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The TOISA INTREPID seen operating near the THIALF
Photo : Fedde Visser (c)

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YSP Event on the "MEGAS ALEXANDROS"



Members of Young Shipping Professionals (YSP) gathered aboard Tsavliris Salvage's "**Megas Alexandros**" last week for what was a highly educational and somewhat "alternative" event. YSP Greece was established in 2006 to bring together the next generation of shipping professionals, predominantly through regular social gatherings. Recently, organizers have sought to try and bring additional value to their members by adding an educative/informative twist to their functions with considerable success.



YSP Committee Member Chronis Perivolaris of Perivolaris Law firm commented: "The "**Megas Alexandros**" is practically an institution here in Piraeus – she is known to almost everyone affiliated to this port. As very few young people within our industry have ever set foot on a salvage tug, we thought it would be a very original and interesting, venue for an event." This sentiment was underlined by the fact that attendees included individuals from the legal community, brokerage firms, P&I Clubs, average adjusters and shipowners all of whom were treated to a guided tour of the tug as well as the obligatory Greek canapé of "**tiropitakia**"!



AVRA's **EAST** seen departing with a **STEMAT barge** from Rotterdam – Photo : Marijn van Hoorn (c)

Somali Pirates Seize State-Owned Tanker



One of Novoship's Moscow class oil tankers. A similar Novoship tanker was boarded by Somali pirates near Yemen on Wednesday, marking the first seizure of a Russian ship with a Russian crew.

A Russian warship was headed toward a Russian-operated oil tanker hijacked by Somali pirates off the coast of Yemen late Wednesday. Somali pirates hijacked the tanker **Moscow University** with 23 Russian sailors about 350 nautical miles from Socotra, Yemen, earlier in the day, in the first ever seizure of a Russian ship with a Russian crew.

The tanker is operated by state-controlled Novoship, a Novorossiisk-based company that is part of Sovcomflot. Communication with the tanker ceased at 8 a.m. Moscow time, when the captain radioed that two boats carrying gunmen had opened fire, Novoship said.

The captain alerted military ships in the area, and the Russian warship Marshal Shaposhnikov was headed toward the tanker late Wednesday. The warship was expected to reach the area by 11 p.m. Moscow time, depending on weather conditions, a Navy source told Interfax.

What action it might take next was unclear. Maritime experts said negotiations and a ransom payment would be the best strategy because storming a tanker full of oil might have tragic consequences. "It would be dangerous for the crew and for the tanker itself," said Mikhail Voitenko, editor of the Maritime Bulletin.

He said the warship was unlikely to intervene unless the tanker crew members managed to hold out in a hard-to-access room. The crew members have locked themselves in the radar room, Jan Thornqvist, an admiral with the European Union's Navfor naval force, told reporters in Kenya. The pirates warned against any rescue attempt and said the tanker was headed for the Somali coast. "Any attempt to rescue the ship will certainly endanger the crew. The ship will be docked at Garacad," a pirate called Abdi told Reuters.

The cargo of crude oil is valued at \$52 million and belongs to Unipet, an oil trader affiliate of China's Sinopec, Reuters reported. It was picked up in Sudan and was being carried to China when the Liberian-flagged ship was hijacked.

Novoship said the tanker has a dead weight of 106,000 tons and was carrying 86,000 tons of crude. The tanker last docked in Russia in February, at the Far East port of Vostochny, a Novorossiisk port source told Interfax. It also participated in the launch of the East Siberia-Pacific Ocean pipeline last December when Prime Minister Vladimir Putin pushed a button to fill it with Rosneft oil from the pipeline.

Novoship said it had alerted the relatives of the 23 sailors but had no comment on any rescue efforts or ransom because no demands had been made. A company source told Interfax that the ship was insured against piracy attacks. Russia's envoy to NATO, Dmitry Rogozin, said the situation was "in the hands of the Russian Navy." The tanker was hijacked in a "safe zone" to which it had been accompanied by the Russian warship. "This signifies that the pirates have expanded their zone of activity to areas previously considered safe," he said.

Last month, three Thai fishing vessels were hijacked as far as 1,900 kilometers off the Somali coast, "the furthest east of any pirate attacks in the area ... and almost 600 miles outside the normal EU Navfor operating area," the EU's Navfor Operation Atalanta, which was launched against the pirates in 2008, said in a statement.

