

MS DAILY BRIEF - 22 August 2022

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Russian warships entered the Adriatic Sea, trying to block US aircraft carrier

Three weeks ago, Russian Navy ships tried to block the exit of the US aircraft carrier Harry Truman from the Adriatic Sea, Admiral Giuseppe Cavo Dragone, chief of the Italian Supreme Defence Staff, revealed in an interview with La Repubblica in Rome. He said Russian warships had reached along the Italian coast as far as Ancona. According to the Italian daily's reconstruction, on 22 July, Russian ships blocked the entry-exit route in the Adriatic Sea to try to prevent the movement of the US aircraft carrier. This led to a huge increase in tensions and a series of manoeuvres by NATO and Russian ships in the area.

"Mediterranean countries will have to get used to Russian warships" Cavo Dragone said in an interview that Admiral Aurelio De Carolis, as soon as Russian warships entered the Adriatic, mobilised the closest units.

The Italian frigate Bergamini followed the Russian destroyer Admiral Tribuc, and the frigate Marcellia followed the Russian cruiser Varyag. In addition, they were constantly overflown by P72 aircraft, and then the frigate Libeccio arrived. "Mediterranean countries will have to get used to Russian warships in the Mediterranean and their competition with navies in the North Atlantic Treaty," Cavo Dragone, 65, told La Repubblica. The Italian admiral says that "on 31 July, Putin signed a document calling the Mediterranean a strategic area that will be the seat of conflict with NATO and the Russians will constantly maintain a stable naval force there". He added that "they will be particularly aggressive in the Middle East and Africa, where they want to set up a base in Sudan. They will try to restart in Egypt, Libya and Algeria." "Russia's focus is no longer just on the eastern Mediterranean, but also on the central Mediterranean. That's why, after the events in the Adriatic, we ordered the change of our maritime security unit. Operation Safe Sea has now become Safe Mediterranean, and our patrolling has expanded to cover the entire basin, not just the areas closest to Italy. This is the only way to control the situation." Cavo Dragone says that "the Russians in the

Mediterranean are sources of supply because North Africa is an area they want to destabilise".
"The Russian cruiser is less than 100 kilometres from the American cruiser."

In its reconstruction of events, La Repubblica writes that NATO commanders reacted immediately to the Russian moves in the Adriatic Sea, which were intended to show that they would not relinquish control of the Ionian-Adriatic crossing. At the end of July, the Russian cruiser Varyag was less than 100 kilometres away from the US cruiser Forrest Sherman, they write. These ships were located on the shores of Cape Santa Maria di Leuca, the Russian ship on the Adriatic and the American ship on the Ionian side. A little further south was the aircraft carrier Harry Truman with its American escort. The Truman was joined by NATO ships from Turkey, Greece, Italy, Spain and the US and formed a square around the carrier on 25 July, the Italian daily writes. They add that on 31 July, the Global Hawk, one of the largest US spy planes, patrolled for hours over the Ionian Sea. "These are routine activities, but now it is more tense than during the Cold War" Admiral Cavo Dragone says the situation is much more tense now than during the Cold War. "There is constant competition in the Mediterranean. The old idea of peace is gone. It goes straight from competition to crisis, which threatens to turn into conflict."

He recalled the situation in April. "In April, two of their Kilo submarines approached the NATO fleet in the Ionian Sea, but were spotted by Italian frigates on the first day. We kept them on sonar for ten days, then a French unit replaced ours. In the submarines, they hear our sonar 'pinging' (slang) them and so they outline them - they realised they couldn't get out of control, so they left." The Italian admiral says that "Russia's moves in the Adriatic Sea are nothing but a routine activity aimed at positioning NATO forces against the Ukrainian crisis". He says they "sensed" the formation of the US fleet and assessed their reaction. "We watched them and studied their movements. These are situations where it's not clear who's chasing whom or, as the jargon goes, who's shadowing whom - the maneuvers were very mirror-like. We also deployed the submarine Longobardo, which was guarding the area. Noticing that it wasn't outlined by sonar, it came very close. The photos taken from the periscope show how close she was to the Russian units," concludes Cavo Dragone.

