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SUPREME HEADQUARTERS ALLIED POWERS EUROPE
Paris, France

SHAPE/282/53

13 March 1953

SUBJECT: Rules for Engagement of Unidentified Hostile or Suspected Hostile Aircraft by Allied Fighters in the SHAPE Area of Responsibility in Peacetime

TO : Secretary, Standing Group
Washington 25, D. C.

1. NATO Intelligence gives the Soviets the capability of launching a major surprise air attack against Western Europe from bases that are presently occupied by large numbers of combat aircraft. Should the Soviets be successful in carrying out such an air attack, either with large formations of aircraft or with single aircraft carrying atomic bombs, the results might well be disastrous to NATO efforts to defend Western Europe. The existence of this Soviet capability, when evaluated in relation to the effects it could achieve for the Soviet Union, make it essential that NATO be prepared to counter such a surprise attack in an effective manner. However, there are no standardized rules governing engagement, nor is there any agreement between NATO nations as to when and how such rules for engagement should be applied.

2. It is recognized that in peacetime each NATO nation is responsible for any air defense activity over its areas of national responsibility. Each NATO nation is thus free to conduct armed interception of unidentified aircraft if it so desires. Interception of unidentified aircraft is in fact being undertaken within certain areas of SACEUR's command for the purpose of identification only. It is therefore important that known and standardized rules of engagement be followed by NATO and national forces and that the signals to be used in communicating with the unidentified plane be standardized and widely disseminated.

3. To overcome the present unsatisfactory situation, SHAPE has prepared a proposed, "Rules of Engagement of Unidentified Aircraft by Allied Fighters," which is attached. Adoption of these procedures by NATO and dissemination of the "Signals Between Aircraft in Flight" to all nations, including those of the Soviet Bloc, would place NATO as a whole, each individual nation, and SACEUR in a much better position to effectively counter any surprise Soviet air attack. These procedures would not, of course, be binding after the start of open hostilities.

4. To be effective in support of NATO objectives and yet not infringe on national prerogatives it is considered that the proposed rules of engagement should become effective under one or more of the following conditions:

- a. at any time an individual NATO nation may decide to undertake armed interception of unidentified aircraft in defense of its areas of national responsibility.
- b. Automatically at the declaration of an alert.
- c. At SACEUR's direction when specifically authorized by the Standing Group in circumstances short of a Simple Alert, during a period of recognized international tension.

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By [Signature] Date 11 Dec 53

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5. It is recommended that the Standing Group approve and obtain each NATO nation's approval of the "Rules of Engagement of Unidentified Aircraft by Allied Fighters" as developed in the enclosure.

6. It is further recommended that in seeking this national approval, Standing Group, at the same time, seek each nation's agreement to these rules of engagement being placed in effect under the conditions given in paragraph 4 above.

7. At such time as the recommendations contained in paragraphs 5 and 6 above have been accomplished, full dissemination of the "Signals Between Aircraft in Flight" (Annex to Enclosure), should be disseminated to all nations as being applicable throughout NATO territories.

FOR THE SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER EUROPE:

Alfred M. Gruenther
ALFRED M. GRUENTHER
General, U. S. Army
Chief of Staff

1 Encl: Rules of Engagement
w/ Annex

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ENCLOSURE NO. 1

SUBJECT : Rules for Engagement of "Unidentified", "Suspected Hostile" and "Hostile" Aircraft by Allied Fighters in Peacetime.

