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Russia keeps four Kalibr missile ships in the Black Sea

Russia is keeping four ships carrying Kalibr cruise missiles in the Black Sea ready for a missile attack on Ukraine. This was announced in Telegram by the press service of the Naval Forces of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, Ukrinform reports.

"There are 4 Kalibr cruise missile ships on combat duty in the Black Sea, the total salvo is 18 missiles," the message reads.

In addition, in the Sea of Azov, the enemy continues to control maritime communications, keeping up to 8 ships and boats on combat duty; in the Mediterranean Sea - 5 ships with Kalibr cruise missiles.

It is noted that during the day, in the interest of the Russian Federation, the passage through the Strait of Kerch-Yenikal was carried out: to the Black Sea - 21 ships, of which 7 ships continued their movement in the direction of the Bosphorus Strait; in the Sea of Azov - 40 ships, of which 18 ships came from the Bosphorus Strait.

The Navy said that the Russian Federation continues to violate the 1974 International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) by turning off Automatic Identification Systems (AIS) on civilian ships in the waters of the Sea of Azov.

Source: <https://www.blackseanews.net/read/193614>

Two more Russian warships have left the Mediterranean Sea, under the close watch of the British frigate HMS Lancaster

In the last two days, there has been an increase in the transit of Russian and US warships through the Strait of Gibraltar. On 24 August, the Russian Northern Fleet cruiser Marshal Ustinov sailed out of the Mediterranean, and the day after, the US aircraft carrier George H.W. Bush crossed the Strait of Gibraltar in the opposite direction.

Yesterday, two other Russian Northern Fleet ships, the destroyer Vice Admiral Kulakov and the tanker Vyazma, exited the Mediterranean. Their presence in the Atlantic Ocean is being monitored by the British Royal Navy frigate HMS Lancaster (F229) and the patrol vessel NRP Sines (P362) of the Portuguese Naval Forces.

After a mission of about six months in the Mediterranean Sea, the Russian Northern Fleet's combat and auxiliary ships are returning to their permanent deployment points in the Murmansk Region. Of the four Russian ships that entered the Mediterranean on 07 February 2022, namely the cruiser Marshal Ustinov, the destroyer Vice Admiral Kulakov, the frigate Admiral Kasatonov and the tanker Vyazma, only the frigate remained in the region to continue its mission. It is not known whether Russia's Northern Fleet will replace the ships

For now, it is not known whether the Northern Fleet will send other warships to the Mediterranean Sea to replace them, or whether only warships and auxiliaries of the Black Sea Fleet, Baltic Sea Fleet and Pacific Ocean Fleet will remain in the area of Tartus port in Syria.

There is currently a Russian squadron of two submarines and 10 surface ships in the eastern Mediterranean. This includes a Pacific Fleet naval group consisting of the cruiser Varyag and the destroyer Admiral Tributs. It is likely that the latter will also leave the Mediterranean in the near future.

The US aircraft carrier Harry S. Truman, which has been on mission since December 2022, will also leave the region in the coming days.

Source: https://www.defenseromania.ro/inca-doua-nave-de-lupta-rusesti-au-parasit-marea-mediterana-sub-monitorizarea-atenta-a-fregatei-britanice-hms-lancaster_617895.html

A representative of the Intelligence Directorate of the Ukrainian Defense Ministry claims that Russia has so far lost more than 55% of its missiles.

The statements were made by Vadim Skibitski, a representative of the Intelligence Directorate of Ukraine's Defence Ministry, in an interview for RBK Ukraine, reports Digi 24 which quotes Kyev Independent.

According to Ukrainian military estimates, Russia now has "no more than 45% of the missiles it had before the war started," Skibitski says. Russia is struggling with its Kalibr missiles and has only "about 20% or less" of its Iskander ballistic missiles left.

According to Vadim Skibitski, the winter period will be difficult and the fate of the war will be decided this autumn. "We hope that the plans we have will be successful. We will mess up Russia's plans for the Donetsk region," Vadim Skibitski said.

Source: https://www.defenseromania.ro/rusia-risca-sa-ramana-fara-kalibr-si-iskander-armata-ar-fi-euizat-deja-55prc-din-stocul-rachetelor-in-ucraina_617900.html

Russia's S-300 missile system transits the Bosphorus to war in Ukraine

Russia is prevented from moving its warships from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea because Turkey has closed the Bosphorus to warships.

