

AIR TASKING ORDER - RESTRICTED ACCESS

1. SITUATION

1610 Local, 9 April 2012, Persian Gulf

BACKGROUND

Tensions have been very high since Iran's attack on Al Dhafra Air Base on April 5. Iran launched 31 cruise missiles at Al Dhafra, 21 of which struck targets, resulting in 8 Americans killed and 36 wounded. American equipment losses include two F-15Cs, one E-3, and 20 buildings. Iran appears to have targeted American facilities at the base, but the UAE lost 5 military personnel and 10 civilians working in the American areas, with 24 more wounded.

Given the timing, it is possible the attack was in response to an incident in the Gulf of Oman, where the USS Sampson fired warning shots at IRGC speedboats quickly approaching it and civilian ships it was protecting. Iran claims the boats were targeted by the Sampson, but we believe their boats received no damage. Iran fired a Silkworm missile at the Sampson, which was shot down. Al Dhafra was hit by missiles 22 minutes later. The Al Dhafra attack must have followed a plan arranged in advance, but it is unclear if it would actually have been carried out without the Sampson incident.

We believe half the missiles aimed at Al Dhafra approached from the west over the Persian Gulf, using a longer flight path going south then turning east at point around 80 NM to the west of Abu Dhabi, instead of the directly south or southeast path we expected. Intelligence indicates this is likely a new land-launched (or less likely air-launched) cruise missile recently developed and not publicly revealed by Tehran. The Patriot battery stationed at Al Dhafra shot down 4 of these missiles. The other half of the missiles approached from the east, almost opposite the expected direction. These seem to be Club-S missiles launched by Kilo submarines from the Gulf of Oman. None of these missiles were shot down by air defenses, though some missed their targets.

Iran's foreign minister Ali Akbar Salehi described the attacks as "a necessary, direct, and effective response to an American attack on our boats peacefully transiting international waters, and the vicious bombings and occupation of Iranian territory that killed hundreds of Iranians. Indeed, it is a very light penalty in comparison to what the US has inflicted on us. We firmly, precisely, and effectively struck at the US military site from which so much of that horrific violence came. And we will answer any further American aggression tenfold in the same way."

In his address that day, President Obama responded: "The United States will make the Iranian regime regret its attack on our forces at Al Dhafra Air Base, with sanctions, more international isolation, and covert action that I cannot discuss. As Iran's deceptive and brazen rush to develop nuclear weapons

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neared the abyss, America was forced to act. We did so reluctantly but resolutely, applying the force necessary to achieve our stated goal of preventing Iran's nuclear program from posing a threat to the world, and then our forces withdrew. Our goal was not regime change, nor is it now. This attack on Al Dhafra did not defend Iran's interests – it only unnecessarily, tragically took American and Emirati lives. From our position of strength, we will not escalate the situation with military force against Iran on top of the rest of our response. But our forces in the area are on high alert and ready to defend themselves against any more Iranian attacks.”

While Iranian and US statements suggested a desire to de-escalate, the signals from the UAE (who actually suffered most of the casualties) are more bellicose. The UAE points to satellite imagery that spotted Iran's Kilo submarines docked at the disputed Abu Musa island 4 days prior to the attack. Although it is unclear what, if any, role the island played in the Al Dhafra attack. But Crown Prince Mohamed bin Zayed said on April 6, “We will not tolerate Iran killing our citizens on our own soil, preparing its attacks from our own soil. Iran must immediately demilitarize Abu Musa and the Tunbs, or the UAE will do what is necessary to secure its territory.”

With Iran showing no signs of removing forces from the islands, the UAE began mobilizing to take the islands for itself. While US diplomats worked frantically to defuse the situation, we believe the UAE has been planning an invasion to begin the night of April 12. However, intelligence indicates Iran is today flying additional air defenses to bolster the Hawk battery already at Abu Musa, along with bolstering ground forces. The UAE has (secretly) told the US that it will start its attack before Iran can make the islands more costly to invade. Given that we observed Iranian cargo aircraft loading two hours ago in Shiraz, this Emirati action is likely imminent.

OVERVIEW & COMMANDER'S INTENT

The orders from above are to defend the carrier group against any attacks, and to avoid any escalation with Iran, including avoiding involvement in any Emirati operations against Iran. Accordingly, we are limiting our airborne presence as much as possible while still deterring and being ready to stop any airborne or sea-based attacks.

We are launching one 2-ship Hornet flight at a time to patrol near the carrier, and you (as part of Dodge 1) will be on the next one. We are not aware of any specific Iranian activity, and a critical part of your job is to not play any unnecessary role in provoking it. But we do think the Emirati activity increases the risk of Iranian action against the carrier group, particularly as we do not know how much Tehran actually believes the US is not involving itself in the UAE action.

