

MARITIME SECURITY FORUM - NEWSLETTER BRIEF - 17 AUG 2022

The Maritime Security Forum is pleased to provide you with a monthly summary product in the form of a newsletter, through which we present the most relevant events and information on naval issues, mainly those related to maritime security but also other related areas. As a monthly newsletter, it aims to present a clear and concise assessment of the most recent and relevant news in the area, with references to sources of information.

We hope that this newsletter will prove to be a useful resource for you, providing a comprehensive insight into the complicated context of the field for both specialists and anyone interested in the dynamics of events in the field of naval security.

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International Maritime Relations

Russian-Ukrainian conflict, what's happening in the Black Sea
Snake Island - a point of strategic importance for the western Black Sea area
British special forces "helped liberate Snake Island, SBS trained Ukrainian commandos in Bond-style submarines"
British Special Forces trained Ukrainian commandos for their assault on the Snake Island. The Special Boat Service, the Royal Navy's special forces unit, reportedly showed Ukrainian troops how to use underwater vehicles James Bond-style.
Known as Diver Propulsion Devices or Sea Scooters, the vehicles are designed to transport people from a combat swimmer unit or naval special forces underwater over long distances. The British press claims that the Dorset Special Boat Service has travelled to Ukraine to train the 73rd Special Naval Centre. An Army source told the Sunday Mirror: 'The 73rd became the spearhead and provided the fighting force that landed on the island'.
With the help of the British navy, however, Ukrainian divers scoured the coast for landmines, then gave the signal to the main group to attack the Russian garrison.
On 30 June, Russia announced it would withdraw its forces from the island.
Comment:
Russia's departure from the island favors Ukraine's actions to defend Odessa and even open sea lanes.
Although the Russians took control of Snake Island on the very first day of the launch of the special military operation against Ukraine, it later turned out that maintaining a military presence on the island at this time is very risky and involves permanent losses of military personnel and military technique.
Thus, as I have already stated in a previous material, during the ongoing conflict between Russian and Ukrainian forces, it is not recommended that the warring parties deploy troops on Snake Island, as they are very exposed to blows from the adversary. On the one hand, the island

is in the path of Ukrainian artillery and missiles, and on the other the Russian Black Sea Fleet has the means to destroy the adversary in this area.

(Source:<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/19298204/british-special-forces-train-ukraine-with-underwater-vehicles/>)

Freedom of navigation for Ukraine's Black Sea ports

Ukraine and Russia have signed a UN-backed agreement to resume grain exports. The ceremony was marked by tensions

Ukraine and Russia signed a UN-backed agreement on 22 July to allow millions of tonnes of grain to be exported from blocked Black Sea ports, which could avert the threat of a catastrophic global food crisis, reports The Guardian. News of the signing of a deal to unblock grain exports to the Black Sea led to a 2% drop in wheat prices on Friday, according to the BBC.

During the signing of the agreement, fighting continued in eastern Ukraine and, highlighting deep-seated enmity and mistrust, Russian and Ukrainian representatives refused to sit at the same table at the ceremony and the display of the two countries' flags was adjusted so that they were no longer next to each other.

"In case of provocations, there will be an immediate military response" from Ukraine, Mykhailo Podolyak wrote on Twitter.

Russia and Ukraine, both among the world's top food exporters, sent their defence and infrastructure ministers respectively to Istanbul for the signing ceremony, which was also attended by Guterres and Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan.

Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shigu said on Friday that Moscow would not "take advantage" of the demining and opening of Ukrainian ports as part of the UN-brokered deal to resume grain exports. "Russia has undertaken obligations that are clearly spelled out in this document. We will not take advantage of the fact that the ports will be de-mined and opened. We have made this commitment," Shoigu told state TV station Rossiya-24 after the signing ceremony in Istanbul, according to Reuters.

The G7 will watch closely to ensure that the agreement to resume Ukrainian grain exports via the Black Sea does not "further expose Ukraine to the risk of further invasion and attack by Russia," the Canadian prime minister said, Al Jazeera notes. "The G7 is working closely with partners like Turkey and others to ensure that we can get that grain out of Ukraine and get it to places around the world where it is needed without jeopardising Ukraine's sovereignty and protection," Justin Trudeau said.

Ukraine has announced that it will begin exporting grain by sea this week. From which ports will the ships depart

The government in Kiev expects grain exports by sea, blocked because of the war, to resume this week, Ukrainian Infrastructure Minister Oleksandr Kubrakov announced Monday. Turkey told Ukraine on Monday that it was important for the first grain shipments to take place as soon as possible.

The outflow of ships from Ukrainian ports into the Black Sea will be based on an agreement signed on 22 July in Istanbul, the minister was quoted as saying by Interfax agency, as reported by EFEE and Agerpres.

According to estimates, the reopening of the ports will allow the export of 3 million tonnes of grain per month, which will bring Ukraine an additional \$1 billion in revenue.

Kubrakov pointed out that the coordination centre to be set up in Istanbul to oversee the operation of the humanitarian corridor for wheat outflows will become operational on Wednesday, 27 July.

Demining work will be carried out exclusively on the corridors created to allow the exit of grain ships and all vessels will be accompanied by Ministry of Infrastructure ships, he added.

For his part, Deputy Infrastructure Minister Yuri Vaskov stressed that if all goes according to plan, the first grain ship will leave the port of Chornomorsk in the Odessa region this week.

"Those from the port of Odessa and the port of Pivdenny will follow," he said, giving assurances that within two weeks the ministry will be technically ready to export from all terminals located in the three ports mentioned.

Turkish Defence Minister Hulusi Akar told Ukrainian Infrastructure Minister Oleksandr Kubrakov on Monday that it was important that the first grain shipments under the recent UN-mediated agreement signed in Istanbul take place as soon as possible, Reuters reports.

The inspection of ships on departure to Ukrainian ports will take place under the control of the Joint Coordination Centre (JCC) in one of Istanbul's ports to address Moscow's concerns that the cargoes will not bring weapons into Ukraine.

No sooner has the ink dried on the Russia-Ukraine agreement than the Russians have bombed the Black Sea port.

Russian missiles hit infrastructure in Odessa in southern Ukraine on Saturday/ 23 JUL, the Ukrainian military said, as quoted by Reuters. This comes after an agreement was signed on Friday to unblock grain exports from Black Sea ports. The city of Odessa is of strategic importance because it is a port city on the Black Sea.

The historic agreement signed Friday by Moscow and Kiev would have allowed some exports to be shipped from Black Sea ports, including the Odessa hub, Mediafax reports. "The enemy attacked the Odessa commercial seaport with Kalibr cruise missiles," the Southern Operational Command wrote on the Telegram app.

Two missiles hit the port's infrastructure, while two others were shot down by air defence forces, it said.

Under the plan signed Friday, Ukrainian officials will guide the ships through safe channels across mined waters to three ports, including Odessa, where they will be loaded with grain. Moscow has denied responsibility for the crisis, blaming sanctions for slowing its own food and fertiliser exports and Ukraine for undermining access routes to its Black Sea ports.

Russia has told Turkey it had nothing to do with the bombing of Odessa port and is "looking very carefully" into what happened

Russia on Saturday denied any involvement in the strikes on the Ukrainian port of Odessa, Turkish Defence Minister Hulusi Akar said.

"The Russians told us they had absolutely nothing to do with the attack and that they are analysing it very carefully," Akar said, a day after Kiev and Moscow signed an agreement in Istanbul to resume Ukrainian grain exports blocked by the war.

The attack on the port of Odessa was announced by the Ukrainian military, which blamed it on Russia. "The enemy attacked the Odessa commercial port with Kalibr cruise missiles. Two missiles were shot down by air defenses, two hit the port's infrastructure," the Southern Operational Command announced on the Telegram network, according to Agerpres. Ukraine on Saturday accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of 'spitting in the face' of the UN and Turkey by bombing the port of Odessa, and said Moscow would take 'full responsibility' for the failure of the grain export deal signed in Istanbul on Friday.

After initially denying it, Russia admitted it had "surgically" hit the port of Odessa with Kalibr missiles a day after the Istanbul agreement

Russian missiles on Saturday destroyed military infrastructure in the port of Odessa, vital for Ukrainian grain exports, Russian diplomacy spokeswoman Maria Zaharova said Sunday, according to Agerpres, citing AFP.

"Kalibr missiles destroyed military infrastructure in the port of Odessa in a high-precision strike," she wrote on her Telegram account in response to a statement by Ukrainian President Volodimir Zelenski, who said the strikes destroyed the possibility of dialogue or a deal with Moscow.

After the strikes in Odessa, Ukraine accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of "spitting in the face" of the UN and Turkey and undermining the implementation of the agreement signed Friday on the resumption of grain exports blocked by the conflict.

On Saturday, however, Russia denied to Turkey that it was involved in the attacks. "The Russians have told us that they have nothing to do with this attack and that they are looking into the matter closely," Turkish Defence Minister Hulusi Akar assured us.

According to the Ukrainian air force spokesman, two missiles hit the territory of the port of Odessa and two others were shot down by air defences before reaching their target.

The Istanbul grain export centre opens on Wednesday. Russia continues to attack Odessa. A new joint coordination centre in Istanbul, set up as part of the agreement to restart Ukrainian grain exports, is to be officially opened on Wednesday, according to the Turkish Defence Ministry.

Turkish Defence Minister Hulusi Akar will attend the opening ceremony of the centre, which will take place at the National Defence University in Istanbul. Last Friday, 22 JUL, Turkey, the UN, Russia and Ukraine signed a "historic agreement" to resume grain exports through three Ukrainian ports after months of Russian blockade.

Under the agreement, a joint coordination centre has been set up in Istanbul to carry out inspections at the ports' entrances and exits and ensure the safety of the routes.

A group of Russian experts will arrive in Istanbul on Tuesday to start work in a quadruple format," the Russian Defence Ministry, which exercises "special control" over the centre's work, said on Tuesday.

But on the morning of 26 July, the Russians launched a massive second missile attack on the port of Odessa, part of the agreement signed.

"The massive missile attack was launched on southern Ukraine, including by air, from the Black Sea. The Istanbul Grain Agreement does not reduce Russian attacks on Ukrainian military installations. So Moscow will continue the special operation, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said during a visit to the Republic of Congo, the first in more than 60 years of Russian-Congolese relations.

Two Turkish frigates and a submarine have entered the Black Sea

Two Turkish frigates and a submarine have entered the Black Sea. Their event coincided with Ukraine's official announcement of corridors for Ukrainian grain ships.

As reported by Ukrinform, this was reported in Telegram by OVA Odessa spokesman Serhii Bratchuk, referring to the Ukrainian Defense Ministry Navy. "Turkish warships have entered the Black Sea (2 frigates + a submarine)," Bratchuk said. Bratchuk predicted that in the next few days the first of such convoys of grain ships will head from the Ukrainian coast to their destination.

According to Deputy Infrastructure Minister Yuri Vaskov, the Ministry of Infrastructure is technically ready to export from all terminals of the country's three seaports.

Ukrainian grain export corridor formed: Turkey has reportedly already sent a frigate to the Black Sea

The Joint Coordination Centre (JCC) in charge of controlling Ukrainian grain exports via the Black Sea was inaugurated on Wednesday 27 July in Istanbul, according to agreements signed on 22 July, AFP reports.

Under the agreements, valid for 120 days between Russia, Ukraine, Turkey and the United Nations, the CCC will be tasked with carrying out inspections of ships on departure and arrival in Istanbul to ensure that they are not carrying anything other than grain, Agerpres reports.

Ukraine and Russia on Friday signed agreements with Turkey and the UN on the export of Ukrainian grain through the Black Sea, which had been blocked because of the armed conflict between the two countries. The 120-day agreements allow the transport of some 25 million tonnes of grain from Ukrainian silos before the new harvest is gathered.

Ukrainian military analysts for Defense Express say that at the moment no one trusts the Russians to respect the signed agreements, especially after the Russian Federation bombed the port of Odessa immediately after an agreement was reached to unblock Ukrainian ports. The source cited says the Turkish frigate TCG Yildirim F243 has entered Black Sea waters, and its presence could be linked to Turkey's commitments to secure Ukrainian grain exports. This vessel belongs to the Yavuz class and was designed in Germany according to the MEKO 200 project, launched in 1988. The ship's main armament consists of eight RGM-84 Harpoon anti-ship missiles, but it also has an RIM-7 Sea Sparrow air defence system with a range of up to 19 km. An anti-submarine warfare helicopter can also be deployed on the ship.

A sea corridor for grain exports has also already been formed and the coordinates for this have been transmitted via the NAVTEX system.

Danger of mines at the mouth of the Danube: Ukrainian civilian ship seriously damaged as it exits the Bastia Channel into the Black Sea

According to Ukrainian Shipping Magazine, on the evening of 28.07.2022, the Ukrainian hydrographic vessel Shlyahovik, which belongs to the State Hydrography, "exploded" following a collision with a sea mine in a maritime district located at the exit of the Bastia Canal into the Black Sea.

According to Ukrainian officials, the ship was damaged but remained afloat. No casualties have been reported so far. The vessel is still in the area of the jetty at the entrance to the Bastia Channel from the Black Sea, where it is being assessed by rescuers.

The source notes that the estuary linking Chilia to the Black Sea via a navigable channel was only reopened to the merchant fleet on 10 July, after Russia decided to withdraw its military from Snake Island.

Another Ukrainian ship was damaged at the mouth of the Danube after colliding with a explosive device

A pilot boat was damaged yesterday afternoon, 31 JUL, following a collision with an unknown explosive device at the mouth of the Bastia Canal. There are no casualties, the circumstances of the event are still being clarified. The crew was evacuated by a Ukrainian Coast Guard vessel. Following the explosion, a hole formed below the waterline on the aft side of the vessel, but the vessel did not sink and was pulled out of the Bastia Canal. According to Dumskaya, the damaged vessel is called "Orlyk" and belongs to the state-owned company "Delta-pilot".

At the time the explosive device hit, the pilot ship was off course. According to the crew members, it was not a sea mine, but another type of explosive device. Passage through the Bastia Channel is temporarily restricted, according to the Operational Command "South" of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, quoted by the Dumskaya publication.

The export of Ukrainian grain from the port of Odessa has resumed. Why Zelensky says "it's too early to rejoice"

Ukrainian President Volodimir Zelenski on Monday (01 AUG) said it was "too early" to rejoice after the unanimously welcomed resumption of Ukrainian grain exports from the port of Odessa, AFP reports. "At the moment, it is too early to draw conclusions and make predictions," he said in his video address. "Let's wait and see how the agreement will work and whether security will really be guaranteed."

