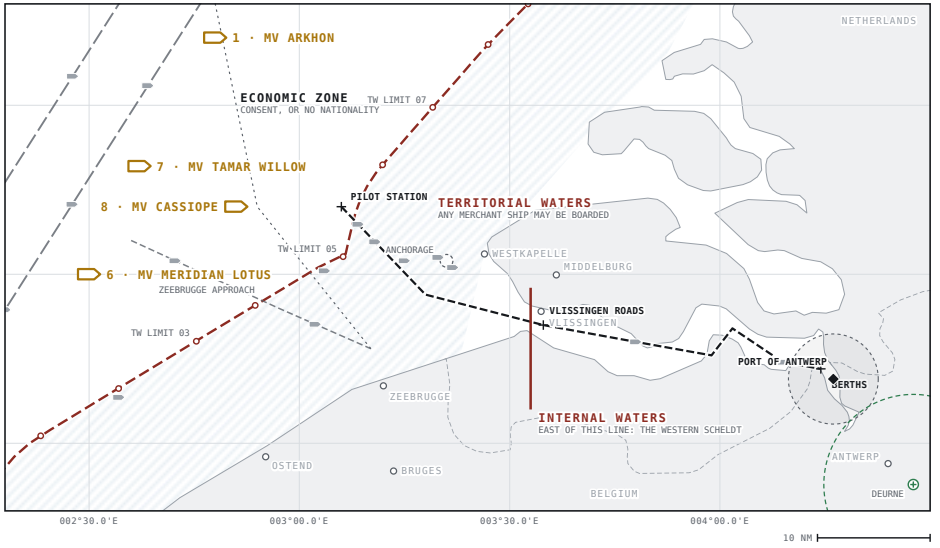
READING THE PLOT

MERCHANT SHIP · NEUTRAL: NEVER A TARGET, ANY OF THE 44
SURVEILLANCE DRONE · UNFRIENDLY: NOT HOSTILE
SLOW CONTACTS TOGETHER, LOW, STEADY FOR A SITE · A FORMATION:
HOSTILE FIVE MINUTES AFTER THE FIRST TRACK
RUSSIAN UNIT · UNFRIENDLY: NEVER A TARGET

WHAT IS NOT KNOWN

WHICH THREE SHIPS · THE FLAG EACH REALLY FLIES
WHETHER, WHEN AND WHERE A FORMATION WOULD BE SENT
WHEN THE SHIPS DECLARED FOR ANTWERP GO IN

INSET · THE APPROACH TO THE SCHELDT · NAI 02 AND NAI 03
WHERE A SHIP BOUND FOR ANTWERP CROSSES THE 12 NM LIMIT AND COMES UNDER OUR LAW



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

C

Operations

ANNEX C TO OPORD 26-071 · DTG 151600ZDEC26 · BNL/OPS/SL/26-071

1. PHASING

PHASE	FROM — TO	WHAT IS EXPECTED	WHAT THE COMMANDER DOES
1 END OF THE FIRST NIGHT	160200Z to sunrise, about 0740Z	Drones over Kleine-Brogel and Volkel; bearings from the listening stations; drones going home to a ship before dawn	Launches his first sorties; gets something watching each of the eight; puts F-35s on the barrier; decides on jammers; sends requests for consent; decides on the P-8A
2 THE DAY	to sunset, about 1530Z	Few or no drones. Answers from the flag states. Questions from the capitals. Ships that move	Looks closer; places teams and helicopters; boards where there is a basis and a reason; rests and rearms the fighters in turn
3 THE SECOND NIGHT	to 162300Z	Drones again, perhaps over more sites. Whatever else the adversary has kept	Barrier manned from before dusk to the end; a rested team within reach; the names to the governments by 2250Z

2. DECISION POINTS

DP	DECISION	TAKEN WHEN	WHAT IT COSTS IF WRONG
DP 1	Ask NATO for the P-8A, then the E-3A	Early: 90 and 60 minutes to arrive, and the pool is small	Too late: eight ships to watch with three MQ-9s and a submarine
DP 2	Switch a jammer ON	When drones are over a site that has no town within 4 nm, and the hours are worth it	Paid by the hour; disturbs civil navigation; a wreck in a street where a town is close
DP 3	Close the three airports	When drones are reported within 8 nm of one that is open	Open: an incident with an airliner. Closed: money by the hour, and patience after three hours
DP 4	Ask a flag state for its consent	**Early, and for more than one ship**: the answer takes 20 to 50 minutes and asking costs nothing	Asked late: the team is ready and the law is not. After a refusal, one more request, and only with new evidence
DP 5	Close inside 6 nm; order a ship to stop	Only when the boarding that follows is ready and lawful	She runs, then throws everything overboard; a launcher sends off all she has left
DP 6	Board	On evidence, with a legal basis, the corvette more than 5 nm away	The wrong ship: paid for at once, and the team is gone for three hours and forty minutes
DP 7	Shoot down a surveillance drone	Over open country or the sea, when a wreck is wanted	Over a town: wreckage in the streets, on your order
DP 8	Name a vessel	When the evidence is in; by 2250Z at the latest	A name cannot be withdrawn. An innocent ship named is worse than a name not given

3. CONTROL MEASURES

MEASURE	DEFINITION	EFFECT
12 NM LIMIT	The outer limit of territorial waters, drawn on the plot as reference points TW LIMIT 01 to TW LIMIT 20, from 51°15.7'N 002°23.1'E to 53°09.7'N 004°30.4'E	Inside it any merchant ship may be boarded. Outside it, consent or no nationality. Annex F
SHADOWING DISTANCE	6 to 8 nm from a vessel of interest	A warship stays there. **Not under way inside 6 nm, not stopped inside 4 nm**, until the boarding is ready
BARRIER SOUTH	A 51°27.0'N 002°45.0'E to B 51°42.0'N 003°09.0'E, 21 nm	Suggested reference lines in the economic zone, 15 to 17 nm off the coast, between the waiting area and the 12 nm limit. For a patrol vessel's station or the axis of a fighter barrier. **They are suggestions, not orders**
BARRIER CENTRE	A 51°54.0'N 003°21.0'E to B 52°15.0'N 003°51.0'E, 28 nm	
BARRIER NORTH	A 52°30.0'N 004°03.0'E to B 52°57.0'N 004°18.0'E, 28 nm	
RUSSIAN KEEP-OUT	5 nm round RFS STOIKIY, wherever she is	No boarding of a ship inside it, by sea or by air
NO-ENGAGEMENT AREAS	4 nm round each of the fourteen towns of paragraph 5, and round the port of Antwerp	**No drone is brought down there**, by a missile or by a jammer, if it can be helped
AIRPORT RINGS	8 nm round Brussels Airport, Antwerp-Deurne and Eindhoven Airport	A drone inside a ring while the airport is open can cause an incident. Annex H
JAMMER REACH	3 nm round a site whose jammer is ON	A surveillance drone that enters it loses its link. Annex H

