

MS DAILY BRIEF - 5 September 2022

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Iran seizes and later releases two unmanned US Navy surface ships

Iran seizes two U.S. Navy drones U.S.S. Nitze was one of two U.S. ships that responded to the drone seizure. For the second time in as many days, Iranian forces have seized U.S. Navy-operated drones, but unlike the first incident this time they managed to pick up two American unmanned drones aboard a warship. The drones were released hours later, while both sides argue over what happened. There is an agreement that an Iranian frigate, the 311-foot-long Jamaran operating in the Red Sea, seized two US Navy Saildrones operating in tandem in the Red Sea. The Iranian ship removed the drones from the water in mid-day on September 1, around 2 p.m. according to the U.S. Navy and released them the next morning around 8 a.m. on Sept. 2, according to the U.S. Navy. The Iranians reported that they came across the two unmanned surface vessels during their normal patrols in the Red Sea, designed to maintain safe navigation and protect against piracy and maritime terrorism. The Iranians say their warship contacted the Americans to tell them to change ship directions to prevent naval accidents. They claim the Americans ignored repeated warnings, so the Iranian ship acted. The US 5th Fleet reports that it detected the Iranian ship approaching both unmanned vessels and taking them out of the water and responded immediately. US Navy guided missile destroyers USS Nitze and USS Delbert D. Black operating nearby contacted the Iranians demanding the return of the sailboats. Both Nitze and Delbert D. Black also each launched an MH-60R Sea Hawk helicopter. The Associated Press quotes an unnamed U.S. naval official as saying the helicopters spotted Iranian sailors trying to cover the drones with a tarp after they boarded their deck. They believe the Iranians were trying to hide the seizure of the craft. The unmanned surface vessels were unarmed, the US Navy noted, saying they were taking unclassified pictures of their surroundings while cruising in an assigned patrol area at least four nautical miles from the nearest shipping route. The US claims the vessels posed no risk to shipping traffic and have operated in the general vicinity of the southern Red Sea for more than 200 consecutive days without incident. Iranian state television on Friday showed footage of sailors aboard the Jamaran examining the sails. They

were later shown throwing the two craft overboard. According to the Iranians, the boats were released in a "safe area", removing them from the Red Sea shipping lanes. On Monday evening, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, in a separate incident, was seen towing another US drone in the Arabian Gulf. In that incident, the Iranians said they "took timely action, captured the naval drone, whose navigation system failed". They reject American reports of an unprovoked IRGC attempt to capture the military vessel. The US noted that the drones were commercially available technologies and did not contain classified systems or information. A report by Nour Media, a news outlet linked to the Iranian government, said: "In recent weeks, a large number of US unmanned boats have been dispatched from Bahrain and outside protocols related to the use of unmanned and remotely piloted vessels to international waters and international sea lanes, causing problems in shipping lanes." They said that fishing vessels, commercial vessels and oil tankers have reported several accidents that have occurred with these boats, which has raised concerns for crew and commercial vessel owners. U.S. officials privately called this an escalation by the Iranians, noting that unlike Monday's incident involving the independent revolutionary Gard, this seizure was carried out by an Iranian navy vessel. It comes as US and international negotiators have been pressuring Iran in ongoing nuclear talks.

Source: <https://www.maritime-executive.com/article/iran-seizes-and-later-releases-two-u-s-navy-unmanned-surface-vessels>