However, Russia has been able to transport advanced weapons systems, such as S-300 missiles, through the straits to support the war in Ukraine.

Under cover of darkness, an unsuspecting Russian cargo ship slipped through the Bosphorus.

The narrow strait is the only waterway linking the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. The ship, Sparta II, is suspected of carrying sophisticated weapons for Russia's war in Ukraine. Russia is believed to have shipped an S-300 air defence system from its bases in Syria to the Black Sea. Shortly after Russia invaded Ukraine, Turkey closed the Bosphorus to warships. This prevented the Russian Navy from strengthening its naval forces fighting against Ukraine. But merchant ships could still pass. The destination of Sparta II was Novorossiysk, a Russian port and important naval base near the Kerch Bridge. The S-300 missiles were therefore to bolster defences either near Kerch or in other areas of Russian operations. Crimea is experiencing increased Ukrainian drone activity and could be due to enhance defenses there. It is understood that the ship departed from Tartus in Syria, where the S-300 components had been assembled on the quay. The S-300 likely came from Masyaf in northern Syria. It began its journey on 20 August and crossed the Bosphorus overnight on 24-25 August. The transit was observed by the respected ship observer Yörük Işık. After waiting at anchor off the Russian coast, it entered Novorossiysk on 27 August. It is understood that the ship is owned by the Oboronlogistika, which actually means the Russian Ministry of Defence. The vessel was specifically added to the US Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctions list. The crew is civilian, but the cargo is often military.

The S-300 is a capable air defence missile system, roughly analogous to the US-made Patriot. It has been supplemented by newer S-400 and S-350 systems, but remains a relevant front-line system. In May this year, Masyaf's S-300 site was reported to have fired missiles at Israeli aircraft. The same units are believed to have been shipped to the Black Sea. The shift of Syria's powerful air defenses to the Black Sea may be significant. It implies the lack of war support systems in Ukraine. At the same time, it weakens Russian and Assad regime forces in Syria.

Source: <https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2022/08/russian-s-300-missile-system-slips-through-bosphorus-towards-war-in-ukraine/>

London donates six underwater drones to Kiev for demining Ukrainian coastline

Britain announced on Saturday it will donate six underwater drones to Ukraine to help it neutralise Russian mines off its coast and train servicemen to operate them.

The "lightweight, autonomous devices are designed for use in shallow coastal areas and are capable of operating up to 100 metres below sea level to detect, locate and identify mines, with the aim of enabling the Ukrainian navy to neutralise them," the UK Ministry of Defence said in a statement, AFP, DPA and Agerpres report.

"Dozens of members of the Ukrainian navy will be trained to use these drones over the coming months, with training already starting for the first of them," the ministry said. The training will be provided by British and American specialists on British soil, according to DPA.

This new military aid comes at a time when, according to the British Ministry of Defence, "Russia is turning food into weapons, destroying Ukrainian agriculture and imposing a blockade of Ukrainian Black Sea ports to prevent its exports".

"Moscow's cynical attempts must not be allowed to succeed"

While some grain ships have been able to leave Ukraine under a UN-brokered agreement, these operations "remain limited by submarine mines left by Russian forces along the coast" of Ukraine, the UK said.

UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said Moscow's "cynical attempts to ransom the world's food supply" must not succeed.

In May, Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced a £300m (€355m) tranche of military and humanitarian aid for Ukraine, following a previous plan for £450m, including the supply of missiles.

Source: https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-razboi_ucraina-25757068-londra-doneaza-ki-evului-sase-drone-submarine-pentru-deminarea-coastelor-ucrainene.htm

Russian oil exports to fall by end of year

Consultancy Rystad Energy expects Russian oil production and exports to fall as the deadline for the planned EU oil embargo approaches. At the end of this year, the European Union will no longer allow additional imports of Russian crude, depriving western Russia of access to its primary export market.

Over the summer, Russia's oil sector has been buoyed by strong domestic demand, even as exports to Europe have declined. Russian tourists are staying closer to home because of the foreign airline withdrawal and driving to their holiday destinations - consuming more gasoline and creating demand for higher refinery runs. This has helped to offset declining demand from traditional European customers.

However, there are signs that the picture may not be so rosy for Russia's energy sector in the future. Rystad notes that crude oil exports were down in June and July - including exports to Asian buyers, who have been absorbing oil that would normally be sold on European markets. The reason for the drop in interest from Asian buyers is not known, but Rystad suggests that Russia may have been reducing the discount to Brent that it offers its customers. These sales are private and undisclosed, but it is possible that the price has gone from the previously reported discount of \$30 a barrel to a more modest \$15.

