



# HACKTORIA

IDENTIFY  
AN ENEMY  
VESSEL  
BEFORE IT  
CAN  
ESCAPE

# NAVAL INTRUSION



# Chapter 1: Routine Surveillance

Isabella Moreno adjusted her glasses as she studied the maritime traffic charts spread across the conference table in the Taiwanese Naval Intelligence Center. The room hummed with the quiet efficiency of analysts working at their stations, the soft blue glow of monitors casting shadows across the windowless space.

"Look at this," she said, gesturing to James Brown who stood beside her. "The frequency of passages through this corridor has increased by thirty percent in the last week alone."

James leaned over, his experienced eyes scanning the data with practiced precision. After two decades in MI6 before joining SERPENT, he could spot patterns that others missed.

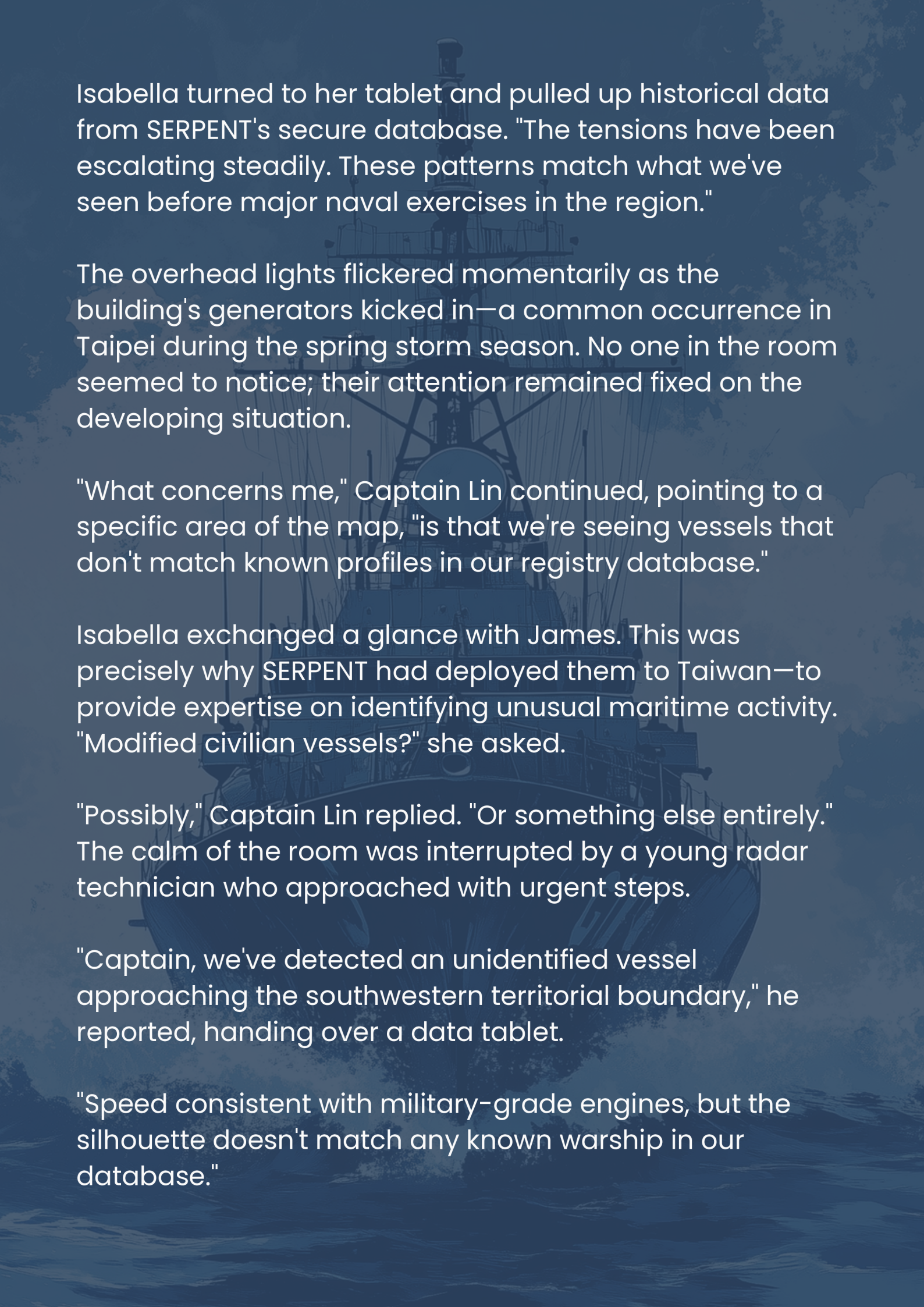
"Reminiscent of the movements we saw last year," he murmured, tracing a finger along a shipping lane. "Testing response times, measuring patrol patterns."

