

MS DAILY BRIEF - 31 August 2022

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China reacts after US destroyers USS Antietam and USS Chancellorsville crossed Taiwan Strait

The Chinese Foreign Ministry has condemned the passage of two US military vessels through the Taiwan Strait, calling it a "provocation" aimed at "sabotaging regional peace and stability", reports Agerpres, citing DPA.

Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said the United States must respect the one-China policy, according to which there is only one Chinese government in Beijing.

Taiwan has had a de facto independent democratic government since 1949, but China considers the island its own territory and opposes any official contacts between Taipei and other capitals.

On Sunday, the US cruisers USS Antietam and Chancellorsville, equipped with guided missiles, conducted a "routine" mission in international waters, the US Navy's 7th Fleet said.

The transit through the Taiwan Strait demonstrates the United States' commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific region. U.S. armed forces fly, sail and operate wherever international law permits," the U.S. command added.

It was the first time that US military vessels have travelled the strategic route since the visit to Taiwan of US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

She promised Taipei officials solidarity from Washington in early August, which caused irritation in Beijing.

China has responded by conducting large-scale military exercises around Taiwan.

Source: https://www.defenseromania.ro/china-ractioneaza-dupa-ce-distrugatoarele-sua-uss-antietam-si-uss-chancellorsville-au-traversat-stramtoarea-taiwan_617921.html

Solomon Islands bans US military ships from docking. Pacific country reaches security agreement with China

The Solomon Islands government has informed the United States that it will impose a moratorium on military vessels entering its ports, the US embassy in Canberra said in a statement on Tuesday (30 August), Reuters reported.

Relations between the US and the Solomon Islands have been strained since May, when the Pacific nation struck a security agreement with China.

"On 29 August, the United States received formal notification from the Solomon Islands government of a moratorium on all naval visits until procedures in the protocol are updated," the embassy said.

Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare had denied reports of the moratorium through a spokesman, telling Reuters he would give a speech on the issue on Tuesday afternoon.

He will greet the US hospital ship Mercy, which arrived in Honiara on Monday on a two-week mission - ahead of the moratorium, according to the US embassy in Australia.

"The US Navy ship Mercy received diplomatic clearance prior to the implementation of the moratorium. We will continue to monitor the situation closely," the diplomatic representation said.

Last week, the US Coast Guard ship Oliver Henry was unable to make a routine port call in the Solomon Islands because the Solomon Islands government did not respond to a request for fuel and food supplies. The ship was on an anti-illegal fishing patrol mission in the South Pacific for a regional fisheries agency, a Coast Guard press officer said Friday.

Source: <https://ziare.com/insulele-solomon/insulele-solomon-interzic-acostare-nave-sua-acord-securitate-china-1758701>

Russian and Chinese warships to simulate 'seaway defence' in Sea of Japan

The Russian and Chinese navies will conduct joint military drills to defend sea lanes in the Sea of Japan as part of the Vostok-2022 strategic military command and staff exercise, the Russian Defense Ministry reports, cited by Rador.

"In the waters of the Sea of Japan, joint exercises are being held to defend sea lanes and areas of maritime economic activity. To help land forces in the coastal area, joint action plans will be drawn up by the Pacific Fleet and PRC naval force groups," the statement said. The Vostok-2022 military manoeuvres will take place from 1 to 7 September under the command of Russian Armed Forces Chief of Staff Valery Gherasimov at seven polygons and training grounds in the Eastern Military District, as well as in the waters and coastal areas of the Sea of Ohotsk and the Sea of Japan.

Source: https://www.defenseromania.ro/nave-de-razboi-ruse-si-chineze-vor-simula-apararea-cailor-maritime-din-marea-japoniei_617911.html

First "encounter" of the aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales with a Russian ship. Britain's new crown jewel 'eyes' a Soviet ship

HMS Prince of Wales, Britain's new aircraft carrier, has had its first encounter with a Russian Federation ship. It took place last week while the British ship was taking part in a military exercise.

According to a Portsmouth News story published last week, the British aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales met the Russian training ship Smolny part of the Project 887 class developed by the Soviet Union in the 1970s.

The source said the Russian ship was most likely in the area in the context of the Joint Warrior exercise.

The aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales, the new jewel in the crown of the British crown, was also involved in the Joint Warrior, the UK's largest military exercise off the coast of Scotland, at a cost of no less than £3.2 billion.

