

MS DAILY BRIEF - 27 September 2022

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New Strategy Center presents study on strategic importance of Snake Island in the US



New Strategy Center, in partnership with the US think tank Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA), presented on Tuesday 27 September the study "The Strategic Importance of Snake Island" at the CEPA Forum in Washington, D.C., USA, 27-29 September. It is the first study conducted by a Romanian and an American think tank since the outbreak of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February this year, on an issue of vital

interest for Ukraine, Romania and NATO, for the freedom of navigation in the Black Sea and at the mouth of the Danube and for the energy security of the region.

"The Strategic Importance of Snake Island" is the product of collaboration between CEPA and the New Strategy Center and is written by both Romanian and American authors. It is an analysis of the strategic importance of Snake Island in several areas and the impact that Russia's presence in the area has on the region, with the expertise of Antonia Colibășanu, Senior Associate Expert at New Strategy Center, geopolitical analyst and operational director of Geopolitical Futures, and George Scutaru, Managing Director of the New Strategy Center, former Presidential National Security Advisor, as well as Joel Hickman, Deputy Director of ECA's Transatlantic Defense and Security Program, and Glenn Alexander Crowther, ECA Associate Expert.

Small in size at only 17 hectares, Snake Island is nevertheless of significant geostrategic importance. Control of the island and its surrounding waters affects all shipping routes linking Ukraine to the rest of the world, as well as those linking mainland Europe to the Black Sea basin via the Danube River. Moscow's naval blockade of Ukraine has been backed up by the Russian military presence on the Snake Island and the naval presence in its vicinity, contributing in no small measure to the suppression of Ukrainian exports.

Ukrainian forces managed to regain control of this vital point at the end of June, after more intense fighting and shelling, when Russian forces decided to withdraw from Snake Island, four months after it was seized on the first day of the invasion. But there is still a possibility that the Russian army will try to retake the island even before a possible ceasefire. Such a move would have major military and economic consequences for both Ukraine and NATO, and especially for the neighbouring states. Russia's presence near the mouth of the Danube would endanger shipping lanes and could also give Moscow the opportunity to lay claim to the exclusive economic zone of Romania and Ukraine, delimited in 2009 by a decision of the International Court of Justice.

At the moment, de facto, Romania's exclusive economic zone borders Russia's exclusive economic zone, after the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014. At the same time, Romania, by opening up the massive exploitation of gas resources in the Black Sea, can diminish Russia's influence and blackmail in the energy field on some states in the region or central Europe, such as the Republic of Moldova, Bulgaria, Serbia, Austria, and thus contribute to increasing the energy resilience of the European Union and some partner states.

Although Romania invests a lot in defence, it is necessary that before some systems such as anti-ship missiles arrive in Romania and become operational, the US and other NATO states bring such systems as a deterrent and to protect our coastline and exclusive economic zone.

Keeping the island under Ukrainian control is essential for Ukraine's continued export of grain worldwide, for Romania's efforts to exploit the energy reserves in its exclusive economic zone and for strengthening regional security. Moreover, as the authors point out in this study, NATO allies should continue to support Ukraine in strengthening its coastal defences with anti-ship missiles, anti-aircraft systems and integrated command and control systems to prevent a new invasion of the island by Russian forces.

"The Strategic Importance of Snake Island" is a plea for Ukraine's support, for more substantial US and NATO involvement in supporting Romania in the naval field, and for promoting the interests of the North Atlantic Alliance in the Black Sea. This paper is part of the New Strategy Center's efforts to contribute to a better understanding of the regional strategic context and to promote Romania's security interests and the strategic partnership between Romania and the US.

Source: https://www.defenseromania.ro/new-strategy-center-prezinta-in-sua-un-despre-importanta-strategica-a-insulei-serpilor_618385.html

Russian-Iranian drones continuously strike Ukrainian port of Odessa



During the evening and night of 25/26.09.2022, Iranian-made Geran-2 kamikaze drones used by the Russian military continued to attack military targets in the Ukrainian city of Odessa. Earlier, the Naval Operations Planning Centre and the headquarters of the Southern Operational Command of the Ukrainian Armed Forces were hit in the city.

