

Contents

NATO makes a show of force: US aircraft carrier George H.W. Bush enters Alliance command at Neptune Strike 2022.2 1

Russia's Poseidon nuclear torpedo, 'weapon of the apocalypse' on paper only? Simileanu: Might have surprise test explosion 3

Russia's river research vessel has come from Murmansk to Kerch 3

NATO and China clash at Arctic summit 4

Bosphorus traffic temporarily suspended after grain ship runs aground 6

Navy destroys bunkering ship over alleged crude oil theft 6

What are collapsible cargo containers? 7

New MCOE at Coast Guard Academy nears completion 7

NATO makes a show of force: US aircraft carrier George H.W. Bush enters Alliance command at Neptune Strike 2022.2

NATO's Naval Strike and Support Forces (STRIKFORNATO) and the US Sixth Fleet (SIXTHFLT) began exercise Neptune Strike 2022.2 (NEST 22.2) on Friday at STRIKFORNATO's headquarters in Oeiras, Portugal.

The centerpiece of NEST 22.2 is the George H.W. Bush Strike Fighter Aircraft Group (GHWBCSG), based on the aircraft carrier of the same name, which arrived in the Mediterranean Sea two months ago on a scheduled deployment to the U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa (NAVEUR-NAVAF) area of operations.

During NEST 22.2, SIXTHFLT will conduct a transfer of authority (TOA) of GHWBCSG to STRIKFORNATO.

The Neptune Strike series is seeing record participation, integrating the work of at least 20 commands under a single command.

Romania also participates in military manoeuvres

Allied and partner nations scheduled to participate in NEST 22.2 include 19 nations: Albania, Canada, Croatia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States, according to the press release.

In addition, there are at least four NATO commands - STRIKFORNATO, JFC Naples, JFC Brunssum and SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe).

Although focused on naval assets, Neptune Strike activity will also have an impact in the air and ground environments.

While under the command and control of STRIKFORNATO, CSG and other Allied units will produce effects in the areas of operations of JFC Naples and JFC Brunssum, demonstrating Alliance cohesion and the ability to operate simultaneously in European waters, STRIKFORNATO and SIXTHFLT said in a joint press release.

NATO has three Allied Joint Force Headquarters, two in Europe at Naples (Italy) and Brunssum (Netherlands) and one in the US at Norfolk.

NEST 22.2 is the eighth phase of NATO's long-running Neptune project and builds on previous phases of the project, including Neptune Challenge in October and November 2021, Neptune Strike in January and February 2022 and Neptune Shield in May 2022.

As in previous phases of Project Neptune, NEST 22.2 brings together NATO commands from across the Alliance to plan and execute real-world vigilance activities across multiple operational domains (naval, air and land).

"The Neptune series is a tangible demonstration of the strength and capability of the NATO Alliance to operate in all domains," said Vice Admiral Thomas Ishee, Commander SIXTHFLT and STRIKFORNATO. "Neptune Strike 22.2 is a prime example of NATO's ability to integrate the cutting-edge maritime warfare capabilities of an Allied strike air group, ensuring our collective ability to deter and defend."

As part of Euro-Atlantic deterrence and defence (EAD), this vigilance activity will improve interoperability between Allied CSGs, STRIKFORNATO, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), national commands in both the Alliance and partners.

"The Neptune series, which integrates carrier-based and amphibious strike capabilities into NATO operations, has become routine, generating effects in the maritime, air and land domains, providing deterrence and reassurance, and offering powerful opportunities for Allied interoperability," said British Rear Admiral James Morley, STRIKFORNATO Deputy Commander. "I am delighted to see this outstanding team of professionals coming together again and demonstrating the strength and cohesion of our NATO Alliance."

At the end of September, the UK announced that it would deploy a Naval Littoral Response Group to the Mediterranean, which includes an amphibious assault ship, two landing craft and a destroyer.

STRIKFORNATO, based in Oeiras, Portugal, is the rapidly deployable and flexible Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) Headquarters with maritime power projection, capable of planning and executing the full spectrum of combined maritime operations.

In June, STRIKFORNATO participated as NATO HQ in the GHWBCSG's Composite Training Unit Exercise (COMPTUEX), practicing from the Oeiras location the command and control of the Strike Aircraft Group, which is based on the east coast of the United States.

The transfer of an American aircraft carrier under NATO command is an unusual event, motivated only by exceptional events, in this case Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

This is the third time in 2022 that NATO has assumed command of an American carrier-based strike group, and the third time since the end of the Cold War. Previously, NATO commanded the Harry S. Truman Strike Group during two other iterations of Project Neptune, according to USNI.