For the first time since the start of the Russian invasion nearly six months ago, a ship loaded with 26,000 tonnes of corn left Odessa on the Black Sea bound for the port of Tripoli in Lebanon under a UN-supervised international agreement aimed at alleviating the global food crisis. "The port has become operational again, exports have resumed, we can say that this is a first positive signal that we will manage to stop the world food crisis," the Ukrainian president added.

"It is the responsibility of our partners, especially the United Nations and Turkey" to guarantee these deliveries, the Ukrainian president insisted.

New ships wait near Istanbul for passage to Chernomorsk and Yujni ports

The Joint Coordination Centre (JCC) on Tuesday, 9 August, authorised the movement of two ships awaiting inspections to pass through the maritime humanitarian corridor as part of the Black Sea Grain Initiative. It is reported by the Ports of Ukraine publication with reference to the Voice of America.

The Petrel S and Brave Commander vessels will undergo an inspection on Wednesday in the Sea of Marmara and, if permission is granted, will go to Chernomorsk and Yuzhni respectively," the statement said. According to Marine Traffic, as of 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, August 10, both ships were off Istanbul.

On Tuesday, SCC groups carried out inspections on board Riva Wind, Glory and Star Helena vessels bound for Ukrainian ports. All ships were given permission to sail.

In addition, on Wednesday, the joint groups will inspect the vessels Mustafa Naciti, Sacura and Arizona coming from Ukrainian ports.

As part of the implementation of the agreements, 12 ships have already left the ports of Odessa, Chornomorsk and Pivdennyi, which have taken more than 370,000 tonnes of agricultural products to seven countries of the world.

In addition, on 7 August, the port of Chornomorsk accepted the bulk carrier Fulmar S, the first ship to enter the Ukrainian seaport since the large-scale Russian invasion, for loading corn.

Balker Polarnet (flag - Turkey), which was one of the first to take part in the implementation of the initiative, on 8 August successfully passed the inspection in Istanbul and arrived at its final destination - the Turkish port of Derindzhe.

First, ships with food cargoes, which have been stuck there since the beginning of the Russian invasion, are leaving Ukrainian seaports.

Comment:

Russia wants to show from the start that the agreement is not a form of truce and thus warns Ukraine and the international community that it has not yielded to its pressure. On the other

hand, the attacks on Odessa are no doubt meant to remind Ukraine that such agreements can be abandoned quickly, but the fact that it has come from the beginning is still odd. Even the damage to the ship at the entrance to the Bastia Canal by an explosive device underlines Russia's desire to show that it still has control of the communication routes in the area or that it can block them at will, and on the other hand such attacks are being used by Russia to influence the price of grain.

(Source:https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-razboi_ucraina-25692845-ucraina-rusia-semnat-acord-sustinut-onu-pentru-reluarea-exporturilor-cereale.htm)

(Source:<https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/externe/ucraina-a-anuntat-ca-saptamana-aceasta-va-incepe-exportul-de-cereale-pe-mare-din-ce-porturi-vor-pleca- navele-2024999>)

(Source:https://m.adevarul.ro/international/europa/exportul-cereale-ucraina-efectua-porturile-odesa-yuzhny-chornomorsk-1_62d87a935163ec4271d2b8fd/index.html)

(Source:https://www.defenseromania.ro/rusia-a-transmis-turciei-ca-nu-are-nimic-de-a-face-cu-bombardarea-portului-odesa-si-ca-analizeaza-foarte-atent-ce-s-a-intamplat_617394.html)

(Source:https://www.defenseromania.ro/dupa-ce-a-negat-initial-rusia-a-recunoscute-ca-a-lovit-chirurgical-cu-rachete-kalibr-portul-odesa-la-o-zi-dupa-acordul-de-la-istanbul_617400.html)

(Source:<https://www.blackseanews.net/read/192391>)

(Source:<https://www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/seafarer-shortage-stands-way-ukraine-grain-corridor-2022-07-27/>)

(Source:https://www.defenseromania.ro/s-a-format-coridor-pentru-exportul-cerealelor-ucrainene-turcia-a-trimis-o-fregata-in-marea-neagra_617446.html)

(Source:<https://ziare.com/volodimir-zelenski/export-cereale-odesa-volodimir-zelenski-1754294>)

(Source:https://www.defenseromania.ro/o-alta-nava-ucraineana-a-fost-avariata-la-gurile-dunarii-in-urma-coliziunii-cu-un-dispozitiv-exploziv_617508.html)

(Source:<https://www.blackseanews.net/read/192937>)

Multinational exercise "Eurasian Partnership MCM Dive 22", the business card of the 39th Diving Centre

The Romanian Naval Forces are organising the 12th edition of the multinational exercise "Eurasian Partnership MCM Dive 22", which will take place in maritime districts off the Black Sea coast of Romania and in the military port of Constanta from August 1-5. The exercise, led by the 39 Diving Centre, will be attended by 240 Romanian soldiers and about 60 foreign soldiers from Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, France, Georgia, the United States and Turkey.

On behalf of the Romanian Naval Forces, the "EP MCM DIVE 22" includes the 274 "Viceamiral Constantin Bălescu" minesweeper and nets, the 29 "Locotenent Dimitrie Nicolescu" maritime dredger, the "Grozavul" maritime support and intervention diving vessel, two radar and harbour tugs, five fast boats (RHIB), a mine centre specialised in specific data collection, a meteorology and oceanography cell (METOC), a rescue diver specialised in medical evacuation missions (MEDEVAC), two EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) detachments for shallow waters and for historical mines, as well as a deep-sea diving detachment, and a MEDEVAC helicopter from the Romanian Air Force's "Mihail Kogălniceanu" Air Base 57.

The exercise "EP MCM DIVE 22" contributes to increasing the level of training in the areas of counter improvised explosive devices and mine countermeasures, as well as strengthening interoperability between the participating forces. At the same time, the exercise is intended to

develop relations between the Romanian Naval Forces and the naval and coast guard personnel involved in the training activities conducted by the Constanta Diver Centre.

The opening ceremony of the multinational exercise "Eurasian Partnership MCM Dive 22" will take place on Monday, 1 August, 09.00, in the military port of Constanta, after which the participating military will start joint training activities with foreign partners.

(Source:<https://www.navy.ro/comunicat.php?id=619>)

The frigate King Ferdinand will participate in Operation Irini in the Mediterranean. The warship, deployed off the coast of Lebanon

The Romanian Naval Forces are sending the frigate "Regele Ferdinand" to the maritime security operation "Irimi" off the coast of Libya.

"Romania is offering its best capabilities, personnel and assets, actively contributing to the Operation, in a difficult international situation due to the COVID pandemic and the war in Ukraine", the EUNAVFOR MED Operation "Irimi" Command in Rome informed on 3 August. The Chief of Staff of the Romanian Naval Forces, Rear Admiral Mihai Panait, paid a working visit to the Operation Command (OHQ) on Wednesday 3 August to prepare the mission of the frigate "King Ferdinand", which will be deployed in the last quarter of this year.

"During the discussions that the Romanian military official had with the Commander of Operation „Irimi", Rear Admiral Stefano Turchetto, the regional maritime security situation in the Central Mediterranean was analysed, which requires a joint effort against the existing threats to regional security. The agenda of the meeting also included topics related to the capabilities, personnel and naval units provided by the member states for the operation," the Romanian Naval Forces reported on 4 August.

"There was a fruitful exchange of views on the current situation in the Central Mediterranean and the need for a joint effort against existing threats to regional security. Rear Admiral Panait appreciated the briefing and expressed his gratitude for the hard work and professionalism shown by the "Irimi" staff on land and at sea," OHQ in Rome said.

"Romania participated in the European Union Operation EUNAVFOR MED „Irimi", in 2020, with the mine and net tender „Vice Admiral Constantin Bălescu", which had on board a detachment of combat divers by incursion", the Romanian Naval Forces recalled in the press release.

In 2021, the Romanian naval ships that are part of the naval force package made available to NATO were integrated six times into the Alliance's permanent naval groupings and executed, over 130 days, missions in the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea.

Thus, the maritime dredger "Locotenent Lupu Dinescu" has been part of the NATO Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group 2 (SNMCMG-2) three times and the frigate "Regina Maria" has participated three times in the NATO Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG-2) missions.

In September 2021, the frigate "Regina Maria" took command of NATO's Operation Sea Guardian in the Mediterranean Sea.

Last month, the frigate "King Ferdinand", the maritime dredger "Lieutenant Lupu Dinescu" and the missile carrier "Zborul" participated in the multinational exercise "Breeze 22", organised and led by the Bulgarian Naval Forces.

Comment:

The operation, named EUNAVFOR MED "IRINI" ("peace" in Greek) was launched on 31 March 2020 and extended until 31 March 2023 to implement the UN arms embargo on Libya.

On 10 September 2020, the first activity at sea took place and the full operational capability of the operation was declared.

In particular, the mission is mandated to conduct inspections of vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya suspected of carrying arms or related materiel to and from Libya, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2292 (2016)

"Irimi" replaced Operation Sofia (launched in 2015), also by the European Union, which was aimed at neutralising refugee smuggling routes.

(Source:https://www.defenseromania.ro/fregata-regele-ferdinand-va-participa-la-operatiunea-irini-din-mediterana-nava-de-lupta-desfasurata-in-largul-coastelor-libaneze_617592.html)

Air-to-ground combat operations simulated during a NATO exercise in Romania

Combat aircraft, Joint Integrated Terminal Attack Controllers (JTACs) and ground units, including an anti-aircraft system, from seven NATO countries took part in a combined air-to-ground exercise that took place in Romanian airspace on Thursday, 28 July.

As part of the exercise, Romanian Air Force F-16 aircraft teamed up with French Rafale and German Panavia Tornado fighter jets, as well as US Navy EA-18 electronic warfare aircraft, which took off from the aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman, currently in the Adriatic Sea.

The team, which included Romanian F-16s, simulated a series of combat actions against a group of Belgian F-16 and Spanish F-18s, as well as a French SAMP/T air defence system deployed in our country.

The exercise was coordinated by Allied Air Command, in conjunction with the Combined Air Operations Centre at Torrejón, the Reporting and Control Centre of the Romanian Air Component Command and a French early warning and command aircraft.

As part of the event, combat, air refuelling and early warning aircraft, directed by controllers in the final integrated strike zone (JTAC), will simulate the take-off of a potential adversary's air defence.

"This heightened vigilance activity allows forces to address a broad spectrum of threats, from tactical to strategic, emanating from multiple directions," explained Lieutenant Colonel Raphael of Allied Air Command, who was part of the exercise planning team. "Participating air units simulate how an adversary's integrated air and defence system degrades to allow for subsequent operations and the freedom of manoeuvre required for defensive operations in NATO and international airspace," the official added.

Comment:

The participation of seven Allied countries in this highly complex exercise underscores NATO's deterrence capability in the region and NATO's ability to simultaneously concentrate multinational forces from air, sea and land components in an area deemed of particular importance and to ensure it has the capability and interoperability to respond if the Alliance is threatened.

(Source:<https://umbrela-strategica.ro/operatiuni-de-lupta-aer-sol-simulate-in-cadrul-unui-exercitiu-nato-in-romania/>)

Divers defused a mine drifting in the Black Sea, 3 km off Eforie

A mine was discovered by a Coast Guard structure, 31 IUL, and the intervention of EOD divers was requested in accordance with national operational procedures specific to such situations.

A team of EOD combat divers from the Romanian Naval Forces, specialised in defusing and destroying explosive devices, is carrying out a mission on Sunday to destroy a drifting sea mine at a distance of about 2 nautical miles (3.6 km) off the Romanian coast, off Eforie, according to a National Defence Ministry statement.

"Immediately, the Naval Forces command ordered the 39 Diving Centre to take the necessary measures to send the intervention diving team to the maritime district to investigate the situation and remove the danger from Romanian territorial waters. The Naval Forces team started its mission at around 7.30 pm. We will come back with details after the end of the intervention," MAPN representatives said.

(Source:<https://newsweek.ro/actualitate/video-scafandrii-au-dezamorsat-o-mina-ce-plutea-in-deriva-in-marea-neagra-la-3-kilometri-de-eforie>)

42 countries, including Romania, ask Russia to withdraw its troops from the Zaporozhye power plant

Forty-two countries, including Romania, have demanded in a joint statement that Russia withdraw its troops and unauthorised personnel from the Zaporozhye nuclear power plant and its vicinity, reports News.ro.

The request comes after shells repeatedly hit the nuclear power plant, and on Sunday the town of Energodar, near the nuclear power plant, was bombed.

Europe's largest nuclear power plant, which has been occupied by Russian troops since March, has been under shelling for several weeks.

Experts from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) are due to inspect the site. Signatories to the communiqué are Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, South Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom and the USA, as well as the European Union.

Some 1,200 tonnes of nuclear fuel are currently stored at the Zaporozhye nuclear power plant in southern Ukraine, which is under the control of Russian troops, and mishandling it could cause a disaster that would affect both Ukrainians and neighbouring Russia, a Ukrainian official warned on Tuesday, quoted by EFE and Ukrinform news agencies.

"The situation at the nuclear power plant has been dangerous and tense since March 2022, when Russian invaders first opened fire on reactor No. 3. But now Russian representatives have announced directly that they are ready to subject Ukraine and the whole of Europe to a nuclear risk," the same Ukrainian official said.

"Such escalations are inevitable, as Russia is not only violating the rules of war and international treaties that do not allow military operations with heavy equipment on the territory of a nuclear power plant, but is simply violating the logic of human existence," Oleksandr Staruh added.

For his part, IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi of Argentina on Saturday expressed deep concern about the bombing of Europe's largest nuclear power plant on Friday 12 August, warning that someone was "playing with fire" and that there was a real risk of a "nuclear disaster".

Comment:

The Zaporozhye nuclear power plant is a source of tension, having been occupied by Russian troops since March, although Ukrainian technicians are still operating the plant.

Recently, as the Ukrainian offensive has begun in the south, the plant has been targeted by several bombings, and Russia and Ukraine blame each other for the attacks on the plant.

Ukraine has accused Russia of using the plant as a shield from which to fire on civilian targets.

Russia plans to decouple the plant from the Ukrainian power system and connect it to the Crimean peninsula, which will have a major impact on the situation of Ukrainian citizens in the future and especially in winter.