Several speedboats as well as maritime drones supplied by NATO member states were also destroyed by "disposable" drones.

The noise of Geran-2 attack drones approaching their targets could be heard clearly in the night sky over Odessa. Focusing on it, and in some cases using night vision devices, the Ukrainian military tried to shoot down the kamikaze drones with ground-fired shots.

Unmanned aerial vehicles produced in Iran had been used against Ukrainian targets in Odessa the night before. One of the strikes detonated an ammunition depot in the area, causing a huge fire that lasted for several hours.

Ukrainian President Volodimir Zelenski has in recent days blamed Iran for arms deliveries to the Russian Federation, prompting Kiev to downgrade diplomatic relations with Tehran and withdraw the accreditation of the Iranian ambassador. The Iranian authorities have expressed their regret at this situation and have spoken out in favour of a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Author's comment: Iranian Geran-2 (Shahed-136) drone strikes on Odessa began on 23 September.

Earlier, using Iranian drones, the Russian military destroyed a Ukrainian Naval Forces tugboat in the port of Ochakov in Nikolaev Region and hit a building in Krivoy Rog.

The Russians also used Iranian kamikaze drones to strike positions of the 92nd Mechanized Brigade of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, operating in the direction of Kharkov. As a result of the attacks, two self-propelled howitzers with a calibre of 152 millimetres, two self-propelled guns with a calibre of 122 millimetres and two infantry fighting vehicles were destroyed.

It should be noted that Iranian Mohajer-6 search and attack drones have also started to appear in the Odessa Region in recent days.

Source: https://www.defenseromania.ro/drone-ruso-iraniene-lovesc-continuu-portul-ucrainean-de-la-marea-neagra_618381.html

Ukraine's military explains why the Russians switched from Kalibr and Iskander missiles to "rudimentary" Iranian drones



Iskander missiles. Photo credit: Moscow Ministry of Defence

A spokesman for the Ukrainian Air Force has spoken out about the Russian occupiers' dropping of Iranian drones into combat, noting that the moment culminated in the cessation of cruise missile launches towards Ukrainian territory. According to Yuri Ignat, spokesman for the Ukrainian Air Force Command, the reasons behind this decision are strategic and financial. The Ukrainian Army official gave an analysis of the use of Iranian drones to the Belsat TV station, as quoted by the Unian agency. He noted that although Iranian drones are technologically "primitive", there are unfortunately positive results for the Russians in using them and hitting Ukrainian technology. He added that because of the huge cost of Russian missiles, Moscow prefers to use Iranian kamikaze drones which are much cheaper. The Ukrainian official is of the opinion that this autumn or winter there will be launches of Kalibr or Iskander again. The costs of Kalibr and Kh-101 missiles are huge and Iranian kamikaze drones - "primitive" and much cheaper.



Launch of a Russian Kalibr missile. Photo: Ministry of Defence in Moscow

"There is no doubt that Russia stopped using high-precision missiles such as Kalibr, Iskander, Kh-101 for financial reasons. These missiles have warheads of about 400 kilograms and cost millions of dollars. For example, the price of a Kalibr missile is around 6 million, and a Kh-101 missile between 11 and 13 million," the Ukrainian military official said. This is why the occupiers are making heavy use of Iranian drones in this phase of the conflict. The Ukrainian air force spokesman says the Shahed-136 are "primitive" drones, but they have the capacity to cover a distance of 2,500 km and can pose problems for Ukrainian forces. Yuri

Ignat added that the Russian Federation is likely to resort to the strategy of using Iranian drones now, in order to use Kalibr, Iskander and other types of missiles to hit Ukrainian critical infrastructure in autumn-winter operations. It should be recalled that late last week, several Iranian-made Shahed-136 (Geran-2) drones were seen in the sky above the Ukrainian city of Odessa. Using kamikaze drones, the Russian military hit several targets belonging to the Ukrainian army. Subsequently, the use of Iranian drones in combat has become an almost daily occurrence.