Captain Lin of the Taiwanese Navy nodded gravely.

"We've had three incidents this month already. Vessels that approach our territorial waters, linger just at the edge, then withdraw when challenged."

"Probing defenses," James said, his voice low. "Classic reconnaissance tactics."





Isabella turned to her tablet and pulled up historical data from SERPENT's secure database. "The tensions have been escalating steadily. These patterns match what we've seen before major naval exercises in the region."

The overhead lights flickered momentarily as the building's generators kicked in—a common occurrence in Taipei during the spring storm season. No one in the room seemed to notice; their attention remained fixed on the developing situation.

"What concerns me," Captain Lin continued, pointing to a specific area of the map, "is that we're seeing vessels that don't match known profiles in our registry database."

Isabella exchanged a glance with James. This was precisely why SERPENT had deployed them to Taiwan—to provide expertise on identifying unusual maritime activity. "Modified civilian vessels?" she asked.

"Possibly," Captain Lin replied. "Or something else entirely." The calm of the room was interrupted by a young radar technician who approached with urgent steps.

"Captain, we've detected an unidentified vessel approaching the southwestern territorial boundary," he reported, handing over a data tablet.

"Speed consistent with military-grade engines, but the silhouette doesn't match any known warship in our database."





Captain Lin studied the radar reading, his expression hardening. "How long until it reaches our territorial waters?"

"Forty-five minutes at current speed, sir."

James straightened his tie—a habit from his MI6 days.

"I believe we might need additional expertise on this one, Captain."

Isabella was already sending an encrypted message to Shadow Wing.



## Chapter 2: Uncertain Contact

"The vessel is maintaining its course," reported the tactical officer in the Naval Command Center. "Still no response to identification requests."

Dimitri Zechev's fingers flew across his keyboard in the secure communications room adjacent to the main command center. Although physically present in Taipei, he was also connected to SERPENT's systems aboard Shadow Wing, giving him access to databases and analysis tools beyond what was available locally.

