

MS DAILY BRIEF - 4 September 2022

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U.S. authorizes sale of Harpoon anti-ship missiles to Taiwan and other systems in \$1.1 billion package

China, with its recent show of force near Taiwan, has succeeded in convincing the US administration that it must send weapons to Taiwan to defend itself.

The US State Department yesterday approved the sale of AIM-9X and AGM-84 missiles to Taiwan. The first tranche of military equipment, which Washington will send to Taipei, is worth \$1.1 billion and includes AGM-84 Harpoon anti-ship missiles, AIM-9X air-to-air missiles and improved radar surveillance.

The most valuable contract, worth \$665.4 million, will provide Taiwan with equipment and logistical support to upgrade the AN/FPS-115 PAVE PAWS radar.

The other two contracts are for the delivery of 64 Harpoon anti-ship missiles (60 AGM-84L Block II missiles and four ATM-84L-1 Block II exercise missiles) worth \$355 million and 100 AIM-9X Block II Sidewinder tactical air-to-air missiles worth \$85.6 million.

The Harpoon missiles are intended to equip the Taiwanese Air Force's F-16 aircraft.

Following a positive opinion from the State Department, through the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), the export proposal has been sent to the US Congress, which, most likely, given recent events in the region, will approve it without problems.

According to the DSCA, the sale serves US national, economic and security interests by supporting the recipient's continued efforts to maintain a credible defence capability. The new weapons and systems will help improve Taiwan's security and help maintain political stability, military balance and economic progress in the region.

Source: https://www.defenseromania.ro/sua-autorizeaza-vanzarea-rachetelor-antinava-harpoon-catre-taiwan-precum-si-a-altor-sisteme-intr-un-pachet-de-1-1-miliarde-de-dolari_618002.html

Ukraine arrested six Russian ships carrying stolen grain

Kiev's Shevchenkiv District Court has seized in absentia six Russian ships used by Russia to transport Ukrainian grain stolen by occupiers. As reported by the Prosecutor General's Office, they are the "Amur-2501", "Alexander Green", "M. Andreev", "Fyodor", "St. Konstantin" and "Captain Korchin". The arrest was imposed in the framework of the criminal trial on the charges of violating the order to enter the temporarily occupied territory (Part 2 of Article 332-1 of the Criminal Code), reports Porta Ukrainy. Ships under the flag of

the Russian Federation carry out systematic illegal actions against the closed sea trade port of Sevastopol, transporting Ukrainian grain to third countries. Thus, the Crimean peninsula is used by the Russian Federation as a bridgehead for the illegal transport of stolen grain from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine," the prosecutor's office said. The preliminary investigation is being carried out by the Ukrainian Security Service in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. Earlier in the proceedings, arrests have already been imposed on other criminal vessels - "Matros Koshka", "Matros Pozynich", "Mikhail Nenashev" under the Russian flag and the Syrian vessel Finikia and the captains of the Russian vessels. Matros Pozynich" and "Mikhail Nenashev". under part 2 of Article 332-1 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine. In July 2014, Ukraine officially stopped the operation of all ports in the occupied territory of Crimea and Sevastopol, the peninsula's ports are closed to international transport. The law enforcement bodies of the autonomy qualify the entry of foreign-flagged vessels into Crimean seaports as actions that undermine Ukraine's sovereignty and violate the rules of national legislation, which entails criminal liability of ship owners, operators and captains.