Interestingly, reports the source, the Royal Navy also published the information and a photo on its official Twitter account, stating that HMS Prince of Wales is "keeping an eye" on the Russian ship. Only the next day the post was deleted by the Royal Navy.

The Portsmouth News notes that it is not known where the photo was taken and whether the ships were in British territorial waters.

Subsequently, a Royal Navy spokesman was only able to confirm that the aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales was taking part in Joint Warrior, an exercise in which 27 other ships from 9 NATO member states are taking part.

Source: https://www.defenseromania.ro/prima-intalnire-a-portavionului-hms-prince-of-wales-cu-o-nava-rusa-noua-bijuterie-a-coroanei-britanice-cu-ochii-pe-o-nava-sovietica_613053.html

'Meeting' between HMS Prince of Wales aircraft carrier and Russian ship amid rising tensions between Britain and Russian Federation

The first "meeting" of Britain's new aircraft carrier with a Russian ship is reminiscent of tensions that have escalated in recent months between London and Moscow.

In June this year, the British destroyer HMS Defender was fired upon by the Russians, accusing the British warship of entering Russian territorial waters, wrongfully obtained through the illegal occupation and annexation of the Crimean peninsula.

At the time, the Russian defence ministry said the British ship had advanced about 3 kilometres into what it considered Russian territorial waters.

The incident also sparked a diplomatic crisis between London and Moscow.

HMS Prince of Wales is the second ship of the Queen Elizabeth class, the first being the one that also bears the class name: HMS Queen Elizabeth.

The new aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales, Britain's latest Crown jewel, broke down just one day after setting sail for the US.

Britain's new aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales encountered a technical problem during a mission. London is not providing much information, predicting that there is still no firm data on the nature of the malfunction.

Inside sources for the UK Defence Journal say it is a fault in one of the carrier's propellers. A team of divers has been sent to check the technical situation and it appears that a fault has caused a blockage.

A team of UK Navy specialists is inspecting the potential damage caused by this technical situation.

Business Insider reports that the new British aircraft carrier suffered the technical situation while off the coast of the UK, a day after starting a mission to the United States.

The quoted source recalls that in the last two years, also for technical reasons, the new British aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales has been on various missions under 90 days at sea.

The UK has two state-of-the-art aircraft carriers: HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales.

HMS Prince of Wales cost London about \$3.5 billion to build.

HMS Prince of Wales is the second ship of the Queen Elizabeth class, the first being the one that also bears the class name: HMS Queen Elizabeth.

The UK has two state-of-the-art aircraft carriers, HMS Queen Elizabeth II and the 65,000-tonne HMS Prince of Wales. HMS Queen Elizabeth II entered service in 2017 and HMS Prince of Wales in 2019.

The two ships were designed to be equipped with F-35 aircraft, with the first aircraft arriving in the UK in June 2018. To date, London has ordered 48 F-35 aircraft, of which 21 have already been delivered, with the remainder due to arrive by 2025. Each of the two aircraft carriers is planned to carry, as a rule, 24 F-35 aircraft, and at full capacity - 36 aircraft.

Source: https://www.defenseromania.ro/noul-portavion-hms-prince-of-wales-bijuteria-coroanei-britanice-s-a-defectat-la-numai-o-zi-dupa-ce-pornise-spre-sua_617914.html

The Royal Navy's HMS Prince of Wales has a problem

Royal Navy's HMS Prince of Wales has a mechanical problem after departure Britain's Royal Navy is struggling to determine the extent of the mechanical problem aboard its newest aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales, after an embarrassing incident in which one of the fleet's two largest ships was forced to anchor off the south coast of England just hours after being given an extraordinary destination on a "landmark mission".

Large crowds gathered over the UK bank holiday weekend to see the aircraft carrier off on one of her first missions as she continues to work towards full readiness, but hours later the Royal Navy issued a brief update, saying the ship is at anchor for "investigation in a mechanical emergency".

The Royal Navy posted a further update on its social media today, Monday, saying:

"You may be aware of problems with HMS Prince of Wales since leaving home port Portsmouth on Saturday. We are in the process of moving her to another berth which is more suitable to allow further inspection of the vessel. At the moment our focus is on the ship and our people; everyone is working hard to understand the problem and what can be done next."