https://www.defenseromania.ro/armata-ucrainei-explica-de-ce-rusii-au-trecut-de-la-kalibr-si-iskander-la-rudimentarele-drone-iraniene_618394.html

The Ukrainian Armed Forces received the first two batteries of the NASAMS system from the US



Ukrainian President Volodimir Zelenski said on Sunday in an interview with CBS that the Ukrainian Armed Forces have received the first two batteries of the Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System (NASAMS) from the United States. In the interview with the US television channel CBS, Volodimir Zelenski thanked US President Joe Biden and confirmed that the Ukrainian Armed Forces have received NASAMS air defense systems.

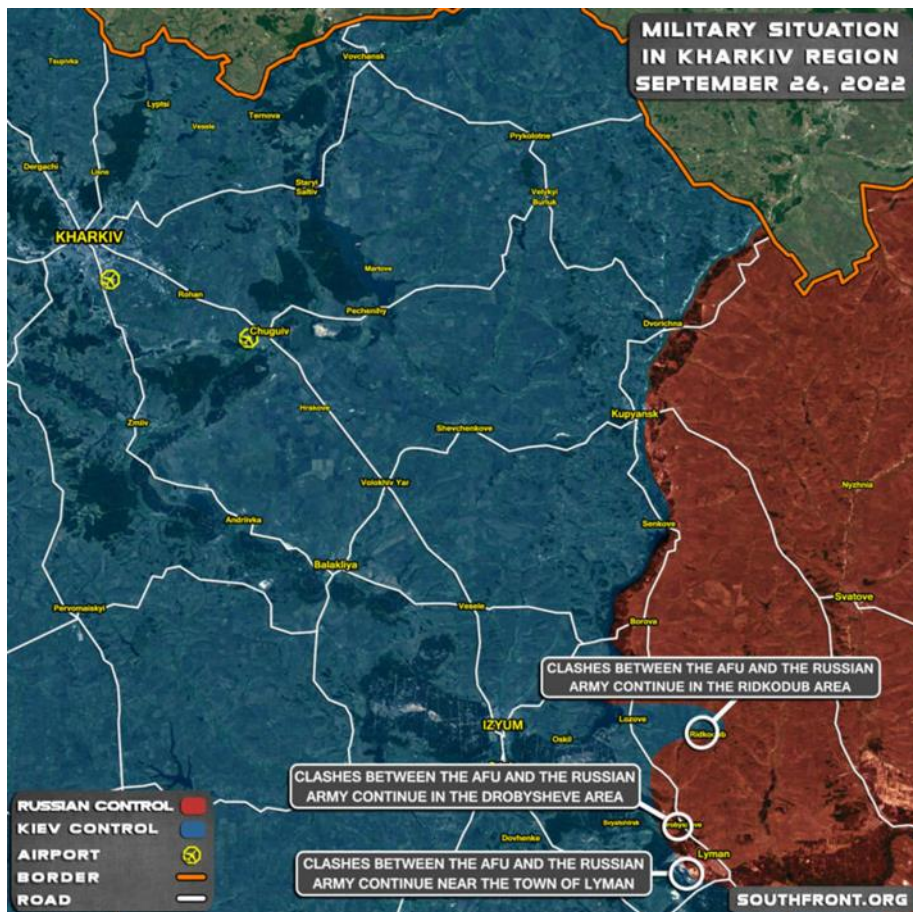
In early September, the US Department of Defense (DoD) came out with new details on the procurement and delivery of the NASAMS air defence system to be offered to Ukraine. At the time, the Pentagon stated that Ukraine would receive two batteries of the NASAMS system to strengthen its air defence.

However, Volodimir Zelenski has insisted that much more support is needed for Ukrainian citizens to be protected against Russian military aggression.