Source: https://www.defenseromania.ro/nato-face-o-demonstratie-de-forta-portavionul-american-george-h-w-bush-intra-sub-comanda-aliantei-la-neptune-strike-2022-2_618829.html

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<https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/3188319/nato-kicks-off-vigilance-activity-neptune-strike-2022/>

<https://www.naval-technology.com/news/strikfornato-neptune-strike-2022-2/>

Russian Poseidon nuclear torpedo, 'weapon of the apocalypse' only on paper? Simileanu: It might have a surprise test explosion

There has been intense talk in recent days about the possibility of a Russian nuclear test, and all eyes have been on the K-239 Belgorod submarine, which is said to be capable of launching a Poseidon nuclear torpedo in a nuclear show of force following the conflict in Ukraine.

According to international media, NATO intelligence services have sent allies data on the movements of the Russian K-329 Belgorod submarine and a possible test of the Poseidon torpedo, dubbed the "weapon of the Apocalypse" by the Russian press.

Colonel Vasile Simileanu, PhD in geopolitics and director of Geopolitica magazine, in one of the editions of Obiectiv EuroAtlantic broadcast by DefenseRomania every Friday at 11:00, tempered the Russian narrative, pointing out that the Poseidon missile, the so-called "weapon of the apocalypse" by the Russians, has not even completed its tests and Moscow may be in for an unpleasant surprise. But he admitted Russia's slight lead over the West in hypersonic programmes, the only area where it is not militarily outclassed, apart from nuclear weapons.

"The West is much more technologically developed than Russia. Not to mention the US military which has far more sophisticated weaponry than Russia. Indeed the only weapon that the Russians are said to have an edge on is the hypersonic missile. They also say about this Poseidon nuclear torpedo, but it has not completed testing. They might have a surprise and explode during the test, it could be a total failure," says Vasile Simileanu.

Source: https://www.defenseromania.ro/torpila-nucleara-rusa-poseidon-arma-apocalipsei-doar-pe-hartie-simileanu-s-ar-putea-sa-aiba-surpriza-sa-explodeze-la-testare_618839.html

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On 14 October, the Academic Council of the Russian Research Institute of Fisheries and Oceanography (VNIRO) summarised the preliminary results of the Proteus research vessel's expedition from Murmansk to Kerch. This is reported by the joint press service of the Federal Fisheries Agency, writes ShipbuildingInfo. According to the agency, during the passage, the Proteus ship covered 5.8 thousand kilometers: 1.5 thousand kilometers through three seas - the Barents, White and Azov Seas and 4.3 thousand kilometers along the inland waterways of the European part of Russia. During the expedition, "extensive material was collected that will help fisheries science better understand the state of water bodies and make more accurate forecasts." Data were collected on hydrochemical parameters of the water, including oxygen and nutrient content.

Source: <https://www.blackseanews.net/read/195561>

NATO and China clash at Arctic Summit

A senior NATO official has clashed with a Chinese diplomat over China's failure to condemn the Russian invasion of Ukraine, injecting tension over the war into an international conference on the Arctic. The uncharacteristically frank exchange between Admiral Rob Bauer, chairman of the alliance's military committee, and He Rulong, China's ambassador to Iceland, followed a speech by Bauer on NATO's role in the region at the annual Arctic Circle gathering.

Bauer, a Dutch naval officer, said China "does not share our values and undermines the rules-based international order". The Chinese envoy spoke from the audience to challenge Bauer, saying "Admiral, with all due respect, your speech and remarks are full of arrogance." This prompted the NATO official's rebuttal. "I have a question for you, because you emphasise the principle of sovereignty and the importance of internationally recognised borders in the world," Bauer said, drawing applause. "I'm right, aren't I? Yes. Then why is it possible that China still does not condemn Russia's attack in Ukraine?" China's view of the "Ukraine crisis" includes a historical perspective, and the world needs to "understand the root cause," he said, eliciting scattered laughter when he called China "the world's peacemaker."

Speaking at @_Arctic_Circle, I explained the strategic relevance of the #Arctic to #NATO and our increased focus on the #HighNorth. Ensuring freedom of navigation and unimpeded access is essential. pic.twitter.com/GsyHcxDQoB - Admiral Rob Bauer (@CMC_NATO) October 15, 2022

China has resisted US calls to condemn President Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine, although Beijing said earlier this week it was "concerned" by Moscow's recent missile strikes on civilian targets. The United Nations General Assembly on Wednesday condemned Russia's annexation of parts of eastern Ukraine in a symbolic vote, voting 143-5, with 35 nations, including India and China, abstaining to approve the Western-backed resolution. The Arctic