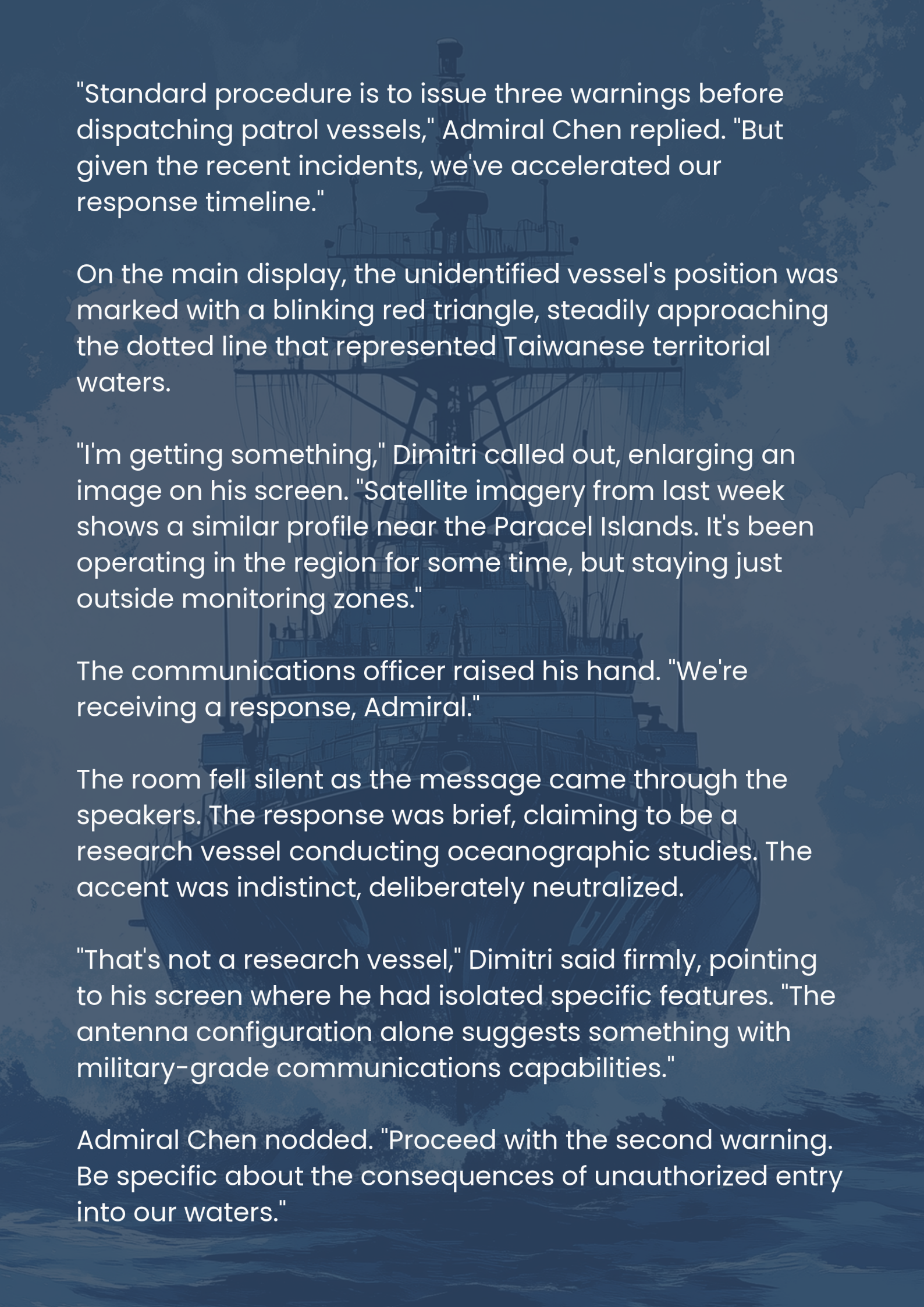
"I'm running the radar profile through our recognition systems," he said, eyes fixed on the scrolling data. "The dimensions are close to several known vessel types, but there are discrepancies in the superstructure."

Cassandra Laurent stood beside Admiral Chen, the composed demeanor she had cultivated during her years in French intelligence perfectly suited to the tense atmosphere.

As SERPENT's diplomatic expert, her role was to ensure the response remained measured while still gathering critical intelligence.

"Admiral, what are your protocols for such encounters?" she asked, her voice carrying the subtle authority that had served her well in Brussels.





"Standard procedure is to issue three warnings before dispatching patrol vessels," Admiral Chen replied. "But given the recent incidents, we've accelerated our response timeline."

On the main display, the unidentified vessel's position was marked with a blinking red triangle, steadily approaching the dotted line that represented Taiwanese territorial waters.

"I'm getting something," Dimitri called out, enlarging an image on his screen. "Satellite imagery from last week shows a similar profile near the Paracel Islands. It's been operating in the region for some time, but staying just outside monitoring zones."