4. REFERENCE POINTS ON THE PLOT

(NR) Highlighted: the seven sites, SITE KLEINE-BROGEL, SITE VOLKEL, SITE ANTWERP, SITE BRUSSELS, SITE DEN HELDER, SITE FLORENNES, SITE SHAPE. Plain: the three airports; TW LIMIT 01 to 20; BARRIER SOUTH, CENTRE and NORTH, A and B; PILOT STATION 51°36.0'N 003°06.0'E; VLISSINGEN ROADS 51°25.5'N 003°34.8'E; ANCHORAGE VLISSINGEN; ANCHORAGE MAAS; LANE SW and LANE NE, the two ends of the traffic lanes. During the day: the pairs of points SIG and a station's name for each bearing, forty minutes each.

5. TOWNS — NOTHING IS BROUGHT DOWN WITHIN 4 NM

TOWN	CENTRE	TOWN	CENTRE
Bruges	51°12.5'N 003°13.4'E	Breda	51°35.3'N 004°46.6'E
Ghent	51°03.2'N 003°43.0'E	Rotterdam	51°55.4'N 004°28.7'E
Antwerp	51°13.2'N 004°24.0'E	The Hague	52°04.2'N 004°18.0'E
Brussels	50°51.0'N 004°21.0'E	Middelburg	51°29.9'N 003°36.7'E
Mechelen	51°01.7'N 004°28.7'E	**Den Helder**	52°57.5'N 004°45.6'E
Hasselt	50°55.8'N 005°20.3'E	**Mons**	50°27.2'N 003°57.1'E
Eindhoven	51°26.5'N 005°28.7'E	Charleroi	50°24.7'N 004°26.6'E

(NR) And **the port of Antwerp**, 4 nm round SITE ANTWERP. Three sites lie inside one of these areas: **the port of Antwerp, the Den Helder naval base and SHAPE**. Whatever is hit close to them falls on a town. Kleine-Brogel, Volkel and Florennes stand in open country; Brussels Airport is 6 nm from the centre of Brussels.

6. EMPLOYMENT OF THE FORCE — SUGGESTED

- **F-35As** in pairs on a barrier over the sea, along or seaward of the barrier lines, so that their 24 nm reach covers the water between the waiting area and the coast. A formation tracked there is released while it is still over the sea. Sixteen fighters do not keep three barriers manned for twenty-one hours: choose which, and when.
- **MQ-9s** high over the waiting area, each holding two or three vessels of interest from 6 to 10 nm.
- **DOLFIJN** beside the vessel the Commander most wants watched. She is slow: where she goes first is where she stays.
- **Patrol vessels** on a barrier line, each within 6 to 8 nm of a vessel of interest if one comes that close, lying stopped or slow. **Frigates** kept back, for their radars and as team platforms.
- **NH90s** on deck alert or on the ground until there is a ship to look at or to board. The two team helicopters are kept for boarding.
- **F-16s** in reserve.

7. DISTANCES AT H-HOUR, IN NAUTICAL MILES

FROM ↓ TO VESSEL OF INTEREST →	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
LEOPOLD I	27	44	72	96	57	21	22	13
DE ZEVEN PROVINCIEN	86	64	33	20	52	109	99	97
HOLLAND	19	36	65	90	49	19	16	6
ZEELAND	37	20	27	51	21	57	48	44
FRIESLAND	68	47	18	25	36	91	81	78
DOLFIJN	17	9	38	62	21	40	30	27
KOKSIJDE AB (NEPTUNE)	46	66	96	120	79	25	34	32
DE KOOY (KAIMAN)	97	75	45	34	64	120	110	106

FROM ↓ TO THE MIDDLE OF →	BARRIER SOUTH	BARRIER CENTRE	BARRIER NORTH
KLEINE-BROGEL AB (VIPER)	98	88	105
FLORENNES AB (LIGHTNING, SKYGUARD)	103	117	150
VOLKEL AB (ORANJE 1–4)	103	82	85
LEEUWARDEN AB (ORANJE 5, 6, REAPER)	143	105	65

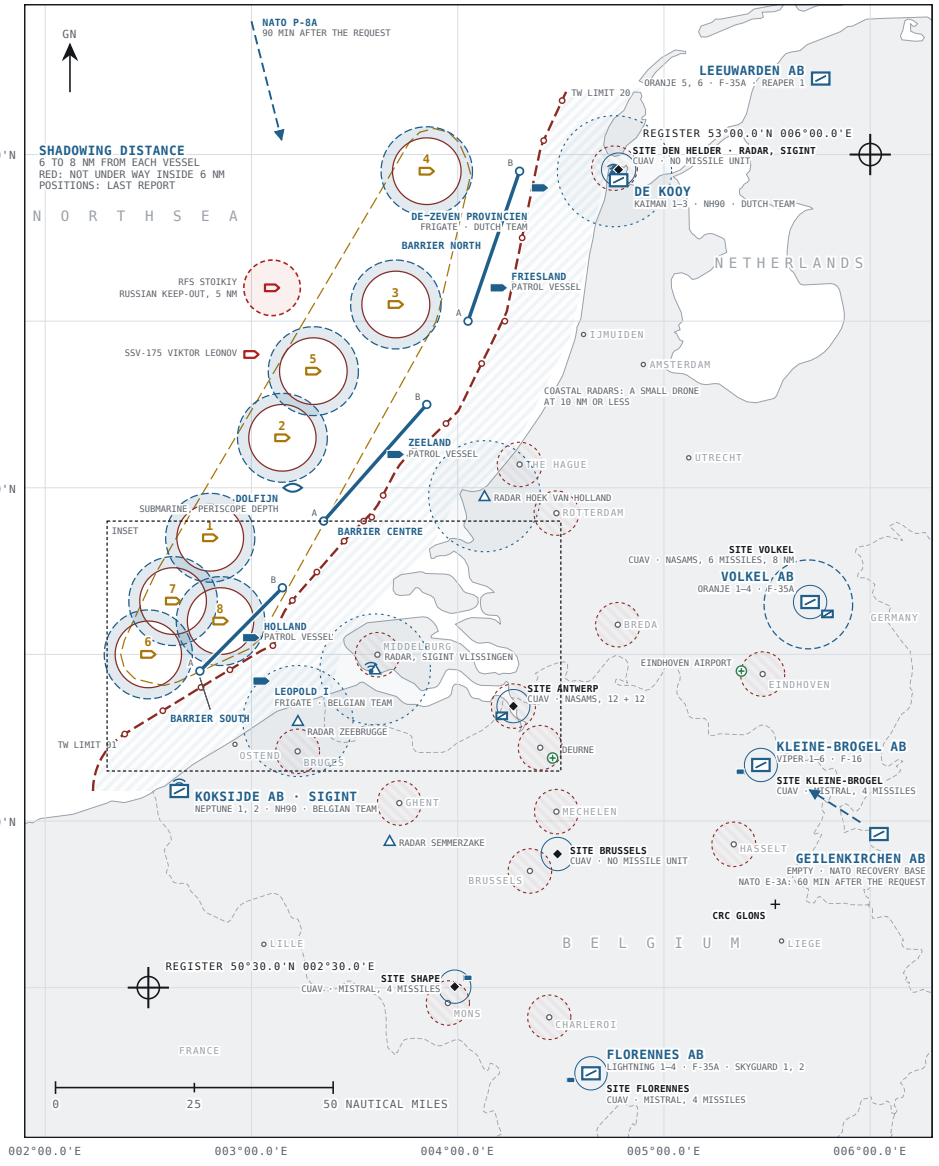
> Vessels of interest at their last report, numbered as in Annex B paragraph 3. A helicopter boards from inside 1 nm, a warship from inside 2 nm.