Port economics: Prof. Michael Dooms on sustainable port development

Over the past two years, the shipping and ports sector has undergone a drastic transformation. Historically, container shipping has been a loss-making business as overcapacity has plagued the industry. For example, in the decade before the pandemic, the operating profit margin for container shipping was -0.2 percent. That has now risen to 57.4 percent as of Q1 2022, according to Alphaliner. As consecutive disruptions have hit the world, starting with the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, the fate of the container shipping industry has changed greatly. Analysts predict that combined net revenue this year for the top eleven ocean carriers could reach \$256 billion, a figure nearly equivalent to Portugal's gross domestic product. To stay ahead of the curve, stakeholders need to take a proactive approach to how they view the entire maritime sector. To help decipher the new dynamics of the shipping business model, Brian Gicheru met with Michael Dooms, Professor of Port Economics at Solvay Business School, University of Brussels, Belgium. How can businesses create resilient supply chains in a global economy awash with disruption, especially from ports? What we have seen is that most internationalised businesses have been able to adapt very quickly. In Europe, for example, some corporations have already started plans for nearshoring and reshoring long before the disruptions hit. When the bottlenecks came and shipping rates skyrocketed, most corporations made a shift to rely on regional (EU) supply chains, driven also by the general adoption of Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) over the past decade. However, these disruptions continue to pose a structural challenge for companies with internationalised supply chains. Reliance on an exclusive or limited supplier base remains a recipe for disaster, as the war in Ukraine and the Covid-19 pandemic have shown. However, the debate on re-shoring and non-shoring cannot be generalised. Different dynamics are at play depending on the type of an industry. Labour cost incentives that have encouraged companies to produce offshore to developing countries in the past are offset by rising transport costs due to port and supply chain disruptions. The labour cost incentive was already under pressure from automation in some emerging economies, significantly lowering the labour cost advantage. For ports, it means developing a thorough understanding and constant monitoring of the different value chains located in or passing through their infrastructure and regions. There has been a recent increase in port footfall, particularly in Western countries. What do you think about effective stakeholder management by port authorities around the world? Following the recent disruptions, ports and airports have become visible as a crucial component of the supply chain. For many years, the port sector has been operating behind the scenes, but the public now sees the value of the connectivity offered by large container terminals. Logistics is therefore now seen as an

important element of the economy to stabilise prices or at least minimise disruption to keep the whole economic system running.

Sea carriers and ports/terminals earn a lot of money. Unfortunately, this is yet to trickle down into port fees and dockworker pay. Remember, these workers put in extra effort during the Covid-19 pandemic to keep the ports open, often in difficult working conditions. A scenario where the share of profits fails to reach them will certainly create conflict (see what is happening now in UK ports). It is about a fair distribution of resources and benefits to all stakeholders. Building on this issue of stakeholder management, you mentioned earlier about a week-long discussion you had with European port workers about automating ports before the pandemic. Is this a concern for port workers in terms of job security? Based on our conversations, port workers are not necessarily against automation and recognise that their profession is evolving with the need to embrace innovation. In fact, they see some benefits. The only concern is that most existing terminals need to automate in stages, which could create additional risks and complexities in the interaction between human workers and large automated machines. This means that port authorities have to invest in thorough training of workers on the hybrid system, which also implies costs and sometimes even lower productivity in the adjustment phase. If such an exercise is carried out without the participation of port unions, there could be an increased risk of accidents at terminals, ultimately causing resistance due to safety issues and a decrease in stakeholder support for automation. Finally, the benefits of innovations brought about by automation and digitisation must also be fairly distributed. Climate change is now a major global concern. How should ports set their business strategies to ensure they meet emerging climate requirements? There is no silver bullet to deal with the sustainable transition. Each port should develop a specific environmental policy based on the type of economic activities that take place and their impact on the local environment. For example, some approaches are best suited to reduce global carbon emissions, while others are used to control location-specific emissions with a direct impact on local communities (such as fine particulate matter). Take the case of the Port of Mombasa, where as the facility grows, it could take an increasing toll on Mombasa's environment. A few years ago, I was taking pictures while flying to Mombasa and you will notice a thick layer of smog over the city. The presence of ships in the harbour with engines running and the movement of trucks plays a significant role, as impact measurements in surrounding port cities have shown. In such a situation, maintaining adequate air quality standards becomes a priority. In some cities, rising air pollution is becoming a public health tragedy. When designing green port policies, we need to take a holistic approach to looking at the environment. We need a strong package of measures that are internally consistent to ensure that all stakeholders benefit from such a policy. In addition, all stakeholders must share a common vision of a good environment and, while there may be negative impacts in the short term, no economic activity should be unnecessarily disadvantaged in the long term. We are seeing an increase in the construction of greenfield ports in East Africa, such as Lamu (Kenya) and Bagamoyo (Tanzania) ports. What do you think about this, based on the rapid developments in the shipping sector over the last two years? I think in East Africa, there has been what I would call a "fever" for big infrastructure projects. Almost every country wants to have a logistics hub and a maritime gateway to the other. As we have seen in Europe about these large terminals, we need to ask some critical economic questions. This is not a business that everyone understands and based on the fact that it happens far from the public (at sea), control tends to be less, unlike other large-scale infrastructure (such as airports, energy projects, shopping malls). We need to be realistic about factors such as shipping traffic forecasts, the operation of shipping companies and, most importantly, how shipping companies evolve with changing trade dynamics. Another critical question is the analysis of the realistic growth of containerisation versus the potential of projects allocated as transhipment hubs. Numerous studies have concluded that the decision to build these ports is not always based on sound economic analysis, which is sufficiently contested by experts and stakeholders.