It is most likely that, given the particular danger posed by the nuclear power plant, a demilitarised zone including this strategic objective will be accepted, subject to control by Moscow, probably at the level of nuclear experts and with access for international inspectors.

(Source:<https://cursdeguvernare.ro/42-de-state-inclusiv-romania-cer-rusiei-sa-isi-retraga-trupele-de-la-centrala-nucleara-zaporojie.html>)

(Source:<https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/externe/oficial-ucrainean-la-centrala-nucleara-de-la-zaporojie-sunt-stocate-1-200-de-tone-de-combustibil-nuclear-2041721>)

Russian Black Sea Fleet headquarters attacked in Sevastopol, there are wounded, "naval parade" has been cancelled – rosZMI

The governor of Russian-appointed occupied Sevastopol has reported that a drone attacked the headquarters of the Russian fleet, as a result of which festive events for the Occupied Navy Day have been cancelled in the city.

According to Ukrainian Pravda , the Russian publication RIA Novosti and the governor of occupied Sevastopol, Mykhailo Razvozhayev, reported this.

According to Razvozhayev, an unknown object flew into the courtyard of the Black Sea Fleet headquarters in occupied Sevastopol, according to preliminary data, it is a drone, 5 people were injured, they are employees of the fleet headquarters, there were no casualties.

"A Ukrainian drone attacked the headquarters of the Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol, 5 people were injured, all festive events in honor of Navy Day in the city have been canceled for security reasons," the governor informed," writes rosZMI.

It was reported that Russian Navy Day in occupied Sevastopol on 31 July will be held with a festive programme, but without a naval parade.

Hours after the Russian accusations, Ukraine denied attacking the Russian Black Sea Fleet headquarters in Crimea with a drone, calling the Russian accusations "a deliberate provocation," reports France Presse, cited by Agerpres.

Russian accusations of "a so-called Ukrainian attack on the Russian fleet headquarters in Sevastopol" are "a deliberate provocation," Serghi Brachuk, spokesman for the Odessa regional administration in southern Ukraine, said in a video message on Telegram. "The liberation of occupied Ukrainian Crimea will happen in a different, much more effective way," he added.

Comment:

The denial of such an action by the Ukrainian side may be credible given that such an attack during the ceremonies had a much stronger effect. It is not excluded that the naval parade in

Sevastopol was cancelled by the Russian authorities because they fear possible attacks initiated by the Ukrainian side.

(Source:<https://www.blackseanews.net/read/192502>)

(Source:<https://spotmedia.ro/stiri/eveniment/atac-cu-drona-asupra-statului-major-al-flotei-ruse-din-marea-neagra-ziua-marinei-a-fost-anulata>)

(Source:https://m.adevarul.ro/international/europa/rusii-sustin-statul-major-flotei-ruse-marea-neagra-fost-atacat-armata-ucraineana-drona-ucrainenii-spun-noua-minciuna-moscovei-1_62e61adc5163ec4271268312/index.html)

On Russian Navy Day, Putin announced new naval doctrine: US and NATO are considered the biggest security threats

According to a new Russian naval doctrine signed by President Vladimir Putin on Sunday (31 July), the United States' desire for a greater presence in the world's seas and oceans and the increase in NATO activity are Russia's biggest security threats.

On Sunday, Russian Navy Day, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a revised naval doctrine recognising the United States as the main threat to Russia's maritime ambitions.

The 55-page document states that the "main challenges and threats" to national security and development are "Washington's strategic goal of dominating the world's oceans" and the advancement of NATO's military infrastructure to Russia's borders.

Addressing a large naval parade on the Neva River, Vladimir Putin said on Russian Navy Day that the doctrine now identifies the Arctic, Black Sea, Okhotsk and Bering, as well as the Baltic and Kuril Straits, as areas of national interest.

"We will firmly guarantee their protection by all means," Putin said of these stretches of water, whose maritime borders are partly disputed by Russia.

According to the doctrine, Russia will make every effort to increase its competitive edge in exploring the Arctic and its natural resources and to maintain "strategic stability", which will enhance the effectiveness of its Pacific and northern fleets.

"Guided by this doctrine, the Russian Federation will firmly and resolutely defend its national interests in the world's oceans, and having sufficient maritime power will guarantee their security and protection," the document states.

The doctrine also refers to Russia's intention to create the "Northeast Corridor", a "safe and competitive" shipping route stretching along the Arctic coast and linking Europe and Asia throughout the year.

The doctrine highlights the strategic importance of Russia's recent efforts to develop the 5,600-kilometre Northern Sea Route - which allows shipping vessels to sail along Russia's Arctic coast from Novaya Zemlia to the Bering Strait. Today's Russia cannot exist without a strong fleet... and will defend its interests in the world's oceans with firmness and determination," the doctrine document added.

The Maritime Doctrine was first adopted in 2001. The document was last updated in the summer of 2015 after Russia's illegal annexation of the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea.

Comment:

The main purpose of the document I believe is the Russian Navy's desire to protect its procurement budget. On the other hand, the Russian Navy is trying to ensure that its procurement priorities are enshrined in official long-term documents. To this end, the doctrine states that while by 2025 the Navy's main conventional weaponry will consist of high-precision long-range

cruise missiles, these will subsequently be supplemented by hypersonic missiles and various automated systems such as unmanned underwater vehicles.

But I think the problem with this plan is that it is less realistic. Since the 1990s Russia has not built any more combat ships larger than frigate level and major changes are unlikely to occur in the coming years.

While nuclear submarine construction is a leading edge, the development of a new generation of non-nuclear-powered submarines remains hampered by the lack of a functioning air-independent power system, leaving the fleet dependent on existing diesel-powered designs. (An air-independent power system does not require access to atmospheric oxygen, which favours less frequent surfacing and allows for quiet operation.)

The current economic environment is also likely to cause funding for military shipbuilding to decline over the next decade.

Even though the document states that "the national interests of the Russian Federation, as a major maritime power, extend over the entire world ocean and the Caspian Sea. These are formed taking into account the challenges and threats to the national security of the Russian Federation in the world oceans, the universally recognised principles and norms of international law, the international treaties of the Russian Federation, as well as the sovereignty and national interests of other states", this will be difficult to achieve.

Moreover, all the talk about the important role that the Russian navy could play in conventional deterrence I believe is designed to mask the minor role of large warships, given the predominantly defensive nature of Russian naval missions. Thus, while the newly approved doctrine seems to indicate that Russia is prepared to rebuild its fleet of surface combatants, including aircraft carriers, the reality seems to make this doctrine another document ready to join many other similar statements about the unfulfilled aspirations of the Russian Defence Ministry. The likelihood of Russia retaining its position as the world's most powerful fleet after the United States by 2030 I believe remains quite low.

(Source:https://www.defenseromania.ro/de-ziua-marinei-ruse-putin-a-anuntat-o-noua-doctrina-navala-sua-si-nato-sunt-considerate-cele-mai-mare-amenintari-de-securitate_617507.html)

(Source:<https://www.replicaonline.ro/rusia-isi-mobilizeaza-flota-de-razboi-in-marea-neagra-527664/>)

Who attacked the Russians in Crimea? What Kiev and Moscow say

A Russian air base in Crimea (a territory annexed by Russia in 2014) was rocked on Tuesday 09 AUG., by a series of explosions that resulted in several casualties. The cause of the explosions remains shrouded in mystery. Officially, no one has claimed responsibility for the attack, but there are several statements, which lead us to believe that Ukrainians are behind it.

A senior Ukrainian official quoted by Reuters on condition of anonymity suggested it was the work of partisan saboteurs.

Publicly, Kiev has not confirmed Ukrainian military involvement, but another senior Ukrainian military official with knowledge of the situation said Ukrainian forces were responsible, according to the New York Times.

Also a Ukrainian government official on Wednesday quotes the Washington Post. He, too, says the attack was the work of Ukrainian special forces, but did not disclose details.

The attack marks a dramatic escalation in the nearly six-month war, demonstrating the ability of Ukrainian forces to strike further behind Russian lines than previously thought.

Kiev has so far denied any responsibility for the incident. Presidential adviser Volodimir Zelenski suggested Russian incompetence was the possible cause of Tuesday's explosions, which killed one civilian and wounded eight, according to the Crimean health department. Moscow said the explosions, at least 12 according to witnesses, were detonations of stored ammunition, not the result of an attack.

Comment:

Ukraine has recently demonstrated that it is capable of striking deeper and deeper into Russian-occupied territory using the HIMARS system, but the system does not have a long enough range for such a strike.

The airbase is about 165 miles from the Ukrainian city of Odessa, prompting speculation that it may have been targeted by the Neptune missiles previously used to sink the Moskva, or missiles from Ukraine's Grom-2 tactical missile system, also called Thunder. Incidentally a Ukrainian official, speaking anonymously, told the New York Times that "an exclusively Ukrainian-made device" was used in the attack. Such an action cannot be entirely ruled out, but is unlikely.

On the other hand, Russia has no reason to blame Ukraine for the attack on the Crimean airbase, because that would show the ineffectiveness of the anti-missile systems and weaken troop morale, but it could also hurt public opinion.

Most likely the explosions were the work of Ukrainian special forces, or the base was exploded with aviation munitions caused by incompetence in storage or handling.

(Source:<https://spotmedia.ro/stiri/eveniment/cine-a-atacat-rusii-in-crimeea-ce-spun-kievul-si-moscova-ce-se-stie-pe-surse-si-cum-arata-baza-militara-devastata-video>)

(Source:<https://www.europafm.ro/mai-multe-explozii-puternice-s-au-auzit-in-apropierea-unei-baze-militare-aeriene-rusesti-video/>)

(Source:<https://ziare.com/rusia/explozii-depozit-baza-aeriana-rusa-crimeea-varianta-ucrainei-1755588>)

(Source:<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/09/russian-airbase-on-western-coast-of-crimea-damaged-in-explosions>)

(Source:https://www.defenseromania.ro/pentru-atacarea-bazei-ruse-din-crimeea-ucrainenii-au-folosit-un-sistem-de-rachete-produs-autohton-toate-indiciile-duc-catre-sistemul-grom-2_617649.html)

Russians feverishly search for weapons for war with Ukraine

A merchant ship subject to US sanctions passed through Turkey's Bosphorus Strait on its way from Syria to Russia late last month. European intelligence officials tracking the Sparta II say it was carrying military vehicles to support Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine.

The ship's journey to the Black Sea port of Novorossiysk points to Kremlin efforts to attract resources for the invasion now in its sixth month as supply lines strain under the pressure of Europe's biggest military campaign since World War II.

While Ukraine has received billions of dollars worth of weapons from the US and Europe to defend itself, Russia has to rely on its own resources to sustain frontline forces amid reports of heavy losses. Tens of thousands of Russian soldiers have been killed or wounded and thousands of armoured vehicles have been destroyed, according to US estimates.

An official familiar with the matter said the US government believes Russia has used merchant ships to move military cargoes into the Black Sea, echoing European intelligence reports. The official asked not to be identified, discussing confidential matters.

The Sparta II almost certainly brought military vehicles from the port of Tartus in Syria, which is used by Russia, according to intelligence officials and satellite imagery from July 17-25 seen by Bloomberg. They said the exact nature of the vehicles is unclear. The ship was seen in Syria with vehicles in its hold, was spotted crossing the Bosphorus Strait and was later identified in Novorossiysk with at least 11 vehicles it was likely unloading. Interestingly, the owner of the vessel is the German company SLOMAN NEPTUN of Bremen, Germany.

Maritime tracking data shows that the vessel owned by a US-sanctioned company in May, controlled by the Russian Ministry of Defence, made the voyage on those dates, apparently unhindered by NATO member Turkey.

A US State Department spokesman referred questions on the matter to the Turkish government. A Turkish official familiar with the matter said a merchant ship is only examined if there is intelligence or a suspicion of wrongdoing.

To be sure, Russia has amassed massive stockpiles of weapons during a decade-long modernization program overseen by Putin, and Kremlin officials deny any refueling problems. However, US and European officials say the loss of large numbers of tanks and armoured personnel carriers is forcing Moscow to draw on stocks of older equipment, including decades-old T-62 tanks.

Comment:

The Russian Federation has found ways to violate the spirit of the convention with the current closure of the Turkish Straits by providing logistics for its operations, transferring military technology from Syria to Black Sea ports using alleged private companies and civilian ships. However, the use of civilian merchant ships for military purposes violates the spirit of the mechanism laid down in the Montreux Convention and steps should be taken to regulate this situation.

Russia can use civilian merchant ships for military purposes at will, but NATO countries cannot enter the Black Sea with ships to support mine clearance actions.

If we add to this the fact that some countries currently bordering the Black Sea (Ukraine and Georgia) did not take part in the negotiations prior to the signing of the Convention, more and more arguments emerge in support of the need to take the necessary steps to amend the Montreux Convention to take account of the reality of the modern world.

There are also some connections to be made between the four Russian military vessels detected on 17 MAR in the Tsugaru Strait in north-eastern Japan and this transport of military equipment by Russia from Syria.

(Source:https://www.dcbusiness.ro/rusii-cauta-febril-armament-si-tehnica-de-lupta-de-unde_647008.html)

(Source:<https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/externe/japonia-a-detectat-patru-nave-de-razboi-rusesti-incarcate-cu-vehicule-militare-indreptandu-se-spre-europa-1874481>)

(Source:<https://www.reuters.com/world/japan-spots-four-russian-amphibious-transport-sailing-far-east-2022-03-17/>)

**NATO forces have stopped a Russian submarine floating off the coast of Norway
NATO military personnel have discovered and tracked a Project 941 "Akula" submarine
off the coast of Norway.**

Ghall.com writes with a link to the Daily Express.

The publication's sources reported that on August 7, a British Air Force P-8 Poseidon aircraft conducted surveillance in the skies over the North Sea off the coast of Norway. Already on Monday, NATO Navy ships and a Russian submarine were spotted in the area, which was in a surface position. It later went into the North Sea.

According to the publication's source, the NATO military discovered a Russian submarine underwater, but forced it to surface.

The article also notes that Russian submarines became particularly active after the start of the Russian Federation's armed aggression against Ukraine.

Comment:

Whatever the Russian submarine was doing there, either simple transit or specific missions, the Norwegians triggered pursuit actions, including by other NATO assets.

It's worth noting NATO officials' statements on Russian submarine activity, which is at levels they haven't seen since the Cold War.

Last month, a Royal Navy warship tracked the movements of two Russian submarines while sailing in the North Sea in a similar area.