"Why do we need this? We need security to be able to convince our Ukrainians to return home. If it's secure, they will come back, settle down, work here and pay taxes and then we won't have a \$5 billion deficit in our budget. So it will be a positive thing for everyone," Zelenski added. According to unconfirmed reports, the two batteries of the NASAMS system are expected to be deployed in Kharkov. NASAMS systems are manufactured by a consortium of the US corporation Raytheon Technologies and the Norwegian Kongsberg group. The complex includes Raytheon AN/MPQ-64F1 launchers and radar stations. Raytheon is responsible for supplying the AIM-120 AMRAAM medium-range air-to-air missiles for the system, and Kongsberg supplies the launchers. The firing range of the anti-aircraft system in the NASAMS II configuration using AIM-120C AMRAAM missiles is up to 25 km, and the height at which it can shoot down an air target is between 14-15 km.

https://www.defenseromania.ro/ucraina-nasams_618384.html

UKRAINIAN OFFENSIVE IN THE HARKOV REGION ON 26 SEPTEMBER 2022 (MAP UPDATE)



Clashes between the AFU and the Russian army continue near Lyman;
Clashes between the AFU and the Russian army continue in the Ridkodub area;
Clashes between the AFU and the Russian Army continue in the Drobyshve area.

<https://southfront.org/ukrainian-offensive-in-kharkov-region-on-september-26-2022-map-update/>

US and South Korea begin joint naval maneuvers to respond to North Korean provocations



The US and South Korea began their first joint naval exercises in five years near the Korean Peninsula on Monday, a day after Pyongyang tested a ballistic missile, AFP reports.

The United States is South Korea's main security ally, where 28,500 US troops are stationed to protect the country from its nuclear-armed neighbour to the north. Conservative South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol, who took office in May, is seeking to strengthen this military alliance after the failure of the previous Seoul government's attempts at diplomatic rapprochement with Pyongyang. "This exercise was prepared to demonstrate the strong will of the South Korea-US alliance to respond to North Korean provocations," the South Korean navy said in a statement.

More than 20 ships, including the US nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan, as well as major air assets, are participating in the four-day exercise.

The exercises consist of naval combat and anti-submarine warfare simulations, tactical maneuvers and other military operations.

Washington and Seoul have long conducted joint military exercises. The two allies insist the exercises are purely defensive, but North Korea sees them as dress rehearsals for a future invasion of its territory.

Source: https://www.defenseromania.ro/statele-unite-si-coreea-de-sud-au-inceput-manevre-navale-comune_618378.html

Although the tender for the corvettes was won with a fixed price, Romania is offering to pay more for the four military vessels

Romania is showing its generosity to France by offering to pay more than the fixed price for the corvettes for the Romanian naval forces.

The contract was for the construction of four corvette-type military vessels to be used by the Romanian naval forces. The tender organised by the Romanian Ministry of National Defence (MApN) was won by a consortium led by the French firm Naval Group. In order to win the tender, Naval Group, which has no shipyard in Romania, teamed up with Constanta Shipyard. This association was necessary because one of the clauses of the tender, imposed by the Romanian side, was that the future corvettes should be built in Romania.

The tender was won by the Naval Group - Constanta Shipyard joint venture in 2019. The Dutch company Damen came second. It competed alone, as it owns two shipyards in Romania - in Galati and Mangalia.

The negotiated price was supposed to remain fixed, but...

In the 2019 tender, Naval Group had asked for around €1.2 billion for the corvettes. The price, since it was accepted by the Romanian side, should have remained fixed. Only a few days ago, the Ciucă Government approved Emergency Ordinance 126/2022. GEO 126 concerns defence procurement. We recall, in this context, that Prime Minister Ciucă is well acquainted with the field, as he was Minister of Defence and Chief of the Defence Staff.

