

# Mixup Cited In Seizure Of Mayaguez

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The U.S. government failed to issue warnings that could have averted the seizure of the cargo ship Mayaguez because information about two previous incidents off the Cambodian coast was not sent to the right officials, a congressional report said yesterday.

The report by the General Accounting Office, the congressional watchdog agency, proposed that State Department procedures be tightened to prevent future bureaucratic mixups.

The GAO said a Korean vessel was pursued and fired upon and a Panamanian ship seized only a week before the seizure of the Mayaguez on May 12 last year.

Following the Mayaguez seizure, President Ford ordered a rescue operation. Fifteen U.S. Marines were killed in the rescue mission, 23 men died in a helicopter crash associated with it and three others were listed as missing in an assault on a Cambodian island.

The Mayaguez crew was released unharmed and the ship returned.

The GAO said that although various State and Defense department intelligence offices knew of the previous Cambodian actions against foreign ships, none had informed the Maritime Affairs Office, which had primary responsibility for issuing or approving special radio warnings to shippers.

The report said the State Department agreed that if the appropriate offices had known of the earlier incidents, some type of warning would have been issued before the Mayaguez was seized.

The GAO recommended that in future the Maritime Affairs Office should be alerted to any hostile actions against ships and outbreak of any hostilities involving a seacoast state.