Moscow University's crew of 23 Russians puts the total number of Russians being held by pirates at 26 because three Russians are among the crew of the St. James Park, a British tanker captured on Jan. 28, Voitenko said.

He said it would be better for Russian government agencies to stay out of the **Moscow University** affair and let Sovcomflot handle negotiations, "either directly or through a mediator." "The pirates may use the fact that the crew and the ship belong to the same country ... and try to get more money," he said by e-mail.

Last month, Russia's UN ambassador, Vitaly Churkin, introduced an initiative to the UN Security Council aimed at ensuring that captured Somali pirates do not escape punishment. President Dmitry Medvedev lobbied for an international court that would prosecute pirates last May. Medvedev spoke after pirates held a Ukrainian ship with three Russian and 17 Ukrainian sailors and a cargo of tanks for three months. The pirates initially demanded a ransom of \$35 million but later accepted \$3.2 million from Ukrainian billionaire Viktor Pinchuk.

Novoship manages a fleet of 56 ships with a combined deadweight of 4.65 million tons, worth about \$3.19 billion. In 2007, it came under the control of the Sovcomflot group, Russia's largest and 100 percent state-owned shipping company. Kremlin chief of staff Sergei Naryshkin heads its board of directors.

A Sovcomflot stake of 25 percent minus one share is on the list of 28 strategic state assets that may be offered for sale as part of a privatization drive announced last year. In 2009, another Novoship vessel, an Aframax-class oil tanker carrying fuel oil, fought off armed hijackers in the Gulf of Aden by hosing the three pirate boats down with water. **Source : Moscow Times**

Russian Navy frees hijacked Novoship tanker

Novoship announced this morning that the Russian warship **Marshal Shaposhnikov** had freed the tanker Moscow University, seized by pirates yesterday.

All members of the tanker crew alive and well. Novoship says the key point for a decision to retake the vessel was confidence that the crew was in a safe place, inaccessible to pirates, and the life and health of seafarers not in danger.



The **Marshal Shaposhnikov**

Novoship praised the skillful and timely action of tanker captain George Igorevich Tulchinsky who led them to the crew and said the pirates were unable to take hostage even a single crew member. RT reports that as a result of the rescue efforts, 10 pirates have been captured and one killed.

"The large submarine-hunter "**Marshal Shaposhnikov**" of Russia's Pacific Navy carried out an operation to free the "**Moscow University**" tanker. It ended with an assault by marines; Russia regained control of the tanker and set free all 23 crewmembers; none of them was hurt. 10 pirates have been detained. Several pirates have been wounded and one has been killed," RT reports Vladimir Markin, spokesman for the Investigations Committee of the Russian Prosecutor General's Office, as saying. **Source : MarineLog**



The Pilot tender **EXPLORER** seen arriving in Vlissingen – **Photo : Daniella Vermeer ©**

Pyongyang sees US role in Cheonan sinking

Despite its strong denial of any involvement and expressions of sympathy for lost fellow Koreans, fingers are being pointed at North Korea over the tragic sinking of the 1,200-ton South Korean corvette **Cheonan** in the West Sea or Yellow Sea on the night of March 26.

"A North Korean torpedo attack was the most likely cause for the sinking of a South Korean warship last month," an unnamed US military official told CNN on April 26. Up to 46 of the ship's 104 sailors were killed in the sinking.

Apparently, North Korea is being set up as the fall guy in an incident that is so mysterious that a Los Angeles Times April 26 story datelined Seoul was headlined, "James Bond Theories Arise in Korean Ship Sinking".

So far, no hard evidence has been produced linking North Korea to the disaster. However, this has not stopped media and experts from holding the North responsible. The South Korean daily Chosun Ilbo wrote on April 29, "It is difficult to imagine a country other than North Korea launching a torpedo attack against a South Korean warship."

Is it possible that North Korea carried out the daring act of torpedoing a South Korean corvette participating in a US-South Korean war exercise? The answer is a categorical no. The circumstantial evidence is quite revealing, showing who is the more likely culprit.

There are four important points that make it clear that a North Korean submarine did not sink the South Korean corvette.