The aircraft carrier, which cost nearly \$3.5 billion to build, is a sister ship to HMS Queen Elizabeth, commissioned in December 2019. In early operations plagued by problems, the aircraft carrier suffered minor flooding in May 2020, followed by a more significant malfunction in October 2020 that sent the ship to the shipyard for major repairs. It is reported to have spent just 20 days at sea in the whole of 2020, but by October 2021, the Royal Navy said it was fully operational and would be fully ready for frontline deployment by 2023.

Serving as a command ship for NATO, HMS Prince of Wales was embarking on a nearly four-month mission that was scheduled to take her to the United States and then the Caribbean in what the Royal Navy said was a "landmark mission shaping the future of stealth aircraft and drone operations."

With her group, HMS Prince of Wales is "poised to push the boundaries of unmanned technology and tactics used by the UK's two new Queen Elizabeth-class carriers."

The departure had been scheduled for Friday, but was delayed for 24 hours due to an unspecified "technical problem". Reports suggest it may have a problem with the starboard propeller shaft. The Royal Navy declined to comment, but reports suggest she was moved to a more sheltered area to make it easier for divers to carry out an unspecified underwater inspection. There was great ceremony when she set off Saturday at the head of a battle group. The 65,000-ton warship is deploying alongside the frigate HMS Richmond, the RFA tanker Tideforce and an air group of helicopters and drones, before F-35B fighter jets are scheduled to join the deployment once the ship reaches North America. Operating with the Americans, it was to incorporate F-35B jets along with unmanned systems, which they said would "define Royal Navy aviation of the future".

"The takeover of the HMS Prince of Wales task group across the Atlantic for the remainder of this year will not only extend beyond UK carrier operations, but will strengthen our close working relationship with our closest ally," said the commander, Captain Richard Hewitt during the departure ceremonies. "From operating F35 Lightnings and drones to hosting the Atlantic Future Forum, none of this would be possible without the efforts of the amazing sailors on board, many of whom are on their first deployment with the Royal Navy."

There are rumors that the 932-foot-long carrier may be forced into dry dock for repairs. She was scheduled for exercise in North America, while her sister ship HMS Queen Elizabeth is due to deploy to the Mediterranean.

Source: <https://www.maritime-executive.com/article/royal-navy-s-hms-prince-of-wales-has-mechanical-issue-after-departure>

The Americans have changed guard in the Mediterranean: the aircraft carrier Harry S. Truman has crossed the Strait of Gibraltar

The Russian Telegram channel "Operational Line" reported on 30.08.2022 that the American aircraft carrier Harry S. Truman (CVN-75) has crossed the Strait of Gibraltar and left the Mediterranean Sea. The ship is on its way to the permanent deployment base in Norfolk after an eight-month mission in the region.

The US aircraft carrier Harry S. Truman was replaced in the Mediterranean Sea by the aircraft carrier George H.W. Bush (CVN-77), which crossed the Strait of Gibraltar on the morning of 25.08.2022.

The carrier's naval grouping includes the cruiser USS Leyte Gulf (CG-55) and the destroyers USS Delbert D. Black (DDG-119), USS Truxtun (DDG-103), USS Farragut (DDG-99) and USS Nitze (DDG-94).

On board the aircraft carrier George H.W. Bush is the 7th Aviation Wing, deployed to Naval Air Station Oceana in Virginia, which includes a total of nine squadrons and detachments equipped with F/A-18E/F, EA-18G, E-2D, C-2A and MH-60S/R aircraft.

In recent days, the two US aircraft carriers have sailed together in the Ionian Sea, demonstrating US commitment to NATO's allies and regional partners.

The aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman and its naval group entered the Mediterranean Sea on 14 December 2021, after deploying to the East Coast since 1 December.

In late December, Pentagon leadership changed the aircraft carrier's marching plan to deploy to the Middle East. It was ordered to remain in the Mediterranean Sea amid the crisis in Ukraine.

US ships in the Mediterranean have been operating in the region amid an intensified presence of Russian naval forces. In early 2022, Russia formed a squadron in the eastern Mediterranean Sea that included two submarines, two cruisers, two destroyers and two frigates belonging to the Northern Fleet, the Pacific Fleet and the Black Sea Fleet.

As of 24 August, several Russian ships belonging to the Northern Fleet left the Mediterranean Sea, heading for Severomorsk. These are primarily the missile cruiser Marshal Ustinov and the destroyer Vice Admiral Kulakov.