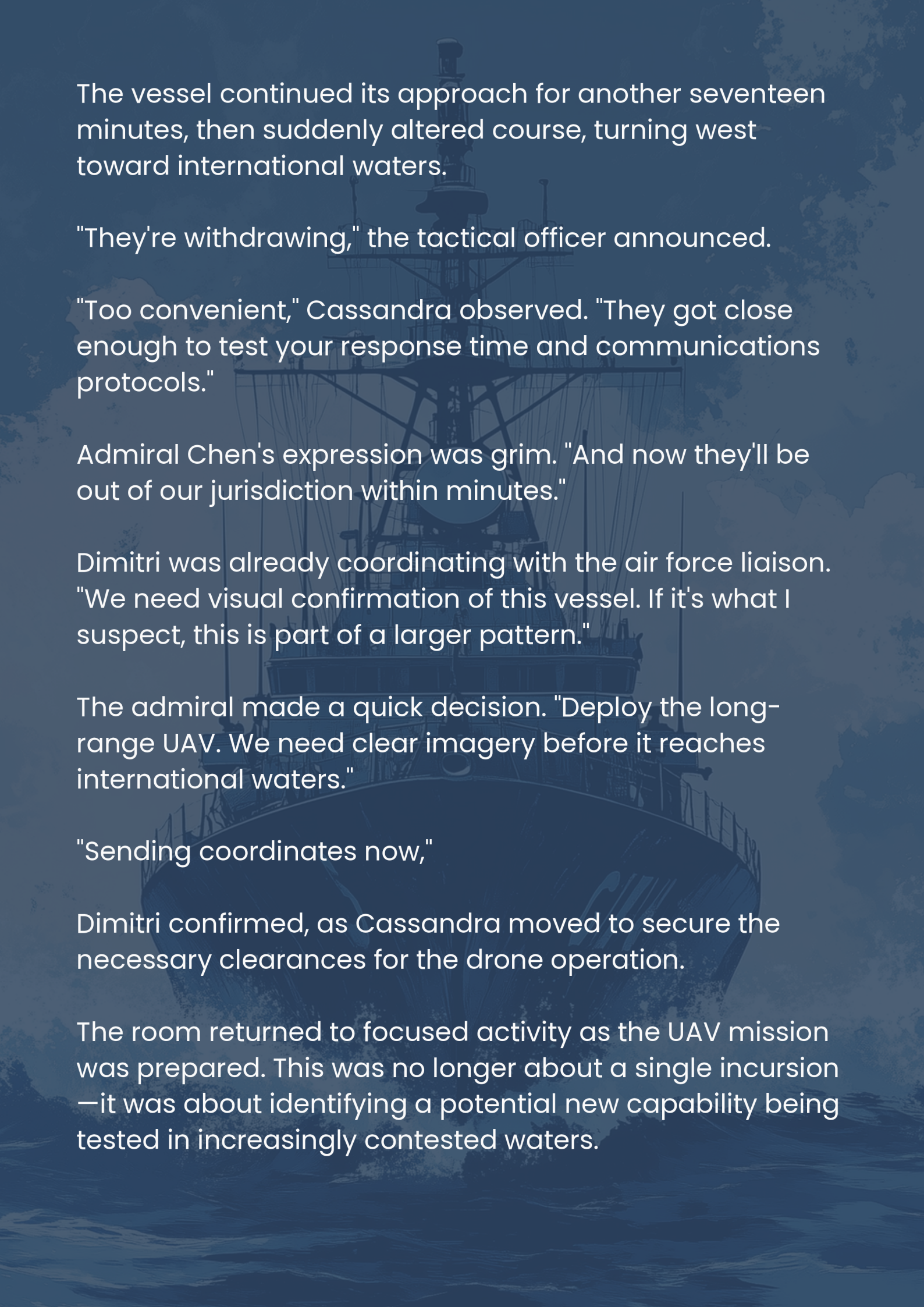
The communications officer raised his hand. "We're receiving a response, Admiral."

The room fell silent as the message came through the speakers. The response was brief, claiming to be a research vessel conducting oceanographic studies. The accent was indistinct, deliberately neutralized.

"That's not a research vessel," Dimitri said firmly, pointing to his screen where he had isolated specific features. "The antenna configuration alone suggests something with military-grade communications capabilities."

Admiral Chen nodded. "Proceed with the second warning. Be specific about the consequences of unauthorized entry into our waters."





The vessel continued its approach for another seventeen minutes, then suddenly altered course, turning west toward international waters.

"They're withdrawing," the tactical officer announced.

"Too convenient," Cassandra observed. "They got close enough to test your response time and communications protocols."

Admiral Chen's expression was grim. "And now they'll be out of our jurisdiction within minutes."

Dimitri was already coordinating with the air force liaison. "We need visual confirmation of this vessel. If it's what I suspect, this is part of a larger pattern."

The admiral made a quick decision. "Deploy the long-range UAV. We need clear imagery before it reaches international waters."

"Sending coordinates now,"

Dimitri confirmed, as Cassandra moved to secure the necessary clearances for the drone operation.

The room returned to focused activity as the UAV mission was prepared. This was no longer about a single incursion—it was about identifying a potential new capability being tested in increasingly contested waters.