8. DECONFLICTION AND RELIEFS

(NR) Aircraft on the barrier stay clear of the Russian units and do not descend over merchant ships. Twenty-one hours are longer than any aircraft's fuel and any crew's day: an aircraft that runs out of fuel is lost, and that loss is the Commander's. Fighters are relieved by assigning aircraft from the ground to the same patrol; rearming takes time; an MQ-9 stays up far longer than a fighter. No tanker is available.

BOTTOM LINE

Nothing is in place when you take over: every patrol, every station and every request is yours to order. Spend the first hour on the picture, the day on the law, and keep enough for the second night.



APPENDIX 1 TO ANNEX C

CHARTS	ICAO 1:500 000 · NAUTICAL CHARTS
SCALE	APPROX 1:1 900 000 · INSET LARGER
DATUM	WGS 84 · DEG AND DEC MIN
DTG	151600ZDEC26
ORIGINATOR	JOINT OPERATIONS / PLANS
SHEET	1 OF 1

OPERATIONS OVERLAY

OPORD 26-071 · OPERATION SWARM LINE · 16 DEC 26
POSITIONS AT 160200Z · NOTHING AIRBORNE, NO PATROL · WEAPONS TIGHT

- AIR BASE AND WHAT STANDS ON IT
- OWN WARSHIP, STOPPED AT H-HOUR (5)
- DOLFIJN, AT PERISCOPE DEPTH
- RADAR (5) · DOTTED: 10 NM, SMALL DRONE
- LISTENING STATION (3)
- SITE WITH ITS CUAV (7) · CIRCLE: JAMMER, 3 NM
- NASAMS BATTERY (2) · DASHED: VOLKEL, 8 NM
- MISTRAL DETACHMENT (3)
- BARRIER REFERENCE LINE, A TO B (SUGGESTED)
- VESSEL OF INTEREST, 1 TO 8, LAST REPORT
- SHADOWING DISTANCE: 8 NM
- NOT UNDER WAY INSIDE 6 NM
- 12 NM LIMIT · POINTS: TW LIMIT 01 TO 20
- TOWN, 4 NM: NOTHING IS BROUGHT DOWN HERE
- RUSSIAN UNIT · 5 NM: NO BOARDING
- AIRPORT
- NATO REINFORCEMENT, ON REQUEST
- INSET FRAME

THE FORCE AT 160200Z · ANNEX A
16 FIGHTERS · 6 F-16 (VIPER), 10 F-35A (LIGHTNING, ORANJE)
3 MQ-9 · 5 NH90 · 2 FRIGATES · 3 PATROL VESSELS · 1 SUBMARINE
ALL ON THE GROUND OR STOPPED, ARMED AND READY

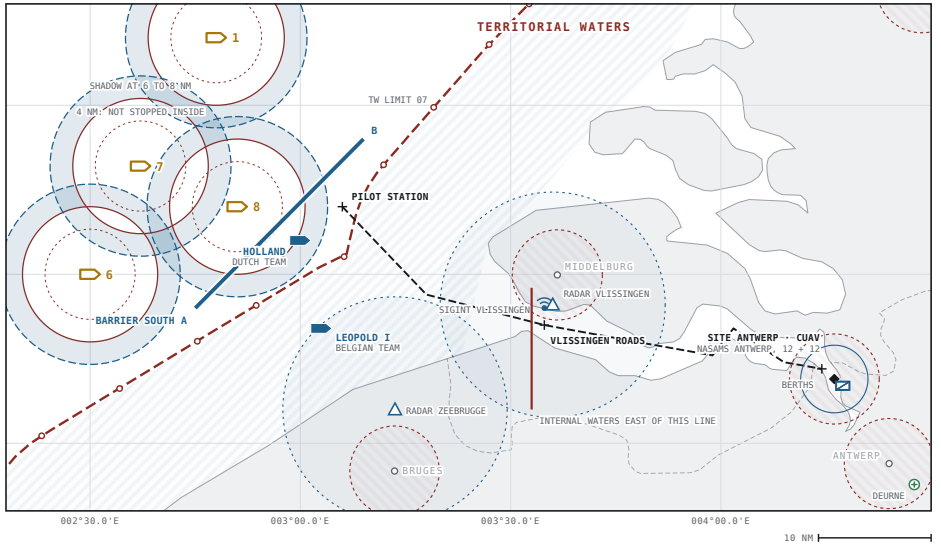
WHO SEES A SMALL DRONE
F-35A · ABOUT 24 NM, AND ENGAGES ON ITS OWN
F-16 · NOT AT ALL
COASTAL RADAR, PATROL VESSEL · 10 NM OR LESS
MQ-9, NH90, SUBMARINE, SIGINT · NEVER

BOARDING TEAMS · TWO, NO MORE
BELGIAN · LEOPOLD I, OR NEPTUNE 1 AIRBORNE
DUTCH · DE ZEVEN PROVINCIEN, HOLLAND, ZEELAND, FRIESLAND, OR KAIMAN 1 AIRBORNE
WARSHIP WITHIN 2 NM · HELICOPTER WITHIN 1 NM
40 MINUTES ABOARD, THEN THREE HOURS OF REST

WHERE A SHIP MAY BE BOARDED · ANNEX F
INSIDE THE 12 NM LIMIT · ANY MERCHANT SHIP
BEYOND · CONSENT OF HER FLAG STATE, OR NO NATIONALITY
BEYOND, UNDER THE RUSSIAN FLAG · NEVER
WITHIN 5 NM OF RFS STOIKIY · NEVER

WHO FIRES AT WHAT · ANNEX G
EVERY UNIT ON WEAPONS TIGHT
SURVEILLANCE DRONE · ONLY BY THE COMMANDER'S OWN ORDER
FORMATION · FIVE MINUTES AFTER THE FIRST TRACK
OVER A TOWN · NEVER · A SHIP · NEVER

INSET · THE APPROACH TO THE SCHELDT AND THE PORT OF ANTWERP
SHADOW FROM 6 TO 8 NM · BOARD BY HELICOPTER · INSIDE 12 NM NO CONSENT IS NEEDED



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

D

Air defence plan

ANNEX D TO OPORD 26-071 · DTG 151600ZDEC26 · BNL/OPS/SL/26-071

1. PRINCIPLE

(NR) Two different things fly, and they are met differently.