(Source: <https://www.blackseanews.net/read/193034>)

(Source: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11098099/Russian-nuclear-shark-sub-spotted-Norways-coast-shadowed-RAF-submarine-hunter.html>)

Russian-Ukrainian conflict, what's happening outside the Black Sea

A sleepy Greek port has become vital to the war in Ukraine

The small Greek town of Alexandroupolis, 15km from the Turkish border, briefly ran out of eggs and chicken this summer. The reason was a three-day influx of hungry US Marines arriving on the USS Arlington.

Lately, Alexandroupolis has turned into a booming town that no longer depends on selling coffee, cakes and souvenirs to tourists from Turkey and the Balkans. For this it can thank Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine, which has caused activity in the city's port to explode. The port's geography makes it attractive to NATO logistics planners. It sits on the Aegean Sea, with good road and rail links north through the alliance's eastern flank. In particular, it offers access to Ukraine via Bulgaria and Romania.

The port has a large storage capacity, unlike the two larger Greek ports of Thessaloniki and Piraeus (which also happen to be run by firms with links to the Russian and Chinese governments).

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, America's armed forces have stepped up their use of Alexandroupolis to deliver weapons, including tanks, armoured vehicles and helicopters. At one point recently, more than 2,400 pieces of military equipment sat on the dock. Britain and Italy, among others, also plan to use the port for military transports, says Mr Cameron. The port's president, Konstantinos Chatzimichail, believes it could also become a major transshipment point for Ukrainian grain exports and other goods - although it is currently not deep enough to accommodate large bulk carriers.

The port could soon also be an energy hub, with plans for two floating liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals a few miles offshore. These will bring mainly US LNG to Greece, Bulgaria and

other parts of south-eastern Europe, helping to reduce their dependence on Russian gas. With the support of the Greek government, the port authority (currently housed in a modest dock building with a corrugated iron roof) has drawn up an ambitious expansion plan. This would add much more berth space, a new cargo terminal, an additional 500-metre pier and a bypass to the local motorway. A €1.1bn (\$1.1bn) upgrade will add an extra line and electrify the railway linking the port to the EU's Trans-European Transport Network. Thanks to Ukraine, says Mr Chatzimichail, "We are preparing for a world of different corridors. It will last long after the war is over." Greece's foreign minister described Alexandroupolis as "one of the most important elements" of the country's mutual defence pact with America. James Stavridis, NATO's former supreme allied commander for Europe, says the port is "located at a strategic crossroads between the Aegean and Black Seas and will be of increasing potential value as events unfold in Ukraine". He says NATO could also "forward-based warships there temporarily and position them to move quickly into the Black Sea in a crisis, with Turkey's permission."

This angers Russia and could be seen as a sensitive moment for the privatisation of the port. The Greek government, is going ahead with plans to sell a 67% stake in Alexandroupolis through a 40-year concession. Bids are due on 29 July. Two of the four consortia that have pre-qualified to bid are backed by US investors and are therefore considered NATO-friendly. The other two have less clear backing. One of these consortia is led by Ivan Savvidis, a Greek-Russian tycoon based in Russia and said to be on good terms with the Kremlin: he is a former MP with United Russia, the party unofficially led by Mr Putin. Mr Savvidis's chances of winning seem remote. If he were to offer the most, the bid could be blocked for competitive reasons: he already owns the Thessaloniki concession.

The other bidder is run by an entity controlled by Dimitris Coupelouzos's family. He is one of Greece's best-known billionaires, with interests in energy, construction, property and media. A former Greek MP and donor to several political parties, he is also one of the most well-connected. The Copelouzos empire has long-standing business ties with Russia. For more than 30 years it has been a 50/50 partner in Prometheus, a joint venture with Gazprom, Russia's state-controlled gas giant, which currently supplies Greece with about a third of its natural gas. Mr Copelouzos is "one of the few Greek entrepreneurs who have developed business activities in Russia, especially in the infrastructure sector", according to a 2020 report by the Centre for the Study of Democracy (CSD), an independent think-tank. He was part of the consortium that renovated St Petersburg airport. Copelouzos was one of two Greek businessmen Putin met when he visited Greece in 2001. He hosted dinners at his home in Athens for top Gazprom and Russian officials. The CSD report calls him "the most influential businessman who has been closely linked to Russian interests in Greece for at least four decades" and his holding company, Copelouzos Group, "an intermediary for Russian interests in Greece". The company was closely involved in the development of two Russian-led pipelines (one of which was abandoned) to bring Russian gas and oil to Greece and neighbouring countries, the think tank notes.

America has made it clear to the Greek government that it would prefer to see an American-backed consortium win. Some Western officials are reportedly concerned that if the Copelouzos-led group wins, it could give Russia a better view of events at the port or, worse, slow its development. The terms of the tender do not stipulate a minimum level of investment. For its part, the Athens government led by Kyriakos Mitsotakis - loyal to NATO and very friendly to America - will not want to anger its allies by handing the port over to anyone considered close to their geopolitical rivals. A spokesman for the state fund selling the port downplays the risks, saying that while the aim of the sale is to "maximise economic returns", it will be subject to

"screening... in terms of protecting national security and defence". Mr Cameron, the US logistics director at the port, is not distracted by the ownership issue. He says his team is already preparing for the next shipment of military equipment, which could be in place to defend NATO's eastern border and Ukraine by mid-August. "And there will be a lot more after that."

(Source:https://www.economist.com/europe/2022/07/21/a-sleepy-greek-port-has-become-vital-to-the-war-in-ukraine?utm_source=headtopics&utm_medium=news&utm_campaign=2022-07-22)

(Source:<https://papernewslive.com/a-sleepy-greek-port-has-become-vital-to-the-war-in-ukraine/122113/>)

British frigate HMS Portland has detected and tracked two Russian submarines in the North Sea

The British frigate HMS Portland has detected and tracked two Russian Akula-class submarines in the North Sea, northwest of Norway. These are the submarines Severodvinsk and Vepr, which were identified and tracked while submerged along the Norwegian coast.

The Russian vessels were also monitored after they surfaced. According to the UK Defence Journal quoting the Royal Navy, the events took place on 16 and 19 July.

The operation involved the frigate HMS Portland (Type 23) and a Merlin anti-submarine helicopter equipped with modern sonars, sensors and torpedoes, the source added.

At the same time, a British Poseidon P8 marine patrol aircraft also participated in monitoring Russian submarines in the North Sea. The Russian vessels are part of the Russian North Sea Fleet.

No incidents were recorded during the operations.

(Source:https://www.defenseromania.ro/fregata-britanica-hms-portland-a-detectat-si-urmarit-doua-submarine-rusesti-in-marea-nordului_617390.html)

US changes aircraft carriers in the Mediterranean: Harry S. Truman to be replaced by George H.W. Bush

According to news.usni.org, the U.S. aircraft carrier George H.W. Bush (CVN-77) departed, on 10.08.2022, from Norfolk Naval Base, to execute its first long-range march in the 6th Fleet area of responsibility.

It will move to the Mediterranean Sea, where it will replace the aircraft carrier Harry S. Truman, which has been in the region for over eight months.

The George H.W. Bush's naval grouping will include the cruiser USS Leyte Gulf (CG-55) and the destroyers USS Delbert D. Black (DDG-119), USS Truxtun (DDG-103) and USS Farragut (DDG-99).

Harry S. Truman and his naval grouping will carry out missions in the Mediterranean Sea starting in December 2021. In that time, the aircraft carrier has twice passed under NATO command, the first US ship to do so since the end of the Cold War.

Comment:

Amid the Ukraine crisis the US is maintaining a credible naval strike force in the Mediterranean to increase NATO's deterrence capabilities in the region.

(Source:https://www.defenseromania.ro/sua-schimba-portavioanele-in-marea-mediterana-harry-s-truman-va-fi-inlocuit-de-george-h-w-bush_617673.html)

China, Taiwan in the context of US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit

China responds to US. Two Chinese aircraft carriers have left their bases and could encircle Taiwan to the north and south ahead of Pelosi's visit

The China Sea is one of the most tense regions right now as Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives and leader of the US Democrats, is expected in Taiwan. The US has made a real show of force to discourage any possible Chinese aggression, while Beijing seems to be responding in kind.

Nancy Pelosi is expected in Taiwan on 02 AUG. Her arrival on the Chinese-claimed island would mark the highest-ranking constitutional politician to visit Taiwan in decades.

China has issued much harsher warnings than usual and has even hinted at a military response, while the US is undeterred and all indications are that Pelosi will arrive in Taiwan.

In all this context the US has an impressive force in the Pacific, which includes the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan, returned to the South China Sea from Singapore and in Okinawa, Japan, some 700 km from Taiwan the US has the amphibious assault ship USS Tripoli on alert, while in the region in Sasebo, Japan is also the amphibious assault ship USS America.

Also in the Pacific Ocean are the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln and 37 other warships and three submarines.

The aircraft carrier Ronald Reagan lies east of Taiwan.

China is also responding. According to media close to the Chinese government, the Liaoning and Shandong aircraft carriers may be heading north and south of the island, encircling Taiwan.

Both sides justify the massive presence near Taiwan by military exercises.

Taiwan issue - Taiwan and China split in 1949, when Nationalist forces led by Chiang Kai-Shek were forced to retreat to the island of Taiwan following their defeat by Communist forces led by Mao. Thus, near the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949, the Communist Party of China established the People's Republic of China, overthrowing the Nationalist government on the Chinese mainland.

Since then, both Taiwan and China claim to be the representatives of the true Chinese state.

China - first reaction after Pelosi arrived in Taiwan. Beijing announces "targeted military maneuvers" as a show of force

China announced on Tuesday 02 AUG that its military will launch "targeted military manoeuvres" in response to a visit to Taiwan by US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi, reports Agerpres, citing AFP, Reuters and EFE.

The military's action is aimed at "resolutely defending national sovereignty and territorial integrity and countering foreign interference and separatist attempts at 'Taiwan independence'," said Wu Qian, a spokesman for the Chinese Defence Ministry.

In a separate announcement, the Chinese military's Eastern Command conveyed that it will conduct combined military exercises near Taiwan starting Tuesday night and test-fire conventional missiles at sea east of Taiwan island.

The exercises will include naval and air military applications north, southwest and northeast of Taiwan, long-range firing in the Taiwan Strait and tests of missiles launched east of Taiwan, the command said.

Russia puts stick through fence: China has right to take necessary steps to defend its sovereignty
China has the right to take "the necessary measures to protect its sovereignty", Russia said Tuesday, describing US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan as an "obvious provocation", reports Agerpres, citing France Presse.

"The Chinese side has the right to take the necessary measures to protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity on the Taiwan issue," the Russian Foreign Ministry stressed in a statement. The Russian Foreign Ministry described the visit of the top US official to Taiwan as an "obvious provocation" aimed at discouraging China.

The Chinese military said it "will launch a series of targeted military actions in response" to the visit.

"We call on Washington to refrain from actions that undermine regional stability and international security and to recognise the new geopolitical reality in which there is no place for American hegemony," says the Russian Foreign Ministry.

Earlier in the day, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the visit was causing "increased tension" in the region and accused Washington of choosing the "path of confrontation".

China's military unveiled strategy for Taiwan island containment exercises

China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) has presented a series of information on military exercises around Taiwan Island since Thursday, saying it is the first time it has held such large-scale, multi-regional exercises around the island.

Senior researcher at the PLA's Naval Research Academy, Zhang Junshe, explained to the Chinese media the importance of the six zones established around the island for the exercises.

The area to the south-east of Pingtan Island is the narrowest point on either side of the Taiwan Strait, breaking the so-called "median line", which China has never recognised.

The two exercise zones north of Taiwan Island can directly block Keelung Port.

The area east of Taiwan Island directly targets the military bases in Hualien and Taitung, forming a frontal attack position.

The exercise area southeast of Kenting can effectively control the entrance and exit to the Bashi Channel.

The exercise area in the southwest of the island is close to Kaohsiung and Zuoying and can close and control the military bases in Kaohsiung. More importantly, it can ensure the six exercise zones totally block Taiwan Island.

Taiwan says China's military exercises are challenging international order. Japan and South Korea call for dialogue

Taiwan says China's military exercises violate its territory and challenge international order.

Taiwan's defence ministry says the island will firmly defend its security. Japan and South Korea have called for dialogue.

Taiwan's Ministry of Defence said on Wednesday 03 AUG that China's military exercises violated the island's territorial sovereignty and the principles of the United Nations. In this context, the ministry stressed that the island will firmly defend its sovereignty, Reuters reports. The defence ministry said it was closely monitoring Beijing's military activities around the island.

China's exercises have led to air and sea space blockades, the ministry said.

Taiwan's defence ministry said it would counter any moves that violate territorial sovereignty and increase its level of vigilance. At the same time, the ministry told a news conference that China continues to launch psychological warfare in Taiwan and that people should not believe rumors and report false information to the government.

Authorities will implement plans to "ensure security and stability around the island" - in response to China's announcement of three days of military exercises around the island starting Thursday. The Taiwanese cabinet added that citizens must feel safe.

At the same time, Taiwan's Foreign Ministry conveyed that China's notification of these military actions is a provocation that challenges international order and stressed that Taiwan will remain in contact with countries, including the United States, to avoid escalating tensions.

Japan described China's military exercises, in response to Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan, as, "worrying", but made no further comment on its presence in Asia. Cabinet representative Hirokazu Matsuno told a news conference that the Japanese government had conveyed its concerns about the military operations to China and reiterated its hope that the Taiwan Strait issues would be resolved through dialogue.

South Korea also called for dialogue to maintain peace and stability in the region.

"Our government's position is to maintain close communication with the parties concerned (...) given the importance of peace and stability in the region through dialogue and cooperation," a Seoul presidency official told reporters.

Taiwan announces "live ammunition" military exercises Tuesday and Thursday following China's military manoeuvres

Taiwan is to hold military drills this week (08-14 AUG) - with live ammunition - to simulate the island's defence against a Chinese invasion, officials announced Monday, as China conducts new military exercises in the island area, AFP reports.

"We will train to repel simulated enemy attacks against Taiwan," an 8th Corps spokesman, Lou Woei-jye, tells AFP.

Taiwanese forces are due to train on Tuesday and Thursday - in facing landings, in the Pingtung region in the far south, the Taiwanese military says.

Beijing has ignored urges to end several days of military exercises around the island and continued joint air and sea drills on Monday, following a visit last week by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Taipei.