Source: <https://www.blackseanews.net/read/193875>

Odessa has found an investor to refurbish Rheny port terminals

Ukraine One of the investment companies, which is ready to develop maritime business in Odessa, has agreed to repair several terminals in Rheny port. Oleksiy Zlenskyi, director of the Odessa Region Regional Development Agency, told about this, writes Porta Ukrainy. The Russian Federation is blackmailing the whole world with the threat of famine: during the month of operation of the grain corridor, Ukraine exported more than 1.5 million tons of grain, compared to 84 million tons last year, and Odeschyna is also regularly bombed. The Odessa Regional Development Agency cannot influence this, but we are able to find investments for the development of maritime and agricultural businesses in the region. We already have many applications from potential investors," Zlenskyi said at the discussion "Consequences of Russian aggression on global food security" on Thursday 1 September. The restoration of the port of Rhenia will allow the number of exports to expand, which will not only help countries dependent on Ukraine, but also help restore the Ukrainian economy. After all, river, sea, road and rail transport pass through this transport hub. In addition, in the future, the range of goods exported through the "corridor" should be expanded and the grain production technology in Ukraine should be updated. Due to rising prices on the world market and the rising cost of transporting goods, Ukrainian farmers will not receive a profit, so Odessa needs to unblock its ports. This will allow ships with fertiliser or raw materials for our industry to enter the region. To do this, the cooperation of investors, communities and authorities is needed to attract funds and high technologies, Zlensky said.

Source: <https://www.blackseanews.net/read/193876>

For the defence of Crimea, the occupiers are training cadets of the Nakhimov Naval School to form a fighting unit

The head of the Black Sea Higher Naval School in Sevastopol, named after Nakhimov, has proposed to the RF General Staff to create a regiment of marines on the basis of the school and send it to defend the Crimean Peninsula. This was reported to Ukrinform by the Strategic Communications Department of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. "It is known that at the initiative of the head of the Black Sea Higher Naval School, named after P.S. Nakhimov, an appeal has been initiated to the FAR General Staff on the creation of a marine regiment on the basis of the school and its

deployment for the defense of the Crimean Peninsula," the General Staff reported. According to preliminary information, such a regiment should be led by the head of the faculty of the Coastal Missile Artillery and Special Training Forces - Hero of Russia, Colonel Volodymyr Karpushenko, and battalions by the heads of the school's courses. Company and platoon commanders' posts will be allocated among the best-trained cadets of the graduating course of the Faculty of Coastal Missile Artillery Forces and Special Training, as most of the officers and course teachers refuse to go to the front and write reports on transfer to other military educational institutions on the territory of the Russian Federation. At present, it is known that the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces has supported this initiative, has developed the relevant organizational directive on the formation of a Marine Regiment and is also working on its introduction into the combat states of the Armed Forces of Russia. According to Ukrinform, options for transferring armored combat vehicles to the regiment from Rosguard units of the Chechen Republic - the so-called "Kadyrivets", as Ramzan Kadyrov militants have no desire to go for the "defense" of Crimea, are also being considered. The General Staff of the Armed Forces recalled that the military educational institution has experience in training and using similar units. Thus, during World War II, the 76th Marine Brigade was created, whose commander was the head of the school, Captain 1st Rank Apostola Borys Mykolayovych. Only this time, the head of the Higher Black Sea Naval School, Rear Admiral Oleksandr Hrynkevich, for some reason, refused to lead the Marine regiment.

Source: <https://www.blackseanews.net/read/193873>

In Odessa, a mine broke loose from its anchor and was destroyed

On September 2, an enemy sea mine was detonated off the coast of Odessa and ripped from its anchor. Serhiy Bratchuk, spokesman for OVA Odessa, reported this in Telegram, Ukrinform reports. "A (enemy???) sea mine, which was snatched from anchor during a storm, detonated in the water near Odessa's coastline. I remind you once again about the ban on swimming in the sea, visiting beaches and the coast," Bratchuk said.

Source: <https://www.blackseanews.net/read/193867>

Mysterious Beluga Whale Base in Sochi



mystery.