"The Government has approved the Emergency Ordinance adjusting the prices of public procurement contracts, products, services, sectoral contracts and framework agreements in the fields of defence and security. This adjustment applies exclusively to the remaining suppliers or service providers existing on the date of entry into force of the regulatory act and will be made on each request for payment for the entire duration of contracts and framework agreements in the fields of defence and security until the supply, full provision and receipt of these products or services. The need for this ordinance is obvious - various circumstances have arisen during this period which the contracting authority could not reasonably foresee: the accelerated increase in prices of raw materials, electricity, gas, transport, as well as bottlenecks caused by the pandemic and the subsequent war in Ukraine through Russian military aggression," announced Government spokesman Dan Cărbunaru.

Foreign firms invited to "adjust" prices

The ordinance gives suppliers of defence products and services the opportunity to notify the Romanian side that they wish to "adjust" the price charged to the Romanian side. The foreign supplier and the Romanian party may, as a consequence, conclude additional acts to these contracts. The procedure is extremely strange. For example, because a supplier has won the tender with a certain price, perhaps lower than the competition.

"Within 45 days from the date of entry into force of this Emergency Ordinance, suppliers may submit an address to the contracting authorities requesting adjustment of the price of the products/services to be provided for all contracts/framework agreements provided for"

Government of Romania

Corvettes delayed, but we order submarines

A few weeks before the Government approved GEO 126/2022, the Minister of Defence, Vasile Dîncu, made a surprise announcement. Without going into details about the contract for the corvettes (a contract that Naval Group and Constanta Shipyard had postponed without any legal basis, which would have given Romania the right to re-tender), Minister Dîncu declared that the MApN wanted to buy two submarines and two military helicopters from France.

Without disputing the need for these submarines or helicopters, it remains suspicious that MApN is buying them directly from France, without a tender.

"In principle, we thought of two. Two submarines and two helicopters at this point. There could be more helicopters, for example, but it's also about technical characteristics."

Vasile Dîncu, Minister of National Defence

Romania's decision to buy weapons from France without a tender could cause problems in our relations with other NATO allies, such as the United States, which has a tradition of producing helicopters or submarines.

The tender for the corvettes had been complained to the military prosecutor's office

It should be recalled that in early 2019, the head of the Armaments Department of the MNA, Secretary of State Andrei Ignat, announced that he had referred to the Military Prosecutor's Office the existence of suspicions related to the organisation of the tender for

corvettes. However, Andrei Ignat was subsequently dismissed as head of department and secretary of state.

The Armaments Department was then downgraded to a Directorate-General, as it is now. Probably so that the head of the structure would have less power and be totally subordinate to the Minister of Defence.

After the Secretary of State for Armaments was dismissed, the company Romtehnica, subordinate to the Ministry of Defence, informed the Naval Group (France) - Constanta Shipyard joint venture that it had won the tender for the delivery of four multipurpose corvettes. Naval Group representatives had put in a tender for the Gowind 2500 multirole corvettes. These are likely to be configured to Romania's specific requirements.

The corvettes would be built by the French in Constanta, as the Romanian side has required the vessels to be built in Romania. The shipyard could be either on the Black Sea or the maritime Danube. At the tender, foreign companies came coupled with Romanian firms or showed that they had yards in Romania.

Romanian submarines in the Black Sea? Frunzuliță: Romania should start with a submarine drone with strike capabilities

This summer Romania expressed its intention to purchase French Scorpene-class submarines, with Minister Vasile Dîncu announcing that Romania had signed a letter of intent with Paris to this effect.

In a previous edition of DefenseRomania's weekly Obiectiv EuroAtlantic, this topic was also analysed by Doru Frunzuliță, president of the George C. Marshall Association in Romania, former MEP and former secretary of state in the Ministry of Defence.

"Romania needs defence capabilities in the Black Sea, including submarines (...) The war is focused on control of the seas and oceans. It's the old American theory that whoever controls the seas controls the world," said the security expert, who recalled that at least three such vessels would be needed, but the maintenance costs of submarines are huge.

"There is talk of two or three submarines, probably three would be needed. But be careful, submarines cost a lot of money to maintain," he said.

By submarines, Romania should have acquired at least one submarine drone.