Fact 1. North Korean submarines are not stealthy enough to penetrate heavily guarded South Korean waters at night and remain undetected by the highly touted anti-submarine warfare units of the American and South Korean forces. A North Korean submarine would be unable to outmaneuver an awesome array of high-tech Aegis warships, identify the corvette Cheonan and then slice it in two with a torpedo before escaping unscathed, leaving no trace of its identity.

Fact 2. The sinking took place not in North Korean waters but well inside tightly guarded South Korean waters, where a slow-moving North Korean submarine would have great difficulty operating covertly and safely, unless it was equipped with AIP (air-independent propulsion) technology.

Fact 2: The disaster took place precisely in the waters where what the Pentagon has called "one of the world's largest simulated exercises" was underway. This war exercise, known as "Key Resolve/Foal Eagle" did not end on March 18 as was reported but actually ran from March 18 to April 30.

Fact 3: The Key Resolve/Foal Eagle exercise on the West Sea near the Northern Limit Line (NLL) was aimed at keeping a more watchful eye on North Korea as well as training for the destruction of weapons of mass destruction in the North. It involved scores of shiny, ultra-modern US and South Korean warships equipped with the latest technology.

Among the fleet were four Aegis ships: the **USS Shiloh (CG-67)**, a 9,600-ton Ticonderoga class cruiser, the **USS Curtis Wilbur (DDG-54)**, a 6,800-ton Arleigh Burke class guided-missile destroyer, the **USS Lassen**, a 9,200-ton Arleigh Burke class guided-missile destroyer and **Sejong the Great**, a 8,500-ton South Korean guided-missile destroyer.

The four surface ships are the most important assets of the two navies, and have multi-mission platforms capable of conducting various tasks, such as anti-submarine warfare. There is every likelihood that they were supported by nuclear-powered US submarines and a South Korean "Type 214" submarine that uses AIP technology.

The sinking of the **Cheonan** has made headlines around the world. If indeed it was a US accident, it is an embarrassing indictment of the accuracy of the expensive weapons systems of the US, the world's leading arms

exporter. It has also cost the Americans credibility as the South's superpower guardian. Ironically, this has made North Korean-made weapons more attractive on the international market.

The South Koreans and the Americans charging the North Koreans with the sinking of the naval vessel in South Korean waters only highlights the poor performance of their expensive Aegis warships, as well as the futility of the US-South Korean joint war games and the US military presence in Korea.

Fact 4: Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg said on March 30 that he doubted there was North Korean involvement in the sinking: "Obviously the full investigation needs to go forward. But to my knowledge, there's no reason to believe or to be concerned that that may have been the cause."

General Walter Sharp, US Forces Korea (USFK) commander, also saw no link between North Korea and the sinking. In an April 6 press conference, he said: "We, as Combined Forces Command and the ROK [Republic of Korea] Joint Chief of Staff, watch North Korea very closely every single day of the year and we continue to do that right now. And again, as this has been said, we see no unusual activity at this time."

There have been misplaced reports that the sinking was an act of retaliation for a naval skirmish in November last year "in which the North came off worse", as reported by the Times of London on April 22.

As a North Korean navy officer, Kim Gwang-il, recalled on North Korean television on Armed Forces Day, April 25: "[In that incident] a warship of our navy single-handedly faced up to several enemy warships, to guard the NLL ... [The North's warship] inflicted merciless blows on them in a show of the might of the heroic Korean People's Army (KPA) Navy."

The first duty of the KPA is to prevent war while jealously safeguarding the territorial air, sea and land of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as this safeguards the peace and security of the Korean Peninsula.

The Korean People's Army Navy would not attack South Korean or American warships unless provoked, since these vessels carry innocent soldiers on the high seas. True, the KPA Navy would be justified in torpedoing a US Aegis ship or a nuclear-powered submarine if one were caught red-handed. But the KPA Navy would not stoop to infringing on South Korean waters to attack a South Korean ship at random, unless it had returned there after committing hostile acts against North Korea.

Seven facts indicate friendly fire as the most likely cause of the naval disaster. It may be no exaggeration to say that the South Korean president and his military leaders have shed crocodile tears over the dead South Korean sailors.

A torpedo could have been launched from any of the American or South Korean warships or warplanes taking part in the Foal Eagle exercise alongside the hapless [Cheonan](#).