OBJECT	STATUS	MET BY
SURVEILLANCE DRONE	UNFRIENDLY. **Not a target** unless the Commander orders a unit to engage it	The jammer of the site it orbits (Annex H). A missile only by the Commander's own order, over open country or the sea
FORMATION	UNFRIENDLY at first track; **HOSTILE five minutes later**, by decision of the governments	**F-35As over the sea**; then the ships it passes; then the missile unit of the site. **Jammers do nothing to it**: it does not depend on its link

2. WHO CAN ENGAGE A SMALL DRONE

UNIT	FINDS IT AT	REMARKS
F-35A (LIGHTNING, ORANJE)	**About 24 nm**	Engages on its own once the track is HOSTILE. Between one and two missiles for each drone. **The only force that can break a formation before the coast**
F-16 (VIPER)	**Does not find it**	Its radar does not hold airframes this small at any range. Do not plan on it
DE ZEVEN PROVINCIEN, LEOPOLD I	Not established	Missiles and guns, if a released formation passes within reach
HOLLAND, ZEELAND, FRIESLAND	10 nm or less	Gun only: effective against a slow drone that passes close
NASAMS, Mistral	With the site's own sensors, in the final miles	One missile per target; paragraph 3

3. GROUND-BASED AIR DEFENCE — PEACETIME ALERT SCALE

(NR) **NASAMS ANTWERP: 12 ready, 12 reloads. NASAMS VOLKEL: 6 ready, none after, inside 8 nm only. MISTRAL KLEINE-BROGEL, FLORENNES, SHAPE: 4 each, none after.** Brussels Airport and Den Helder: no missile unit. Paragraph 4b of the order.

(NR) Count them against a formation: four shots at Kleine-Brogel, Florennes or SHAPE; six at Volkel; none at Brussels Airport or Den Helder; only the port of Antwerp has more. **A site defence at this scale thins out a formation and does not stop it. Without fighters in the right place a site will be hit.** Fighters alone, on the other hand, protect the sites and leave the ships where they are.

4. THE RELEASE, MINUTE BY MINUTE

WHEN	WHAT HAPPENS	WHAT THE UNITS DO
First track	CRC: NEW FORMATION. The governments are asked	The contacts are UNFRIENDLY. **Nothing fires.** Keep the track; close the range; send more fighters
+ 5 minutes	CRC: ENGAGEMENT AUTHORISED, with the number of contacts, their heading and the estimated target area	The formation shows HOSTILE. Every unit on Weapons Tight within reach engages
Over a town	—	**Hold the unit's fire** until the track is 4 nm clear

(NR) **The five minutes are lost only once, and they are best lost over the sea.** A formation first tracked by a coastal radar at 10 nm is released as it crosses the beach; one first tracked by the counter-drone system of its target is released when it is already there. Nobody will say what a formation carries until it has arrived or been examined on the ground.

5. THE GAP INLAND

(NR) Once a formation has passed the coastal radars **nothing can be counted on to track it over land** until the counter-drone system of a site picks it up in the final miles. An F-35 that follows it keeps the track. An E-3A, if asked for, brings an airborne radar over the Antwerp–Eindhoven area; what it holds of airframes this small is not established.

6. WHICH WEAPON

AGAINST	FIRST	THEN	NOT
A formation, released	AIM-120 from an F-35A, over the sea	AIM-9X close in; ships' missiles and guns; NASAMS and Mistral at the site	A jammer
A surveillance drone	The jammer of the site, where no town is within 4 nm	One missile, by the Commander's order to one unit, over open country, when a wreck is wanted	Anything over a town
A ship	**Nothing, ever.**		

(NR) A fighter on Weapons Tight fires its longest-range missile first at every hostile track in reach. Every missile fired is counted; guns are not.

7. ENGAGING NEAR THE THREE SITES THAT LIE BY A TOWN

(NR) **Den Helder, SHAPE and the port of Antwerp.** A formation bound for one of them must be met before it is within 4 nm of the town, which for Den Helder means over the sea and for SHAPE over the open country to the north. MISTRAL SHAPE and NASAMS ANTWERP fire inside the no-engagement area if they are left on Weapons Tight: the Commander decides whether a hit on the site or a wreck on the town is the lesser harm, and holds or frees the unit accordingly.

8. OWN AIRCRAFT

(NR) Nothing expected in this operation attacks an aircraft of this command. An aircraft lost will have run out of fuel, flown into the sea, or been found by one of our own weapons. Each one is reported to the governments by name.

BOTTOM LINE

The F-35s are the air defence. Everything on the ground is a last resort with a handful of missiles. Put the fighters where a formation must pass while it is still over water, and have them there at night.

E

Maritime interdiction

ANNEX E TO OPORD 26-071 · DTG 151600ZDEC26 · BNL/OPS/SL/26-071

1. SEQUENCE

(NR) **Hold, prove, ask, stop, board.** Each step is useless without the one before, and the last three are ordered by Special Action on **one merchant contact selected on the map**.