Lou Woei-jye says the Taiwanese exercises were planned and are not a reaction to the ongoing Chinese exercises.

Taiwan regularly holds military exercises simulating a Chinese invasion, and last month trained to repel attacks from the sea as part of a "joint interception operation" in its largest annual military exercises.

China has changed its mind in defiance of the West: Maneuvers to simulate anti-submarine warfare and maritime desegregation around Taiwan continue

China's military announced on Monday 08 AUG, despite calls from the West, that it will continue its military exercises near Taiwan in protest at US Congressional House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to the island claimed by Beijing, reports Agerpres, citing AFP and Reuters.

"The People's Liberation Army (...) continues to conduct joint practical exercises in the sea and airspace around Taiwan, focusing on joint anti-submarine and sea assault operations," the Eastern Theater Command said in a statement.

China began "live ammunition" manoeuvres in six extended areas in the vicinity of Taiwan on Thursday 04 AUG, the day after the departure of the Speaker of the lower house of the US

Congress, No.3 in the Washington administration. Those exercises, in any case in this configuration, were due to end midday (04:00 GMT) Sunday, according to the Chinese Maritime Security Administration. But the maneuvers continue on Monday, according to this Chinese military announcement.

Ships avoid Taiwan ports during Chinese navy drills

China's military exercises are making ships think twice before heading to one of Taiwan's most important ports, creating potential delays for shipments of electronic goods. Ships are dropping anchor at sea to avoid an exercise area just outside the port of Kaohsiung in southern Taiwan, said Jayendu Krishna, deputy head of consultancy Drewry Maritime Advisors.

The area is one of the largest areas where China conducts exercises and is 15 nautical miles from the port entrance. Shipowners are concerned about the possibility of missiles hitting their ships, choosing to stop ships and burn extra fuel until the exercises pass.

"They will avoid going to Kaohsiung for the next two to three days because that is directly in the line of fire," Krishna said. "Some ships and tanks have been asked to anchor and wait for orders." Kaohsiung is operating normally and no unusually heavy congestion of ships has been found in the outer seas, according to the port's vice president, Su Jiann-rong. "So far there has been no impact from military exercises," he said, and empty berths are available in the port. No ships canceled plans to enter or leave port Thursday, according to a statement from Taiwan's Ministry of Transport.

The Taiwan Strait is a key supply chain route, with nearly half of the global container fleet passing through the waterway this year. As ships continue to travel through the straits during military exercises, they sail around exercise deployment areas.

Some shipowners have banned their ships from transiting the strait. Two liquefied natural gas suppliers have advised ships not to travel the waterway until they can confirm that military exercises have ended, according to traders familiar with the matter.

The city of Kaohsiung is a major stop for ships picking up semiconductor chips from Taiwan and is also where state-owned refiner CPC Corp. produces petrochemicals for manufacturing plants around the world, shipping experts said. Additional delays will occur and eventually affect Asian cargo shipments headed to the U.S., Drewry's Krishna said.

China is not giving up on forced unification with Taiwan: Beijing withdraws pledge not to send troops to island

China has withdrawn a promise not to send troops or administrative staff to Taiwan after taking the island back, an official document published on Wednesday, cited by Reuters, also signals a decision by President Xi Jinping to grant less autonomy than previously suggested.

The white paper, titled "The Taiwan Question and China's Reunification in the New Era," comes after several days of unprecedented Chinese military exercises near the island, which Beijing claims as its own territory, in protest at US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit last week. "New era" is a term commonly associated with Xi's leadership.

Taiwan rejects China's claims to sovereignty, saying the island's people should decide their own future and vows to defend its democracy, Reuters recalls.

China has said in two previous white papers on Taiwan, in 1993 and 2000, that it "will not send troops or administrative personnel based in Taiwan" after unification is achieved.

This line, intended to assure Taiwan that it will enjoy autonomy after it becomes a special administrative region of China, no longer appears in the latest white paper.

The DPA news agency also reports that amid continuing tensions over Taiwan, China is again threatening to take back the self-governing democratic island republic by military means if

necessary. "We will work with the utmost sincerity and make every possible effort to achieve peaceful reunification". "But we will not renounce the use of force and reserve the option to take all necessary measures," the Chinese government said in the white paper.

"The use of force would be the last resort (...). We will only have to take drastic measures to respond to provocation by separatist elements or outside forces if they ever cross our red lines." No foreign interference in Taiwan will be tolerated, says the Chinese leadership, adding that "the historic goal of reunifying our homeland must and will be achieved".

Shipping remains calm on Taiwan situation

The marine insurance industry sees little increased risk from China's exercises.

US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan brought an immediate response from Beijing: live firing exercises in the waters around the island for four days after her visit. China said additional exercises would follow in the Yellow Sea and Bohai, near South Korea and Japan, by the end of the month, and declared that Taiwan's "median line", an unofficial division of space between the two sides, has never existed and will not be respected.

The shipping industry is paying close attention, as it did in the weeks before Russia's invasion of Ukraine. On 15 February, maritime insurers decided that an invasion was imminent and upgraded Russian and Ukrainian waters to the highest risk category in the industry. At this point, ships are still going to and from Taiwan. But the continuation of the island's overseas trade links depends on the shipping industry's assessment of Beijing's intentions.

Last weekend, China's exercises continued with such an enormous show of force that Taiwan's defense ministry said the attack was a simulated attack on Taiwan's main island. And on Sunday 07 AUG, China's exercises became even more provocative, with Chinese ships crossing the median line.

These first days of simulated attacks have not deterred shipping companies or their insurers. On Sunday, the Marshall Islands-flagged container ship Spirit of Lisbon, for example, docked in the Taiwanese port of Taichung, waiting to depart for the Chinese port of Xiamen. Around the ship, the port was crowded and, as usual, other ships were waiting offshore for their turn to dock. In the port of Mailiao, the Panama-flagged bulk carrier Atlantic Tiger had just arrived after a 27-day voyage from Morro Redondo, Mexico. She too was surrounded by ships waiting to unload their cargo and receive Taiwanese cargo.

In London, marine insurers were watching developments closely. We asked Neil Roberts - head of marine and aviation at Lloyd's Market Association, which represents insurers and secretary of the Joint War Committee (JWC), a London-based body that ranks world waters according to risk - how concerned insurers are. Higher risk means more expensive insurance. And if the JWC places an area of water in its highest-risk category - as it did with the Sea of Azov and the Russian and Ukrainian parts of the Black Sea on 15 February - the terms of cover have to be confirmed through negotiations, rather than framed in pre-existing arrangements, making it difficult to get insurance.

But as of Sunday, the JWC had not elevated any waters around Taiwan to its highest-risk category. In fact, those waters are not listed by the JWC at all, meaning they are not considered to pose a high risk to shipping, although it goes without saying that crews have been briefed on the exercise areas and are expected to avoid them.

On 14 February, Russia announced that it would withdraw its troops from its border with Ukraine. The next day, the JWC upgraded Russian and Ukrainian waters to its highest risk category. I suspected that the committee was overreacting, but it clearly had credible sources and

an acute sense of risk. The fact that the JWC and the shipping industry are not frightened by China's show of force so far is good news for Taiwan. Indeed, a drop in shipping traffic to the island may be one of the best indicators available to predict serious future problems.

Comment:

China's response has been to execute several integrated military exercises around Taiwan, including missile firings that could enter Taiwanese territory and have already landed in Japan's claimed exclusive economic zone in the East China Sea.

China's reaction may be considered over the top, but nothing new militarily. Any large-scale exercise helps the military learn to operate better, and in this context may help it gain intelligence on Taiwan's defensive system.

Moreover, Beijing has consistently invaded Taiwan's air and sea space for years, so much of the Chinese reaction seems little more than an action designed to save face. And in a way, it mirrors US reactions after North Korean missile tests: much sound and fury that changes nothing.

That's not to say the exercises aren't dangerous and provocative. It is likely to scare off civilian air carriers and commercial shipping. But any long-term effect is unlikely, because once the exercises are over, things will return to normal. Or, China could try to more rigidly enforce the Air Defense Identification Zone around Taiwan, but most civilian air carriers already comply with the identification requirements. It is also suggested that Beijing could decide to do more of these types of exercises regularly around Taiwan, keeping the island in a perpetual state of nervous tension. It might, but it would also be risking a great deal and the possibility of an accident triggering a full-blown crisis: the accidental downing of a civilian airliner, cargo or passenger ship submerged in international waters is not desirable by China.

On the other hand, if China really wants to impose some tough measures on Taiwan, a real escalation would be the imposition of a shipping blockade. This, however, would probably represent a red line for the United States and the international community, as a unanimously recognised international right "freedom of navigation" is being violated.

(Source:https://www.defenseromania.ro/china-raspunde-sua-doua-portavioane-chineze-au-parasit-bazele-si-ar-putea-inconjura-taiwanul-in-nord-si-sud-inaintea-vizitei-lui-pelosi_617533.html)

(Source:https://www.defenseromania.ro/china-prima-reactie-dupa-ce-pelosia-a-ajuns-in-taiwan-beijingul-anunta-manevre-militare-tintite-ca-o-demonstratie-de-forta_617540.html)

(Source:<https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/externe/taiwan-spune-ca-exercitiile-militare-ale-chinei-provoaca-ordinea-internationala-japonia-si-coreea-de-sud-fac-apel-la-dialog-2034891>)

(Source:https://www.defenseromania.ro/rusia-baga-batul-prin-gard-china-are-dreptul-sa-ia-masurile-necesare-pentru-a-si-apara-suveranitatea_617541.html)

(Source:<https://dantomozei.ro/2022/08/07/armata-chinei-a-prezentat-strategia-exercitiilor-de-izolare-a-insulei-taiwan/>)

(Source:<https://www.news.ro/externe/taiwanul-anunta-exercitii-militare-cu-munitie-reala-marti-si-joi-in-urma-manevrelor-militare-ale-chinei-1922403508002022081220808960>)

(Source:https://www.defenseromania.ro/china-s-a-razgandit-sfidand-occidentului-manevrela-de-simulare-a-luptei-antisubmarin-si-a-desantului-maritim-din-jurul-taiwanului-continua_617608.html)

(Source:<https://gcaptain.com/ships-avoid-taiwans-ports-chinese-navy/>)

(Source:https://www.defenseromania.ro/china-nu-renunta-la-unificarea-fortata-cu-taiwanul-beijingul-isi-retrage-promisiunea-de-a-nu-trimite-trupe_617650.html)

(Source:<https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/08/08/shipping-rates-taiwan-china-tension/>)

Economy, port operations, maritime transport

Challenges facing shipping in the context of the COVID-19 crisis

Shipping is the backbone of international trade and the global economy. More than 80% of the volume of international trade in goods is transported by sea, and the percentage is even higher for most developing countries. The Review of Maritime Transport is a flagship UNCTAD report, published annually since 1968. It provides an analysis of structural and cyclical changes affecting maritime trade, ports and shipping, as well as an extensive collection of maritime trade and transport statistics. This year's edition of the report puts a special focus on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the industry and includes a special chapter on the challenges facing seafarers in the context of the manning crisis.

(Source : <https://unctad.org/webflyer/review-maritime-transport-2021>)

Shipping incident on the Danube in the Chilia Veche area. A drifting Ukrainian ship washed up on the Romanian shore

Suspicious naval incident on the Danube on Saturday morning, 23 July. A Ukrainian ship anchored in the area of Chilia Noua (Ukraine) started drifting for unknown reasons and ended up on the Romanian shore in the area of Chilia Veche, where it hit the pontoon of a guesthouse and damaged at least one boat. A Ukrainian tug intervened.

"According to witnesses, a Ukrainian vessel (Chalsi), which was "at anchor" in the area of New Chilia (Ukraine), for reasons still unknown, started drifting to the Romanian shore of the Chilia Arm where it hit the pontoon of a guesthouse, also damaging at least one boat," reports the Constanta Coast Guard.

A Ukrainian tugboat arrived shortly after, 5-10 minutes later, and "pulled" the vessel out of the area. The freighter Chalsi is under Palau flag and belongs to the shipowner BLACK SEA SHIPPING MANAGEMENT CO LTD ODESSA.

(Source:<https://stiripesurse.directorylib.com/incident-naval-pe-dunare-in-zona-chilia-veche-un-vapor-ucrainean-aflat-in-deriva-a-ajuns-pe-malul-ro-1116605.html>)

(Source:<https://observatornews.ro/eveniment/incident-naval-suspect-pe-dunare-un-vapor-a-inceput-sa-pluteasca-in-deriva-din-senin-si-a-ajuns-de-pe-malul-ucrainean-pe-cel-romanesc-a-distrus-un-ponton-si-o-barca-480594.html>)

(Source:<https://ziare.com/incident/vapor-ucraina-incident-naval-dunare-1752769>)

Ship insurers sail into the unknown as grain deal with Ukraine is concluded

A number of insurers are interested in providing cover for grain shipments from Ukraine after an agreement was reached to reopen Black Sea ports, although the first shipments are expected within weeks, industry sources said. Russia and Ukraine on Friday signed a landmark agreement to reopen ports for grain exports, raising hopes that an international food crisis exacerbated by the Russian invasion can be eased.

The agreement capped two months of talks brokered by the United Nations and Turkey, a NATO member that has good relations with both Russia and Ukraine and controls straits leading to the Black Sea. Securing transport and insurance will be a crucial part of the process ahead.

"There are a number of insurers who have expressed an interest in writing this risk and also one or two brokers. There may be a consortium that forms," Neil Roberts, head of marine and aviation at Lloyd's Market Association, told Reuters.

"A number of things are going to have to be worked out and insurers will have to assess voyages on an individual basis," said Roberts, whose association represents the interests of all underwriting companies in the Lloyd's of London insurance market.

"We anticipate some sort of test to provide comfort to commercial interests. We wouldn't expect ships to start going out for at least a few weeks," Roberts said. "Then there's the question of chartering and who arranges it. It's going to take some time to put these contracts in place." The LMA has placed Ukrainian waters in their high-risk area and any sailings must get approval from insurers, who are awaiting more details on how the arrangement will work. "The will is there for this humanitarian initiative, but the insurers can't give any idea about the type of cover or pricing until they know more," said an insurance source familiar with the situation. "It's how quickly it can get from the diplomatic table to a plan that actually evolves."

