

RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING RADIO COMMUNICATIONS IN JOINT COMBATING OPERATIONS

3.1 The Contracting Parties

RECALLING the provision of Article 7 of the Agreement for Co-operation in Dealing with Pollution of the North Sea by Oil and Other Harmful Substances, 1983 (Bonn Agreement) concerning assistance to a Contracting Party by other Contracting Parties called upon,

TAKING into consideration that assistance could be rendered in the form of strike teams consisting of one or more ships or of aircraft,

BEING AWARE of the need for radio communications in joint combating operations at sea,

NOTING that in order to avoid disturbance and jamming in a joint operation, there is a strong need for different radio communication frequencies on the one hand between the Operational Control ashore and the Supreme On-Scene Commander/Co-ordinator (SOSC) and, on the other hand, between the SOSC and participating National On-Scene Commanders/Co-ordinators (NOSC) as well as between the different NOSCs and their respective team units,

RECOMMEND that:

in accordance with the scheme of radio communications for joint combating operations presented in the annex to this recommendation,

- a. Concerning the communications between the Operational Control ashore and the SOSC (which is the concern of the lead country of the operation), consideration should be given to the possibility of using wireless email, telefax, teleprinter or telex.
- b. Communication between the SOSC and the NOSCs should be performed on one or, if needed, more of the international VHF-channels 10, 67 and 73.
- c. The vessels from which the SOSC operates should have at least two VHF-stations on board with a standby function on channel 16.
- d. Communications between a NOSC and the strike team units should be performed on special domestic (internal) frequencies.
- e. Communication between SOSC/NOSC and between aircraft should be performed on special frequencies, see the Aerial Surveillance Handbook.
- f. The working language between OSCs from different countries should be English.
- g. The broad aspects of the radio communication problems in joint oil combating operations at sea should be presented to the telecommunications authority in each country for information and internal consideration.

3.2 Notes and Supplementary Guidelines

With the aim of further facilitating Radio Communications in joint combating operations, the following guidelines have been agreed upon. (See Annex 1).

3.3 Communication Between the Operational Control and the SOSC (1st Level)

3.3.1 The operational control is exercised normally by the country within whose zone the operation takes place (lead country) and its physical location will normally be ashore.

3.3.2 It is the responsibility of the lead country to establish and maintain the communication between the operational control and the SOSC.

3.3.3 Depending on the facilities and internal organisation within the lead country, the communication could be established either directly from the operational control to the SOSC via teleprinter, radio telephone or radio telegraphy between the coast radio station and the SOSC.

3.3.4 To facilitate the communication between the operational control and the SOSC the possibility of using email or wireless teleprinter e.g. telefax via mobile radiotelephone or telex as the best means of communication between these two command levels should be considered.

3.4 Communication Between the SOSC and the NOSC (2nd Level)

3.4.1 In accordance with 3.1.a, the communication between the SOSC and the NOSC should be performed on one or if needed more of the international maritime VHF channels 10, 67 and 73.

3.4.2 To this end, the vessel from which the SOSC operates should, as a rule, have at least two maritime VHF stations on board with a stand-by function on channel 16.

3.4.3 It is the responsibility of the lead country to obtain the permission from the national telecommunication authorities to use the maritime VHF channels 10, 67 and 73 for combating operations at sea which could be given either as a general authorisation to use the frequencies during combating operations and combating exercises or as a separate authorisation for each combating operation and combating exercise. As channels 10, 67 and 73 are not established for exclusive use in combating operations but could also be used for inter-ship communications, port operations service and ship movement service there exists a risk that the communication on these frequencies between authorities engaged in a combating operation could be seriously hampered by other traffic not relevant to the ongoing operation.

3.4.4 Under such circumstances the national telecommunications authorities should be consulted to advise on how non-combating traffic could be minimised or completely eliminated.

3.4.5 It should further be noted that the first radio contact between the SOSC and NOSC should be made on channel 16 unless otherwise agreed.

3.5 Communication Between NOSCS

3.5.1 Under circumstances where one NOSC and his strike teams operate geographically close to another NOSC and his strike teams, a need may arise for direct communication between the NOSCs in respect of navigation, manoeuvring and other operational matters.

3.5.2 In order to restrict the number of VHF channels in use, the communication between NOSCs should be performed on the same VHF channel as used for communication between the NOSCs and the SOSC.

3.5.3 If more VHF channels are used for communication between the SOSC and the NOSCs, the communication plan should be established in such a way that NOSCs and their strike teams operating geographically close to other NOSCs and their strike teams should be allocated to the same VHF channel for communication with the SOSC.

3.6 Communication Between the NOSCS and their Strike Teams (3rd Level)

3.6.1 In accordance with 3.1.d, the communication between a NOSC and his strike team units should be performed on special domestic (internal) frequencies.

3.6.2 For communication between NOSC and aircraft reference is made to the Aerial Surveillance Handbook.

3.6.3 Before deciding on the domestic frequencies, a NOSC from a country other than the lead country should check with the SOSC that the frequencies in question do not interfere with other frequencies used on the scene of action.

3.7 Communication between Strike Teams

3.7.1 It is anticipated that if need arises for communication between strike teams under the same NOSC, this communication will be carried out on the same domestic frequencies as used for communication with the NOSC or on a special domestic frequency selected for internal communication between strike teams.

3.7.2 Due to the use of domestic frequencies between the NOSC's and their strike teams, direct communication between strike teams from NOSC's of different nationality cannot normally be expected.

3.7.3 For communication between aircraft, reference is made to the Aerial Surveillance Handbook.

BONN AGREEMENT COMMUNICATION PLAN FOR JOINT COMBATING OPERATIONS