It usually stems from top-down government policies and the need to upgrade physical infrastructure, which is of course an important and legitimate goal. However, when combined with other factors, such as donor pressure - often with vested interests in construction - the inevitable

result is a compromise on the socio-economic rationale for building new infrastructure. This constitutes a solid risk of infrastructure overcapacity for very long periods, leading to declining societal and even market support for these projects, in turn leading to stakeholder opposition to future infrastructure development in general. However, there could be strategic benefits for these future ports. In 1991, Rotterdam embarked on a massive project to extend the port to the sea, creating over 2,000 hectares of sea space, of which 1,000 hectares for new economic activities. The prevailing thinking at the time was that space would eventually fill up with containers as trade grew, but this did not happen as container markets matured. Twenty years later, the project has found its relevance with offshore wind companies looking for space in the port for the production of wind turbine components. As a result, the area will be more likely to have a very mixed economic vocation, including, but not entirely, container handling. The sustainable transition to a carbon-free economy could be an opportunity for these high value greenfield projects.

Source: <https://www.maritime-executive.com/article/port-economics-prof-michael-dooms-on-sustainable-port-development>

NGO rescue ship with more than 460 migrants stranded waiting at an EU port

Mediterranean migrant crisis SOS Mediterranee reports it is facing more cases of distress than ever. The migrant crisis continues in the Mediterranean, with the voluntary organisation again calling on the global community to develop a better solution to manage the growing number of people trying to flee the coast of Libya to reach southern European countries. The level of the crisis is highlighted again by the NGO SOS Mediterranee, in partnership with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), calling on the European Union to allow the disembarkation of 466 survivors from the Ocean Viking, an offshore support vessel the NGO uses for its search and rescue missions. The NGO reports that in just 60 hours on its most recent mission, the Ocean Viking faced more distress cases than ever before, and medical situations are increasingly being served. During the most recent mission, four unseaworthy and overcrowded boats in distress were spotted from the ship's bridge. Distress alerts of six other boats have also been forwarded by other NGOs to Ocean Viking. Some of those rescued have been on board the ship for up to eight days and it is now overcrowded, with a total of 459 people remaining on board, including women, children and babies. NGOs said they are facing an overwhelming number of medical cases, including exhaustion, dehydration and skin infections and untreated wounds, while other survivors face chronic medical conditions. Two women nine months pregnant were evacuated from the ship late last week, but the vessel remains stranded at sea awaiting the disembarkation of survivors. "We have never experienced this level of severe medical cases on board the Ocean Viking before," said Xavier Lauth, director of operations for SOS Mediterranee. "Survivors were found in the middle of open sea in unimaginable situations. In a desperate attempt to find safety, they were near death at sea, either by drowning or dehydration. Under maritime law, their rescues will only be completed when they reach safety. The current blockade to their disembarkation must end without delay." SOS Mediterranee and the IFRC called on European members and associated states to show solidarity, respect maritime law and guarantee fundamental human rights by putting an immediate end to the waiting and suffering of the survivors. On 2 September, the Italian authorities assigned the ship to Taranto as a place of safety for the 459 survivors remaining on board the Ocean Viking. However, as of 4 September, the ship remains at sea awaiting authority to dock. Europe continues to face a worsening migrant crisis in the Mediterranean, which is being fuelled by Libyan smugglers. In June, the UN reported that for migrants, who risk their lives to cross the Mediterranean to Europe in flimsy boats, the crossing has become more deadly. Their figures cited 3,231 reported deaths in 2021, up from 1,881 in 2020. Since beginning its operations in 2016, SOS Mediterranee reports it has rescued about 37,000 migrants, over 7,000 rescued by the Ocean Viking since it began operating in August. Built in 1986 and measuring 227 feet in length, it's a 2,000 gross ton ship that the organization charters for its mission.