2. HOLDING A SHIP WITHOUT ALARMING HER

UNIT	WHERE TO KEEP IT	WHAT ALARMS HER
DOLFIJN	Within about 8 nm, at periscope depth	**Nothing.** She is never seen
MQ-9; P-8A	High, 6 to 10 nm off	Flying low or close over her
Patrol vessel, frigate	**6 to 8 nm off**, stopped or slow	**Closing inside 6 nm under way; lying stopped inside 4 nm.** Minutes are enough
NH90	Away, until it goes in to board or to inspect	Loitering near her. She sees it at about 1.5 nm
Fighter	High and clear	Orbiting close over her

(NR) **An alarmed ship** alters course to seaward and works up speed. **Pressed further, she throws everything overboard**: a boarding then finds nothing, and a launcher first sends off everything she has left. If a unit of ours is close enough to see it, it reports both. **Back off in time and she settles.**

3. EVIDENCE

EVIDENCE	HOW IT IS OBTAINED	WHAT IT IS WORTH
CLOSE INSPECTION	A warship or an airborne helicopter stays close aboard a vessel of interest for some minutes. Not repeated on the same ship for some hours	An indication B2 or nothing B3. **An honest ship can have a cluttered deck**; and the inspection is inside every distance that alarms her
LAUNCH SEEN	A unit of ours holds the ship, from a few miles, at the moment a drone leaves her deck. An MQ-9 or the P-8A sees it from further than a ship; the submarine must be closer	**Proof** against the launcher
RECOVERY SEEN	The same, at the moment a drone is taken aboard; or an aircraft of ours that follows a held drone home, close behind it	**Proof** against the recoverer
BEARINGS	Annex B paragraph 7: crossings on the same held contact, several times over	**Proof** against the relay, when the listening cell names her
BOARDING	Paragraph 6	The ship herself, her crew and what she carries

(NR) Evidence does three things: it makes a flag state more willing to consent, it allows a renewed request after a refusal, and it is what the governments will weigh a name by.

4. ASKING THE FLAG STATE — Vessel - Ask flag-state consent

(NR) One click, with the ship selected. The legal adviser sends the request through the Foreign Ministries and gives the window of the answer, **20 to 50 minutes**. Needed only outside territorial waters. Asking costs nothing and alarms nobody.

ANSWER	MEANING	THEN
CONSENT	The flag state confirms the registration and consents	She may be boarded in the economic zone
REFUSAL	It confirms the registration and finds no ground for a boarding	**One renewed request**, and only if the evidence against her has grown since the first. A second refusal is final
NO RECORD	The registry she claims does not know her	A ship without nationality: she may be boarded in the economic zone
MOSCOW REFUSES	She flies the Russian flag	**No boarding outside territorial waters, and no second request**

(NR) A state with a serious registry consents more readily than a registry of convenience, and both more readily when shown evidence.

5. STOPPING HER — Vessel - Order to stop

(NR) One click, with the ship selected, and **a warship or an airborne helicopter of ours within 4 nm of her**. An ordinary ship stops her engines and waits ninety minutes. **A ship with something to hide may run for the open sea instead, and from then on knows she is watched**; in the Scheldt fairway she may answer that she is under pilotage and keep her speed. **A ship that loiters at 3 to 5 knots is already slow enough to board: she needs no stop order.** One is needed only for a ship making more than 8 knots.

6. BOARDING — Vessel - Board

(NR) Two clicks, with the ship selected: the first checks the conditions and states them, the second, within ten minutes, sends the team.

CONDITION	REQUIRED
THE SHIP	Stopped, at anchor, alongside, or making 8 knots or less
THE TEAM	Rested, and within 2 nm aboard one of its warships or **within 1 nm aboard its helicopter, airborne**. No helicopter boarding above sea state 5 (forecast: 4)
THE LAW	Internal or territorial waters; or, in the economic zone, consent or no nationality. Annex F
THE CORVETTE	RFS STOIKIY more than 5 nm from the ship

(NR) The team is aboard **forty minutes**, during which the ship lies stopped, and reports: the ship is ours, with what was found, and ship and crew are held for the prosecutor; or nothing was found and she is released. **The team then rests three hours. By helicopter**: the NH90 flies straight in, the order is given as it arrives inside a mile, and she has no time to do anything about it. **By warship**: the last six miles are run under her eyes.

7. THE CORVETTE

(NR) If RFS STOIKIY stands within 5 nm of a merchant ship, that ship is not boarded, by sea or by air; her helicopter is on deck alert. **Wait for her to leave, or take another ship.** She cannot be beside two ships at once, and she stays outside territorial waters.

8. A SHIP THAT GOES UP THE SCHELDT

(NR) From the PILOT STATION inwards she crosses the 12 nm limit; from VLISSINGEN ROADS she is in internal waters. **No consent is needed any more, whatever her flag.** Under way in the fairway she makes 10 to 12 knots and must first be stopped. **Alongside in the port of Antwerp she is stopped, in internal waters, and a team helicopter overhead is enough**; the berths are inside the no-engagement area of the port.

BOTTOM LINE

Watch from far, ask early, and go in once, by air, on the ship you can prove. A warship that goes to have a look gives her the time to throw the proof overboard.

F

Law of the sea: boarding by zone

ANNEX F TO OPORD 26-071 · DTG 151600ZDEC26 · BNL/OPS/SL/26-071

1. THE THREE ZONES

ZONE	WHERE	WHO MAY BE BOARDED	BASIS
INTERNAL WATERS	Landward of the baseline: the ports, and the **Western Scheldt** from VLISSINGEN ROADS to Antwerp	**Any merchant ship, whatever her flag**	Full sovereignty of the coastal state
TERRITORIAL WATERS	From the baseline to **12 nm**: reference points TW LIMIT 01 to TW LIMIT 20	**Any merchant ship, whatever her flag**	Sovereignty of the coastal state. Passage that serves the launching, landing or taking aboard of an aircraft is not innocent
ECONOMIC ZONE	Beyond 12 nm. **All eight vessels of interest were there at their last report**	Only a ship whose flag state consents, or a ship without nationality. **Never a ship under the Russian flag**	Freedom of navigation; a ship answers to her flag state alone; right of visit of a ship without nationality (article 110)

(NR) What a flag state answers, and what follows from each answer, is at Annex E paragraph 4. A ship that claims a flag she has no right to is disowned by that registry and may be boarded at once.

2. WHAT THE LAW DOES NOT ALLOW ANYWHERE

- **Fire at a merchant ship**, to stop her or for any other reason. Nothing in these orders allows it.
- **Any act against RFS STOIKIY, SSV-175 VIKTOR LEONOV or their helicopter.** A warship has complete immunity from the jurisdiction of any state but her own, in any zone.
- Holding a ship aboard which nothing was found. She is released; her owner claims for the delay; and if she was boarded in the economic zone her flag state protests a boarding on the high seas.

3. WHAT A BOARDING COSTS WHEN IT IS WRONG

(NR) A boarding of an innocent ship is paid for in legitimacy and with the allies; **more dearly in the economic zone than inside 12 nm**. The shipowners' associations, the underwriters, the Scheldt pilots and the flag states are all watching for one. A lawful boarding that finds the material is the opposite: it is the one event of the day that raises all three of the things the governments stand on.