DEFINITIONS

1. An "unidentified aircraft" is an aircraft which flies a route over Allied Territory without proper clearance.
2. A "suspected hostile aircraft" is an aircraft of any type with Russian or Satellite markings or with unidentified markings, or no markings at all, which flies over Allied Territory without proper clearance.
3. A "hostile aircraft" is any combat type of aircraft intercepted by an Allied Fighter which at any time commits a hostile act i.e., fires on intercepting aircraft, opens bomb bay doors, drops bombs, strafes, drops paratroops, attempts to land troops, or which, in the opinion of the intercepting pilot is clearly and persistently maneuvering into an attacking position.
4. For the purpose of these instructions, the Allied Territorial Border, will be an aerial zone 10 miles in depth parallel to, and on the inside of, the Allied Territorial border on the ground.
5. The intercepting pilot, upon interception of an "unidentified" or "suspected hostile" aircraft, will report his observations to the Ground Controller. With the minimum delay the Ground Controller will instruct the pilot whether or not the apprehension procedure is to continue. If affirmative, the procedures described below will be followed.
6. For an "unidentified aircraft" Series 1 of the Visual Signals (Annex) will be employed.
 - a. If a response is received and the aircraft is identified as a civilian or military aircraft of an Allied Nation, Series 3 of the Visual Signals will be employed and no action will be taken against it unless:
 - (1) It comes from outside the Allied territorial borders and is proceeding towards, and is less than 20 (twenty) miles from a prohibited area; or,
 - (2) It comes from outside the Allied territorial borders, has reached a position more than 20 (twenty) miles inside such borders and three or more similar penetrations are taking place simultaneously (not necessarily in formation).
 - b. In case of (1) or (2) above the aircraft will then be treated as a "suspected hostile aircraft".
 - c. If a response is not received or the aircraft is not identified as a civilian or military aircraft of an Allied nation it must be treated as a "suspected hostile aircraft".
7. A "suspected hostile aircraft" will be ordered to land by the use of Series 2 of the "Visual Signals".
8. If the "suspected hostile aircraft" persists in his failure to respond, the interceptor pilot will inform the Sector Controller who may classify the aircraft as "hostile" and direct the interceptor to open fire.

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9. A "hostile" aircraft. Intercepting fighter pilots are delegated authority to fire at any time during the identification and control procedure that the intercepted aircraft commits a hostile act as defined in Paragraph 3 above, or in a clear case of self defense.

NOTE. This system can only be effectively applied in an area containing at the time of the incident:

- a. Effective Military control of all air traffic;
- b. Effective operation of the C&R system.

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ANNEX to Encl to
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VISUAL SIGNALS BETWEEN AIRCRAFT IN FLIGHT

SERIES	ORDERS BY FIGHTER	VISUAL SIGNAL BY FIGHTER	ACTION BY INTERCEPTED AIRCRAFT
1.	"Circle for Identification"	<p><u>By Day</u> - Rocks aircraft laterally.</p> <p><u>By Night</u> - Continuous dots on recognition lights.</p> <p>Given from RIGHT side of and level with, the intercepted aircraft.</p> <p>Fighter informs Sector Controller.</p>	<p><u>By Day</u> - Starts slow continuous turn to the LEFT at constant height to await identification and further orders.</p> <p><u>By Night</u> - In addition, if by night, burns normal navigation and recognition lights.</p>
2.	"Land at nearest airfield"	<p><u>By Day</u> - Rocks aircraft longitudinally.</p> <p><u>By Night</u> - Alternates dots and dashes on recognition lights</p> <p>Given from LEFT side of intercepted aircraft.</p> <p>Fighter informs Sector Controller.</p>	<p><u>By Day</u> - Reduces speed and lowers landing gear. Proceeds to first available suitable airfield, in gentle dive and lands.</p> <p><u>By Night</u> - In addition, if by night, burns normal navigation and recognition lights.</p>
3.	"You are free to proceed"	<p><u>By Day</u> - Overtakes on RIGHT side and breaks away 180° to the RIGHT at same height as intercepted aircraft.</p> <p><u>By Night</u> - As for day, but burning steady navigation and recognition lights during procedure.</p>	<p><u>By Day</u> - Rocks aircraft laterally.</p> <p><u>By Night</u> - Shows steady navigation and recognition lights for 30 seconds.</p> <p>Proceeds on course (if by night burning all normal navigation lights).</p>

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