Thus, the tense situation in the Mediterranean over the last eight months is beginning to ease. Although the naval groupings of the two sides, Russia and the US (NATO), will continue to monitor each other and try to block each other, the scale of activity will decrease, even if hostilities in Ukraine show no signs of ending.

Source: https://www.defenseromania.ro/americanii-au-schimbata-garda-in-marea-mediterana-portavionul-harry-s-truman-a-traversat-stramtoarea-gibraltar_617936.html

SH Defense "Cube" system aboard BAE Systems' Adaptable Strike Frigate

At the DALO Industry Days in Denmark, local company SH Defense announced that its Cube system has been selected for the European Patrol Corvette (EPC).

The company also announced a partnership with BAE Systems to fit the Cube system aboard the "Adaptable Strike Frigate", which is the company's proposal for the Type 32 frigate requirement for the Royal Navy.

René Bertelsen also said that having integrated Special Operations Forces (SOF) payloads into Cube, SH Defense is now working on integrating mines into the system. The Cube system will be one of the key features of the future OMT-designed OPV for the Royal Danish Navy (with 23 Cube positions integrated into the design).

Regarding the adaptable strike frigate, John Bulmer of BAE Systems Naval Ships said:

"We've been thinking about the technologies that will drive future frigates, so we've come up with a concept of adaptable strike frigates and we're thinking among the technology themes, modularity, the ability to turn different capabilities on and off within the same ship, all as part of a larger system-of-systems approach, will be absolutely key. So as part of that [...], we've been looking to work with SH Defense and we've now been cooperating for several months, with a lot of useful meetings about how The Cube system works and how it will eventually be integrated. Our concept."

About The Cube

The SH Defense Cube is a modular equipment for customizing Navy and Coast Guard ships. The Cube consists of standard modules that meet common requirements. But it is also possible to order custom modules that fit specific needs.

The innovative hull is designed to protect the equipment and ensure that it is fully reliable and operates smoothly in both Arctic and extreme heat regions. All equipment is tested and proven and is already in use by naval vessels around the world.

The modules fit the ISO standard footprint of 20' to 40' containers and can be easily transported overland by train or truck or by plane. No special transport is required. In addition, the equipment can be quickly changed at any port and requires only a flat loading surface. And once fitted, the modules are plug and play ready for use.

Source: <https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2022/08/sh-defence-cube-system-aboard-bae-systems-adaptable-strike-frigate/>

US experts surprised by Ukrainian use of allied-supplied weapons

American experts and officials say the Ukrainian military is fighting Russia with advanced equipment, including rockets and missile systems mounted on trucks and boats, The New York Times reports.

The billions of dollars in military aid the United States has sent to Ukraine include some of the most advanced and lethal weapons systems in the world. But according to military experts, Ukraine has also achieved significant success in the war, using weapons and equipment in unexpected ways, as well as improvisation.

From the sinking of Russia's Black Sea flagship Moskva. in April to this month's attack on a Russian air base in Crimea, Ukrainian forces have used American and other weapons in ways few expected, experts and US Defense Department officials say.

Missiles installed on trucks and boats

For example, by installing missiles on trucks, Ukraine's armed forces used them to increase their firing range. By installing missile systems on high-speed boats, they have increased their combat capability at sea. And, to the surprise of experts, Ukraine continues to destroy Russian targets with relatively slow, Turkish-made Bayraktar attack drones and cheap drones modified to drop grenades and other munitions.

"The Ukrainians operate on the 'MacGyver principle,'" says Frederick Hodges, a former US Army commander in Europe, recalling the 1980s series in which the main character uses simple, improvised devices to get out of difficult situations.

Despite this, the engineering ingenuity of the Ukrainians contrasts sharply with the doctrinaire slow nature of Russia's war.

During the attack on the Moskva, for example, the Ukrainians developed their own anti-ship missile called the Neptune, which is based on the design of an old Soviet anti-ship missile, but with significantly improved range and electronics.

According to a senior US official, they apparently mounted Neptune missiles on one or more trucks and moved them within range of the ship, which is about 120 km from Odessa. This strike was, in fact, proof of the existence and effectiveness of the Neptune missile; the new Ukrainian weapon was used for the first time in a real war and shot down a Russian flagship in the Black Sea.

"With the Moskva, they created a very effective anti-ship system that they put on the back of a truck to make it mobile," says Hodges, who is now a senior adviser at Human Rights First.