4. READING THE LEGAL ADVISER

(NR) The first click of `Vessel - Board` states the legal basis it has found, or the reason there is none: *she is in internal waters*; *she is in territorial waters*; *consent of* her flag state; *ship without nationality*; or **BOARDING REFUSED**: no legal basis, the flag state has not been asked, has not answered yet or has refused; she flies the Russian flag and is in the economic zone. When a request is sent for a ship that is already inside 12 nm, the adviser says that no consent is needed there.

BOTTOM LINE

The line that matters is the 12 nm limit. Seaward of it the flag decides; landward of it you do. A ship that waits outside and has a good flag, or a Russian one, is safe from you until she comes in or her flag state gives her up.

G

Rules of engagement — aide-memoire

ANNEX G TO OPORD 26-071 · DTG 151600ZDEC26 · BNL/OPS/SL/26-071

ROE SWARM LINE · WEAPONS TIGHT · PEACETIME · THE GOVERNMENTS RELEASE, YOU ANSWER	
G-01	**Every unit is on WEAPONS TIGHT**, in the air, on the surface, under it and on land: it fires at a contact held HOSTILE and at nothing else. Weapons Free is never ordered.
G-02	**Surveillance drones are not hostile.** They show UNFRIENDLY and stay so; marking one hostile does not hold. Nothing fires at one unless you order that unit to engage that contact yourself.
G-03	**A formation is released by the governments five minutes after it is first tracked.** It then shows HOSTILE. Until ENGAGEMENT AUTHORISED, hold your fire.
G-04	**Never over a town.** Engage over the sea or over open country. Nothing is brought down within 4 nm of a town or of the port of Antwerp.
G-05	**Nothing is fired at a ship**, merchant or Russian: no warning shot, no disabling fire, not at a ship that runs.
G-06	**The Russian units do not fire first.** Fired on and hit, they defend themselves against anything of ours within reach. **A Russian unit destroyed ends the operation.**
G-07	**Boarding inside 12 nm: any merchant ship.** Beyond: consent of the flag state, or a ship without nationality. **Never a ship under the Russian flag beyond 12 nm; never within 5 nm of a Russian warship.**
G-08	**Three names at most, and a name cannot be withdrawn.** Name on evidence.

WHAT THE PLOT SHOWS

SHOWN AS	MEANS	UNITS ON WEAPONS TIGHT
UNFRIENDLY (air)	A surveillance drone; or a formation not yet released	Do not fire
HOSTILE (air)	A formation released by Brussels and The Hague	**Fire**, within their reach
NEUTRAL (surface)	A merchant ship, the three that matter included	Do not fire
UNFRIENDLY (surface, air)	RFS STOIKIY, SSV-175 VIKTOR LEONOV, HELIX 27	Do not fire

WHAT WILL BE ASKED AFTERWARDS

ACT	WHO ASKS
A Russian unit hit or sunk	Everyone. Moscow speaks of an act of war; **a Russian unit destroyed ends the operation at once**
A merchant ship hit by our fire	The flag state, the owners, the underwriters, every ally
A ship boarded that had nothing to hide; a ship named that had nothing to do with it	The flag state, the shipowners, the Scheldt pilots, the allies
A wreck in a street; an incident at an open airport; an explosion on a site	The two parliaments, the mayors, the press, the airlines
Airports closed or jammers on for hours; an aircraft lost; missiles spent without measure	The airlines, the broadcasters, the two staffs

> Nothing in these rules limits the right of a unit to defend itself. The orange and red markers on the plot are not targets.

ANNEX G TO OPORD 26-071 — PAGE G-1 OF G-1

H

Sites, jammers and airports

ANNEX H TO OPORD 26-071 · DTG 151600ZDEC26 · BNL/OPS/SL/26-071

1. THE COUNTER-DRONE SYSTEMS

(NR) One on each site, named CUAV and the site. Each reports drones **overhead, inside 4 nm**, and whether its jammer is ON or OFF.

2. JAMMERS — Sites - Jammers ON · Sites - Jammers OFF

(NR) **All seven are OFF at H-hour.** One click. **Select the CUAV unit of a site first** (several may be selected together) and the order goes to that site; **with no CUAV unit selected it goes to all seven**.

JAMMER ON	EFFECT
ON A SURVEILLANCE DRONE	Any that comes **within 3 nm** of the site loses its control link. **Most come down within two minutes; some turn away and go home.** Each is reported: DRONE DOWN, or link broken and leaving
ON A FORMATION	**None.** A formation does not depend on its link
ON THE GROUND	A drone that comes down is **a wreck for the technicians** in open country, and **wreckage on the roofs if a town is within 4 nm**
ON EVERYBODY ELSE	Civil satellite navigation and airport systems are disturbed for as long as it lasts. **It costs for every hour and every site**

SITE	A DRONE JAMMED THERE COMES DOWN	REMARKS
Kleine-Brogel, Volkel, Florennes	In open country	The two bases overflown since before midnight are among them
Brussels Airport	In open country	The jammer disturbs the airport it protects
SHAPE	**Probably on Mons**, 3 nm away	Wreckage in the streets, and a mayor who wants to know who decided it
Den Helder naval base	**On Den Helder**	
The port of Antwerp	**On the port**, which counts as a town	

(NR) **What to weigh.** Every minute a drone spends over a site whose jammer is off will be asked about; every hour a jammer is on is paid for. A drone that goes home leads to a ship; a drone on the ground is a wreck to examine.

3. AIRPORTS — Airports - CLOSE · Airports - REOPEN

(NR) One click, **one switch for the three**, which close and reopen together. They are open at H-hour.

STATE	EFFECT	PRICE
OPEN	**A drone within 8 nm of an airport can cause an incident**: an airliner on final passing it at less than a hundred metres	Each incident is paid for, in money and in public opinion
CLOSED	Flights divert. No incident is possible	Money for every hour; **public patience as well once the closures add up to more than three hours**

(NR) **Brussels Airport** is itself one of the seven sites. **Antwerp-Deurne** lies 12 nm from the port of Antwerp site. **Eindhoven Airport** lies 17 nm from Kleine-Brogel and 18 nm from Volkel, between the sea and both bases.

BOTTOM LINE

Jammers and closed airports buy quiet, by the hour, and find no ship. Use them when the price is worth it and switch them off when it is not.