Circle Assembly is an annual international gathering about the Arctic, including governments, indigenous organisations and academics. It is separate from the Arctic Council, an intergovernmental group of eight countries that includes the US and current president Russia. Its meetings have been suspended since the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Always a good idea to shake hands after an exchange in front of 2,000 people??@HeRulong@CMC_NATO pic.twitter.com/O42nrhcKrU - Arctic Circle (@_Arctic_Circle) October 15, 2022 Gao Feng, China's special representative for Arctic affairs, told the meeting that his country would not support excluding Russia, which leads the group until 2023, to punish it for the war in Ukraine and hand over the chairmanship to Norway. "There is no procedure to remove anyone from the council," Gao said. "So I really doubt whether the presidency could be handed over - to anyone - or whether Norway could take over."

Source: <https://gcaptain.com/nato-and-china-face-off-at-arctic-summit/>

West Coast ACV capsized at practice, no injuries reported

The U.S. Marine Corps has ordered a halt to waterborne operations in the surf zone for its fleet of amphibious combat vehicles after an ACV overturned in Camp Pendleton, California waters. During the shutdown, no ACV is allowed to launch from or land on an ocean beach. An ACV assigned to the Assault Amphibian School suffered "a reported mechanical failure" around 7:45 p.m. Thursday, the Marine Corps said in a news release. "Of the three crew members inside the vehicle, none were injured or required medical attention," according to the release. "The incident is currently under investigation." The Marine Corps suspension will last until more tests and data are collected and analyzed, according to the release. Surfing operations sponsored by the Amphibious Vehicle Test Branch are permitted. Land operations are not affected, and ACVs can still operate in protected waters and the ocean, Navy spokesman Capt. Ryan Bruce told USNI News. At Camp Pendleton, that means ACVs can launch into the water or move ashore from the base's base, a protected harbor that has ramps and a sandy shoreline. "Open water operations are prohibited," Bruce said. Officials did not detail the mechanical problem that led to the vehicle overturning in the surf. Surf in the region south of the base was reported to be 2 to 3 feet. The ACV was reportedly still stuck in the sand Friday morning. It was unclear if crews had recovered and removed the vehicle from the training beach by late afternoon. The suspension comes just three weeks after the service released its growing fleet of ACVs to resume open water operations after a two-month hiatus after a pair of ACVs were disabled in the surf during a July 19 training event at Camp Pendleton involving the 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion. In the midst of that investigation, the Marines also delayed the first operational deployment of the ACV, which was supposed to be part of the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit's overseas deployment with the Amphibious Ready Group from Makin Island. This followed a months-long hiatus in operations on the water after the fatal July 2020 sinking of an AAV during shore-to-ship training. Multiple investigations have found serious failures in training, certifications, standard operating procedures, maintenance requirements and naval integration involving AAVs. It also raised similar concerns as both services prepared for the first operational deployment of ACV on

board ship. "We are taking a deliberate and methodical approach to the implementation of this platform," Lt. Gen. David Furness, deputy commander for plans, policy and readiness, said in the release. "This adjustment to current guidance ensures our Sailors have the ability to train safely and maintain proficiency with the platform while we work to conduct additional testing." The suspension of transit in the surf zone is the latest disruption to on-water training for the Marine Corps AAV/ACV community. The ACV, built by BAE Systems, replaces the Marine Corps' aging fleet of tracked amphibious assault vehicles. The wheeled ACVs underwent a series of tests and operations with the 1st Marine Division and Marine Expeditionary Force I in California, including on-water and on-deck operations with Navy amphibious ships this year.

Source : <https://news.usni.org/2022/10/14/west-coast-acv-overturms-in-training-no-injuries-reported#more-98176>

Bosphorus traffic temporarily suspended after grain ship runs aground

Bosphorus traffic has been temporarily suspended after a ship loaded with grain ran aground due to unexpected damage off Türkeli, Turkey's Directorate General for Coastal Safety reported. The 190-meter-long shipwreck named "Annitta" was successfully towed away under the prompt coordination of the Istanbul Vessel Traffic Service Center, according to a statement by Anatolia news agency. After the tow, the vessel was anchored in the Sariyer district of Istanbul. Later, Turkish authorities informed us that the suspended traffic is expected to resume at 1.30 a.m. (local time). The coordination centre in Istanbul is carrying out joint inspections of ships loaded with grain from Ukraine crossing the Black Sea to Turkey's Bosphorus Strait. It ensures that the ships do not carry any weapons or combat equipment after leaving or entering ports.