A blockade of Ukrainian ports by Russia's Black Sea fleet, trapping tens of millions of tons of grain in silos and stranding many ships, has worsened global supply chain bottlenecks and, along with Western sanctions, fueled galloping food and energy price inflation around the country. world. James O'Brien, head of the US State Department's Bureau of Sanctions Coordination, said he is focused on "seeing the agreement fully implemented." "Based on our conversations with the insurers, if there is full implementation of this arrangement, we believe that both insurance and ships will be available," O'Brien told reporters Friday. Guy Platten, secretary-general of the International Chamber of Shipping, a global trade group, said he was ready to work with all parties. "Ensuring crew safety will be crucial if we want this agreement to move quickly," Platten said. "Questions remain about how ships will navigate heavily mined waters and how we can effectively equip ships in the region to meet the suggested deadline."

(Sursa: https://gcaptain.com/ship-insurers-sail-into-the-unknown-as-ukraine-grain-deal-reached/?subscriber=true&goal=0_f50174ef03-d0c939cd24-139869041&mc_cid=d0c939cd24&mc_eid=9c3143fd22)

European maritime safety report: key messages

The first edition of the European Maritime Safety Report (EMSAFE), published by the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), coincides with the agency's 20th anniversary. The report presents a wide range of maritime safety topics in a factual and comprehensive manner and provides an in-depth analysis of specific technical issues. EMSAFE brings together information from all EMSA-hosted databases, e.g. EMCIP, SafeSeaNet, THETIS and STCW-IS, thus providing the possibility to cross-reference data as well as a detailed overview of the maritime safety situation within the EU.

This document presents a summary of the main issues addressed in the first EMSAFE report. Overall, it can be concluded that the European Union has achieved a robust maritime safety system. Many challenges remain, but one thing is certain: weakening safety efforts cannot be an option. On the contrary, to avoid a return to the era of substandard shipping, as demonstrated by accidents such as the Erika and Prestige, the EU must continue to strengthen and invest in its maritime safety framework.

(Source: file:///C:/Users/Pc/Downloads/EMSAFE%20HIGHLIGHTS_EN.pdf)

Maritime technology and techniques

The future for naval forces: naval ships and the transition to zero carbon emissions
The Naval Forces realise the importance of reducing emissions because the future of our world and the reputation of the country they represent depends on it. Simon Newman, Principal Engineer, and Thomas Beard, Senior Analysis Engineer, BMT, explore the issues facing navies in their quest to decarbonise.

In April 2021, the UK became the first major economy to enshrine in law its target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. With Ministry of Defence (MOD) operations contributing almost two million tonnes, or 0.5% of the UK's total greenhouse effect. greenhouse gas emissions, it is clear that urgent action needs to be taken to assess naval platforms and operations and understand where and how significant efficiencies can be made to ensure that the UK's wider net zero targets are met. In doing so, the UK Ministry of Defence recently published its strategic approach to sustainability and climate change, with three steps outlined to ensure it can meet the 2050 target.

These stages are; tackling projects already planned, reducing emissions using existing and emerging technology, whilst building resilience into the supply chain, building and future equipment and harnessing new technologies to build resilience and further reduce emissions. What is not clear from the approach outlined by the MoD is how this carbon reduction will be implemented in practice for the Royal Navy's legacy and new ships. And this is the same for many if not all leading global navies. However, for most it is recognised that the targets for the navies themselves may not be complete net zero, but a push to reduce emissions as much as possible.

Naval vs commercial operations.

The commercial marine sector continues to move forward with trials of new fuels and technologies, from digital twinning to the use of automation, in an effort to improve ship efficiency and drive decarbonization efforts that will eliminate reliance on fossil fuels. In contrast, naval ships have been slower to adopt the tools and naval technologies that will move operations toward low or zero carbon. This is partly due to a range of considerations that need to be taken into account for defence and security that differ from the commercial shipping sector, from the need for safe and reliable fuel supply in global operations requiring a continuous need for bunkering in different ports around the world, to interoperability with other navies, survivability in combat, diversity of ship age and type, and variability of routes and roles. The solutions for naval forces will in many ways be different from those followed by the commercial sector.

The challenge of variability and diversity

Unlike commercial ships, military ships do not usually follow a fixed route of operation, and their original designed role may change over their lifetime due to the development of operational requirements over the extended periods of time that ships are operational. This high variability of operations, often far from the original design point, poses a significant challenge to baseline performance prediction and the design and implementation of certain CO₂ reduction measures. This contrasts with a commercial vessel that often conforms to a much more fixed operating regime where new energy saving technologies can be optimised to provide maximum efficiency gains. Navies also operate a wide range of different types of ships to manage, from small craft to aircraft carriers, and therefore any measures to reduce carbon footprint will vary from ship to ship.

As nations around the world begin to introduce legislation such as a ban on the use of fossil fuels, navies as well as commercial operators will have to comply with regulations when entering

international ports. There are three low GHG-emitting fuels that are widely anticipated to provide the bulk of marine fuel supply in the future. These are methanol, ammonia and hydrogen. However, the reality is that low-carbon fuels will not be widely available in global ports in the short to medium term, and when they are, there is likely to be huge competition for their use, including from the commercial shipping industry.

Also, in times of conflict or political unrest, fuel availability may also be compromised. For this reason, navies will need to have the flexibility to use fossil fuels for some time in the future, while using alternative low-carbon fuels when available.

Energy-saving technologies for naval vessels

There are a number of energy-saving measures that should be considered for ships that can help them achieve their emission reduction targets. One of the simplest and most obvious gains is replacing old light bulbs with LED lights, which are much more energy efficient. Another aspect worth considering is anti-fouling paints for ships' hulls. Energy storage systems, such as batteries, can allow a ship to operate more efficiently for some applications by smoothing transient power demand and providing standby power, thus allowing generators to be shut down idle. Another way to ensure optimal efficiency is to incorporate a waste heat recovery system, such as an Organic Rankine Cycle (ORC), so that heat energy from the engines can be recovered.

Comment:

With more and more countries introducing laws to ensure zero emission commitments are met, it is clear that some action needs to be taken in the Navy to reduce its carbon footprint, taking into account the specifics of current and future missions. There will be much discussion on the type of fuel chosen for navies as well as for commercial shipping, but there will need to be some level of universality to ensure the effective operation of ships in defence operations around the world and even in considering the complexity of these missions, there are steps navies can take today to reduce their carbon footprint.

Turkey begins sea trials of its own naval gunnery facility

A new Turkish naval artillery installation of 76/62 mm calibre for sea trials has been installed on the Navy's TCG Beykoz (F-503) corvette. This was reported by the Ministry of National Defence of the Republic of Turkey, writes Military.

The integration of the installation on the ship took place after the successful completion of ground tests. Now the installation awaits port and sea trials on the TCG Beykoz corvette.

The naval gun was developed jointly with the Istanbul Shipyard Command and the Machinery and Chemical Industry Corporation (MKE A.Ş) under the design and operation responsibility of the Turkish Ministry of National Defence.

The first trial firing was carried out in early December 2021. The first test phase was attended by the country's top military leadership, including the Turkish Minister of Defence and representatives of the developer.

The declared range of the 76 mm artillery installation is up to 20 kilometres, the ammunition is 70 shells, the rate of fire is 80 rounds per minute. The weight of the equipped artillery installation is 8,500 kg.

Development of the new system took about a year.

Comment:

Turkey has several programmes under development to assimilate military equipment for domestic production.

(Source: <https://www.blackseanews.net/read/192122>)

(Source: https://www.defenseromania.ro/turcia-incepe-testele-pe-mare-pentru-tunul-naval-de-76-mm-de-productie-indigena_617367.html)

Vasile Dîncu: We have signed a letter of intent for the purchase of French Scorpene submarines

Vasile Dîncu, Minister of National Defence, said in an interview with DefenseRomania last week that the Romanian Armed Forces' procurement plan includes French Scorpene submarines and French helicopters. Vasile Dîncu also pointed out that a letter of intent had been signed with the French defence minister in this regard.

Without giving too many details, Vasile Dîncu revealed that following the visit of the French delegation led by Emmanuel Macron in the middle of last month, Romania and France discussed the modernisation of the Romanian Naval Forces.

In this regard, it seems that our country has expressed its intention to purchase French Scorpene class submarines. The minister also announced a programme to equip the country with helicopters. Again, no further details.

The size of the Scorpene class submarines varies between sixty and seventy metres and the price is close to half a billion euros. They are new generation submarines, manufactured by Naval Group of France in collaboration with the Spanish company Navantia. Morocco has bought such vessels from the French company. India, Brazil, Chile and Malaysia have also bought a number of submarines in this class.

Recall that in 2018 MAPN estimated that Romania would need at least three submarines for the Romanian Naval Forces, and at the time there was even talk of German submarines of the Type 214 class developed by the Germans of ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems, which would be favorites in this program. Due to lack of funds, no further discussions were held.

Defence Minister Vasile Dîncu said yesterday (20 July) that Romania was considering the possibility of buying two state-of-the-art Scorpene submarines and two or more helicopters from France.

"For the time being, we have signed an agreement, a letter of intent with French Minister Lecornu, because France has assumed a very important framework nation mission for our territory, because the Scorpene submarines are at the top of the state of the art at the moment, associated with helicopters, which are also specialized in naval surveillance," Vasile Dîncu said in an interview for Digi 24. These new statements come shortly after Vasile Dîncu, Minister of National Defence, first said in an interview with DefenseRomania last week that the Romanian Armed Forces' equipment plan includes French Scorpene submarines and French helicopters. Asked by Naval News what implications a submarine agreement would have for France, Romania and the Black Sea region, Hugo Decis said that "the prospect of a submarine agreement between the two countries would confirm that their bilateral relationship has reached a new level following the Russian invasion of Ukraine".

Hugo Decis believes that "a Romanian submarine operating in the Black Sea would be a relevant platform from which to collect data and intelligence on Russian operations in the region, to track specific assets and, in general, this would contribute to conventional deterrence by challenging

Russia and Turkey's monopoly on the local underwater domain. The local balance of power would, of course, remain firmly in Russia's favour, but the existence of one more NATO submarine in the Black Sea should be taken into account when designing and conducting local naval operations".

Comment:

The submarine acquisition should be seen in an allied context, especially as NATO has no submarine permanently based in the Black Sea.

(Source:https://www.defenseromania.ro/dincu_617246.html)

(Source:https://www.defenseromania.ro/noi-detalii-despre-achizitia-de-submarine-franceze-romania-intentioneaza-sa-cumpere-doua-submarine-scorpene_617347.html)

(Source:<https://www.g4media.ro/analist-un-submarin-romanesc-care-opereaza-in-marea-neagra-ar-fi-o-platforma-relevanta-de-pe-care-sa-fie-colectate-date-si-informatii-despre-operatiunile-rusesti-in-regiune.html>)

Gowind fiasco in Malaysia: Authorities did not take into account the opinion of the Navy, which preferred Damen's SIGMA 10614

A Malaysian parliamentary committee recently published a report highlighting a number of serious problems with the local programme to equip six Maharaja Lela-class ships - an enlarged version of the Gowind corvettes designed by the French Naval Group but built by a local shipyard. Nearly a decade and a half ago, Malaysia embarked on a procurement programme to build six Littoral Combat Ships (LCS) in a local shipyard in cooperation with an international partner.

The ships were to be delivered in phases from April 2019 to June 2023, but so far no ship has been handed over to the Malaysian Navy, which has expressed dissatisfaction with the way the programme has been run in recent years.

The report detailed irregularities in the way the programme has been managed by the Boustead Naval Shipyard, part of the Boustead Heavy Industry Corporation (BHIC), a state-controlled entity that has been appointed to build the corvettes.

Problems were also highlighted with getting Naval Group approval for the project plans. Many of the irregularities uncovered were carried out on the orders of two senior BHIC executives. Azhar Jumaat, the current director of the programme, said 96% of the paperwork required for ship manufacture was complete. However, only 82% of these were validated, tested and approved by Naval Group, which ceased operations in November 2019 due to the shipyard's inability to continue payments.

There were also delays due to unforeseen equipment changes, which then impacted the design. Admiral (ret'd) Aziz Jaafar, head of the Malaysian Naval Forces from 2008-2015, has sent ten letters to government officials about the Navy's dissatisfaction with the programme. Jaafar also said that the shipyard did not take into account the views of the Naval Forces, particularly with regard to the Navy's preference for Damen's SIGMA 10614 type rather than the Gowind solution with which Naval Group and BHIC won the contract.

The SIGMA design was chosen by the Navy and then approved by the Ministry of Defence, only to be later changed to the Gowind design on 11 July 2011 at the suggestion of Boustead Shipyard, according to the Malaysia Chronicle.

In September 2020, the Malaysian government suspended construction of the six ships, but on 20 April announced that it had decided to continue with the programme.

Comment:

The situation in Malaysia also bears many similarities to the corvette saga in Romania, which began in 2016. Initially, the contract for the four corvettes that would equip the Romanian Naval Forces was awarded directly to Damen, which would build the ships at its shipyard in Galati or Mangalia.

Later, after the change of government, the plan was cancelled, so the procedure was restarted and a tender was organised.

In July 2019, French shipbuilder Naval Grup, in partnership with Constanta Shipyard, won the contract to build the four corvettes for the Romanian Naval Forces, after a tender marked by disputes.

The contract has not yet been signed, as talks between the Romanian state and Naval Grup have reached an impasse because, according to sources, the French side is asking for more money than was included in the bid with which it won the tender.

(Source:<https://umbrella-strategica.ro/fiascoul-gowind-in-malaysia-fortele-navale-doreau-sigma-10614-de-la-damen-dar-autoritatile-au-ales-naval-group/>)

Naval Bulletin. Second-hand options - La Fayette

Nicholas - 8 August 2022

Even if they have not officially "appeared" on the "second-hand market", the La Fayette-class frigates deserve, in light of the latest joint Franco-Romanian statements (Romanian Defence Minister Mr Dâncu and French President Mr Macron), more attention.

In the French Navy's organics, the La Fayette are also called Light Stealth Frigates and are designed for patrol missions and presence in the French exclusive economic zone.

They are not specialised ships for a particular area of combat, they are general purpose frigates, perhaps a little closer to the French term aviso. According to the armament embarked, I would say they cannot be considered frontline ships. But they are decent platforms that can be upgraded and armed to become frontline ships, as the Singaporeans did with the Formidable I wrote about here earlier.

Five units were launched throughout the 1990s, all active today. Three of them will be going through a programme of refitting navigational resources and upgrading sensors and shipboard weaponry. They will gradually be replaced by new frigates - Frégate de Taille Intermédiaire. The upgrades are quite modest compared to the capabilities of the platform - a KingKlip Mk2 sonar and CANTO countermeasures, two refurbished Sadral systems using the Mistral Mk 3 anti-aircraft missile and the adoption of the latest version of the Exocet ship-to-ship missile. All three will be withdrawn from service between 2031 and 2034 when all five FTIs are operational.

