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U.S. MILITARY SUPPORT FOR STRAIT OF HORMUZ FACILITATED TRANSITS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Purpose

To provide maritime industry partners operational concepts, risks, feasibility, and procedures related to U.S. military facilitated transits of the southern route through the Strait of Hormuz.

1. Operational Concept – Scope and Limits of U.S. Support

Q: What is the scope of U.S. “facilitated” transit?

Answer: A combination of airborne overwatch, ISR, and threat response.

Q: What is the timeline from request → approval → transit?

Answer: Recommend starting the process 24-36 hours in advance. NAVCENT Naval Cooperation and Guidance for Shipping (NCAGS) (m-ba-navcent-ncags@us.navy.mil) will respond quickly once the form/email is received and then schedule a reservation/transit time. Masters should plan their own time-distance calculations to begin the route at the specified location and time.

Q: How long can a vessel remain in the risk assessment process, when can the owner withdraw, and when is the vessel considered committed?

Answer: A vessel is never committed. The process is entirely voluntary, and vessels can withdraw at any time.

Q: Will U.S. forces provide real-time threat alerts during transit?

Answer: The environment is dynamic and force providers are focused on defeating threats before communicating. NCAGS will endeavor to advise but may not be able to communicate threats to vessels in real-time.

Q: Under what conditions would U.S. forces abort or suspend a facilitated transit?

Answer: If the force provider were unable to provide its standard force posture without mitigations, or threat indications exceed its ability to effectively defend shipping, NCAGS would inform ships and recommend they postpone/cease transit.

Q: When were vessels last targeted by drones or missiles while using the southern route, and were these threats intercepted?

Answer: Threats are presented regularly; however, the overwhelming majority of threats are defeated by force providers. There have been over 200 successful transits with less than five completed attacks, none resulting in loss of life or vessel.

Q: Will NCAGS/U.S. forces provide consolidated incident history for vessels that have transited thus far (attacks, near misses, electronic interference, navigational issues, interceptions)?

Answer: There have been over 200 successful transits with less than five completed attacks, none resulting in loss of life or vessel.

Q: Will NCAGS provide pre-transit threat assessments?

Answer: Please refer to the most recent [Joint Maritime Information Center \(JMIC\) advisories](#) pertaining to the Strait of Hormuz.

Q: Are there any flag-state, crew-nationality, or cargo restrictions affecting eligibility?

Answer: Vessels are not permitted with a Next Port of Call or Last Port of Call in Iran. Dark fleet (i.e., vessels that purposefully obfuscate their identity/position/affiliation, etc.) and U.S. sanctioned vessels also are not permitted.



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2. Transit Feasibility for Large Vessels (VLCCs, ULCCs, LNG)

Q: What types of ships have completed facilitated transits so far (LOA, beam, draft, cargo)?

Answer: Dimensions (length, beam, draft) have not been limiting factors.

Q: Have VLCCs or ULCCs successfully used the southern route?

Answer: Yes.

Q: What is the maximum recommended draft for the corridor?

Answer: No recommended draft limit. Masters know their vessels best and should review applicable charts for navigational concerns.

Q: Are there depth constraints, shoaling, or narrow sections requiring reduced speed?

Answer: No major depth constraints highlighted beyond standard navigation. A recommended speed is provided for transit cohesion.

Q: Will routing differ by vessel size, maneuverability, or cargo type?

Answer: No.

Q: Is NCAGS aware of any navigational incidents involving vessels using this route?

Answer: No.

3. Route, Navigation Points & Pre-Transit Surveying

Q: Will the same navigation points be used each time?

Answer: Navigation points are provided in advance, but subject to change if issues arise.

Q: Will the area be surveyed prior to transit (mines, Unmanned Surface Vessels (USVs), Unmanned Undersea Vessels (UUVs))?

Answer: There are no indications of mines or mining of the Deep South Route. U.S. forces continually monitor all-source reporting for indicators of mining/mines along the route.

Q: How are U.S. forces monitoring the mine situation in the corridor?

Answer: U.S. forces continually monitor all-source reporting for indicators of mining/mines along the route.

Q: Will transit timing (day/night) depend on threat level?

Answer: Night transits are recommended, but day transits are possible.

Q: Will U.S. forces provide updated bathymetric or hazard information?