Source: <https://www.maritime-executive.com/article/ngo-rescue-ship-with-over-460-migrants-stranded-waiting-for-eu-port>

Shell's bid to search for oil and gas off the coast of South Africa blocked

A South African court has rejected Shell Plc's application to conduct an ocean seismic survey along the country's east coast. Decisions to grant Shell exploration rights for oil and gas did not follow a fair procedure and the decision-maker did not take relevant considerations into account, according to an Eastern Cape High Court ruling handed down on Thursday. Last year's attempt by Mineral Resources and Energy Minister Gwede Mantashe to renew Shell's exploration right was also struck down because "it follows that if the exploration right is wrong in law, renewals are legally untenable," the judge said. Shell was first granted the exploration right in 2014, but was only due to start seismic surveys on the Wild Coast, a remote stretch of the eastern seaboard where humpback and southern right whales are frequently sighted, last year. The plans have been met with resistance from coastal communities, environmentalists, civil society groups and large petitions, with some people also choosing to boycott the use of Shell gas stations. Last year, the High Court temporarily halted the seismic survey, which involves firing compressed air cannons and sending constant streams of powerful compressed air or concentrated sound waves towards the ocean floor. Concerns that were raised included that communities were not properly consulted, environmental impact assessments were outdated with the new laws and marine life could be affected. "We respect the court's decision and are reviewing the ruling to determine our next steps regarding the Wild Coast block," a Shell spokesperson said in an emailed statement. "We remain committed to South Africa and our role in the just energy transition." The area Shell was to explore supports rural fishing communities and is also the site of the annual so-called sardine run, which has been described as the biggest shoal on earth. Millions of small, silvery fish migrate north, attracting predators such as dolphins, whales, sharks and gannets in large numbers. The spectacle is also a boon for tourism. The Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy, Impact Africa and BG International were ordered to pay the costs of the claim.

Source: <https://gcaptain.com/shells-bid-to-search-south-african-coast-for-oil-gas-blocked/>

Navy appoints first female 'chief of craft' of submarine force

Senior Information Systems Technician Angela Koogler spent a week on the USS Louisiana (SSBN-742) making history. Koogler is the Navy's first female chief of craft - the senior enlisted advisor to commanding and executive officers aboard a submarine. She joined the Navy in 2002 after attending college, according to a release from the U.S. Pacific Fleet Commander Submarine Forces. She had planned to enlist after high school, but an injury delayed her. "Once I joined, I knew I had found my career and the family and friends in the Navy I would have forever," Koogler said in the release. "I've continued to serve over the years because it's a good fit for me and I love it." Women have served in the Navy since 1917, when Loretta Walsh became the first women to enlist. But Navy integration took time with women unable to join service academies until 1976 and combat positions until 1994. Submarines were one of the last to fight with women. Female officers first began serving in 2010. In 2015, 38 women were selected to serve aboard the USS Michigan (SSGN-727) as the first enlisted sailors, beginning in 2016, USNI News previously reported. Koogler was one of the 38, according to the release. She served 36 months before deploying with Submarine Squadron 19. Just making women eligible to serve on submarines meant revisions had to be made to Ohio-class submarines so women could have their own space, according to the Navy. The Virginia and Columbia-class submarine designs already include living quarters for women and men. Including women in the submarine force has had its problems. In 2014, the Navy discovered that 12 male sailors aboard the USS Wyoming (SSBN-742) watched an illegally made video of officers showering on board. While Koogler served just three years on a submarine, 19th Submarine Squadron Commander Travis Brown said in the release that he knew he was the right candidate for the craft's chief. "In 36

months, she left a submarine as a qualified watch diving officer and everything in between, while learning how to lead submarine sailors," Brown said in the release. For Koogler, the boat boss is a cornerstone of her career. Her ultimate goal is to become a commander-in-chief, which required her to be boat chief first. "I knew that's what I wanted to do," she said in the release. "I want to be able to take care of the sailors. I want them to develop and accelerate themselves. That's always been my goal." Koogler said in the release that gender should not be a factor in deciding which sailors are selected for roles. "A sailor is a sailor to me and we shouldn't define their gender," she said in the release. "It's important to include everyone and it shouldn't matter as long as they do their job." It can be difficult to be the person who breaks such a barrier, Brown said, acknowledging that Koogler needed a nudge. "But this is a huge glass ceiling broken by underwater force," he said. "Now there's a path to the top."