The Russian Navy's use of dolphins, seals and (now infamous) beluga whales is well known. There are two marine mammal programs, one based in the Arctic, the other in the Black Sea. The sites associated with these are known, even the advance deployment to naval bases (Sevastopol, Novorossiysk and Tartus). But there is a beluga whale site in Sochi on the Black Sea that retains an air of

The site is at the entrance to the harbour, sheltered behind a pier. It appears to be linked to the marina, but (at present) is not fully confirmed. Shortly before the 2014 Winter Olympics, beluga whale pens appeared in Sochi harbour. It was reported at the time that their purpose was to defend the port. This was before the widespread awareness of the Russian Navy's marine mammal programs. The Olympics was an opportunity for Russia to purchase a lot of Western diving equipment for "anti-terrorist" needs at the games. It is plausible that the beluga was indeed there in an anti-sabotage role. Circumstantially, they will be removed from

the Russian Navy's marine mammal program based near Murmansk. The Sevastopol unit was still under Ukrainian control, albeit only for a few days while Russian troops occupied Crimea. The Russian Navy is the main and simplest explanation. However, it should be noted that there are aquariums in the area that train belugas and dolphins. They could be part of a breeding or training programme. Or they could have a civilian scientific purpose. In 2017-19, several belugas were seen by locals around the inner harbour. They appear to be living free, though obviously released or escaped from somewhere. Belugas are not native to the Black Sea. In 2020, local media reported (in Russian) that the beluga whales would be taken back to the Arctic. The same article reports that scientists have been studying them in "special pens". Although the Russian Navy has reinstated its dolphin program in the Black Sea (sequestered from Ukraine in 2014), there appears to have been no movement to change the animals. Dolphins are generally better suited to warmer waters. And they're smaller, which should make them easier to handle on boats, etc. But like much about the Russian Navy's marine mammal programs, there's a lot we don't know. Although Sochi is associated with Putin and the Russian government/oligarchs, the port itself contains no obvious targets. Why defend this site but not the private VIP ports, one of which is outside "Putin's palace"? So it's not clear if they are part of a naval program. On the one hand, the timing of their arrival and their location support it.

Source: <http://www.hisutton.com/Beluga-Whale-Site-In-Sochi.html>

Brazil has commissioned its first Scorpène submarine

On 1 September, the first of four Scorpène submarines in the ProSub programme was commissioned by the Brazilian Navy. Riachuelo was built entirely in Brazil by Itaguaí Construções Navais (ICN) thanks to a technology transfer programme from Naval Group. The ceremony took place at the Itaguaí naval base. Launched in December 2018, Riachuelo has successfully completed her sea trials and has now been delivered and entered service with the Brazilian Navy. Scorpène is a 2000-ton conventional submarine designed by Naval Group for all types of missions, such as anti-surface warfare, anti-submarine warfare, long-range strikes, special operations or intelligence gathering. Extremely stealthy and fast, it has a level of operational automation that allows a limited number of crew, which significantly reduces its operating costs. Its combat edge is highlighted by the fact that it has 6 weapons launch tubes, 18 weapons (torpedoes, missiles). With 14 submarines sold worldwide, Scorpène is a key reference of conventional attack submarines (SSK) for navies worldwide. It can be easily adapted to specific customer requirements, and the continuous improvement of Scorpene ensures seamless integration of the latest technology on board.

Source: <https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2022/09/video-brazil-commissions-its-first-scorpene-type-submarine/>

Stranded tanker blocks Suez Canal for hours

An Aframax type tanker heading southbound on the Suez Canal this afternoon lost steering control and got stuck in the canal's navigation channel south of Little Bitter Lake, blocking all traffic. The Suez Canal Authority reports that it was able to refloat the vessel and reposition it back into the canal. AIS data shows that the ship surrounded by tugs is making intermittent progress, with at least six other vessels also heading south, trapped directly behind the imploded tanker. The incident is taking place near the canal's southern terminal in the single-traffic zone, not far from where Ever Given got stuck in 2021. The tank is the 114,600 dwt Affinity V registered in Singapore. The six-year-old vessel had unloaded its cargo in Portugal, so was transiting the canal, only in ballast and returning to Saudi Arabia to