J

Communications and reporting

ANNEX J TO OPORD 26-071 · DTG 151600ZDEC26 · BNL/OPS/SL/26-071

1. NETS

NET	STATIONS	CARRIES
COMMAND	The two Chiefs of Defence · COM BENELUX SHIELD · CAOC Uedem, Allied Maritime Command (info)	Orders, the release of a formation, incident reports, the report to the governments
AIR DEFENCE	CRC GLONS · all fighters · the radars · NASAMS, Mistral and counter-drone units	The air picture, formation reports, jammer orders
MARITIME	CRC · the five ships and the submarine · NH90s and MQ-9s · the boarding teams	The surface picture, sightings, stop orders, boarding reports
LISTENING	CRC · the three SIGINT stations · the listening cell	Bearings and crossings
LIAISON	CRC · the legal adviser and the Foreign Ministries · the airports · NATO · the capitals	Requests and answers of the flag states, airport closures, reinforcements, questions

2. WHO SPEAKS ON THE PLOT

SIGNED	SAYS
CRC GLONS / CRC	The opening message with the list of eight and the flags they claim; a new formation and its release; what was shot down and where it fell; the end of a formation; an aircraft of ours lost
CARRY-OVER	At H-hour, when the operation follows earlier ones: Moscow's mood, what NATO can spare, what allied intelligence already expects
CUAV and a site	Drones overhead; a drone down; a link broken
SIGINT and a station · SIGINT CELL	A bearing on the control link; what the crossings are worth so far; in the end, a name
a unit's name	LAUNCH SEEN; RECOVERY SEEN; a close inspection; a ship that has altered course away or is throwing crates over the side; the corvette standing close to a ship
LEGAL ADVISER	A request sent, with the window of the answer; the answer of the flag state
STOP ORDER · RADIO and a unit	Why a stop order cannot be given; what the ship answered
BOARDING · BOARDING PARTY	The conditions and the legal basis; the team away; forty minutes later, what was found
COUNTER-DRONE · AIRPORTS	Acknowledgement of a jammer or airport order
AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL	An incident between an airliner and a drone at an open airport
TECHNICAL INTELLIGENCE	What the first wreck was; what a formation carried, once it is known
NATO	Cost and arrival time of a reinforcement; its arrival
REPORT	A name about to be given; a name given; the report closed
BRUSSELS / THE HAGUE and other capitals, the press	Questions, and warnings when the governments are in difficulty
FLASH	An explosion on a site; a site struck; a ship hit by our fire; the Russian units at action stations

(NR) Reports of sightings and of the listening cell carry a grade in square brackets, [B2], [B3], [C2] or [C3]: Annex B, source grading.

3. THE NINE SPECIAL ACTIONS

(NR) The Commander's orders to the outside world. They work once the clock has run a minute and until the operation is over. **The three that begin with Vessel, and the report, act on one merchant contact selected on the map**: click the contact, then run the action. Those marked ×2 show what they will do at the first click and are confirmed by running the same action again **within ten minutes**; running another ×2 action in between cancels the first.

NAME, EXACTLY	CLICKS	SELECT FIRST	DOES
`Vessel - Ask flag-state consent`	1	A merchant vessel	Asks the flag state she claims to confirm her registration and to consent to a boarding. Answer in 20 to 50 minutes. Annex E paragraph 4
`Vessel - Order to stop`	1	A merchant vessel	Orders her by radio to stop and wait. Needs a warship or helicopter of ours within 4 nm. Annex E paragraph 5
`Vessel - Board`	×2	A merchant vessel	Puts a boarding team aboard. Forty minutes; then the team rests three hours. Annex E paragraph 6
`Sites - Jammers ON`	1	A CUAV unit, or nothing for all seven sites	Switches the jammer of the site ON. Annex H paragraph 2
`Sites - Jammers OFF`	1	A CUAV unit, or nothing for all seven sites	Switches it OFF
`Airports - CLOSE`	1	Nothing	Closes Brussels Airport, Antwerp-Deurne and Eindhoven together. Annex H paragraph 3
`Airports - REOPEN`	1	Nothing	Reopens the three together
`NATO - Request reinforcement`	×2	Nothing	First the P-8A (90 minutes), then the E-3A (60 minutes); 1 of the pool each. Paragraph 4d of the order
`Report - Name the selected vessel`	×2	A merchant vessel	Names her to the governments as part of the drone operation. Paragraph 4 below

(NR) If nothing usable is selected, or the contact is not a merchant vessel, the action says so and does nothing. The same guide, with every message, is in the Briefing Pack, section 7.

4. THE REPORT TO THE GOVERNMENTS

(NR) **Before 162300Z Brussels and The Hague expect names: three at most.** Each is given by `Report - Name the selected vessel`, twice: the first click asks, the second confirms. **A name cannot be withdrawn.** Any of the forty-four merchant ships can be named. With the third name the report is closed and goes to the two capitals; otherwise it goes as it stands when the operation ends. **It is judged then, not before**: nobody will say during the day whether a name was right.

(NR) **The governments would rather have one name with evidence than three guesses.** A ship seen launching or recovering, a ship the listening cell has named, a ship held with her material aboard: those are names with evidence. A ship named because she was on the list is a guess. The line closes a few minutes before 2300Z; give the last name by **2250Z**.

5. EMISSION CONTROL AND THE RECORD

(NR) All radars radiate, ashore, afloat and in the air. **DOLFIJN keeps radar and sonar silent. The log of the day is the record**: every sighting, every request, every stop order, every boarding, every shot and every name with its time. It is what the debrief is built from.

K

Allied and political coordination

ANNEX K TO OPORD 26-071 · DTG 151600ZDEC26 · BNL/OPS/SL/26-071

1. THREE THINGS THE GOVERNMENTS STAND ON

WHAT	WHO JUDGES IT	WHAT RAISES IT	WHAT LOWERS IT
INTERNATIONAL LEGITIMACY	The flag states, the shipowners, Moscow, the courts	A lawful boarding that finds the material; names that prove right	A boarding without a legal basis or of the wrong ship; a shot at a ship; an innocent ship named
PUBLIC OPINION	The two parliaments, the mayors, the press, the airlines	A formation brought down clear of the towns; a ship seized with proof	Wreckage on a town; an incident at an open airport; an explosion on a site; airports closed for hours
ALLIED COHESION	NATO, London, Paris, Berlin, the Baltic allies	Ships named on evidence; a ship seized with proof	An innocent ship seized or named; anything fired at a Russian unit; a site hit; an aircraft lost

(NR) **Brussels and The Hague warn when one of the three is eroding and again when it is critical. If one collapses the governments fall, the caretaker cabinets order all weapons held, and the operation ends there.** Where the two governments stand at H-hour depends on what the autumn has left them.

2. WHO WILL ASK DURING THE DAY

(NR) About once an hour a capital, an authority or a newsroom asks a question. Nobody expects a reply in words: **each looks at the record a little later** and draws its conclusion.