Doru Frunzuliță believes that before submarines, Romania should start the programme with the purchase of a submarine drone - unmanned underwater vehicles (UUV) - that also has attack capabilities, not just surveillance and reconnaissance.

"I think Romania could start with a submarine drone. Such technologies already exist, they are not as expensive and specialists can be trained much faster. These should be drones that not only have reconnaissance and surveillance capabilities, but also strike capabilities. They would be the hornet's nest that Russian submarines and surface ships should be aware of.

There has been talk of mini-submarines, but I have many doubts, not necessarily about the capacity of the industry, because they are already being produced in Timisoara for the Italian Army which has a tradition in this weapon. But I have doubts about their capability and efficiency. There are many statements about the technique we want to buy. We should be more careful in this area because they are sensitive issues and any statement can have reverberations", concluded Doru Frunzulică.

Romania officially announced plans to purchase French Scorpene submarines

Our country has also expressed its intention regarding these vessels. Minister Vasile Dîncu confirmed that Romania has sent a letter of intent to France.

Of course, the approach is a formal one, as the process is long and complicated, but it represents a first step towards equipping the country with this type of weapon.

Minister Vasile Dîncu also said that initially MApN had thought of two such submarines. There is no final decision on how many vessels Romania would like to acquire.

At the same time, officials gave assurances that the "Multipurpose Corvette" programme is not influenced by the intention to equip with submarines and are waiting for the association between Naval Group and Constanta Shipyard to reach an agreement to sign the contract and start building the four Gowind 2500 class corvettes.

The Scorpene-class submarines range in size from sixty to seventy metres and cost 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.

Source: https://www.defenseromania.ro/submarine-romanesti-in-marea-neagra-frunzulica-romania-ar-trebui-sa-inceapa-cu-o-drona-submarin-cu-capacitati-de-lovire_618389.html

The Outlaw Ocean Episode 1: The mystery of a massacre at sea



Murders like this don't happen often on land. A 10-minute slow-motion slaughter captured by a cell phone camera shows a group of unarmed men at sea in an undisclosed location, possibly 15 of them, killed one by one by a semi-automatic weapon, after which the culprits pose for celebratory selfies. This case shows the challenge of prosecuting crime on the high seas. There were at least four ships on the scene, but no law required any of the dozens of witnesses to report the killings - and no one did. Law enforcement in the open ocean is limited, and jurisdiction is complicated. Authorities only learned about the killings when the video surfaced on a mobile phone left in a Fijian taxi in 2014. It's still unclear who the victims were or why they were shot. An unknown number of similar killings occur each year - on the ship from which the video was filmed they later said they had witnessed a

similar slaughter the week before. After receiving the video from an Interpol source in an email with the subject line "Brace yourself," The Outlaw Ocean Project, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit journalism organization, began an investigation that led to Wang Feng Yu's 2021 conviction. , the captain of the Taiwanese-flagged Ping Shin 101, who was taken into custody by the Taiwanese Coast Guard in 2020 The details of this relentless investigation are featured in this dramatic first episode of CBC Podcasts and L.A.'s new podcast series The Outlaw Ocean. Times.