US military officials remain puzzled as to why Russia's multi-layered air defense systems have failed to effectively stop these Bayraktar drones, which have no self-defense systems, are easily detected by radar and fly at speeds of only 128 km per hour.

Now the ingenuity of the Ukrainian Armed Forces is being demonstrated in Crimea. In recent weeks, Ukraine has carried out a series of attacks on the Black Sea peninsula, which Russia illegally annexed in 2014.

During the attack on the Russian airbase, Ukrainian forces destroyed eight fighter jets. A few days later, Ukrainian special units operating behind enemy lines struck several targets in the occupied territory that Russia considered safe, including ammunition depots and supply lines.

Then explosions erupted at a military airfield near Sevastopol, the largest city in Crimea, where the Russian Black Sea Fleet is based.

"Ukrainians can put their knowledge to good use," says Dara Massicot, senior policy researcher at the RAND Corporation.

Ukraine, the heart of the former Soviet Union's defence industry

The origins of this knowledge are rooted in Ukraine's history as the heart of the defence industry in the former Soviet Union. For decades, Ukraine was where the Soviet Union - and then Russia - developed turbines for warships.

US military commanders who have worked with Ukrainian troops say Ukrainians are always ready to improvise.

The attacks in Crimea demonstrate Ukraine's increasingly aggressive military tactics, as the government in Kiev has relied on special forces and local guerrillas to strike deep in the back, disrupt enemy logistics and successfully counter Russia's superior weapons and equipment.

U.S. officials say the United States has provided detailed intelligence to help Ukrainian forces attack Russian targets throughout the war.

But the first of the recent strikes on Crimea - a series of explosions at a military airfield in Saki on Aug. 9 - was carried out by Ukraine without prior notice to the U.S. and other Western allies, officials said.

Later, a US official reported on the attacks, saying Ukrainian special forces and guerrilla groups used improvised weapons, explosives and tactics to carry out the strikes.

"It's all improvisation. We have not received any prior notification," the official said on condition of anonymity.

The first strike on the airfield destroyed a significant part of the aircraft and ammunition stores of the 43rd Naval Aviation Regiment of the Black Sea Fleet. It was also intended to psychologically affect Russian troops in Crimea, a US official said, calling it the "Doolittle Raid," referring to America's attack on Japan during World War II.

Ukrainian military journalist Andrii Tsaplienko wrote on the Telegram channel after the attack on Saki that the damage to the object indicates the Ukrainians used a truck-mounted "Grim" or "Sapsan" heavy missile launcher during the attack. This system was developed by the "Pivdenmash" aerospace plant. But the Kremlin has rejected the possibility that the Ukrainian ballistic missile system had anything to do with it.

Culled from: <https://ziare.com/ucraina/ucraina-razboi-rusia-invazie-ingeniozitate-arme-occidentale-1758594>

Philippines - More than 80 people rescued from a ferry fire

Philippine coast guard personnel and volunteers rescued more than 80 passengers and crew of an inter-island ferry that caught fire as it approached a port south of Manila, prompting many to jump into the water as flames spread rapidly in windy weather, officials said Saturday.

Only two passengers are unaccounted for, and authorities are checking to see if the two are missing or were rescued, but they left immediately for home without notifying officials who led the search effort Friday, the Coast Guard said. The M/V Asia Philippines was listed as carrying 49 passengers and 38 crew members. The ferry, which was coming from Calapan town in Oriental Mindoro province, was more than a kilometre (about a mile) away from Batangas port when smoke followed by flames billowed from the second deck, according to one of the rescued passengers.

The proximity of the ferry to the harbour allowed the quick rescue of the victims even after nightfall by coast guard vessels and nearby ships, motor banks and tugboats. One ship helped the Coast Guard extinguish the fire, which destroyed the ferry carrying at least 16 cars and trucks, Coast Guard officials said.

Passenger Benedict Fernandez told DZMM radio Friday night that smoke and flames suddenly rose from the second deck as crew members apparently tried to start and stop an engine as the ferry approached the harbor. There was no immediate order to abandon ship, but when it became hard to see because of the smoke, he said he decided to jump into the water with his two children on the third deck, along with other passengers.

"I pushed my kids because if we didn't jump from the top, we would really burn because our soles were already feeling the heat," Fernandez said.