Whatever the cause, declining interest in Asia and curtailment in Europe could cut Russian crude exports by about 550,000 barrels a day by the end of December. "Russia's upstream sector has rebounded, but this resilience is short-term. Domestic consumption helped fill the gap during the peak demand season, but overseas demand for Russian blends has reduced spelling problems further. The upcoming EU embargo remains an unknown factor, when and where it will have an impact is not yet clear, but it will hasten the expected decline this fall," said Daria Melnik, senior analyst at Rystad Energy, in a new research note.

An impending economic downturn will likely add to the impact domestically. Russia's central bank predicts a severe economic contraction of around 10% in the fourth quarter. The resulting reduction in energy demand will affect domestic refining operations, removing an additional 700,000 bpd from domestic oil consumption, according to Rystad.

"Russia will have to face a domestic economic crisis and supply new markets for oil and oil products when the EU embargo comes into force. After the summer acceleration, crude oil production is expected to fall again by 1.1 million bpd, but further recovery will be more difficult and take longer," Rystad predicted.

Source: <https://www.maritime-executive.com/article/rystad-russian-oil-exports-will-fall-off-by-the-end-of-the-year>

Ukrainian sailors allowed to leave country to help crew grain ships

Sailors will be allowed to leave Ukraine if they receive approval from their local military administrative body, Ukraine's prime minister said Saturday, a move that could ease the process of transporting grain from the country's ports.

Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal said the decision was approved by the cabinet on Saturday. The change would cover the need for male crew members for sea and river vessels, as well as students who have to attend practical courses on board ships, he added.

The decision is likely to alleviate the shortage of able and willing seafarers to man ships coming in and out of Ukraine to export grain through an international intermediary corridor. Ukrainian men aged between 18 and 60 have largely been barred from leaving Ukraine under a martial law imposed as the country battles a Russian invasion. Women of all ages were free to leave throughout the war.

Source: <https://gcaptain.com/ukrainian-sailors-allowed-to-leave-country-to-help-crew-grain-ships/>

Taiwan blames continuing provocations by China. Ships and fighter jets still carry out manoeuvres around the island

Taiwan's Defense Ministry announced on Saturday that it has detected 21 Chinese planes and five ships operating around Taiwan, as China continues its military exercises near the island, Agerpres reports, citing Reuters.

The ministry said no Chinese aircraft had crossed the median line in the Taiwan Strait, an unofficial barrier between China and Taiwan.

Since 4 August, China has staged large-scale military manoeuvres, deploying planes, ships and ballistic missiles in six sectors around Taiwan island in response to a visit to Taipei by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

The Chinese military explained that through joint air and sea force operations around the island of Taiwan it had "effectively tested" its combat capability.

Taiwan has had an independent government since 1949, but China considers the island part of its territory. In 1979, Washington formally severed diplomatic ties with the Taipei authorities and established relations with Beijing.

Source: https://www.defenseromania.ro/taiwanul-acuza-continuarea-provocarilor-de-catre-china-nave-si-avioane-de-lupta-efectueaza-inca-manevre-in-jurul-insulei_617898.html

The aircraft carrier George H.W. Bush entered the Mediterranean for the first time in 15 years

The aircraft carrier George H.W. Bush, with more than 6,000 sailors on board, entered the Mediterranean Sea on Thursday as the US and NATO strive to show support for their allies amid the Russian-Ukrainian war, Stripes reports.

The aircraft carrier passed through the Strait of Gibraltar, according to a previously planned deployment, and entered the area of operations of US Naval Forces Europe and Africa and the US 6th Fleet. This is the first time the aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush has entered the region since 2007.

The George H. W. Bush is expected to replace the aircraft carrier Harry S. Truman, which has been in the Mediterranean for more than eight months.

The aircraft carrier George H.W. Bush completed a two-and-a-half-year maintenance cycle in 2021 and recently completed its certification exercise with the Italian naval force destroyer Caio Duilio.

Other ships that are part of the carrier group are the USS Delbert D. Black, USS Farragut, USS Nitze and USS Truxtun.

Source: <https://monitorulapararii.ro/portavionul-george-h-w-bush-a-intrat-in-marea-mediterana-pentru-prima-data-dupa-15-ani-1-45193>