The four Aegis ships and most South Korean warships carry Mark 46 torpedoes, which have improved shallow-water performance for anti-submarine warfare and anti-ship operations.

General Sharp had issued on March 4 a five-point safety message warning that "a single accident can undermine the training benefits you will receive during KR/FE '10. Remain vigilant and engaged."

It appears that Sharp's warning came true, and the US repeated the kind of friendly fire incident for which it is notorious in Iraq and Afghanistan. After the ship disaster happened on the night of March 26, Sharp promptly cut a visit to Washington to testify at congress to fly back to Seoul, according to the March 30 edition of Kyonggi Ilbo.

President Barack Obama then called his South Korean counterpart on April 1, ostensibly to express condolences over the ship disaster, but also to offer him the privilege of hosting the next nuclear security summit in 2012, as was reported by Joong Ang Ilbo on April 14.

Obama made this offer one week before he and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev signed a nuclear arms reduction treaty in Prague, and two weeks before the 2010 nuclear security summit took place in Washington.

When Obama announced his decision to select South Korea as host of the next major nuclear security summit in 2012, Agence France-Presse reported that "the announcement surprised many". Most observers presumed that Russia would lead the next meeting.

The most plausible explanation is that Obama offered South Korea the summit due to an overriding need to mollify otherwise possible South Korean resentment at the friendly fire sinking, while covering up the US's involvement in a friendly fire torpedo attack. Most probably, Sharp reported to Obama the potentially disastrous consequences of the public discovering the true nature of the incident. This would likely lead to a massive wave of anti-American sentiment and put Obama and South Korean President Lee Myung-bak in an extremely awkward situation.

Obama must have felt relieved at the South Korean president's ready acceptance of his offer of compensation. One article carried in the April 14 edition of Joong Ang Ilbo was headlined "Veep Biden Says LMB [Lee Myung-bak] Is Obama's Favorite Man". The comment was made by Biden on April 12, one day before the nuclear summit.

Sharp unexpectedly attended the April 3 funeral of a South Korean rescue diver, Han Ju Ho, who died while participating in the search for missing sailors from the corvette. Sharp was seen consoling the bereaved family in an unprecedented expression of sympathy.

Joong Ang Ilbo reported on April 27 that the South Korean government would deal strictly with rumors rampant on the Internet that a collision with a US nuclear submarine had caused the sinking.

The best solution is for the South Korean government team investigating the ship disaster to find an old mine responsible. It is easy to falsely accuse North Korea, but public pressure will mount for military reprisals against North Korea, which will promptly react by turning Seoul into a sea of fire in less than five minutes. North Korea would not flinch from using nuclear arms in the event of US involvement. **Source : AsiaTimes**

BP told to pay upto \$10 billion for oil spill

United States has asked British energy giant BP to pay in full for the Gulf of Mexico oil spill. The US has also significantly backed increasing the cap on damages faced by companies that pollute the environment. Under a law



introduced after the **Exxon Valdez** oil tanker disaster in Alaska in 1989, oil companies are bound by law to pay for the full clean-up and containment costs of any oil seeping from their facilities after an accident.

However the legislation caps damages for which the firm is liable at \$75 million unless the company is guilty of gross negligence. Bills introduced in the House and the Senate would fix the cap at \$10 billion. White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs has said "We would be in favour of significantly lifting that cap," but did not specify if the White House accepted the \$10 billion limit.

"I don't have a specific number. I would reiterate that as the president said, BP is going to get a bill for the recovery, the cleanup and the damage it's caused." Gibbs said.

BP has already offered cash grants of \$25 million for US states facing costly cleanup efforts and said that it will "absolutely" live up to its responsibilities to pay for the clean-up operation. It has also said it will honour all legitimate claims stemming from the slick, which is threatening precious fishing grounds, wildlife habitats and beaches along the southern US coast. BP leased the **Deepwater Horizon** oil platform that blew up and sank in April in the Gulf of Mexico from Houston-based contractor Transocean. The accident killed 11 workers and left an oil well gushing thousands of barrels of oil a day into the ocean. **Source: Commodity Online**



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The **SKY** seen passing Spijkenisse – **Photo : Lia Mets ©**

Euro tumbles to new 14-month low vs. dollar

The euro sank to a new 14-month low against its U.S. counterpart in Asian trading Thursday, on continuing fears that sovereign-debt woes in southern Europe will spread. The ongoing run on the single currency will also be center stage when the European Central Bank meets later Thursday.