## Chapter 3: Assessment Request

Mei Huang sat in her workspace aboard Shadow Wing, reviewing the preliminary data as it came in. The modified Bombardier Global 8000 maintained its holding pattern in international airspace, close enough to Taiwan to provide support but careful to maintain neutrality in the sensitive region.

"The communication patterns are interesting," she noted to Overseer Julia Sharpe, who stood behind her chair.

"Deliberate ambiguity in the responses. They're using standardized phrases that could originate from multiple naval traditions."

Julia nodded, her experience from years at MI6 evident in her calm assessment. "They're masking their origin."

The main screen flickered as new imagery began downloading from the Taiwanese UAV. The high-resolution camera had captured the vessel as it retreated toward international waters.

"We're getting good visual data," Mei said, enhancing the images. "The superstructure has been modified... look at the unusual placement of the communications array."

Julia studied the vessel carefully. "Familiar, yet not quite matching any standard design."





Pablo Iglesias, one of Shadow Wing's pilots, joined them at the workstation. With his background in military aviation, he had experience with maritime patrol operations.

"That's an interesting configuration," he noted, pointing to specific features of the ship. "The hull design is reminiscent of several classes, but these modifications suggest specialized capabilities."

The secure communication system chimed with an incoming transmission. Julia activated it, and Admiral Chen's face appeared on the secondary screen.

"Overseer Sharpe, thank you for your team's assistance today," he began formally. "The vessel has now withdrawn to international waters, but we have serious concerns about its nature and purpose."

"Understandably so, Admiral," Julia replied. "We've received the imagery and are conducting preliminary analysis."

"Our database searches have been inconclusive," the admiral continued. "The vessel appears to incorporate elements from multiple known designs, but doesn't definitively match any in our registry."

Mei had been running the images through SERPENT's more comprehensive identification systems, with similar results.

"It's as if it was deliberately designed to confuse identification efforts," she remarked.





"That's our assessment as well," Admiral Chen agreed.

"Given the strategic importance of accurate vessel identification in these waters, I've been authorized to formally request SERPENT's expertise in determining the original make and model of this ship."

Julia straightened, recognizing the official nature of the request. "We would be honored to assist, Admiral. I'll assemble our team immediately."

After the communication ended, Julia turned to Mei.

"Prepare the briefing room. This is exactly the kind of situation where Special Agent K's open-source intelligence skills will be essential."

Mei nodded, already organizing the data they had collected. "The UAV imagery is excellent, but identifying this vessel will require connecting dots across multiple intelligence sources."

"That's precisely why they need us," Julia replied, heading toward the command center to send out the team notification.

As Shadow Wing banked gently in the cloud-scattered sky above the Taiwan Strait, the SERPENT team prepared to take on a contract that would require all their specialized skills. Somewhere below, an unidentified vessel was slipping away, carrying with it secrets that could shift the delicate balance of power in an already tense region.



# Briefing

Greetings, Special Agent.

We have a special case on our hands today. As tensions around the island nation of Taiwan rise by the day, allied nations reach out frequently for our help. Today is no exception. This morning at 09:43 Taipei Standard Time, the Taiwanese Navy identified a foreign vessel entering it's waters.

Upon making contact, the ship left westward for international waters. However, a UAV was dispatched and managed to snatch a picture of the vessel.

The ship did not identify, nor does it match the database of known vessels operated by any Navy around the world. It comes close to several, but appears to be altered for a different purpose.

The Taiwanese government signed a contract for our services to identify the original make and model of the vessel.

As always, Special Agent. The Contract is yours, if you choose to accept.



# Materials

ship-image-01.png

## Answer Instruction

Use the answer to unlock the flagfile, this will reward you with your badge.

Answer Format: type-123q-nato-reporting-name

Answer Example: type-555d-kingkong-IV

## Flagfile

Be advised, the flagfile is an encrypted ZIP. Make sure your OS supports the ZIP format. Ensure the password contains no hidden characters or formatting.

PS: Don't forget to claim your Coins and XP, by posting your card in the #card-brag channel in Discord.

<https://discord.hacktoria.com>

## Write-Up

There is an attached file called a write-up, this will give you the answer in case you get stuck.

## Acknowledgements

This challenge was made by Frank Diepmaat.