

[REDACTED]

december 17, 1987

[REDACTED]

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(b)(3)

PERSIAN GULF:

Situation Report

**Iranians, Omanis
Clash**

Iranian speedboats operating in Omani territorial waters twice fired at an Omani patrol boat this week, according to a reliable source. The Omani patrol boat—firing its 76-mm gun—chased a speedboat out of Omani territorial waters yesterday, after rounds from the Iranian craft came close to the Omani boat. On Tuesday, the same Omani boat did not return fire after an Iranian speedboat fired several rocket grenades that fell short of the ship.

[REDACTED]

Iranian naval forces appear to be operating deeper into Omani territorial waters to attack tankers, thus increasing the likelihood of more confrontations with the Omanis.

[REDACTED]

The Tanker War

Iranian naval forces attacked another Greek tanker and Maldivian ship in the southern Persian Gulf yesterday, probably in retaliation for an Iraqi strike earlier in the day against a Maltese cargo ship trading with Iran.

[REDACTED]

Iraq has conducted nine attacks on six ships this month, while Iran has attacked eight ships, five of which were trading with Saudi Arabia.

[REDACTED]

The severe damage and fires on board the Greek tanker attacked by Iran on Tuesday appear to have been caused hours later by an internal explosion triggered when an unexploded Iranian rocket or shell later blew up, according to shipping sources. A second Iranian attack on this tanker by an Iranian frigate or speedboats has not been confirmed.

continued

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[REDACTED] Ship attacks are continuing at relatively high levels. Iran may have been targeting shipping in the Saudi trade this month to press Riyadh on its oil-production policies before and after the recent OPEC meeting. Although greater damage has resulted from some recent Iranian attacks, there is no evidence that Iran is using a new weapon system or more aggressive tactics. [REDACTED]

Iranian naval forces, however, may be using incendiary rounds for its machineguns, naval guns, and 107-mm rocket launchers to start fires that can spread throughout the tankers. Speculation among shippers that Iran is trying to inflict greater damage on its targets may generate requests for expanded protection of Gulf shipping. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

More Kuwaiti Tankers To Be Reflagged

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The reflagging of six Kuwaiti tankers to Liberian registry brings the total number foreign-flagged Kuwaiti tankers to 21. In addition to the 11 US-reflagged tankers, there are four reflagged with British registry. [REDACTED]