

CHAPTER 11

SABOTAGE ATTACK AGAINST SHIPS - CBRNDC COUNTERMEASURES

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1101. General

BRd 8988 and Royal Navy Security Guidelines (RNSG) provide guidance to Commanding Officers (CO) on defence against sabotage and terrorist attacks made on their ships both above and below water, giving background information on the factors which have to be considered, the preparations which must be made in advance and on dealing with the threat when it materialises. They also identify a number of possible means of attack ranging from mortar attacks, to car bombs, to underwater swimmers. The potential for ships to be targeted with biological or chemical weapons poses a newer, albeit highly unlikely, threat in certain operational theatres. The following paragraphs provide supplementary guidance on CBRNDC defence considerations arising from a terrorist or sabotage threat.

1102. The Threat

a. Threats to ships in harbour will normally be countered by the procedures instituted under the relevant Counter Terrorist Response Level or AWKWARD Alert State. BRd 8988 states that an attack will fall into one of two categories, alerted or unalerted. In the case of the former, the ship may be alerted to the possibility of a threat before its arrival in port (presuming there is an overriding requirement to enter harbour) or at a subsequent point in its period alongside, anchored or moored.

b. When a ship is alerted to the possibility of a threat, the ship will need to tailor its preparations to the likelihood that an attack will be made and to the level of warning that can be expected. This is reflected in the various levels of Counter Terrorist Response Level and AWKWARD alert states. If a ship is alerted prior to entering harbour, as many material preparations as possible should be completed prior to entry, although certain aspects may need to be modified in order to maintain an impression of normality on the upper deck and in areas used by visitors. When intelligence information is received after arrival that requires an increase in the general alert state, due consideration will need to be given to the limitations imposed by the reduced number of personnel onboard. Whilst the priority must be to achieve and maintain the required state, Damage Control and/or CBRN Defence preparations for the next higher state should be started early in order to reduce the impact of manpower shortages. It should be noted that it may not be possible to achieve the full State 1 and consideration will need to be given to deployment of the reduced manpower.

c. In the event of an unalerted attack, the DC response will vary according to the type of attack and damage sustained. In all such situations the DC effort will have to be undertaken without those ratings that are part of the Ship Protection Organisation (SPO). Additional non-duty personnel will need to be mustered and briefed in an area clear of the upper deck and the area of damage. The OOD may need to delegate his SPO or DC responsibilities to another Officer or Senior Rate.

1103. Main Broadcast

When calling an AWKWARD state, main broadcast should only be used when beyond audible range of land. If alongside, or in audible range, either mute all upperdeck loudspeakers or advise the requirement by a less obvious pipe eg **“CLEAR LOWER DECK OF ALL OFFICERS AND SENIOR RATES, MUSTER IN...”** maybe appropriate, followed by a briefing. The Action Alarm should only be used if the ship has to react to a direct attack without warning.

1104. Awkward Alert and Counter Terrorist Response Level Systems

The AWKWARD Alert System is intended to provide guidance on the defence posture required to counter possible sabotage activity during periods of tension, TTW or war. The Counter Terrorist Response Level System is concerned with the measures to be taken on receipt of a warning of terrorist attack. Both encompass a wide range of means of attack and thus potential damage. Preparations will need to be guided by available intelligence assessments.

1105. Underwater Attack

If the primary threat is of underwater attack the focus of activity should be to ensure that the maximum degree of watertight integrity is maintained commensurate with the level of threat. Consideration should be given to restricting access to compartments on or below the waterline. A large underwater charge could result in whip action and thus full securing for action is essential. If the ship is on her own power supplies the possibility of sections of them being lost should be included in the planning, as should the potential for fires caused by damaged running machinery. Should an underwater charge explode, it will be necessary to obtain an early estimate of the damage and commence DC efforts. However, the number of personnel committed to the task will need to be carefully controlled in case of damage from further charges.

1106. Surface Attack

If this is the primary threat, then damage sustained in the event of an attack is likely to be similar to that from a shell or missile. Fire is potentially the greatest hazard, although splinter damage could cause localised flooding and casualties. The general guidance is to increase the watertight integrity with the alert state and, while risk of significant flooding may not be a concern, a higher Damage Control state will permit better control of smoke boundaries in the initial stages. Again, early identification of the extent of the resulting incidents is essential but, in some circumstances, it may be necessary to ensure, through use of the SPO, that it is safe to move personnel onto the upperdeck to deal with incidents there.

1107. Pre-Emptive Action on Discovery of Unexploded Sabotage Charges

BRd 8988 contains general guidance on the actions to be taken when a charge is found before it activates. The principle requirements are to isolate all supplies to the vicinity and provide a vent route for the blast. Personnel will need to be moved clear of the area, including those adjacent compartments which could suffer splinter damage. Careful consideration should be given to the state of fuel tanks in the vicinity, noting that full tanks are safer than partially empty ones. The proximity of magazines to the device should be reviewed and the status of the flood and spray arrangements checked. The possibility of the device triggering a magazine incident should not be discounted.

It may be prudent to flood a magazine if it is estimated that there is a high risk of a serious magazine incident being initiated by the device. All portable DC equipment should be removed from the area of the device if time permits, although this may not be prudent if it is in the vicinity of a FRPP or Section Base. Fire and repair parties should be mustered clear of the anticipated danger area but ready to respond quickly.

1108. Other Attacks

The possibility of attacks using BW or CW against ships is remote, although in some theatres it may rise during periods of tension. The threat can range from tear gas type aerosols discharged into ventilation systems by terrorists/activists or more serious attacks that might even have been directed at adjacent land forces. The appropriate level of defensive measures will need to be determined based on available intelligence assessments and guidance from higher authorities. There are limited counters available to terrorist attack as, except in exceptional circumstances, it will not be possible to achieve an effective gas-tight citadel and some personnel will need to be exposed on the upper deck. During periods of tension or greater it may be possible to consider maintaining a citadel at very high threat states. Prior to that some preparatory closing down could be achieved although the benefits would need to be weighed against habitability, access, maintenance and operational considerations. In such a situation it is most likely that the threat will also apply to adjacent land forces and thus the ships posture, should be guided by theirs including dress states. Where no UK land forces are present, the ships posture will need to take account of local sensibilities. If possible, a more prudent course of action may be to sail, avoidance being a primary defence against BW or CW for ships.