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We are told that the Emiratis will wait until nightfall to actually begin any ground invasion of Abu Musa or the Tunbs, but they seem likely to attack the incoming Iranian cargo flight, which probably means disabling the Hawk battery at the same time.

WEATHER: 29C, Few at 12000, Wind 329@ 8kt. Altimeter 29.99.

ENEMY FORCES

Enemy air threat is possible from F-4s and F-7s at Bandar Abbas (BE 013/72), F-4s at Shiraz (BE 320/280), and Mig-29s and F-14s from Kerman (BE 011/261). Iranian HAWK sites are on Abu Musa (BE 262/57) and near Bandar Abbas (BE 002/66), along with EWR at Kish and Bandar Abbas. Over Iranian territory, MANPADs and AAA are also a threat.

The frigates IRIS Alborz and Jamaranhas been observed near Greater Tunb. Dozens of IRGC speedboats have been patrolling along the Iranian coast and around Sirri, Abu Musa, and the Tunbs.

FRIENDLY FORCES

Fixed wing assets in the AO:

- **You:** Dodge 1 (2 F/A-18s): patrol northeast of CVN-73 for air and surface threats
 - **You** will be flying as Dodge 1-2: follow 1-1's lead.
- Ford 1 (2 F-14s): escorting Magic
- Ford 2 (4 F-14s): Alert-5 on CVN-73, prepared for CAP
- Dodge 2 (4 F-/A-18s): Alert-15 on CVN-73, prepared for ground/surface threats
- Shell 1 (S-3): Alert-15 on CVN-73, to be launched in fuel contingencies

C&C:

- Magic (E-3): C&C, orbiting southeast of CVN-73

ATTS/DETS

- Tanker: Shell (40Y / 240 MHz), if launched in contingency
- AWACS: Magic (252 MHz)

2. MISSION

Dodge 1 is tasked with patrol 40 NM northeast of CVN-73 to deter and protect against air and surface threats to the carrier group, while avoiding any unnecessary escalation.

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3. EXECUTION

1. Dodge 1 will launch from CVN-73 by 1320Z and head direct to WP 1, forming up at Angels 25. Ensure flight is on Guard Receive the entire flight.

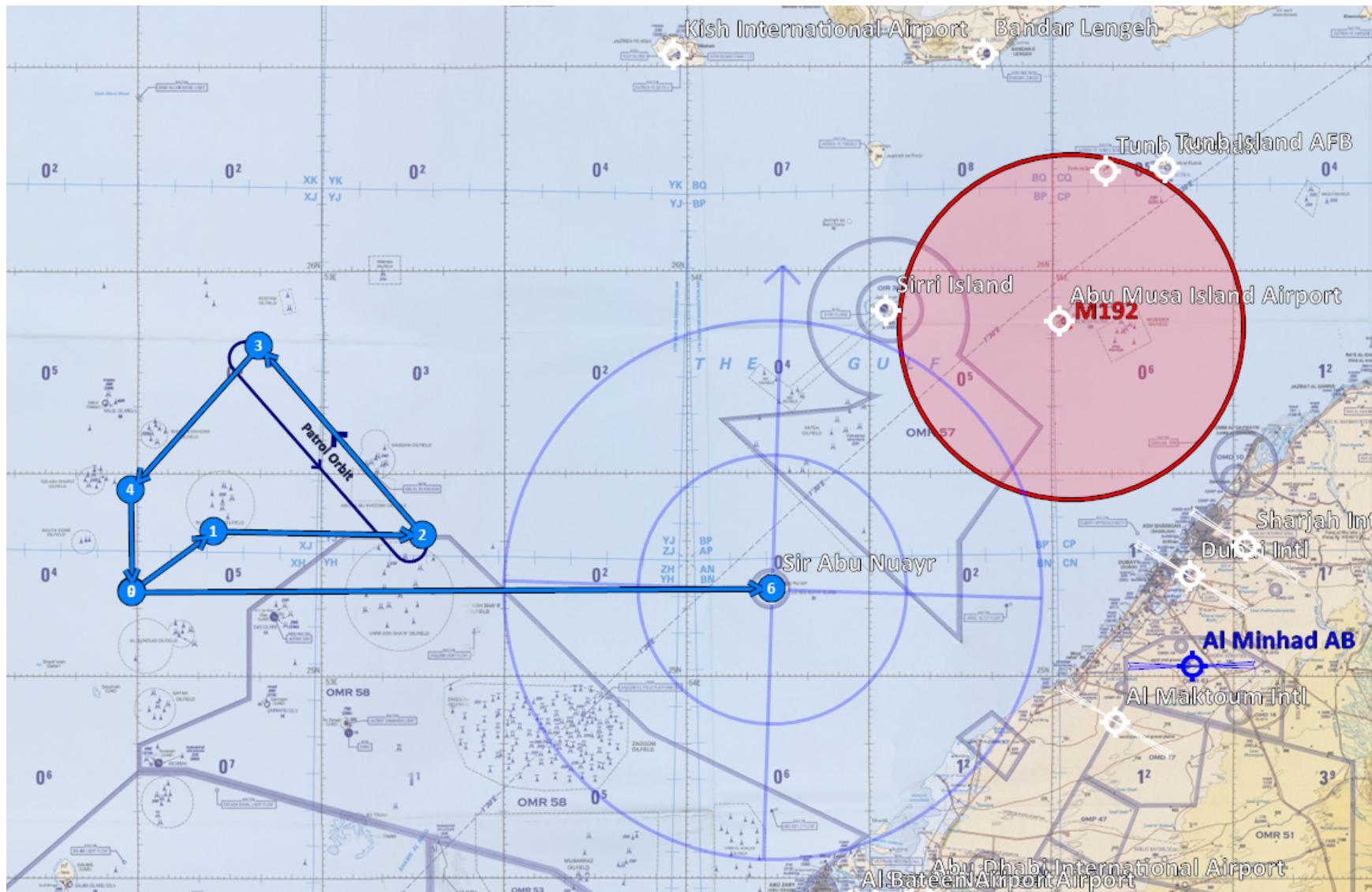
2. Tune TAC 1 and check in with Magic. Head to WP 2, maintaining CAP orbit between WP 2 and WP 3.