Source: <https://www.cdm.me/svijet/evropa/ruski-ratni-brodovi-usli-u-jadransko-more-htjeli-blokirati-americki-nosac-aviona/>

Warship arrives in Scotland to be targeted for destruction

The former USS Boone, a decommissioned US frigate, has arrived in Scotland and will soon be sunk as part of an exercise involving firing missiles from a British frigate.

A local source said the ship arrived in Campbeltown in western Scotland after being towed to Scotland from Philadelphia in the US.

A decommissioned US frigate has arrived in Scotland and will soon be destroyed by US, British and allied warships as a target. "SINKEX" will be led by Americans as the main purpose of the exercise will be to test a new satellite.

In addition, another source who does not wish to be named said that HMS Westminster will fire at least one Harpoon anti-ship missile at the USS Boone, but "SINKEX" will be American-led because the main purpose of the exercise will be to "test a new US targeting satellite".

The RNavy's number of Harpoon missiles is limited (Only HMS Kent and Montrose still carry them).

The former USS Boone is currently at the NATO POL depot in Campbeltown, this is just an acronym for a depot for oil, oils and lubricants. Built in the 1960s to NATO specifications, the depots at Garelochhead (adjacent to Naval Base Clyde), Loch Striven (near

Dunoon), Loch Ewe (in Wester Ross) and Campbeltown provide a mainly maritime supply facility for UK and NATO ships.

What is a SINKEX? The term "Diving Exercise" or "SINKEX" is commonly undertaken to test a weapons system usually involving a torpedo or missile attack on an unmanned target ship. The US Navy uses SINKEXs to train its sailors in the use of modern weapons, and these exercises are also used to take out decommissioned warships. When does this happen and where? September, but the location is not currently public information.

Source: <https://ukdefencejournal.org.uk/warship-arrives-in-scotland-to-be-destroyed-as-target/>

China's planes and ships get dangerously close to Taiwan: they crossed the median line

Taipei's Defense Ministry announced that five Chinese planes crossed the Taiwan Strait median line on Sunday, according to Reuters.

Taiwan's defence ministry announced that 12 Chinese planes and five ships were detected on Sunday near the island, Mediafax reports.

According to the same source, five planes crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait.

China has been conducting military exercises near Taiwan since earlier this month, following a visit to the island by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

Source: https://www.stiripesurse.ro/avioane-si-nave-ale-chinei-se-apropie-periculos-de-taiwan-au-trecut-linia-mediana_2522255.html

Hypersonic triad: Russia starts mass production of Zircon hypersonic missiles

In an interview with national TV channel Russia-1, Russian Defence Minister General Sergei Shigu announced on 20.08.2022 that the Russian Federation is starting serial production of new Zircon hypersonic missiles.

"We are starting serial production of Zircon hypersonic missiles. Basically, they have been introduced into the equipment of the Naval Forces. The necessary documentation will be finalised this year," said Sergei Shigu, whose statements were also reported by the Interfax news agency.

On 31 July, Russian President Vladimir Putin said the Zircon missiles would start being delivered to the Russian Navy in the coming months. According to his statement, the new weapons will initially be used by the Northern Fleet frigate Admiral Gorshkov.

As announced by the Northern Fleet Press Service on 31 December 2021, the Zircon hypersonic missile, produced by the Tactical Missile Armament Corporation, has been launched 10 times from aboard a surface ship and twice from a submarine.

President Vladimir Putin announced in a message to the Federal Assembly in February 2019 that the Zircon hypersonic missile will be capable of reaching speeds of up to about Mach nine and destroying land targets at distances of more than 1,000 kilometers.

Author's comment: Following the introduction of air-based (Kh-47M2 Kinzhal) and land-based (Avangard) hypersonic missiles into the Russian Armed Forces, Russia will soon also have a sea-based hypersonic missile (Zircon). Although the primary role of the hypersonic triad will be to strategically deter potential adversaries, it should be noted that the Russian side has already used Kinzhal missiles in the Ukraine conflict. On several occasions they have destroyed underground command points or large ammunition depots of the Ukrainian military.

The first contract for the purchase of Zircon hypersonic missiles was concluded between the Russian Ministry of Defence and their manufacturer in August 2021, within the framework of the Armed Forces-2021 military-technical forum.

