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LETTER DATED 1 APRIL 1976 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ICELAND TO  
THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Acting under instructions from my Government I have the honour to bring the following to your attention regarding continued British aggression in Icelandic waters.

British naval deployment within the fisheries jurisdiction of Iceland continues to be as extensive and aggressive as ever before, and if anything this has been stepped up of late. No less than six naval frigates, assisted by some five support and supply vessels, have lately been operating in this fashion, protecting a British fishing fleet of about 25 trawlers engaged in unlawful fishing inside the Icelandic fishery zone. The British frigates are of the so-called Leander class, approximately 2,500 tons in size, with a speed of 30 knots. These are deployed against an Icelandic Coast Guard fleet consisting of seven ships, varying in size from some 200 tons to 1,050 tons, commissioned for the purpose of dealing with fishery protection, salvage and rescue work, hydrographic research, surveying and light-house tending duties. The British frigates are thus almost three times as large as the Icelandic vessels and have twice their speed.

The aggressive behaviour of the British naval ships has created serious incidents in the last few days. On Saturday, 27 March 1976, the British naval frigate Diomede made more than 20 deliberate attempts at ramming the Icelandic Coast Guard vessel Baldur when she was engaged in carrying out lawful patrol duties some 52 nautical miles east of the peninsula of Langanes in north-eastern Iceland. Four of the aforementioned ramming attempts were successful, resulting in extensive damages by the British frigate to the Coast Guard vessel on her port-side bridge-wing, as well as to the starboard of the ship. Immediately following this incident the naval frigate Galatea came sailing up to the Coast Guard vessel Baldur pointing both guns and rockets in her direction. The Commander of the Baldur has reported that these guns were manned by their special crews in full battle-dress who were clearly fully prepared to fire at the Baldur and in fact made threatening moves to do so, while following her at close range as she sailed in the direction of the Icelandic coast. Needless to say the Icelandic Government has made strong protests against this irresponsible and highly hazardous practice by the British warships of attacking an Icelandic Coast Guard vessel, while performing her lawful duties, thus gravely endangering the lives of Icelandic seamen and the safety of their ships. The Government of Iceland has also reserved the rights to claim full reparation for damages caused during the incident reported above.

Another serious incident created by British naval frigates took place on Tuesday, 30 March 1976. At 12:52 hours on that day, the Coast Guard vessel Aegir spotted the British frigate Bacchante F 69 at location 65 degrees 13'5 north latitude and 13 degrees 26'8 west longitude, which is well within the internationally recognized territorial waters of Iceland. The frigate had neither requested nor obtained permission from Icelandic governmental authorities, nor had she notified anyone of her movements or her business inside the territorial limits of a foreign sovereign State. This unexplained presence of a British warship in Icelandic territorial waters has also been protested at and an explanation requested from the British Government.

It seems obvious to the Icelandic Government that this behaviour of the British warships has the sole intent of creating and provoking incidents in the first place possibly to sink one of the ships belonging to the small fleet of the Icelandic Coast Guard, and in the second place with the objective of spying on the movements of the Icelandic Coast Guard vessels as they go about their lawful duties of law enforcement.

I have the honour to request that this letter be circulated as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ingvi INGVARSSON  
Permanent Representative of Iceland  
to the United Nations

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