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Director: Mag. Renate Plöchl

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Contact:

Email: [landesbibliothek\(at\)ooe.gv.at](mailto:landesbibliothek(at)ooe.gv.at)

Telephone: +43(732) 7720-53100

Anhang

Der Nordsee-Erlass der britischen Admiralität vom 3. Nov. 1914¹⁰⁷⁾

During the last weeks the Germans have scattered mines indiscriminately in the open sea on the main trade route from America to Liverpool via the North of Ireland. Peaceful merchant ships have already been blown up with loss of life by this agency. The White Star liner Olympic escaped disaster by pure good luck. But for the warnings given by British cruisers, other British and neutral merchant and passenger vessels would have been destroyed. These mines cannot have been laid by any German ship of war. They have been laid by some merchant vessel flying a neutral flag which has come along the trade route as if for the purposes of peaceful commerce and, while profiting to the full by the immunity enjoyed by neutral merchant ships, has wantonly and recklessly endangered the lives of all who travel on the sea, regardless of whether they are friend or foe, civilian or military in character.

Minelaying under a neutral flag and reconnaissance conducted by trawlers, hospital ships, and neutral vessels are the ordinary features of German naval warfare. In these circumstances, having regard to the great interests entrusted to the British Navy, to the safety of peaceful commerce on the high seas, and to the maintenance within the limits of International Law of trade between neutral countries, the Admiralty feel it necessary to adopt exceptional measures appropriate to the novel conditions under which this war is being waged.

They therefore give notice that the whole of the North Sea must be considered a military area. Within this area merchant shipping of all kinds, traders of all countries, fishing craft, and all other vessels will be exposed to the gravest dangers from mines which it has been necessary to lay, and from warships searching vigilantly by night and day for suspicious craft. All merchant and fishing vessels of every description are hereby warned of the dangers they encounter by entering this area except in strict accordance with Admiralty