Sourcouf and Guepratte will not be included in this programme and will be used in the role of patrol vessels - Offshore Patrol Vessels to be taken out of service in 2027 and 2031.

Equipped with a 76mm gun, 32 VL Mica NG anti-aircraft missiles, 8 Exocet/NSM ship-to-ship missiles, torpedo launchers, sensors and electronic warfare systems, the two La Fayette-class frigates could be a tough nut to crack and offer new possibilities for action in the Romanian coastal area. Another potential advantage would be the uniform equipping of all the fleet's ships with sensors, weaponry and a centralised battle management system.

Comment:

The Romanian Naval Forces have launched as a first urgency the programme to equip 4 new, domestically built corvettes.

This has led to discussions about equipping them with two submarines, and now with frigates to be replaced by the French with other modern ships.

First of all, it seems that there is no desire to build modern ships in the country, not to mention the money that will all go abroad.

Are we really up to no good?

The 'La Fayette' frigates are not suitable in a particular area of combat, and this is essential for a modern ship. They were designed for patrol missions and presence in the exclusive economic zone, not for wolfing down an environment contested by an even medium-sized enemy. This is also underlined by France's intention to use such ships in the future in a patrol ship role.

The equipment of these frigates is modest:

- Exocet MM40 block II missile, old design (72 km range)/ Kalibr missiles, export version (300 km range).

- Crotale CN2 surface-to-air missile system (range 16 km)

- Automatic 100 mm TR gun, cadence 80 rounds/min, up to 17 km/ AK-176 system (76 mm gun) has a cadence of up to 120 rounds/min, up to 15 km

- 20 mm F2 mode gun, 720 rounds/minute, up to 1.5 km/ AK-630 system, up to 4000 rounds/minute, up to 4 km

In conclusion, with the existing equipment, given that France also intends to use this type of ship as a patrol vessel, the La Fayette class ships will hardly be able to cope with a naval air confrontation in the Black Sea.

In order to be effective, they need to be included in a maintenance programme immediately after purchase, and under these circumstances the costs can only be justified if France donates these ships to Romania at no cost.

(Source:<https://www.rumaniamilitary.ro/actualitati-naval-optiuni-second-hand-la-fayette>)

Why the Russians don't jam GPS signals more strongly in Ukraine. Five possible explanations for Russia's electronic warfare

Russian forces have repeatedly jammed US Global Positioning System signals, both as part of its war against Ukraine and at various, well-chosen times during NATO's military activities in northern Europe. Despite demonstrating that it has this capability, as well as the ability to go as far as physically destroying satellites, Russia's impact on GPS operation in Ukraine has not been as strong as one might have expected.

Several possible causes for this have been identified in the expert analysis environment, most likely the Kremlin's decision was made based on several of the factors listed below.

Russia's electronic warfare capability is not as good as people think

Russian forces have a very discouraging reputation when it comes to electronic warfare, and the Russians are doing their best to reinforce this image. At one point, the state news agency Sputnik claimed that by using electronic warfare capabilities, Russian forces "can render aircraft carriers useless."

However, since Russian forces in the Ukraine conflict were surprisingly less capable than expected in this combat environment, the idea was born that this might be their true ability to interfere with GPS.

Most disagree with this hypothesis, and repeated examples of the Russians jamming GPS signals in northern Norway from positions far from the border are used as arguments. Moreover, it is pointed out that in some cases this jamming has been so precise that the signals used by Russian GLONASS satellites, despite having frequencies very close to those of GPS, have not been affected.

It is also believed that Russia has even demonstrated the ability to mimic the GPS signal.

Russian troops need American GPS

Proponents point to downed Russian fighter jets with GPS receivers glued to their on-board displays.

Russia's GLONASS navigation satellite system and the Chayka ground-based radio navigation system are both available for use in Ukraine. However, there are apparently not enough receivers compatible with these systems to equip all Russian forces.

As the world's first global navigation satellite system, GPS receivers have become both plentiful and cheap. Affordable GPS receivers and some duct tape seem to be the fallback solution for Russia's more poorly equipped military.

High-powered GPS jamming systems are easy to discover and neutralize

Any strong and constant radio frequency emission can be easily located and attacked. Many systems have missiles specially designed to intercept and destroy jammers. Even without such weapons, direction finders can easily determine the position of a transmitter and facilitate an artillery attack or aerial bombardment.

By making judicious use of electronic warfare systems, limiting their power and transmission time, Russian commanders could aim to avoid discovering the position of GPS jamming complexes.

Ukraine would be less affected anyway

While Ukraine is increasingly obtaining and using Western weapons, many of which use GPS, it also has huge stockpiles of Soviet-era weapons. These do not rely on GPS and are probably unaffected by most, if not all, forms of electronic warfare.

Ukrainian forces are also probably less dependent on the sophisticated command, control and communications systems used by Western militaries. Thus GPS jamming, which would most likely disrupt the operation of US and NATO troops, has much less impact on Ukrainian forces. Keeping the best capabilities for use against the US and NATO

Despite the location of the conflict, Ukraine is not the enemy the Kremlin is really worried about, Russia's concerns focus on the US and NATO.

Introducing the most advanced and powerful Russian electronic complexes into the Ukrainian theatre of operations would allow the West to make contact and study their technology, techniques, tactics and procedures of use. And this would facilitate the development of electronic countermeasures or counter-countermeasures, which may make weapons less effective in future conflicts.

The Kremlin has probably decided to keep the best anti-GPS capabilities in reserve for later use against more powerful forces and more important targets.

Comment:

Each of the factors presented has a greater or lesser influence on the decision made by the Russian military on jamming GPS signals in the war in Ukraine. But there have been numerous instances where Russian fighter jets have used GPS receivers glued on board. This shows that Russian troops need American GPS.

On the other hand, the desire to keep the best capabilities for use against the US and NATO cannot be ruled out.

(Source:https://www.defenseromania.ro/de-ce-rusii-nu-bruiaza-mai-puternic-semnalele-gps-in-ucraina-cinci-posibile-explicatii-ale-razboiului-electronic-purtat-de-rusia_617385.html)

Military Science

Advice from American political scientist Francis Fukuyama: Ukraine needs to hurry up before Putin is helped by Trump

Ukraine should focus on liberating southern regions and unblocking seaports. Movement in this direction has begun, and real changes may become visible by the end of the summer, says Japanese-born American political scientist Francis Fukuyama in an interview with Deutsche Welle.

According to the expert, the Ukrainian armed forces are capable of retaking Herson and other Russian-occupied settlements in the region. He also argues that gaining access to the Black Sea, which will allow Ukraine to export food abroad, is an extremely important point. Fukuyama notes that liberating the south is now even more important than the fight for Donbas.

"By the end of the summer we may see real progress in the south. It is very important for Ukraine to restore access to Black Sea ports to resume exporting all its agricultural products, to break the Russian blockade of Odessa. I think that's what they will focus on. They have already started an offensive in the Herson region and have made some progress there. If the Ukrainians really liberate that area by September or October, that will lay the groundwork for serious ceasefire negotiations to begin," Fukuyama said.

The Stanford University professor also said that retaking the occupied territories in the Lugansk and Donetsk regions would take much more time and resources, so it is not worth hoping for in the coming months.

He also says Ukraine needs to hurry up because if Donald Trump returns to the US presidency in 2024, he could solve all of Putin's problems, as the Republican leader plans to withdraw the United States from NATO.

The American political scientist has identified two major dangers threatening the unity of the West. "The first test will be European support for Ukraine in the winter. Russia has already effectively stopped natural gas supplies. And I think once the cold weather comes, Europe will have a real problem finding a replacement for Russian gas. The second danger is that support for Ukraine from US Republicans is gradually weakening. At the same time, Trump is on the other side, pro-Russian.

Obviously, if he returns in 2024 as president, he can solve all Russia's problems today, because Trump plans to withdraw the US from NATO. Thus, the Kremlin will achieve its main goal simply by changing the course of US policy. That is why I think it is extremely important for Ukraine to make some progress and take the initiative on the battlefield during the summer. ...If the idea prevails that the situation has reached a stalemate that will last forever, then I think there

will be cracks in the unity of the West and there will be more calls for Ukraine to give up territory to stop the war."

Russia today reminds Fukuyama more of Nazi Germany than anything else. Its only ideology is extreme nationalism, albeit in a less developed form than that of the Nazis. Moreover, this regime is very weakly institutionalised and revolves around one man - Vladimir Putin, who controls all the main levers of power, he says.

"If you compare Russia with China, they are very different. China has a huge Communist Party with 90 million members. It has strong internal discipline. There are a lot of rules about who gets promoted and how the whole government system is run. In the case of Russia, there is no such institutionalisation of the state regime. Everything really revolves around the president and his specific decisions. And so when he leaves, it's not clear what will happen, says the political scientist.

"I imagine there will be a big power struggle between all the power ministries and those internal forces that underpin his power. I don't see in this political regime a clear ideology that they project outwards. I think the people who support the Putin regime are simply those who, for various reasons, don't like the West. They can be left-wing, like, say, the Venezuelan leadership, or right-wing, like Hungary. But that is all. The current Russian regime has no consistent ideology.

Comment:

Even if Russia is bluffing about its new "devastating" offensive, it is crucial for Western cohesion that Ukraine begins to regain some territory and more important for future status to regain some territory in the south, mainly the city of Herson and the consolidation of the Black Sea exit.

Without Ukraine making some progress and regaining its military momentum over the summer and with the prospect of Mr. Trump's return to office in 2024, support for Ukraine will suffer because unity in the West depends on people believing there is a military solution to the problem in the short term. There are open questions about the West's political will to continue its unwavering support for Ukraine as economic difficulties put increasing pressure on governments.

If there is a sense that we are facing an extended stalemate that will last forever, then I think unity will begin to break down and there will be more calls for Ukraine to give up territory to stop the war.

(Source: <https://ziare.com/ucraina/ucraina-razboi-rusia-invazie-sfaturi-francis-fukuyama-vladimir-putin-donald-trump-1751689>)

(Source: <https://www.dw.com/en/trump-2024-comeback-would-solve-all-of-russias-problems/a-62538201>)

(Source: <https://www.businessinsider.com/trump-getting-reelected-2024-would-fix-all-of-russia-problems-2022-7>)

(Source: <https://news.am/eng/news/712885.html>)

Destabilising the big powers

Author: George Friedman

The Geopolitical Futures Model argues that entities in the Northern Hemisphere represent the center of power in the global system and define how it functions at any given time. The anchors

of this hemisphere are China, Russia, the EU and the US. These four entities account for 60% of global GDP, the measure of economic output. They also collectively hold the majority of global military power. They are different in terms of their military and economic power. Russia has a small GDP but a significant military. EU states have relatively small armies, but together have an impressive GDP. The US and China have both types of power.

The Northern Hemisphere faces economic, political and military challenges. These three occur together when entities are subject to some level of dysfunction. The possibility of these problems spreading globally is, over time, almost certain. It is also likely that this period will affect these entities. World War II was a political, military and economic phenomenon that included almost all of these countries. It led to political and economic transformations that still shape the world. So the question is how the current crisis will affect the entities.

The Northern Hemisphere is facing enormous economic problems, some connected to other problems, some not. The biggest of these is China's economic decline. China has developed enormously over the last 40 years. Now, the squeeze on the global economy does not allow China to continue exporting, thus increasing the risk of investment in China.

At the same time, the US economy is also going through a recession. The problems started with the solutions to the COVID-19 crisis in 2020. But just as important, and too little mentioned, is the fact that 12 years have passed between the 2008 recession and the recession caused by COVID-19, and this is a longer period than usual.

The Russian-Ukrainian war has imposed many constraints on the system. The US launched a financial war on Russia; Russia responded with an attack on the supply line. This attack has particularly affected the EU - the most fragile entity in the northern hemisphere - causing energy prices to rise and availability to fall.

Russia faces a war it is far from winning, with financial problems and supply chain intrusion, the latter putting pressure on others as well as itself. Russia is the smallest economy in the northern hemisphere and its status depends on military power, which is also subject to destruction.

There are four levels to this crisis. The first is a war which, more than any other war, has an enormous economic dimension, creating a supply chain crisis in the European Union, a bloc under enormous pressure also because of internal financial problems. The second dimension is the supply chain problem, which affects a large part of the world, causing shortages of basic needs and thus creating a crisis outside the northern hemisphere, which then spills over to the northern hemisphere. The third dimension is a cyclical recession in the US, exacerbated by a supply chain that has raised energy prices significantly. The fourth dimension, and by no means minor, is China's export decline, coupled with a fall in imported commodities and investment capital.

Perhaps the war is the cause of all this - except that China's decline, the stalling of US economic growth and fragmentation in Europe preceded the war. The war made the problems worse, but ending it will not solve them. Ultimately, the solution lies with the US, the largest military and economic entity in this hemisphere. The problem they need to solve is to deliver energy to Europe without turning to the Russians. And as there is no possibility of resolving this in a timely manner, the most likely outcome will be a crisis in which the US will seek, first and foremost, to defend itself.

Comment:

The war in Ukraine links economic warfare to EU stability and the availability of capital for China. The Northern Hemisphere is the bedrock of the global system, not least because of its military and economic power. The region can deliver stability, but this stability depends on

cooperation between key players. At the moment, all actions can affect others in the Northern Hemisphere, and economic conflict combined with military conflict means that even that little cooperation has been destroyed.

Each of these entities is unstable. It is not the instability that is unprecedented, but the fact that all four members of the hemisphere are experiencing some level of instability. The question is what the world looks like if the northern hemisphere entities destabilize at the same time. Global interaction is perhaps the most important thing, even if the group avoids mass destabilisation.

(Source: <https://monitorulapararii.ro/destabilizarea-marilor-puteri-1-44884>)

(Source: https://geopoliticalfutures.com/destabilizing-major-powers/?utm_source=GPF+Free+Newsletter&utm_campaign=f0a6a6b01d-20220803_FL_Weekly&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f716b3bf65-f0a6a6b01d-265136333&mc_cid=f0a6a6b01d&mc_eid=d4ff4fc0d2)

Maritime Security Studies

The future looks bleak for the Russian navy. Submarines, Putin's last hope
Russia's naval forces have been involved in the war in Ukraine, but their performance has been mixed at best.