Greek strikes against added austerity measures turned deadly on Wednesday, adding to uncertainty about whether the government can continue its deficit-cutting measures. The euro was buying \$1.2787, after earlier falling as low as \$1.2736, according to Factset Research data. It was at \$1.2823 in late North American trading Wednesday.

"We maintain our bearish view on the euro over the medium term, as euro-zone fiscal problem concerns are not likely to dissipate anytime soon," Tomoko Fujii, a rates and currency strategist at Bank of America Securities-Merrill Lynch, said in emailed comments.

The dollar index, a measure of the U.S. unit against a basket of six major currencies, rose to 84.321, from 84.082 late Wednesday. The British pound sterling slipped against the dollar ahead of Thursday's general election in which the consensus for the outcome points toward a hung parliament, in which no party wins an outright majority.

The pound was buying \$1.5037, down from \$1.5103 late Wednesday.

The dollar traded at 93.55 yen, down from 93.67 yen late Wednesday and from earlier Thursday highs.

The dollar "failed to reach 95.00 [yen] for the second consecutive business day, so a modest correction is likely in the near term," said Bank of America Securities-Merrill Lynch's Fujii.

On Wednesday, the euro fell to the lowest in 13 months against the dollar in spite of the lifeline provided to Greece by its euro-zone partners and the International Monetary Fund. **Source: MarketWatch**

Baltic Dry Index down 27pts, to 3379 pts

As of May 5th, Baltic Dry Freight Index fell by 27 points to 3379 points, the Exchange trading data said. The 2009 Index maximum, at 4661pts was posted on November 19th. In May, 2008 BDI gained its highest level ever, to over 11,700 points, beginning its slump in mid-July the same year. In Dec.5, 2008 it settled at 663 pts, a minimum Baltic Dry Index rate.

Baltic Dry Freight is an index reflecting changes in the value of the overseas shipments of basic commodities: metal, iron ore, coal and grain. The index includes three other indexes of freight rates, different sizes of ships for which they are calculated - Capesize, Supramax and Panamax. Dynamics of changes in BDI allows investors and market traders to analyze major trends in world demand and supply. Often the index is considered as the main indicator of future economic growth (if the index increases) or recession (if it falls), since the raw material on which the index is calculated, has a low potential for speculative operations. **Source : PortNews**

Dag van de Zeesleepvaart Zaterdag 5 juni!



De **Stichting Sleepboothaven Maassluis** organiseert op zaterdag 5 juni de **Dag van de Zeesleepvaart**. De dag start om 10.00 uur met een vlootshow op de Nieuwe Waterweg. Belangstellenden kunnen tijdens de vlootshow meevaren met de Holland voor de unieke prijs van 5 euro! Ook kunnen die dag rondvaarten gemaakt worden met de **Westgat** en de **Furie**. De schepen zijn van 11.30 tot 17.00 uur open voor publiek. Het voormalige Smit-kantoor (!) aan de Govert van Wijnkade is open met een kleine tentoonstelling van het **Nationaal Sleepvaart Museum** en op de **Hudson** is modelkunstenaar Dirk Brijs aanwezig met schepjes in fles. De **Elbe** wordt na de openingshandeling door de directie van Kotug gesleept door de **Adriaan**. Ongekend is de demo-sleepreis die de Furie zal maken met de stoombaggermolen Friesland, een feestje voor schepsspotters! Dankzij de rondvaarten is het voor iedereen mogelijk unieke opnames vanaf het water te maken. Op de kades zingen shantykoren en het dameskoor Uit Volle Borsten, en er is een nautische markt. Het Woon Informatie Centrum Maassluis is geopend om wonen langs de Waterweg te promoten, voor wie 365 dagen schepen wil zien! Kotug, Fairplay en Smit zullen zich inspannen om de Waterweg tot schuim te varen. Een uniek nautisch feest zoals alleen Maassluis dat kent.