Source : <https://news.usni.org/2022/08/31/navy-names-submarine-forces-first-female-chief-of-the-boat>

U.S. B-52H strategic bombers simulated the destruction of the Russian Naval Task Force in the Mediterranean Sea

Two US B-52 "Stratofortress" strategic bombers, integrated with French and Italian air forces, conducted a drill to strike Russian naval vessels in the Mediterranean Sea. Since mid-August, four B-52H strategic bombers from the US Air Force's (USAF) 5th Bomb Wing have been deployed to the UK's Fairford Air Force Base, with the primary purpose of deterring possible Russian aggression against NATO member countries.

The next few days were busy for the US airmen, who flew on the alliance's eastern flank patrolling from the Baltic to the Black Sea, areas where Russian force density is particularly high.

But after Russian naval vessels penetrated as far north as the Adriatic Sea in late August, attempting to monitor NATO's armada in the Mediterranean, particularly the US aircraft carrier Harry Truman, the North Atlantic Alliance's military leadership has been testing a scenario for responding to a possible Russian attack on NATO's southern flank.

So on 31 August, two USAF strategic bombers, which took off from Fairford Air Force Base, flew over France and Italy, from where they simulated launching missiles and bombs, with strikes coordinated with allied Joint Terminal Attack Controllers (JTACs) in the two countries, according to a press release from Allied Air Command (AAC) in Ramstein, Germany.

In French airspace, the US aircraft were escorted by French Air Force Rafale multi-role fighter jets.

In addition to the JTAC target engagement scenario, the B-52H bombers also conducted air-to-ground exercises with French and Italian Special Operations Forces (SOF), the AAC said in the press release.

An unmanned MQ-9 MQ-9 Reaper aircraft was also involved in the activities, helping to coordinate the bombers with ground forces.

With an impressive amount of ammunition on board, the two B-52s alone can sink all Russian warships in the Mediterranean Sea.

The B-52H strategic bombers can carry up to 32 tonnes of missiles and bombs. Among these munitions, the JASSM-ER cruise missile stands out, with a range of over 925 km, and a bomber can carry up to 20 such weapons.

These missiles are not dedicated to anti-ship missions, but it is not ruled out that LRASMs (the JASSM-ER variant for anti-ship strikes) could be carried on board the bombers. The USAF is currently testing the integration of LRSAMs on the B-52, but it is never certain how quickly these tests will progress.

On the other hand, the presence of the MQ-9 Reaper unmanned aircraft at the exercise, which can accurately coordinate a missile or bomb on any target, makes it possible to even use the JASSM-ER against ships.

Thus, the two bombers can launch from a safe distance - for example over the Alps - a total of 40 missiles, with which they can sink or damage the four Russian warships (a cruiser, a destroyer, a frigate and a corvette) in the Adriatic Sea, which the press has reported as monitoring the movements of NATO ships.

Of course, NATO or the US have not admitted that the exercises explicitly targeted the Russian Naval Task Force in the Mediterranean, but the show of force is obvious and shows once again how vulnerable Russian assets in the area are.

There is no question that the NATO Navy in the Mediterranean is not strong enough to neutralize the Russian naval grouping. The purpose of the exercise was to demonstrate, once again, the wide range of strike options the North Atlantic Alliance has at its disposal, which gives great flexibility to military commanders.

While Admiral Kuznetsov is a 'wreck in the making', the Russians are dreaming of a new aircraft carrier with electromagnetic catapults.



Russian Defence Minister General Sergei Shigu announced the creation of a land-based complex for Russia's naval aviation, which will test electro-magnetic catapults. In an interview with the daily Vzgliad, Russian military expert Konstantin Sivkov later said that if Russia were to test electromagnetic catapults to launch aircraft, then it could build an aircraft carrier with a displacement of 90,000 tonnes.