It is expected that in the coming period all large combat ships, which have launch facilities for the current Kalibr and Onyks cruise missiles, will be equipped with the new Zircon hypersonic missiles. Thus, in addition to the Northern Fleet's Admiral Gorshkov frigate, which has also provided testing of such missiles, the first platform carrying Zircon hypersonic missiles will become the Admiral Golovko frigate (Project 22350). It is due to be handed over to the Navy by the end of this year.

Source: https://www.defenseromania.ro/triada-hipersonica-rusia-incepe-producerea-in-serie-a-rachetelor-hipersonice-zircon_617809.html

Strike that will block Europe: Britain's biggest port to close

Employees at Britain's biggest container port have gone on strike for the first time in 30 years.

According to the BBC, around 1,900 members of the Unite union at Felixstowe in Suffolk will take to the streets for eight days in a dispute over pay, reports Mediafax.

Unite said its members had rejected a 7% pay offer from the Felixstowe Dock and Railway Company, which it said was below the rate of inflation.

About 2,550 people work at Felixstowe, the country's busiest port, which handles about 48% of the UK's container trade. Workers on strike include crane drivers, machine operators and forklift operators who load and unload ships, cites stiripesurse.ro.

Ahead of the strike, port spokesman Paul Davey said workers had been offered a 7% rise plus a one-off payment of £500. But the unionists want a 10% increase.

"We've got a shrinking economy, we're going into recession... I think it's a very fair offer," he said.

The strike is expected to last until Monday 29 August.

Source: <https://www.replicaonline.ro/greva-care-va-bloca-europa-cel-mai-mare-port-din-marea-britanie-va-fi-inchis-529663/>

After the storm, Russia increased the number of ships in the Black Sea

After the storm, the Russian fleet's group of ships was increased to 15 units, which continue to operate in missile-safe sea areas. This is reported by the operational command "South", writes NV. It is noted that the occupants are keeping two large amphibious ships, two surface and one underwater, equipped with 20 Kalibr cruise missiles on alert. "The relevance of the threat of missile and artillery attacks remains unchanged, which means our indomitability will still be tested for strength," OK notes.

Source: <https://www.blackseanews.net/read/193365>

Two Russian Navy 'admirals' will have to wait a long time for repairs

The Russian Navy may receive the Soviet Union Fleet's Admiral Kuznetsov aircraft carrier and the Admiral Nakhimov heavy nuclear missile cruiser a year late. This was stated by Vladimir Korolev, general director of United Shipbuilding Corporation JSC for military shipbuilding, reports ixbt.com.

The dates are subject to change due to delays in equipment supply. If they don't arrive on time, then the ships will be delivered not in 2023, but in 2024. The Soviet Union Fleet's Admiral Kuznetsov aircraft carrier was launched in 1985. It is designed to destroy surface

targets, protect naval formations and support disengagement operations. The 306-metre ship is capable of carrying 28 aircraft and 24 helicopters. It is the only aircraft carrier in the Russian Navy. From November 2016 to January 2017, it carried out combat missions in the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Syria. There it took part in hostilities for the first time, lost several. After the campaign, the ship was sent for repair and modernisation. It burned in 2019. The nuclear missile cruiser "Admiral Nakhimov" (project 1144.2M "Orlan") became part of the Russian Navy's Northern Fleet in 1988. In 1992 its modernisation began. According to the latest plans, the cruiser should be armed with 80 UKSK 3S14 launchers for various types of missiles. Including "Kalibr", "Onyx" and "Zircon".

Source: <https://www.blackseanews.net/read/193362>

Five Type 052D destroyers under construction in China

The image published on Chinese microblogging site Weibo by user @lyman2003 shows the five hulls in various stages of completion at the Dalian shipyard. Located in northern China, it is one of two Chinese shipyards building large, destroyer-sized warships.

As previously reported by Naval News, this shipyard launched a Type 052D and a Type 055 on the same day two years ago. With such a pace of construction, the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) is confirming its status as the "world's largest," a rank it achieved in 2021, according to a US Department of Defense (DoD) report.