Meer informatie op www.sleepboothaven.nl of info@sleepboothaven.nl



The **CAP PRESTON** seen in Willemstad (Curacao)

Photo : Kees Bustra - community.webshots.com/user/cornelis224 (c)

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Explosives traces found on sunken S.Korea warship

Traces of explosive from a torpedo have been found on debris from a sunken South Korean warship, a newspaper said Thursday, but the defence ministry denied the report. Aluminium fragments from a torpedo casing have also been found, Dong-A Ilbo newspaper quoted an unidentified member of a team investigating the blast as saying. President Lee Myung-Bak hinted Tuesday that North Korea was involved in the March sinking of the **Cheonan**, which cost 46 lives. He promised a "resolute" response when the cause is established following the multinational probe.

The unidentified team member was quoted as saying the explosive traces were found on a funnel that was torn off the **Cheonan** by the blast on March 26 near the disputed border with North Korea. "It has been confirmed that the explosive came from a torpedo," the team member was quoted as saying. Detailed analysis of salvaged aluminium fragments also confirmed they are from a torpedo, the individual said. The defence ministry denied the report. "No traces of explosive have been found," spokesman Won Tae-Jae said. "We've not reached any conclusion yet that the aluminium fragments came from a torpedo." Dong-A said investigators would announce their findings no later than mid-May.

The North, whose leader Kim Jong-Il is visiting China this week, denies involvement. Kim reportedly met President Hu Jintao Wednesday and South Korean analysts have said the ship incident would likely be discussed. The South has not publicly ruled out a military response if the North is proved to have sunk the **Cheonan**, but has said it would probably take the issue to the UN Security Council. China is the North's sole major ally and main source of fuel and food. As a permanent veto-wielding council member, its support would be crucial in any attempt to punish the North.

CASUALTY REPORTING



Russian landing ship sank Ukrainian tug

In the morning of May 4 large landing ship **Yamal** of Russian Navy was entering Nikolaev sea port, Ukraine, to take part in May 9 festivities. Ship was proceeding Dnepro-Bugskiy Liman Channel with assisting tugs, and one of the tugs, Bugskiy, capsized. Master of Nikolaev port blamed pilot on board of **Yamal**, he didn't coordinate movements of tug and Yamal, tug was aft of the ship with towline attached, when **Yamal** increased speed tug's bow ploughed under water, still, pilot didn't react on tug's alert messages VHF messages. Finally, tug capsized. 3 crew safe, capsized tug was later towed to berth where she will be refloated with the floating crane. Owner of the tug is Nikolaev sea port, manager Morvest Co., no characteristics of the tug available, either in international or Russian ships' databases.

Source : Mikhail Voytenko

NAVY NEWS



The **F 236 MONTROSE** seen departing from Devonport – Photo : Ian Denton ©

Australian Minister for Defence visits HMAS Stirling

Australian Minister for Defence, Senator John Faulkner, today visited HMAS Stirling at Garden Island, Western Australia. Commanding Officer HMAS Stirling, Captain Brett Dowsing briefed the Minister on the roles and capabilities of Navy's largest operational establishment. During his visit, Senator Faulkner also took the opportunity to meet and talk with base personnel.

"The visit by Senator Faulkner gave my team the opportunity to show the Minister the wide range of capabilities this strategically important Naval establishment encompasses," Captain Dowsing said. The Commander, Australian Submarine Force, Captain Brett Sampson, briefed the Minister on Australia's submarines.

The Minister toured the submarine **HMAS Collins** with Commander Tom Phillips and met the ship's company.

The Minister also visited **HMAS Warramunga** which is one of five frigates based at HMAS Stirling. He viewed air warfare training exercises and was briefed by Commanding Officer of **HMAS Warramunga**, Commander Bruce Legge.

Afterwards the Minister visited clearance Diving Team Four where he was briefed on the team's operations including Improvised Explosive Device disposal operations that the team carried out in Afghanistan in 2009 to 2010.

Source : Garry Luxton



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Sea Fleet: the cost of power

The ratification of the Russian-Ukrainian agreement allowing the Black Sea Fleet to remain in Sevastopol until 2042 has again raised the issue of modernizing the fleet, the cost of such an upgrade, and Russia's ability to implement it.

To address these issues, we must first understand why Russia needs the Black Sea Fleet at all. Today, the fleet has two main purposes. The first one is to control the Black Sea basin and ensure the security of Russia's southern borders. Considering the current geopolitical situation and the naval capabilities of the neighboring fleets, this mission could be performed by relatively small groups of light vessels supported by shore-based missile systems and aircraft.