- **Follow any orders from Magic. In the absence of orders you are WEAPONS HOLD.** Do not radar lock or engage Iranian assets unless specifically ordered or if your flight comes directly under attack.
- If we observe a threat, we will launch our Alert-5 CAP (Ford 2) or Alert-15 ASuW (Dodge 2) flights to assist you.
- **Perform FENCE IN checks but remain MASTER ARM OFF while on patrol until ordered or if you come under attack.**
- Familiarize yourself with Fig. 1 showing the AO. If following tasking away from the CAP orbit, remain at least 20 NM from Iranian airspace (32 NM from Iranian shores) unless specifically ordered. We also want to avoid getting near UAE airspace (to avoid indicating we are part of the UAE's operations against Abu Musa), including Sir Abu Nuayr (Bullseye). As always, avoid neutral Oman airspace.
- Especially avoid the area around Abu Musa, both to avoid triggering escalation and to avoid the HAWK WEZ.
- Report any ships you observe in the vicinity.
- We want to avoid launching tankers to reduce our footprint in the air. You will take 3 fuel tanks and should remain near the boat, but conserve fuel where possible.

4. RTB when ordered by Magic.

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Fig. 1: Flight Plan Overview



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RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

- **A/A: Weapons Hold**
 - You may use force to defend Dodge 1-1 or 1-2 if under attack, but only as needed to ensure your own safety.
 - Otherwise, all use of force against air targets requires orders from Magic, including to defend other friendly assets.
- **A/G: Weapons Hold, except as directly ordered by Magic.**

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4. ADMINISTRATION/LOGISTICS

Launch Time: 1315Z, 9 April 2012

Recovery Window: 1415Z - 1715Z

ARMAMENTS:

- Dodge 1: 1*AGM-65E, 3*AIM-120C, 2*AIM-9X, 3 fuel tanks

AIR REFUELING: Shell will only launch in contingencies.

EW/ELINT: Magic will orbit southeast of CVN-73.

5. COMMANDER/SIGNAL

SIGNAL:

COMM 1:				COMM 2:		
Name	Preset	Freq		Name	Preset	Freq
Dodge 1	1	141		TAC 1	1	252
TAC 1	2	252		TAC 2	2	254
TAC 2	3	254		CVN-73	3	127.5
CVN-73	4	127.5		Shell	4	240
Shell	5	240		Dodge 1	5	141

COMMAND: Commander CVW-1, CSG-8

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SUMMARY

Launch Time: 0450Z, April 5, 2012

Recovery Window: 0620Z - 1000Z

Joker: 5000. **Bingo:** 4000.

BULLSEYE: WP 6, Sir Abu Nuayr (N 25° 13.03', E 54° 14.02')

TARGET: N/A (only as ordered by Magic)

AIR THREAT: Bandits from Bandar Abbas, Shiraz or Kerman

AA THREAT: HAWK, AAA

WEAPONS HOLD EXCEPT AS BRIEFED

NOTES:

Carriers	Tankers	Support
-- USS George Washington -- 127.5 MHz AM TACN: 73X GW ICLS: 3	-- Shell -- SH 40Y 240.0 MHz AM	-- AWACS -- 252.0 MHz AM Magic (AI Magic on 254.0 MHz AM)

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WP	Name	Remarks	Angels	Speed
1	Alpha	Form up, contact Magic (TAC 1)	25	
2	CAP1	Patrol orbit start	25	Max endurance
3	CAP2	End of racetrack orbit	25	
4	Return			
5	CVN-73			
6	Bullseye		N/A	