load the next cargo. The vessel is 828 feet long and is currently reported to be operating with a draught of 36.7 feet. According to Lieutenant General Osama Rabie, head of the Suez Canal Authority, the tanker had "a technical malfunction in the ship's rudder, which caused it to lose steering ability and resulted in the ship running aground." It was at the 143-kilometre mark of the canal that places the ship about halfway between Little Bitter Lake and the southern terminal at Suez. The vessel was stranded along the single-lane section of the southern canal. The Suez Canal Authority received reports at about 5 p.m. local time when the tanker was disabled and immediately dispatched five tugs for a rescue attempt. They found the vessel diagonally across the canal and it took nearly five hours for the vessel to be pulled from the bank and repositioned in the canal. One SCA tug now has the lead towline guiding the tanker south, while three Svitzer tugs remain attached to the lines aft. The ship is expected to continue to make slow progress and it could be several more hours before it clears the channel. However, the canal authority is trying to reassure the shipping industry it could undock the vessel and that operations continue in Suez.

Source: <https://www.maritime-executive.com/article/suez-canal-blocked-for-hours-as-tanker-loses-steering-and-grounds>

US forces Iran to re-release seized sail drones

The United States has forced Iran for the second time this week to release US military sail drones it tried to seize at sea, US officials said Friday. Iran has beefed up its naval presence in the Red Sea off the coast of Yemen, where Tehran supports the Houthi movement. The incident there, after an earlier one in the Gulf, was the latest reminder of military tensions between the US and Iran, even as both countries hold nuclear talks. They follow last week's firefights between US troops and Iranian-backed groups in Syria. Iranian state television acknowledged earlier Friday that the Iranian navy had launched two US maritime drones into the Red Sea, but accused the unmanned US ships of endangering maritime safety without providing evidence. "The (Iranian) frigate Jamaran seized the two ships on Thursday to prevent any possible accident after issuing warnings to the US fleet. After international sea lanes were secured, the two ships were released to a safe area." The US Navy, in a statement, disputed that account, saying the drones were in an assigned patrol area at least four nautical miles from the nearest shipping lane. "The ships posed no risk to vessel traffic and had been operating in the vicinity of the Southern Red Sea for over 200 consecutive days without incident," the Navy statement said. A U.S. defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity, suggested that the Iranians sought to get their hands on the drones in secret, pulling the sail drones completely out of the water Thursday and then covering them with tarps. Iran initially denied having American property before returning them Friday to US warships that arrived on the scene, a US official said. Iranian television footage broadcast Friday appears to show more than a dozen Iranian navy personnel pushing two drones into the sea from the deck of their ship. The Navy statement said the US Navy guided-missile destroyers USS Nitze and USS Delbert D. Black remained alongside the Iranian warship, communicating with it "to calm the situation and recover the seized Saldrones." The Iranian warship released the drones on the morning of September 2, the US Navy said. On Tuesday, the US Navy said it thwarted an attempt by Iranian Revolutionary Guards naval forces to seize an unmanned surface vessel operated by the US 5th Fleet in the Gulf. Iran said the drone posed a danger to maritime traffic. Iran has repeatedly warned the United States about its military activities in the Gulf, saying the Guards' naval forces have stepped up patrols to ensure the passage of Iranian ships and combat fuel smuggling. Meanwhile, the US military has expanded its use of drones at sea in the region. It is unclear whether Iran could seize American drones in an attempt to copy them. Some of Iran's drones

rely on drones from other countries and it has tried to copy a US RQ-170 Sentinel reconnaissance drone captured in 2011. Iran and the regional forces it supports have increasingly relied on drones in recent years in Yemen, Syria and Iraq. US officials say Iran is supplying drones to Russia for use in the war in Ukraine, which Tehran has denied.

Source: <https://gcaptain.com/u-s-compels-iran-to-again-release-seized-u-s-sail-drones/>