"At present, only the US has electromagnetic catapults, which operate to launch

aircraft on the latest Gerald Ford-class aircraft carriers," Konstantin Sivkov said.

"The previous generation of aircraft carriers, such as the French Charles de Gaulle, uses steam catapults. India is building the Vikrant multirole aircraft carrier, which will also be without an electromagnetic catapult. Only two countries have the technology to make them: US and Russia. The Americans have problems with this catapult, but it works. China has tried to get the technology from Russia, but officials in Moscow have refused. As a result, China's Liaoning and Shandong aircraft carriers are still without an electromagnetic catapult," said the expert.

Sivkov suggested that the new electromagnetic catapults mentioned by Sergei Shigu could be intended for the Shtorm-KM multi-purpose aircraft carrier, the model of which was first presented at the Armada-2018 forum. The ship was designed for 46 aircraft.

The approximate composition of the embarked air wing could be 12-14 Su-33 heavy fighters, 12-14 MiG-29K light aircraft, four long-range radar patrol aircraft and 12-14 Ka-27 multirole helicopters. In the future, the most modern drones will also be able to be embarked.

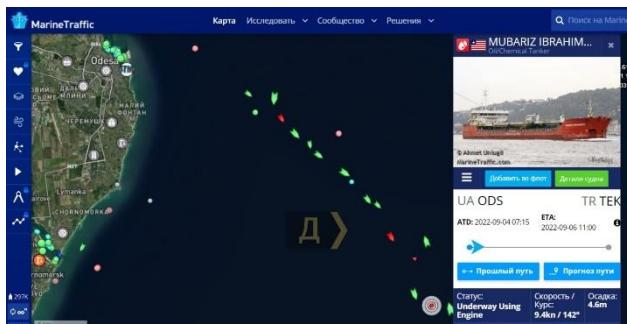
Author's comment: The Naval Aviation Ground Complex mentioned by the Russian Defence Minister is under construction in the town of Yeisk in Krasnodar County and is due to be commissioned in 2023.

It was built as an alternative to the similar complex in operation in Crimea (NITKA Saki). After the reintegration of Crimea into the Russian Federation, the Naval Forces found that they had two such complexes and decided that NITKA Saki would continue to be used for pilot training and NITKA Yeisk for testing new categories of technical means needed to equip the Naval Aviation.

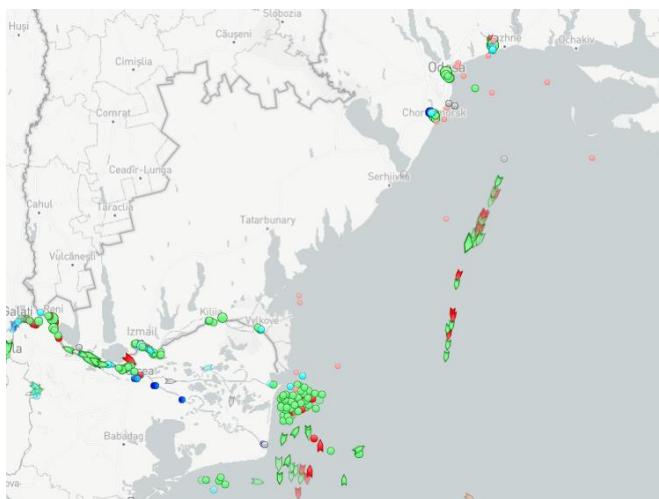
Construction of a new Project 23000 Shtorm-class aircraft carrier to replace the "old" Admiral Kuznetsov could start in Russia after 2024. According to the project, it will have more aircraft launch sites and will have two traditional trampolines and four electromagnetic catapults.

The new carrier is also likely to carry fifth-generation Su-57 fighter jets. The ship is also to have a powerful air defence system, represented by the naval version of the S-500 complex.