But the problem is entirely different if Sevastopol is viewed as a base for the fleet's deployment in the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. In this case, the fleet must have deep-sea-going and ocean-going vessels capable of ensuring a naval presence far from Russian shores.

Russia does not conceal its interest in the Mediterranean or the Indian Ocean, and its Black Sea Fleet continues to have ocean-going capabilities.

This was the role of the Black Sea Fleet in Soviet times. In 1991, the Black Sea Fleet employed about 100,000 personnel as well as 60,000 service members and consisted of 835 vessels from practically all existing classes, including 28 submarines, two anti-submarine cruisers, six 1st class missile cruisers and large anti-submarine ships, 20 large, 2nd class anti-submarine ships, 2nd class destroyers and patrol ships, about 40 multipurpose patrol ships, 30 small missile ships and launches, about 70 mine-trawlers, 50 troop-carrying ships and launches, and more than 400 naval aircraft. The fleet had two divisions of ships (anti-submarine and troop-carrying), one submarine division, and two aviation divisions (assault and naval missile-carrying aircraft), one division of coastal defense ships and dozens of separate brigades, regiments, battalions, divisions, platoons and batteries.

Up to a hundred warships and support vessels entered the world's oceans through the Black Sea straits every year. The fleet had an extensive network of bases from Ismail to Batumi (Ismail, Odessa, Nikolayev, Ochakov, Kiev,

Chernomorskoye, Donuzlav, Sevastopol, Feodosia, Kerch, Novorossiisk, Poti, etc.). Its units were deployed in Ukraine, Moldova, Russia, Georgia and the autonomous republics in the North Caucasus. Experts from the International Institute of Strategic Studies estimated that at the beginning of 1992 the value of everything owned by the Black Sea Fleet, including warships, exceeded \$80 billion.

Now the Black Sea Fleet has a mere 50 warships and a dozen support vessels. The number of shore-based aircraft and cost guard vessels has also decreased many times over. The Black Sea Fleet previously dominated the Black Sea and competed with NATO allied forces for supremacy in the Mediterranean; now there are fewer vessels in the Black Sea Fleet than in the Turkish Navy. Nevertheless, the Black Sea Fleet is more powerful than the navies of all other Black Sea countries put together, and the fighting power of its main warships would allow it to succeed in a confrontation with a more powerful enemy.

However, the ships of the Black Sea Fleet are rapidly becoming obsolete. During the next 10 to 15 years the overwhelming majority of them will be decommissioned due to physical wear and tear. Major repairs and modernization may extend the service life of some ships, but not of all and not forever. Some ships may be put to more effective use, for instance, the guided missile cruiser Moskva. A number of experts believe that it would be much more appropriate in the Pacific, in the same unit with the similarly equipped Varyag.

Russia must modernize the Black Sea Fleet if it intends to keep it. In the near future the fleet is supposed to receive up to 50 next-generation warships. According to naval commanders, the first warships will appear in the Black Sea as early as 2011 and 2012. Igor Korotchenko, a military expert and a member of the public council at the Defense Ministry, said that altogether the fleet is supposed to receive up to eight Steregushchiy-class corvettes and Admiral Gorshkov-class frigates, 10 to 12 Alexandrit-class mine-trawlers, six to eight small Buyan-class artillery ships, 10 to 12 Skorpion-class missile boats and eight to ten small P-750-class submarines.

What is the cost of such modernization? The four Project 20380 corvettes will cost a billion dollars, while four Project 22350 frigates will have a price tag of about two billion dollars (assuming that Russia will buy equal numbers of these ships). The other units - small artillery ships, missile boats, trawlers and submarines will cost another three billion dollars. All in all, re-equipping the Black Sea Fleet will cost about six billion dollars over the next 10 to 12 years. Considering the current conditions and the fleet's real mission, this number is enough for reliable defense of Russia's southern borders and for a guaranteed presence in remote areas under the purview of the Black Sea Fleet.

However, these will not be the only expenses. Considering the need to drastically upgrade the fleet's infrastructure, and replace its landing and auxiliary ships, aircraft and servicing and repair capacities, this figure should be doubled if not tripled. These expenses are as essential as the costs of the new warships. **Source : RIA Novosti**

SHIPYARD NEWS

<p>MEET TOS  AT</p> <p> from 18th until 20th May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Global Ship Delivery• Crewing Solutions <p>www.tos.nl</p>
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Ulstein Verft completes Normand Ranger

Norway's Ulstein Verft has delivered the AHTS **Normand Ranger** to Solstad Offshore.