The Russian navy successfully blockaded ports and launched missiles against targets in Ukraine, but along the way lost its flagship in the Black Sea, lost one of its most important amphibious warships, failed to secure control of Snake Island, and failed to mount decisive amphibious operations off the Ukrainian coast.

The Russian military will face substantial budget constraints in the future. While it is true that Russia's economy has so far withstood sanctions better than the West expected, this is unlikely to continue in the long term, especially if the United States can keep the anti-Putin coalition together.

The strategic perspective

Strategically, Russia's naval situation has changed considerably in the past few months.

The Baltic Sea is closed to Russia when Finland and Sweden join NATO. In no possible conflict could Russian warships (even submarines) use the Baltic Sea without risking imminent destruction.

Finland's accession complicates Russia's access to the north by giving NATO a better view of Russia's main naval bases in the Arctic, including its ballistic missile fleet.

Russia has the most flexibility in the Pacific, but Japan's rearmament and the increasingly strained relationship between Tokyo and Moscow will pose problems, writes Insider.

Even the Black Sea is now dangerous for Russia. If Ukraine survives this war as a political entity, it will undoubtedly have anti-ship weapons that will trouble Russia. Turkey, despite its often difficult relationship with the rest of NATO, now holds the key to naval power in the Black Sea.

Russia's surface fleet is in trouble

Russia's surface fleet is in trouble, starting with its industrial base.

Russia has reportedly cancelled the purchase of additional Project 22610 patrol vessels due to performance concerns. The average construction period for Admiral Gorshkov frigates is

currently over a decade, with only three of the ships having been delivered since the first was commissioned in 2006.

Theoretically, Russia could purchase warships from abroad (China most likely), but this would require money and also admitting the shortcomings of the domestic industry.

The existing fleet has big problems. One looming question involves Russia's aircraft carrier, the Admiral Kuznetsov. The Kuznetsov has been the butt of jokes for the past 15 years, suffering several accidents, including several fires.

The aircraft carrier has not left port since 2017, meaning the Russian naval aviation team has all but ceased to exist as an effective force.

The other two large surface ships are the two Kirov-class cruisers, Pyotr Veliki and Admiral Nahimov. The latter has been under repair for the past two decades, while the former has yet to play any significant role in the war.

Both ships have minimal ground attack capability and both would make excellent targets for the enemy. They are extremely old and cannot be seen as plausible bases for future Russian naval power.

Russia's amphibious flotilla has proved particularly useless during the war, except for temporarily blocking Ukrainian forces at Odessa. The flotilla's inability to carry out an assault on Odessa or hold Snake Island demonstrated a significant shortfall in Russian capabilities.

Submarines, the core of Russian naval power

On the other hand, the submarine fleet remains the core of Russian naval power. Russia's military shipbuilding industry withered after the collapse of the Soviet Union, but submarine construction has quickly recovered. Russian conventional and nuclear submarines remain competitive with foreign ones.

In the war against Ukraine, submarines have helped strengthen the blockade, including launching strategic missile attacks on targets across the country.

Comment:

The capabilities of submarines in modern warfare are unquestionable, but they cannot in all respects replace the capabilities required of a modern fleet with pretensions to world power. Realistically analysing the situation, at the moment Russia, in terms of maritime power, cannot claim to be a world naval power.

It seems that the Russian Federation has bet wrongly on the prestige and intimidation factor that large and powerful surface ships can offer, because at this moment Russia's surface fleet cannot survive in almost any conflict against a major power.

On the other hand the deterrent power provided by submarines is unquestionable.

(Source:<https://ziare.com/rusia/rusia-flota-ucraina-razboi-invazie-vladimir-putin-1751396>)

The Black Sea risks becoming a lake divided between Russia and Turkey **Sabina Fati - Deutsche Welle**

Turbulence is growing in the Black Sea without NATO states on the Pontic littoral having a common strategy. Romania is the only one stable and aligned with military objectives against Russia, while Bulgaria is adrift and Turkey is negotiating its position with Russia beyond mediating grain shipments from Ukraine.

In this area, anything that could have been postponed until now should become urgent for NATO and the United States. A first step for the security of the western Black Sea would be the

establishment of a permanent US base in Romania, an idea put forward during Traian Basescu's presidency and taken up through diplomatic channels after the war.

From Romania, the allies could monitor all the movements of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, if they bring sufficiently sophisticated military equipment. The question is whether there is sufficient confidence in Bucharest's determination to remain within the parameters of democratic stability and maintaining the Atlantic azimuth.

But if there is no such confidence because of ambiguities on the part of Bucharest, then the Black Sea risks remaining a lake divided between Russia and Turkey according to the interests of the two regional powers. Vladimir Putin and Recep Tayyip Erdogan have met twice in less than a month: in Tehran in the presence of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who promised him support in the war with Ukraine, and then in Sochi, Putin's summer capital.

In the four hours they spoke in Sochi, Putin and Erdogan had time to negotiate the overlapping areas where they intersect, from Iraq and Syria across the Black Sea to the Balkans. The two have plenty of room for manoeuvre and similar expansion tendencies. After all, Turkey has a history of invading Northern Cyprus in 1974 and constantly violating Greek and Cypriot territorial waters, where it continues to prospect in an area that does not belong to it.

Turkey is in NATO, but often plays by its own rules, quite similar to Russia's. So it's not out of the question that Ankara and Moscow intend to share influence in the Black Sea by excluding competition and suspending their historic rivalry. It would all be in Russia's favour, if the West does not intervene.

The war in Ukraine is about to change course in Kiev's favour, at a time when the Americans are worried about China's abrupt moves and the Europeans fear a too-harsh winter and successive political crises. On the Black Sea, Turkey continues its ambiguities, in Bulgaria President Rumen Radev, a general and former air force commander, is pirouetting with the interim government for a return to a friendlier policy towards Russia, and Romania seems to be losing its breath in domestic excesses.

Comment:

Until Russia's attack on Georgia and Ukraine the regional security construct in the Black Sea area was considered viable. This construction was mainly based on the existing balance between Russia and Turkey.

It is now clear that the two states have started to negotiate the situation in the region and basically divide their areas of influence based on a common desire to harm their interests as little as possible.

Basically Turkey is on a diplomatic but also military offensive in the region and Russia cannot resist, Ankara and Moscow intend to share their influence in the Black Sea by excluding competition and suspending their historical rivalry.

(Source:https://adevarul.ro/news/eveniment/marea-neagra-risca-devina-lac-impartit-rusia-turcia-1_62f160715163ec42716eaf07/index.html)

China and Russia's strategic problem

Author: George Friedman

The war in Ukraine, now six months old, is of strategic importance for several reasons. If Russia defeats Ukraine and takes control of the country, its forces will be on the border of Eastern

Europe. A Russian presence on Europe's border would shift the balance of power in the Atlantic and thus inevitably prevent the US from deploying forces to defend Europe.

What Russia's intentions were at the start of the invasion matters little. Intentions change, and strategy need not be optimistic. So the stakes in the Ukrainian war are the possible revival of the Cold War, with all the risks involved. From an American perspective, attacking Russia through Ukrainian troops in Ukraine is less risky than another Cold War.

The Cold War did not lead to full-scale war, it was all about the fear of war. Western fears about Soviet intentions outweighed Soviet capabilities. Their concern instead held NATO together, much to the chagrin of leaders in Moscow. Neither of these concerns came true, and the break-up of the Soviet Union was more to do with internal problems than an external threat. It is not certain that any Cold War that follows will be like the last one, but one thing is clear: given the existence of nuclear weapons, the front line of a new Cold War will remain static, and the status quo of each side will remain intact as long as they do not fall apart.

China's vulnerabilities and its attempts to overcome them are far more dangerous. As with Russia, the main problem is geography. For Russia, the problem is that the Ukrainian border is less than 300 miles from Moscow, and Russia has survived several invasions only by Moscow's distance from its invaders - a distance that the breakup of the Soviet Union has obliterated.

Russia's obsession with Ukraine comes to rectify this problem. China's geographical problem is that it has become an export power, so it depends on access to the Pacific Ocean and adjacent waters. The US sees China's unimpeded access to the Pacific as a possible threat to its strategic depth, something fundamental to the US since the end of World War II. China's access to the Pacific is blocked by a number of island states - Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines and Indonesia, indirectly supported by nearby powers - such as Australia, India and Vietnam. None of these countries is a US ally, but all have common interests against China's naval expansion. China wants to defend its strategic depth by conquering and controlling it. The US wants to defend its strategic depth by defending it.

Russia wants to regain its strategic depth and is well aware of the financial consequences of doing so. In other words, it overlooks financial disaster in exchange for strategic security. So far, it has not gained strategic security and has suffered huge financial losses, which it has also distributed to Europe.

China is seeking a strategic solution while avoiding the economic disaster that further expansion could cause. Its main enemy on both fronts would be the US. So China is analysing the US, trying to understand possible responses.

America's objective in Ukraine, then, is to negate Russia's strategic depth in order to limit the Russian threat in Europe. With China, the objective is to maintain American strategic depth to prevent China from threatening the US or gaining global influence.

The issues seem essentially similar, but the stakes for the US are not. For Washington, the China issue is far more important than Russia. A Russian victory in Ukraine would reconfigure unofficial borders and increase the stakes. A Chinese success would create a global power that threatens the US and its allies around the world.

The consequences of war are always important. US involvement also carries economic costs. So far, Russia has suffered costs. China may not be able to do that, given its current vulnerable economy. But states live by economics and survive by security. So it seems that Russia is less interested in negotiations than China is.

(Source: <https://monitorulapararii.ro/problema-strategica-a-chinei-si-rusiei-1-45105>)

Maritime education and culture

Romanian Navy Day

Message of the Chief of Naval Staff, Rear Admiral Mihai Panait, on the occasion of the Romanian Navy Day

<https://www.navy.ro/eveniment.php?id=1588>

Anniversary medal launched on Romanian Navy Day

To mark the 120th edition of the Romanian Navy Day, the Autonomous State Mint launches the anniversary medal “120 years since the first celebration of the Romanian Navy Day / Mărășești Frigate”, during the event “Open Day”, which will take place on Saturday, August 13, in the military port of Constanța.

The medal issue is dedicated to the celebration of the Romanian sailors, as well as to the ace of clubs of the Royal Navy and is part of the State Mint’s 2022 Medal Programme. It was produced in 150 pieces, 75 of which are made of fine silver and 75 of copper alloy.

15 August – sailors’ name day! Short history of the Romanian Navy Day

The Navy Day has always offered the audience a real scenic royalty, made up of both sober moments, such as the military ceremonial of the welcoming of the officials, the hoisting of the flag and of the great flag, to the tune of the National Anthem and to the background of the 21 salutes, the religious service, the naval and air parade, the parade of the Guard of Honour, etc., and of picturesque moments, specific to our seafaring life and traditions.

Today, Monday, 15 August 2022, is the feast of St Mary the Great or the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, one of the most important feasts dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Also today is the Romanian Navy Day.

According to navy.ro, Romanian sailors were officially honoured on 15 August 1902, on the feast of St. Mary the Great, and for more than a century the Romanian Navy Day has been a genuine festival of the sea and seafaring spirituality.

A century ago, by address No. 6082 of 6 August 1902, Cristea Georgescu, the mayor of Constanta, in a desire to attract tourists, addressed the mayors of the urban communes and county seats throughout the country, warning them of the significance of this holiday: “On the occasion of the celebration of the 15th of August, the 15th of August, the sea is celebrated. C. – St. Mary – the patron saint of the Navy, will take place in the waters of Constanta and on land some celebrations worthy of being seen such as, runs, the Argonauts’ ship and others.”

In the Navy, this day was certainly celebrated before 1902, since archival documents speak of a precedent – even if no official decree or reference date for this celebration has been found.

(Source:<https://www.ziuconstanta.ro/stiri/actualitate/15-august-onomastica-marinarilor-scurt-istoric-al-zilei-marinei-romane-792626.html>)

(Source:<https://www.navy.ro/comunicat.php?id=633>)

The Black Sea in the geopolitical vortex/ Dr. Vasile Simileanu

With two separate volumes, but on the same theme, totalling almost 500 pages of analysis in Romanian and English, with original maps and authors from many corners of the world, the journal of political geography, geopolitics and geostrategy naturally called GeoPolitica has entered its second decade of existence, as an initiative of a fellow countryman passionate about the doctrine that reminds us that the politics of a state is also determined by its geographical

location. Only Niccolo Machiavelli warned that "the first method of estimating the intelligence of a ruler is to look at the men he has around him."

The creator of GeoPolitica magazine is Dr. Vasile Simileanu , founder and president of the Geopolitics Association "Ion Conea", director - senior editor of the mentioned publication, associate member of the Academy of Scientists, member of the Professional Association of Geographers, member of the Union of Journalists.

It is worth reading the extensive study - with maps drawn up by the author himself - by Dr. Vasile Simileanu on the Black Sea in the global geopolitical vortex.

This material clearly states that : "EU enlargement has brought about major changes in the European space, imposing new geopolitical challenges for European, Asian and African actors. The gradual change in EU borders has prompted reactions from Russia and generated new security risks, but also new opportunities, for states in the spaces adjacent to the Union, which have had to adapt their strategies and adjust their foreign policy. Of course, these developments have also occurred in the states that have joined the EU. Romania, with its accession, has had to redefine its priorities in its relations with its neighbours and to generate special strategies for an enhanced neighbourhood, being at the eastern border of the organisation."

On the other hand, Dr Simileanu says: "In the new international political context, the North-South axis delimits NATO member states from the Russian Federation. States bordering the two political-military systems can promote and maintain peace in the region and, at the same time, develop mutually beneficial and viable systems of commercial cooperation."

(Source:<https://www.geopolitic.ro/2022/07/42413/>)

(Source:<http://www.geopoliticamagazine.com/cumpara/marea-neagra-in-vortexul-geopolitic-i-ii-81>)

(Source:https://adevarul.ro/international/rusia/vasile-simileanu--marea-neagra-vortexul-geopolitic-1_62e90c235163ec42713b94fb/index.html)

Interview Techniques for Seafarers / Alina Barbu

A book about which the author says:

Another book about interviewing. What's new about it? A niche presentation of the maritime job interview with sample answers, variations and suggestions. Plus a database of online resources in the same field. The book is obviously aimed primarily at my students, but also at anyone interested in the field of maritime English

Rear-Admiral (rt) Dr. CONSTANTIN CIOROBEA