Source: https://www.defenseromania.ro/in-timp-ce-amiral-kuznetov-este-o-epava-in-curs-de-modernizare-rusii-viseaza-la-un-portavion-nou-cu-catapulte-electromagnetice_618012.html



The convoy was led by the BS CALLISTO, followed by the tanks MUBARIZ IBRAHIMOV,



The largest convoy of ships since the opening of the "grain corridor" has left the coast of Odessa

On Sunday, 4 September, the largest convoy of ships since the opening of the "grain corridor" left the coast of Odessa today. Nine ships and four tankers with Ukrainian agro-industrial products left the port of Odessa Mare, Dumska reports.

CANOPUS, GEN. POLAD HASHIMOV and MRC LINA. The destroyers LADY EVA, SARA, SEA DOLPHIN C, LADY PERLA and MAINA are also in formation. The largest ship in the convoy is the 229-metre long bulk carrier NORD VIRGO, the smallest is the 80-metre SEALOCK.

Interestingly, the Ukrainian-flagged AFANASIY MATYUSHENKO with home port Herson, bound for the Turkish port of Tekirdag, closes the convoy. A total of 282.5 thousand tonnes of Ukrainian agricultural products are on board 13 ships, which are bound for eight countries of the world.

Source: <https://www.blackseanews.net/read/193923> and <https://www.marinetraffic.com/sv/ais/home/centerx:30.4/centery:45.7/zoom:8>

Erdogan accuses Greece of occupying Aegean islands

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said Greece has "captured" demilitarised islands in the Aegean Sea and threatened a harsh response. "Turkey will not be stopped by Greece's occupation of the islands. When the time comes, we will do what is necessary. It can happen unexpectedly, any night," Erdogan said. The Turkish leader claimed that Greece is actively militarising the occupied islands and asked the Greek army not to provoke Turks, ZN.UA reports. "If you continue to provoke, you will pay a heavy price. I want to say one thing to Athens: don't forget Izmir!" - he added, addressing Greece. In doing so, the Turkish president alluded to the events of 1919, when Izmir was occupied by the Greek army and they were soon driven out of the city by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's troops. Greece responded by saying it would not follow Turkey's "outrageous daily series" of statements and threats. "We will inform our allies and partners about the content of provocative statements so that it becomes clear who is undermining the cohesion of our alliance at a dangerous time (Greece and Turkey are NATO members)," the foreign ministry said. Ankara claims that the Aegean islands were ceded to Greece under the 1923 and 1947 treaties on condition that no troops were stationed there. Turkey will challenge Athens' sovereignty over the islands if the treaty is violated, Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu said. Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis called Ankara's position "absurd".

Source: <https://www.blackseanews.net/read/193910>

Royal Caribbean to be first to use SpaceX's Starlink high-speed internet

Royal Caribbean Group revealed this week that it will be the first cruise ship operator in the industry to deploy SpaceX's Starlink for onboard broadband internet service for guests and crew for the entire fleet. The cruise giant said Tuesday that it will immediately begin installing high-speed, low-latency Starlink connectivity on all Royal Caribbean International, Celebrity Cruises and Silversea Cruises ships, along with all new ships for each of its brands going forward. The installation is expected to be completed by the end of the first quarter of 2023. The move comes on the heels of the US Federal Communications Commission's June authorization for SpaceX to use the Starlink satellite internet network to transport vehicles, including commercial ships, airlines and trucks. Royal Caribbean said a Starlink test aboard its Freedom of the Seas ship received "an enormous amount of positive feedback from guests and crew". Increasingly, cruise ship passengers and crew members expect a robust internet connection for high-bandwidth activities such as video calling and streaming. "Our goal as a company is to provide our guests with the best vacation experiences responsibly, and this new offering, which is the largest public deployment of Starlink high-speed internet in the travel industry to date, demonstrates our commitment to that goal." said Jason Liberty, president and chief executive officer of Royal Caribbean Group. "This technology will provide a game-changing internet connection onboard our ships, enhancing the cruise experience for both guests and crew." "Royal Caribbean Group selecting Starlink to provide high-speed, low-latency internet throughout the fleet will make its passengers' getaways even more luxurious," said SpaceX vice president of Starlink sales Jonathan Hofeller. "We couldn't be more excited to work with Royal Caribbean Group to ensure that at sea travelers can stay connected with a great internet experience."

Source : <https://www.marinelink.com/news/royal-caribbean-industrys-first-spacexs-499150>