WHO	ASKS ABOUT
THE CHAMBER · THE TWEEDE KAMER	What has been seen over Kleine-Brogel and over Volkel, and what was done about it
NATO HQ	An attribution the Council can stand behind: which ships, on what evidence
MOSCOW	“Piracy against peaceful merchant shipping in the North Sea”
SHIPOWNERS · UNDERWRITERS	Freedom of navigation in the economic zone; whether these are still ordinary waters
THE HARBOUR MASTERS	What the navies want with merchant ships; whether the approaches are affected
AIRPORTS · AIRLINES · EUROCONTROL	Whether flights can go on; how long a closure will last; to be told before, not after
BROADCASTERS · AGENCIES	Drones filmed over the bases; satellite navigation gone wrong; how many, over what, sent by whom
THE MAYORS · THE PROSECUTOR	Who decided to bring a drone down over their streets; that every boarding be well founded
LONDON · PARIS · BERLIN	What the Russian corvette is doing; boardings on evidence; whether the E-3A is wanted

3. THE ALLIES AND THE RESERVE

(NR) What NATO can spare was decided before H-hour and is shown by the first click of the request. The record of this operation is what the next commander inherits: the standing of the governments, Moscow's posture, the reserve, the aircraft lost, and whatever is learnt from a wreck or from a ship's hold.

4. LINES TO TAKE

- Belgium and the Netherlands protect their own sites, in their own airspace and waters, under their own law and the law of the sea.
- No ship was fired at. Ships were boarded where the law allowed it, and on evidence.
- What was brought down, where, and what it was, is published as soon as it is known.

L

Meteorological and astronomical forecast

ANNEX L TO OPORD 26-071 · DTG 151600ZDEC26 · BNL/OPS/SL/26-071

1. AREA FORECAST — SOUTHERN NORTH SEA, BELGIUM AND THE NETHERLANDS, 160200Z TO 162300Z

ELEMENT	FORECAST
Air temperature	About 5°C
Cloud	Overcast
Precipitation	Light rain
Sea state	**4**, throughout. Boarding by helicopter is possible up to sea state 5
Effect on operations	None on radar. Cameras and infrared seekers see a small drone late under the cloud and in rain. A ship is identified by eye only from close

2. SUN, 16 DECEMBER — TIMES IN ZULU; LOCAL TIME IS ONE HOUR LATER

PLACE	NAUTICAL DAWN	CIVIL DAWN	SUNRISE	SUNSET	CIVIL DUSK	NAUTICAL DUSK
KLEINE-BROGEL 51°10.1'N 005°28.2'E	**0613Z**	0656Z	**0736Z**	**1530Z**	1611Z	**1653Z**
ANTWERP 51°13.2'N 004°24.0'E	0618Z	0700Z	0741Z	1534Z	1615Z	1657Z
AT SEA, WAITING AREA 51°54.0'N 003°00.0'E	0625Z	0708Z	0750Z	1536Z	1618Z	1701Z

(NR) H-hour, 160200Z, is in full darkness: more than four hours before first light. **Daylight lasts about seven hours and fifty minutes.** The sun rises a quarter of an hour later over the waiting area than over the bases. By about 1700Z it is fully dark again, and the last six hours of the operation are night.

3. MOON

DATE	PHASE	MOONRISE	MOONSET
15 DEC	Waxing crescent	—	about 2210Z
16 DEC	One day before first quarter, a little under half lit	about 1125Z	**about 2320Z**

(NR) **No moon from H-hour to dawn**: it set before midnight. In the second night a half moon stands in the south-west and sinks to the west until after the end of the operation, **behind an overcast**: count on a dark night both times.

4. WHAT THE LIGHT MEANS

- Nothing that flies will be seen by eye in either night; what is known of it comes from radar and from the listening stations.
- A merchant ship sees a helicopter at about a mile and a half by night as well as by day, and a patrol vessel on her radar at any hour.
- The day is short: a boarding takes forty minutes and a flag state up to fifty to answer. What is to be done in daylight is asked for in the morning.

M

References, charts and abbreviations

ANNEX M TO OPORD 26-071 · DTG 151600ZDEC26 · BNL/OPS/SL/26-071

1. CHARTS AND REFERENCE POINTS

(NR) ICAO 1:500 000 aeronautical charts; nautical charts of the Belgian and Netherlands coasts and of the Western Scheldt. Datum WGS 84. Positions in this order are in degrees and decimal minutes. The 12 nm limit is held at the CRC as the twenty points TW LIMIT 01 to TW LIMIT 20, south-west to north-east; it is measured from a simplified baseline and is the line the legal adviser uses.

2. OVERLAYS

APPENDIX	TITLE	SHOWS
B/1	Intelligence overlay	The eight vessels of interest at their last report, drawn alike and numbered as in the INTSUM; the waiting area; the traffic lanes, approaches and anchorages; the Scheldt route; the 12 nm limit and the three zones; the Russian units and the 5 nm round the corvette; the two bases overflown and the other sites; the airports; where drones from the sea cross the coast. Inset: the approach to the Scheldt
C/1	Operations overlay	Bases and aircraft; ships and submarine at H-hour; radars and their reach against a small drone; counter-drone systems, NASAMS and Mistral; listening stations; the barrier reference lines; the shadowing distance; the towns and the no-engagement areas; where the NATO reinforcements arrive. Inset: the approach to the Scheldt and the port of Antwerp

3. ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS ORDER

ABBR.	MEANING	ABBR.	MEANING
AB	Air base	MV / MT / MF	Motor vessel / motor tanker / motor ferry
AIS	Automatic identification system (ships)	NAI	Named Area of Interest
CAOC	Combined Air Operations Centre	NASAMS	Norwegian Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System
CRC	Control and Reporting Centre	OSV / FV	Offshore supply vessel / fishing vessel
CUAV	Counter-unmanned aircraft system	PIR	Priority Intelligence Requirement
DP	Decision point	RFS	Russian Federation Ship
DTG	Date-time group	ROE	Rules of engagement
INTSUM	Intelligence summary	SIGINT	Signals intelligence
MRCC	Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre	(NR)	NATO RESTRICTED paragraph marking

4. NAMES

(NR) **VIPER** is the Belgian F-16; **LIGHTNING** the Belgian F-35A; **ORANJE** the Dutch F-35A; **SKYGUARD** and **REAPER** the MQ-9s; **NEPTUNE** and **KAIMAN** the Belgian and Dutch NH90s. **HELIX** is the NATO name of the Ka-27 helicopter. On the plot every drone is named UAV and a number, in the order in which it appears, whatever it is.

Provenance

> Operation SWARM LINE, OPORD 26-071, BENELUX SHIELD and its commander, the events of 15 and 16 December 2026, the eight vessels of interest and everything ordered here are fiction, written for a scenario of Command: Modern Operations by totobimbo. The drone incidents of the autumn of 2025 cited in Annex B, the bases, the ships and aircraft named and the rules of the law of the sea are on the public record; the Briefing Pack lists the sources and says what is assumed.

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