

# 2d Day, 2d Scrape

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## U.S., Soviet Destroyers Collide Again

By J. Y. Smith

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The U.S. Navy destroyer Walker collided with a Soviet warship in the Sea of Japan yesterday for the second day in a row.

The United States promptly lodged another "severe" protest with Moscow, State Department spokesman Robert J. McCloskey said. It charged the Russian vessel, an unidentified destroyer, with harassing U.S. naval units conducting exercises on the high seas and with creating "dangerous situations."

"We asked the Soviet government to take prompt steps to halt such harassment," McCloskey said.

### First Bump Wednesday

The Walker's first scrape with a Soviet warship occurred Wednesday, when the Soviet destroyer Besslednyi brushed against it while overtaking it. The United States also protested that incident, charging harassment and a violation of the international rules of navigation.

Damage in both cases was described as minor. There



United Press International  
CMDR. S. W. McCLARAN  
... USS Walker captain

were no injuries to crewmen.

At the White House, press secretary George C. Christian said the incidents were "a matter of concern" to President Johnson. He refused to elaborate.

### No Connection Offered

At the State and Defense Departments, officials declined to link either the al-

leged harassment of U.S. ships or the bumpings to the war in Vietnam or other areas of friction between the United States and the Soviet Union.

"I should think it inadvisable to make any unwarranted judgments here on the basis of what we know now," McCloskey said at the State Department.

[A Radio Moscow broadcast tonight blamed the incident between the Walker and the Besslednyi on the United States, Reuters reported. It said Soviet captains had warned the Americans about getting too close and "called for an end to the provocative actions. But the American ships continued their dangerous maneuvers and as a result collisions did take place.]"

According to spokesmen at the Pentagon, yesterday's incident came about in this way:

The Walker was steaming about 360 nautical miles west southwest of the Japanese island of Hokkaido at 2:33 p.m. Japanese time (1:33 a.m. Washington time). Its position was about 210 miles

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of a violation of the International Rules of the Road, as was the case Wednesday, or merely with harassing American vessels.

It could not be definitely determined here whether the Walker was operating alone or with the anti-submarine task group to which it is normally attached. The task group includes two other destroyers and the aircraft carrier Hornet.

### Oral Protest Made

The protest concerning the second collision was made orally to Yuri N. Chernyakov, the Soviet charge d'affaires in Washington, by Assistant Secretary of State John M. Leddy. As was the case in the first collision, it was followed up by a written protest.

U.S. officials said they doubted that the first protest reached Moscow in time for the Soviets to act upon it before the second collision took place.

Llewellyn Thompson, the U.S. Ambassador in the Soviet Union, has been ordered to follow up the protests in Moscow, it was announced at the State Department.

On Capitol Hill, House minority leader Gerald W. Ford (R-Mich.), a Navy veteran, said "we certainly can't tolerate other such incidents." He said President Johnson and the Joint Chiefs of Staff should decide what action to take to protect American ships.

### Comment by Sen. Tower

Sen. John G. Tower (R-Tex.), a member of the Armed Services Committee, said the two collisions "indicate either a very stupid Soviet sea captain or a deliberate Soviet attempt to cause an international incident of far-reaching implications." He added that the Pentagon should "restudy its contingency plans in case it becomes necessary to use force."

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southwest of its collision Wednesday with the Besslednyi.

The Soviet destroyer threatened to cross the Walker's bows. The Walker

sounded six short blasts on its siren, the danger signal. It also hoisted the red-and-white checked signal flag which means "you are standing into danger."

The flag is recognized by sailors of all nations, as is the siren signal.

### Moving at Low Speed

The Pentagon spokesmen said the Russian ship continued on its course despite the warnings. The collision occurred when the starboard, or right, bow of the Walker came into contact with the port quarter, or left rear section, of the Soviet vessel. Both ships were said to be moving at low speed.

From this description it was not clear whether the Soviets were being accused