They were rescued from the water by another boat that approached the burning ship and then transferred to a tugboat, which brought them to the harbor, he said. Footage released by the coastguard showed his staff trying to resuscitate a rescued passenger, a 43-year-old woman, in the harbour before she was taken to hospital with injuries. Fernandez said he and his two children, who were shaken by the experience, and other passengers were taken to a hotel by officials of the company that owned the ferry. The ferry, which was towed to an anchorage area, can carry about 400 passengers, the coast guard said, adding that an investigation is under way.

In the past, there have been cases of ferries carrying uncounted passengers in contravention of regulations. Shipping accidents are common in the Philippine archipelago because of frequent storms, poorly maintained boats, overcrowding and irregular enforcement of safety regulations, especially in remote provinces.

In December 1987, the ferry Dona Paz sank after colliding with a fuel tanker, killing more than 4,300 people in the world's worst peacetime maritime disaster.

Sursa: <https://www.npr.org/2022/08/27/1119792493/people-rescued-philippine-ferry-fire?t=1661835987583>

Sweden: A car ferry caught fire off the coast with 300 people on board

The fire is now out. No injuries have been reported and the cause of the fire is not yet known. A fire that broke out on Monday aboard a ferry carrying 300 people has been extinguished and there were no casualties, Swedish maritime authorities have learned. The "Stena Scandica" was providing a link between Latvia and Sweden in the Baltic Sea when the alarm was raised at around 12:30 local time (10:30 a.m. GMT) of a fire on board, according to the company and rescue services.

According to Stena Line, which operates the ferry, the fire appeared to have spread from a refrigerated truck on the parking deck. "The fire is out," Lisa Mjörning, spokeswoman for the Swedish Maritime Authority, told AFP at around 13:30 GMT.

All 300 people on the ferry (about 240 passengers and 60 crew) remained on board, the spokeswoman said, correcting initial reports that an evacuation had begun.

"There were no injuries on board and there was no evacuation," according to the maritime authority.

Source: <https://www.lesoir.be/462131/article/2022-08-29/suede-un-car-ferry-etait-en-feu-au-large-des-cotes-avec-300-personnes-bord>

Update: Stena can restart drifting ferry after truck fire on board

This evening, engineers on board the Stena Scandica managed to restart two of the engines on board the vessel, which was floating in rough seas, after a truck caught fire on the deck of the vehicle and caused the vessel to break up. The situation had become tense and by early evening maritime authorities began an emergency evacuation pending a tug that had been dispatched to tow the vessel. Although they were able to extinguish the fire without injury to passengers or crew, the 35,500 gross ton RoPax was about 14 nautical miles off Gotland, Sweden and heading for the island's shore. The fire was reported mid-day as the 17-year-old ferry was sailing just north of the Swedish island of Gotland in the Baltic Sea. Stena confirmed that a fire was discovered on the deck of the craft's vehicle at around 12.30pm. The Swedish Sea Rescue Society said conditions at the scene were "relatively difficult", with reports of waves of up to 10 feet and winds of around 35 mph. There are 241 passengers on board, in addition to 58 crew members. Pictures and social media posts show the passengers were moved to what Stena called an "assigned area", but the images showed them on the upper deck in the open air in weathered life jackets. A small amount of smoke could be seen over the side of the vessel.

The fire caused the ferry to lose propulsion, and the Swedish Coast Guard said its anchor was not working. The Stena Scandica was sailing south towards Gotland at about 2-3 knots. Three Swedish sea rescue vessels were among the first to arrive on the scene and continue to stand by. The Maritime Administration also had three helicopters ready at the scene to assist with an evacuation. The Coast Guard has both an aircraft and a lifeboat monitoring the situation, as well as pilot boats on shore. Authorities have also reportedly asked the Visby ferry in the area to divert and stand by in case an evacuation is necessary. A cargo ship also responded to the initial distress call. They were preparing for an evacuation, but after an hour and a half they reported that the fire had been extinguished by the crew using systems on board the ship. Stena reports that they believe the fire started in the refrigeration unit of a truck on the deck of the vehicle. A team of specially trained firefighters from the Swedish Marine Incident Response Group has been airlifted to the vessel and is working with the crew to confirm the fire is out.

Swedish authorities said after the fire was extinguished that they did not believe an evacuation would be necessary and expected a rescue tug to arrive at the ship at about 8:40 p.m. Stena in Latvia advised that the ferry will return to the port of Nynashamn in Sweden early Tuesday morning. After about 7:00 p.m. the Swedish authorities decided however that they should start an evacuation of the passengers from the ferry, but due to rough seas they could only remove them by helicopter. About 25 people were flown to Visby, which continued to stand by. News reports said that families with children and the elderly were being evacuated, but the operation was later suspended due to nightfall.

