

MINE CLEARANCE IN EUROPEAN WATERS

*Agreement signed at London November 22, 1945, with appendix
Entered into force November 22, 1945*

Department of State files

POST WAR MINE CLEARANCE IN EUROPEAN WATERS

The attached document has been agreed between us as the basis of an international organisation for the clearance of mines in European Waters. The representatives of the United States, France and Great Britain have already been authorised to accept this document on behalf of their respective Governments.

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INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR THE CLEARANCE OF MINES IN EUROPEAN WATERS

The following organisation for the clearance of mines in European waters after the defeat of Germany has been drawn up with a view to meeting the needs of all interested maritime Powers by providing an international machinery for the direction of policy and general control of mine clearance operations. It is hoped that by these measures mines will be cleared with equal thoroughness and expedition in all European Waters.

Division of European waters into zones

2. The European waters to be cleared shall be divided into four zones:—

- (i) An East Atlantic zone
- (ii) A Mediterranean zone
- (iii) A Barents, Baltic and Black Sea zone
- (iv) A Kattegat, Baltic Straits and their Approaches zone

These zones shall be divided into areas and sub-areas, the clearance of which shall be allocated to the interested littoral and other naval powers under the direction of Boards set up in accordance with paragraph 7 below. The recommended limits of these zones are given at Appendix A.

International Central Mine Clearance Board

3. Mine clearance in European waters shall be controlled and co-ordinated by an International Central Mine Clearance Board, under the presidency of a British Naval Officer and consisting of representatives of France, U.S.S.R., U.K. and U.S.A.

4. Each member of the Central Board shall be responsible for consulting his Government as he may deem necessary and shall have the right to insist that the confirmation of his Government is required before any particular action contemplated by the Central Board affecting its interests is taken.

5. At all stages during the preparation of plans for mine clearance, and until completion of the task, the Central Board shall refer to the Allied Naval Authorities as deemed necessary and shall in particular consult the Supreme Allied Commanders and the Allied Commission of Control on their special requirements. In their dealings with capitulated powers, the Central Board, and the zone Boards referred to below, shall communicate with them through the appropriate Supreme Allied Commander or Allied Commission of Control.

6. The functions of the Central Board shall be:

(a) to draw up a general plan of mine clearance in the European waters taking into account ships, manpower and minesweeping equipment (minesweeping forces) required, and to ascertain for this purpose available resources of both the Allied and neutral countries concerned and the defeated powers.

(b) to lay down the precise limits of the zones in European waters and to adjust these limits only if at any time this should be necessary.

(c) to set up and direct the Zone Mine Clearance Boards referred to in paragraph 7.

(d) to set up the Central Mine Clearance Intelligence Office referred to in paragraph 13.

(e) to direct, through the Zone Clearance Boards, the general policy of mine clearance in European waters.

(f) to apportion, in the light of the mine clearance commitment of each zone, the available minesweeping forces between the zones at the beginning of mine clearance, and to re-allocate minesweeping forces from one zone to another should it at any time appear desirable, provided that such re-allocation would be without detriment to the first zone.

(g) to give guidance to the Zone Boards in determining the areas of specified responsibility referred to in paragraph 7(a).

(h) to specify the acceptable scale of mine clearance, essential for safe navigation.

(i) to promulgate reports on experience gained in the course of operations.

NOTE: It is assumed that, under the terms of the instruments of surrender, all enemy minesweeping forces will be taken over and held at the disposal of the United Nations.

Zone Mine Clearance Boards

7. There shall be set up within each zone a Zone Mine Clearance Board, responsible to the Central Board, with the following functions:

(a) to divide the zone into sub-areas and to assign the responsibility for the clearance of sub-areas among the Powers involved; to re-adjust the limits of these sub-areas only if at any time this adjustment should be necessary.

(b) to direct the general policy of mine clearance within the zone, while leaving the executive control of minesweeping forces in the hands of the individual Power responsible for each sub-area. But the direct control in the clearance of sub-areas for which surrendered countries are responsible shall be exercised by the Supreme Allied Commander or the Allied Commission of Control.

(c) to determine the responsibility of the capitulated Powers in the clearance of waters within the zone.

(d) to allocate minesweeping forces assigned to the zone by the Central Board to Powers represented on the Zone Board who have not sufficient minesweeping forces with which to clear the sub-area for which they are responsible.

(e) at the outset of mine clearance to collect full intelligence of all mines laid within the zone and throughout the work of clearance to collect and collate reports on the progress and operations; and to transmit this intelligence without delay to the Central Mine Clearance Intelligence Office.

(f) to co-ordinate the mine clearance plans of the Powers responsible for clearance within the zone and to ensure that priorities of common interest, such as the fairways of navigation are observed.

(g) to ensure that the standard of mine clearance specified by the Central Board is observed.

(h) to transmit to the Central Board and to promulgate within the zone reports on the experience gained in the course of operations.

NOTE: For the purpose of the preceding paragraphs, the term "minesweeping forces" should be taken to include minesweeping vessels, aircraft used in the search for mines, minesweeping equipment, ancillary vessels and gear, maintenance facilities and other resources used in minesweeping, together with the personnel to man or operate them.