Source: <https://www.marineinsight.com/shipping-news/bosphorus-traffic-suspended-temporarily-after-grain-vessel-runs-aground/>

Navy destroys bunkering ship over alleged crude oil theft

An illegal oil bunkering vessel seized with allegedly stolen crude oil on creeks in the Niger Delta was destroyed by personnel associated with the Nigerian Navy on October 10 in Delta State. Reports showed that on October 6, on the Escravos creeks, operatives of the private oil pipeline monitoring group, Tanita Security Services, allegedly arrested the vessel and its seven-member crew while the crude oil was being illegally loaded. The vessel with registration number "L85 B9.50" was loaded with 600-650 cubic meters in nearly five compartments filled with illegally taken oil when it was detained. Around 3pm on 10 October, Niger Navy personnel set fire to the ill-fated vessel on the Warri River after the ship's captain, named Temple Manasseh, confessed that the vessel was indeed loaded with crude oil. In his revelation, Manasseh admitted that Tania Security Service agents had detained him and his fellow crew members. In addition, he added that armed individuals had

forcibly abducted the ship, diverted it to the waterways and loaded it with crude oil. He said the Tompolo boys arrested him in Escravos. However, the alleged stolen crude oil had not been loaded by him. Apparently my boat was hijacked by some boys who forced the loaded crude oil into his boat. He doesn't know the hijackers. But as Tompolo security agents stormed the scene, they abandoned the loading operation that had lasted about two and a half hours. Captain Warredi Enisuoh, the maritime intelligence consultant associated with Tanita Security Services, reportedly confirmed that the arrest resulted from intelligence gathering, explaining that security personnel had been monitoring the space via satellite. However, officials from the Nigerian navy officials who destroyed the illegal oil tanker denied speaking to journalists about the incident. Records, according to Captain Enisuoh, show that the Dutch vessel sold to a Nigerian had been used to illegally transport crude oil for several years. He added that the captured vessel was supposed to carry stolen oil to Tema in Ghana. Enisuoh expressed delight that the operation led by the Tanita Security Services in association with Operation Delta Safe, a private sector and government initiative, had yielded positive results, eventually leading to the arrest. Ensure further informed journalists that Tanita had information about the five vessels. The only one (the destroyed ship) had entered since the security operations had begun. The identities of the ship's owners were also established.

Source: <https://www.marineinsight.com/videos/video-navy-destroys-bunkering-vessel-over-an-alleged-crude-oil-theft/>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=earXx0L6EUk&t=197s>

What are collapsible freight containers?

When the Japanese-registered Hakone Maru first sailed from Japan on August 27, 1968, on its voyage to Oakland, USA, it was a huge step forward in cargo shipping - especially the transport of standardized containers. On its maiden voyage, it carried 752 twenty-foot ocean containers (TEU). Corrugated steel cargo containers developed by American entrepreneur Malcolm Maclean in 1955 were already popular by then. Today, containerisation and container ship freight are the two most common methods of moving goods between locations. Intermodal containers that can be easily transported and moved between the three modes of transport - sea, rail or land - account for the transport of about 85% of global cargo. Dedicated shipping containers are used for the transport of general cargo and temperature-sensitive goods. The International Maritime Organisation (IMO) introduced container standardisation in the late 1960s to bring consistency to the loading, unloading and transport of these containers. Container handling equipment used in ports and warehouses, as well as related facilities, have also adapted to these changes.

Source and continuation: <https://www.marineinsight.com/maritime-law/foldable-containers/>

The new MCOE at the Coast Guard Academy is nearing completion

A \$25 million construction project is nearing completion at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy that will transform the waterfront area of the 90-year-old campus. A ceremony and milestone recognition reception was held downtown on October 12, with construction company representatives, cadets and alumni eager to tour the nearly completed project. The 20,000-square-foot Maritime Center of Excellence (MCOE) will be the Academy's first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified building and will highlight the unique waterfront programs there. With a curvilinear vaulted roof, wood decks and true north orientation, the building is designed to highlight the waterfront landscape. The new facility will feature interactive, high-tech classrooms designed to encourage collaboration. The center's modern design also includes ambitious sustainability design goals in line with coordinated climate resilience efforts across the service to address the dangers posed by climate change. The interior spaces of the future centre have been designed with access to natural light and natural ventilation to minimise reliance on artificial lighting and air conditioning. Double-height spaces for ship maintenance, office space and an atrium will provide natural ventilation. Other sustainability goals include exploring ground heating and cooling sources, solar panels and rainwater harvesting. The building's exterior will also feature durable, resilient materials that are easy to maintain. Completion of the center is a significant step forward as the Academy works to recapitalize the 1930s infrastructure and build modern training and education spaces to develop the future Coast Guard workforce.

Source: <https://en.portnews.ru/news/337084/>