Stena Scandica is now reported to be travelling at a speed of five to six knots, with the journey estimated to take up to six hours, depending on weather conditions. She is accompanied by tug and coastguard on the journey to Nynashamn, and the press say the mood on board is calm. The Visby went to Visby, Sweden, where she arrived around midnight. The Stena Scandia was sailing between the port of Norvik in Sweden and the port of Ventspils in Latvia when the fire broke out.

Source: <https://www.maritime-executive.com/article/stena-ferry-drifting-in-the-baltic-after-truck-fire-was-extinguished>

Turkey refuses entry to decommissioned Brazilian aircraft carrier over asbestos concerns

The Turkish government has decided to refuse permission for the decommissioned Brazilian aircraft carrier N Ae São Paulo to be scrapped. Environmentalists believe the former French Navy ship (formerly known as the Foch) contains a substantial amount of asbestos, and after the scrapper refused to carry out a new inventory of hazardous materials, the Turkish Environment Ministry said it would not grant permission for the ship to enter Turkey.

"Due to the fact that the 'Dangerous Goods Inventory Report', which should be drawn up by showing the places where asbestos and other dangerous substances are found on the ship's plan and photographing the sampling points, was not submitted to our ministry, it was decided to cancel the approval of the conditional notification," Environment Minister Murat Kurum said in a statement.

The decision appears to end the controversial ship saga, at least for now. Turkish authorities sent a letter to the Turkish shipyard Sok Denizcilikve Tic (SOK) and the Brazilian government, preventing the carrier from entering Turkey until a new inventory of hazardous materials was carried out in accordance with the European Union's Ship Recycling Regulation. The initial inventory provided by the seller found only nine tonnes of asbestos on board. Foch's sister ship, the Clemenceau, notoriously contained over 700 tonnes of the toxic substance.

The letter was dated five days after the São Paulo left Rio de Janeiro under tow to Aliaga for dismantling. SOK, which specializes in dismantling large decommissioned ships, bought the hull of the carrier for about \$2 million in March 2021.

On 22 August, Brazil's environmental agency IBAMA responded by stating that the ship had already left Brazilian territorial waters, making it impossible to enforce the IHM directive.

"We declare that, as we received your communication on 9 August 2022, the vessel had already left Brazilian territorial waters, according to information from the Brazilian Navy. The vessel is following its predicted course, its location is known and has been tracked remotely," the letter said.

Environmental activists claim the demolition voyage violated the Basel and Barcelona Conventions. In addition, they suggest that the initial inventory of hazardous materials didn't seem credible because it found suspiciously little asbestos - and no PCBs. The use of PCBs in deck flooring, gaskets, rubber parts, insulation, paints, etc. was common at the time the Foch and Clemenceau were built in France. In addition, they expressed concern that the Foch might also have been contaminated with radioactive material because of her involvement in (long ago) atmospheric nuclear bomb testing in the Pacific.

"Turkey is to be commended for asking for a true and accurate survey and inventory. The current one is simply not credible based on what we know about older aircraft carriers. We have real concerns that the inventory provided greatly underestimates the hazardous and radioactive materials on board the São Paulo," said Nicola Mulinaris, policy advisor to the NGO Shipbreaking Platform.

The denial of entry does not yet appear to have affected the carrier's voyage. As of Friday evening, her salvage tug (Alp Centre) maintained its course and heading, moving seven knots north through the Canary Islands.

Source: <https://www.maritime-executive.com/article/turkey-refuses-entry-to-decommissioned-carrier-over-asbestos-concerns>

An oil tanker partially sank near the port of Gibraltar on Monday evening after colliding with a ship carrying liquefied natural gas (LNG).

Its bow is now resting on the seabed at a depth of 17 metres. Twenty-four people are on board the tanker and are doing well, according to a statement from the captain to the authorities. Rescuers are on the scene to evacuate the sailors if necessary. The vessel is carrying 183 tonnes of heavy fuel oil, 250 tonnes of diesel and 27 tonnes of lubricating oil. Once the day breaks, a team of divers from the port of Gibraltar will go to check the damage to the ship.

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Source: <https://www.lesoir.be/462269/article/2022-08-30/un-petrolier-coule-apres-une-collision-pres-de-gibraltar>