Trygg Mat Tracking, a Norwegian research firm that focuses on maritime crime, identified Ping Shin 101 by comparing video footage with images from a maritime database. The former pontiffs were identified through posts on Facebook and other social media platforms where they discussed their time on board. Interviews with these former sailors, some of whom said they witnessed the crimes captured in the video, revealed the captain's name and details of the incident. Taiwanese officials, who were presented with the names of the men and ships in 2015 and 2016, said the victims appeared to be part of a failed pirate attack. But maritime security analysts have warned that the piracy claim has been used to justify attacks carried out to thwart a range of crimes, real and otherwise. The victims, they said, could have been mutinous crew members, thieves caught stealing or simply rival fishermen. Such crimes will continue to go unchecked without better prosecution of offshore violence, more transparency from flag registries and fishing companies, and greater efforts by governments to prosecute perpetrators. And that matters because what happens at sea affects everyone. According to some estimates, more than 90 percent of the world's trade is moved by the sea, and seafood is a major source of protein for much of the world. The Ping Shin 101 sank on 7 July 2014, less than two years after the shooting captured in the video. Wang, still captain at the time, sent out a distress signal citing a mechanical failure. Taiwanese authorities issued an arrest warrant for Wang in December 2018. In August 2020, prosecutors were granted a break. A tuna longliner named Indian Star, owned by a Taiwanese company and flagged Seychelles, arrived in Kaohsiung, a city on Taiwan's southwest coast. The fishing vessel had a history of violations, including the use of falsified licences and fishing in prohibited areas. More important to the authorities, however, was the man driving the vessel. Wang Feng Yu stepped ashore and, eight years after allegedly shouting orders to kill in that video, was eventually arrested. The captain was soon sentenced to 26 years in prison for the murder, bringing a dramatic end to the 7-year investigation. Ian Urbina is the director of The Outlaw Ocean Project, a Washington DC-based non-profit journalism organization that focuses on environmental and human rights concerns at sea globally.

Source: <https://www.maritime-executive.com/editorials/the-outlaw-ocean-episode-1-the-mystery-of-a-massacre-at-sea>

Clandestine rat forces an Australian cargo ship into quarantine for a week



Earlier this month, a ship delivering essential supplies to a remote island off the coast of Australia was forced into quarantine under biosecurity laws after a single rat was detected on board. The MV Island Trader, the ship carrying supplies for Lord Howe Island's 350 residents, was forced to quarantine at Port Macquarie after a live rodent was detected on board by tracking cameras. Loading was quickly stopped while the ship was searched by dogs. The Lord Howe Island Board (LHIB) said the trail camera footage was reviewed and, with no evidence in the video that the rodent had left the ship, the decision was made to quarantine the vessel. The council activated an emergency plan and asked the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) to fly emergency supplies to the island. The Island Trader, a general cargo ship built in 1981 and operated by contractor Birdon, must meet high biosecurity standards to prevent rats and other biosecurity risks from entering the island. The Australian government has spent tens of millions of dollars to remove rats from Lord Howe Island's ecosystem and does not want to risk a new infestation. "We would like to thank the RAAF for their continued assistance and cooperation as we work with Birdon to ensure the best possible outcomes for the community while maintaining appropriate biosecurity for the island," said Debbie Johnsen, LHIB Acting CEO. . After a call with independent rodent experts, the team decided to offload the vessel to ensure it could be fully inspected, then keep the vessel rodent-free for seven days. Following the end of quarantine, the Island Trader was cleared to depart on Thursday and resumed its normal route. Lord Howe Island, which covers an area of only 14.5 square kilometres, is on the UNESCO World Heritage List because of its natural beauty and diversity. Rats arrived on the island in a wrecked freighter in 1918 and have been exceptionally pests to native birds, many of which are found nowhere else; rat predation on Lord Howe has already contributed to the extinction of five bird species, at least 13 invertebrate species and two plant species, according to the council. A multi-million dollar eradication program involving aerial dispersal of rat poison pellets began in 2019, and a cleanup campaign eliminated another 100 rats last year. Within a few years, the cleanup is already allowing some endangered bird species to repopulate the island, according to the council.

Source: <https://www.maritime-executive.com/article/stowaway-rat-forces-australian-freighter-to-quarantine-for-a-week>

[Gas from Russia's Nord Stream 2 pipeline leaks into the Baltic Sea](#)