East Atlantic Zone Board

8. The East Atlantic Zone Board shall consist of members representing Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Holland, Norway, U.S.S.R., and the U.K. under the Presidency of a British Naval Officer. A representative of Germany shall be summoned to attend as required by the Board to give information and to receive directions. Eire, Iceland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden, shall be invited to send observers to the Board.

Mediterranean Zone Board

9. The Mediterranean Zone Board shall consist of members representing France, Greece, U.S.S.R., the U.K., U.S.A., and Yugoslavia under the Presidency of a British Naval Officer. Representatives of Germany and Italy shall be summoned to attend as required by the Board to give information and receive directions. Egypt, Portugal, Spain, and Turkey shall be invited to send observers to the Board.

Barents, Baltic and Black Seas Zone Board

10. The Barents, Baltic and Black Seas Zone Board shall consist of members representing Denmark, Norway, Poland, U.S.S.R. and U.K., under the Presidency of a Soviet Naval Officer. Representatives of Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Italy and Roumania shall be summoned to attend as required by the Board, to give information and to receive directions. Sweden and Turkey shall be invited to send observers to the Board. The Soviet Government considers the Danube to belong to the Zone of the Barents, Baltic and Black Seas and it has already carried out a considerable amount of minesweeping of the river.

Kattegat, Baltic Straits and their Approaches Zone Board

11. The Kattegat, Baltic Straits and their Approaches Zone Board shall consist of members representing Denmark, Norway, Poland, the U.S.S.R., and the U.K. The Presidency of this Board shall be held for alternate periods by a British and Soviet Naval Officer. A representative of Germany shall be summoned to attend as required by the Board to give information and to receive instructions. Sweden shall be invited to send an observer to the Board.

Allocation of Responsibility within the Zones

12. The allocation of responsibility within the Zones is a matter for the decision of the respective Zone Boards. Each Power will undertake the clearance of its own coastal waters and, in addition, an adjoining area in the open sea in proportion to the minesweeping forces available or made available to it.

The Intelligence Office of the Central Board

13. The Central Mine Clearance Board shall establish a Central International Intelligence Office for the evaluation and promulgation of mine clearance intelligence. It shall consist of an Executive Committee and an Administrative Section. The Executive Committee will consist of represent-

atives of members of the Central Board. The organisation of the Administrative Section will be undertaken by the British Admiralty. To secure close liaison between the Executive Committee and the Administrative Section, the Senior Officer of the Administrative Section will also be a member of the Executive Committee.

14. Mine clearance intelligence from the zones, after collation by the Zone Boards will be received by the Central International Intelligence Office in the name of the Central Board. Information so received will be plotted by the Administrative Section for examination and evaluation by the Executive Committee, and will be promulgated by the Administrative Section in accordance with the Executive Committee's decisions.

15. The maritime Powers shall be invited to appoint representatives in London, who might normally be officers at their Embassies, Legations, Consulates or High Commissioners' Offices, with whom the Intelligence Office may have direct contact. On receipt of intelligence from the Zone Boards the Office shall, with as little delay as possible, distribute "Mine Warnings to Mariners" to these representatives for onward transmission to their respective Governments.

16. The Office shall be responsible for its work to the Central Board.

APPENDIX "A"

Limits of Zones in European Waters

The limits of the zones shall be as follows:—

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| <i>East Atlantic Zone</i> | (i) | The Eastern boundaries of the East Atlantic Zone shall be a line running approximately along the meridian of North Cape (Nordkapp) (25° 47' East approximately) to the coast of Norway; the Scandinavian coast to the Norwegian-Swedish frontier; a line joining the Norwegian-Swedish frontier to tip of the Skaw; the Western shores of Europe to Cape St. Vincent; and a line joining Cape St. Vincent and Cape Blanco (North) (33°09' North) (8°38' West). The Western boundary of the East Atlantic Zone shall be the dividing line between the British and American strategic areas. |
| <i>Mediterranean Zone</i> | (ii) | The Western boundary of the Mediterranean Zone shall be a line joining Cape St. Vincent and Cape Blanco; at its Eastern end the Zone shall exclude the territorial waters of Turkey. |
| <i>Barents, Baltic and Black Seas Zone</i> | (iii) | The Western boundary of the Barents Sea area shall coincide with the Eastern boundary of the |

East Atlantic Zone North at approximately the meridian of North Cape (Nordkapp).

- (iv) The boundary between the Baltic Sea area and the Kattegat and Baltic Approaches Zone shall be a line drawn from Ystad (Sweden) to the vicinity of Lubeck.
- (v) The Black Sea area shall exclude the Bosphorus and the territorial waters of Turkey.
- (vi) The Western boundary of the Kattegat, Baltic Straits and their Approaches Zone shall be a line joining the Northern tip of the Skaw to the frontier of Norway and Sweden. The Eastern boundary shall coincide with the Western boundary of the Baltic Sea area.

*Kattegat, Baltic
Straits and their
Approaches Zone*