Answer: Known hazards will be provided. Bathymetric surveys are the responsibility of the vessel master.

Q: Will vessels be required to follow a strict track line, or is deviation permitted for safety of navigation?

Answer: Deviation permitted for safety of navigation. Recommended waypoints are provided; masters retain ultimate responsibility for the safety of their vessels.

4. Threat Environment – Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), Missiles, Mines, Unmanned Surface Vessels (USVs), Electronic Interference

Q: What is the assessed likelihood of: One-way attack UAVs (drones)/Ballistic missile targeting/Explosive USVs/Floating or tethered mines?

Answer: UAVs are the most common threat. Mines: there is suspected activity but U.S. forces have no indications of mines or mining of the Deep South Route. Route has proven safe for over 200 transits.



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Q: What is the expected warning time if a threat is detected?

Answer: Limited – U.S. forces prioritize defeating threats over communication in narrow strait scenarios.

Q: Will U.S. forces provide GNSS interference warnings or electronic interference situational awareness?

Answer: Reports of GNSS interference exist; vessels should be prepared for the possibility. Vessels have relied on GNSS with success. Radar in standby is recommended to minimize emissions.

5. Communications, Command & Control

Q: Will VHF silence be required?

Answer: Recommended for safety – emissions could be used for targeting. Satellite (email/phone) preferred.

Q: Will communication be one-way (instructions only) or two-way?

Answer: Two-way is possible via satellite/email/phone. Acknowledge check-ins at checkpoints.

Q: Will there be communication with supporting forces during transit?

Answer: Communicate with NCAGS watch at checkpoints via email/satellite.

Q: Who retains command of the vessel during transit (Master retains full authority)?

Answer: Master retains full command and responsibility.

Q: Will NCAGS conduct individual owner briefings or group briefings?

Answer: NCAGS is available to conduct individual owner/operator briefings

6. AIS, Radar, Tracking Devices & Operational Security (OPSEC)

Q: Will AIS be required to be on or off?

Answer: It is recommended that AIS be turned off.

Q: Will radar emissions be restricted (e.g., standby only)?

Answer: Standby mode is recommended; it is recommended to energize only in extremis for navigational purposes.

Q: If AIS/electronic aids are off, what navigational support will NCAGS provide?

Answer: Only recommended waypoints are provided. No additional navigational guidance.

Q: Should tracking devices (e.g., Raptor) be turned off?

Answer: Recommended – anything emitting RF energy should be minimized.

Q: Will VSAT/Iridium/Starlink be restricted?

Answer: Satellite communications are preferred.

Q: Will U.S. forces provide OPSEC guidance (crew phones, social media, reporting restrictions)?

Answer: Yes – best practices will be recommended.

7. Escorting, Monitoring & On-Scene Support

Q: Will there be escorting by smaller vessels (U.S.N., U.S.C.G., partner forces)?

Answer: No.

Q: Will personnel be embarked on merchant vessels?

Answer: No.



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Q: Will U.S. forces provide satellite monitoring of the corridor?

Answer: Not for navigational purposes.

Q: Is salvage support available (tugs, emergency response, towing)?

Answer: Owners/operators should be prepared to contract salvage services on an as-needed basis. In the event of an emergency, NCAGS and U.S. forces will coordinate a response with Oman.

Q: What is the protocol if a vessel experiences engine/steering failure in narrow sections?

Answer: Masters will decide the best course of action for vessel/crew safety.

8. Requirements for Participation

Q: What documentation or pre-registration is required?

Answer: Email the NCAGS distribution list (provided above) for a list of requested information—it is not excessively intrusive.

Q: Will vessels need to submit: Crew list/Cargo details/Route plan/Security level declaration?

Answer: Limited details requested.

Q: Will NCAGS require a minimum-security posture (ISPS Level 2 or 3)?

Answer: No – left to ship's judgment.

Q: Will vessels need to demonstrate physical hardening (citadel, SSAS test, razor wire)?

Answer: No.

Q: When getting a go-ahead signal, will it take long before my vessel is ready to sail?

Answer: This depends on where the vessel is located in proximity to the rendezvous point.

9. Post-Transit Reporting & Lessons Learned

Q: Will NCAGS require a post-transit debrief?

Answer: No.