Danish authorities on Monday asked ships to move away from a five nautical mile radius off the island of Bornholm after an overnight gas leak from the Russian-owned Nord Stream 2 pipeline drained into the Baltic Sea. The German government said it had contacted Danish authorities and was working with local law enforcement to find out what caused the sudden drop in pressure in the pipeline. Denmark's energy ministry declined to comment. The pipeline has been one of the flashpoints in an escalating energy war between Europe and Moscow since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February, which has hit major Western economies and driven up gas prices. "A leak occurred today on the Nord Stream 2 pipeline in the Danish area," the Danish energy agency said in a statement. Danish maritime authorities have issued a shipping warning and established a zone around the pipeline "as it is dangerous for ship traffic," it added. The operator of Nord Stream 2 said the pressure in the pipeline, which contained some tight gas inside although it never became operational, dropped from 105 to 7 bar overnight. The pipeline, which was to double the volume of gas flowing from St Petersburg under the Baltic Sea to Germany, had just been completed and filled with 300 million cubic metres of gas when Germany cancelled it days before the invasion. "Overnight, the Nord Stream 2 dispatcher recorded a rapid drop in gas pressure on the A-line of the Nord

Stream 2 natural gas pipeline," the Nord Stream 2 operator said in a statement. "The investigation is ongoing." Without clarity European countries have resisted Russian calls to allow the Nord Stream 2 pipeline to operate and accused Moscow of using energy as a weapon. Russia denies doing so and blames the West for the gas shortage. "We are currently in contact with the authorities concerned to clarify the situation. We still have no clarity on the exact causes and facts," a statement from the German economy ministry said. The Swiss operator, which has been legally liquidated, said it had informed all relevant authorities about the leak. Russian gas exporter Gazprom has raised questions about the incident with operator Nord Stream 2. Russia has cut off gas supplies to several countries and also stopped flows through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline, blaming Western sanctions for hampering operations. President Vladimir Putin in September blamed the West for keeping Nord Stream 2 closed. Monday's gas leak came a day before the ceremonial launch of the Baltic Pipe pipeline carrying gas from Norway to Poland. The project is the centerpiece of Warsaw's efforts to diversify away from Russian gas. Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen is due to travel to Poland on Tuesday to mark the occasion. Nord Stream 2 has been highly unpopular with Danish lawmakers, and the country passed a law in 2017 allowing it to ban the project from passing through its territorial waters on security grounds. But Nord Stream 2 later changed its original route to take it through Denmark's exclusive economic zone, where this veto could not be enforced.

Source: <https://www.marinelink.com/news/gas-russias-nord-stream-pipeline-leaks-499720>

[Norwegian regulator warns that drones have been discovered near offshore platforms](#)



The Norwegian Petroleum Safety Authority (PSA) on Monday urged oil companies to be more vigilant of unidentified drones seen flying near Norwegian offshore oil and gas platforms, warning that they could pose a risk of accidents or deliberate attacks. The warning came after the country's largest oil and gas company, Equinor, recently said it had notified authorities of sightings of drones of unknown origin flying near some of its platforms. "We urge increased vigilance, a review of emergency preparedness and incident response measures and information sharing," PSA said in a letter to operators. The watchdog said unidentified drones pose a risk to helicopters carrying offshore workers, could become a source of ignition in areas at risk of explosion or could be used for deliberate attacks. The Stavanger Aftenblad newspaper reported last week that unidentified drones have been spotted at at least six

Equinor installations, including its giant Johan Sverdrup field. Last Tuesday, a drone was spotted about 50 metres from Equinor's Heidrun platform in the North Sea, breaching the 500-metre security perimeter, the newspaper reported. "There have been drone sightings at some of our installations on the Norwegian continental shelf," an Equinor spokesman told Reuters, declining to elaborate. Equinor reported the incidents to Norwegian authorities, including PSA and police. "We take these observations very seriously," the company spokesman added. Drones have also been observed near the Kristin, Gullfaks C, Snorre A and Gina Krog installations, Aftenbladet reported. The police district in southwestern Norway said it had started an investigation into the offshore drone sightings and notified the Norwegian Police Security Service, which deals with terrorism and external threats. "The police take the sightings of illegal drone activities seriously and are closely monitoring the situation," lead investigator Amund Preede Revheim told Reuters in an email.

Source: <https://gcaptain.com/norwegian-regulator-warns-of-drones-spotted-near-offshore-platforms/>