China's shipbuilding industry launched a record 10 destroyers in 2019, with 8 more in 2021. Contacted by Naval News, two Chinese military observers confirmed that there are currently 25 destroyers (13 Type 052D and 12 Type 052DL) currently in PLAN service. They will soon be joined by five under construction at Dalian and (at least) one more being built at Jiangnan Changxing Shipbuilding and Heavy Industry Corporation (the other Chinese shipyard building large surface ships, located northeast of Shanghai).

The new "DL" variant features a stretched hull (more details below) and all new Type 052 destroyers are expected to be built in the "DL" variant.

About the Type 052D destroyer

The Type 052D Kunming Class (NATO designation: Luyang III) is one of the latest generation of the Chinese Navy's guided missile destroyers (DDG). It is based on its predecessor, the Type 052C DDG and probably shares the same hull. However, the Type 052D incorporates many improvements in terms of design as well as sensors and weapons matching. This modern class of ship is considered the Chinese equivalent of the American AEGIS destroyers. The ships are built for PLAN by two shipyards: the Jiangnan-Changxing Shipyard and the Dalian Shipbuilding Industry Company. The first ship of this class, Kunming (number 172), was commissioned in March 2014. It has a displacement of 7,500 tonnes (full load), a length of 157 metres, a width of 17.2 metres, a draught of 6.2 metres and a crew of 280.

The ships are equipped with a total of 64 Vertical Launch System (VLS) cells for: HHQ-9 surface-to-air missiles Yu-8 rocket-propelled ASW torpedoes YJ-18 tactical cruise missiles.

Four modules are located forward of the ship in front of the superstructure, another four aft in front of the helicopter hangar. These destroyers are also armed with a 130 mm H/PJ-45A main gun, a 30 mm H/PJ-12 CIWS (the first 8 ships in the class are equipped with the older variant: H/PJ11), HQ-10 short-range SAM and two triple torpedo launchers.

The powerful sensor suite consists of Type 346A, Type 364, Type 366, Type 517B and Type 760 radars, an SJD-9 hull-mounted sonar and an SJG-311 variable depth sonar.

According to a presentation by a PLAN vice admiral in August 2017, the combat capability of a Type 052D is "1.6 times greater" than that of a Type 052C, knowing that the lead ships in these two classes of Chinese destroyers were launched only 9 years apart.

The "DL" variant was introduced from the 14th ship in the class, the tactical number 156 Zibo: the destroyer's hull is about 4 metres longer. This extra length primarily involves the hangar and helicopter deck aft of the ship. Modifications were introduced to accommodate the new Z-20 helicopter. With a displacement of 7,700 tonnes (full load), the ship is 162 metres long, 17.2 metres wide, with a draught of 6.2 metres and a crew of 280.

Source: <https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2022/08/five-type-052d-destroyers-under-construction-in-china/>

Dubai court fines boxship crew for exploding dangerous container

In a new example of seafarer liability, a Dubai court has issued a suspended jail sentence and a \$28,000 fine for five crew members of the container ship Ocean Trader, which suffered a cargo container explosion at Jebel Ali last year. On 27 June 2021, three containers of organic peroxides arrived in Jebel Ali from China and were stored in a terminal yard. Organic peroxides are a known dangerous cargo with a risk of thermal runaway, and summer temperatures in Dubai are high. Over a week later, on the night of 7 July, the containers were loaded on board the Trader. One of the containers started smoking and exploded on board the ship shortly after it was lifted on deck. The explosion was heard across the emirate and five suffered minor injuries, according to prosecutors. Although the cargo had just been loaded and the initial events took place on the quay, local prosecutors charged the ship's captain and four crew members with the explosion. Prosecutors argued that the master's responsibility for the stowage of the containers made him liable, even though he played no role in the open stowage of the cargo. The Dubai Misdemeanour Court found that the container involved in the explosion had been left in the sun on shore for 12 days, causing the cargo inside to decompose and heat up, and found all five crew members guilty. The captain denied that he would have accepted the cargo if he had known how it was stored and said he safely evacuated the ship and informed authorities when the dangerous containers began to smoke, according to National. Five companies connected to the ship and transport were also fined \$28,000 each.

Source: <https://www.maritime-executive.com/article/dubai-court-fines-boxship-crew-for-explosion-of-a-hazardous-container>