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LETTER DATED 25 MARCH 1986 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO
THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

In accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, I wish, on behalf of my Government, to report that United States forces have exercised their right of self-defence by responding to hostile Libyan military attacks in international waters in the Gulf of Sidra.

United States forces exercised great restraint. It was only after several missiles had been launched by Libya that the United States reacted. In the ensuing action, two Libyan naval vessels were disabled in an area where the United States fleet was operating. Key components of the missile complex at Sirte from which SA-5 missiles had been fired were also damaged.

The United States Government protests the unjustified attacks against American naval units which were operating in and/or above international waters in the exercise of the freedom of navigation under international law and in accordance with a standard "notification of intent" filed with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). That notification covered operations to begin at 0000 GMT, 23 March, and to conclude at 2359, 1 April. Those operations in no way threatened the security of Libya. Similar operations have been conducted many times over the last few years.

The Government of the United States of America views this unjustified attack with grave concern. Any further attacks against United States forces operating in and over international waters off Libya will also be resisted with force if necessary.

In view of the gravity of Libya's action, and the threat that this poses to the maintenance of international peace and security, I ask that you circulate the text of this letter as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vernon A. WALTERS