The vessel was originally under construction at Karlsund Maritime Service AS. After Karlsund declared bankruptcy, Ulstein was awarded the contract to complete the vessel by state-run credit guarantee agency GIEK and Sparebank 1 SR-Bank. The ship came to Ulstein's shipyard in August 2009.

Photo : Per Eide ©

Normand Ranger is a VS 490 AHTS with a length of 91 m, breadth of 22 m and accommodations for 58 persons. Deadweight is about 4,500 tonnes. Bollard pull is 287 tonnes. The vessel is

equipped with a Triplex MHD (Multi Deck Handler) and Odim ARF (Anchor Recovery Frame) for safe anchor handling operations on deck. "We are very satisfied with the completion of **Normand Ranger**. The project has fulfilled our expectations when delivered from Ulstein Verft today," said Solstad Offshore shipowner Lars Peder Solstad.

"**Normand Ranger** is ready for the spot market in the North Sea, and we are pleased to see that this market is slightly recovering," he added. "It is challenging to take over a half produced vessel," said Ulstein Verft managing director Karsten Saevik. "We had to get a complete picture of everything that had been done, and whether it had been done correctly in relation to the regulations. Furthermore, we had to provide an overview of which suppliers were still a part of the project. Interaction between engineering, procurement, planning and production has been very important. We have an organization that has the necessary expertise and experience to handle such challenges."

Source : MarineLog

Vyborg Shipyard's Q1 profit tumbles 4,2 times, to RUB62.276m

Net income of Vyborg Shipyard (VSZ OJSC, Leningrad region), according to Russian Accounting Standards (RAS) in the 1st quarter of 2010 shrank 4.2 times as much compared to the same period last year, to 62.276 million rubles, the Company's statement said. Vyborg Shipyard's Q4, 2010 income made up 57,465,000 rubles.

Vyborg Shipyard specializes in the construction of drilling rigs for the development of offshore deposits and building of small and medium tonnage vessels. In addition, the Company invested in a new Primorsk shipyard project (Leningrad Oblast), for building large-capacity merchant ships. Source : PortNews

ROUTE, PORTS & SERVICES

Boxship orders could be back in vogue next year: Alphaliner

A rapidly depleting orderbook and an improved trade outlook could lead to the return of major new orders for containerships by the first quarter of 2011, based on Alphaliner's analysis of historical ordering activity. If the present drought of orders continued for another 12 months, the orderbook could fall to a record low of 9.8% by December 2011.

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The orderbook as at 1 May 2010 stands at 655 ships for 4.16 Mteu, which represents 31% of the existing cellular fleet. It has fallen from the peak recorded at 7.02 Mteu in July 2008 or 60% of the fleet at that time. As a percentage of the fleet, the orderbook had peaked at 64% in November 2007. Based on current delivery projections and assuming no fresh orders are placed between now until the end of the year, the orderbook will fall to 3.14 Mteu or 22% of the fleet by December 2010. **Source: seatradeasia-online**

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Seen from Allseas **AUDACIA** anchored off Trinidad, near Chaguaramas, during preparations for her next project which are a 36" and 12" pipeline, in the background is seen Heerema's **BALDER**

Photo : Tjeerd Braaksma ©

STARCLASS JACHT TRANSPORTEN NAAR BASEL.



Wat is er mooier dan met uw eigen jacht vanaf Basel als een Batavier de Rijn af te zakken,

met de gelegenheid hier en daar naar believen een van de mooie zijrivieren op te varen zoals Neckar en Moezel. De Lorelei wacht! En u heeft de stroom mee!

Starclass Yacht Transport heeft een breed platform gevonden voor het starten van een nieuwe lijndienst voor jachttransport. **Starclass Yacht Transport** (per schip) en van de Wetering Jachttransport (per truck), hebben het initiatief genomen tezamen met de innovatieve binnenvaart rederijen HTS Groep uit Gorinchem en Suratho Scheepvaart uit Rotterdam om een dienst te starten om uw jacht per binnenschip naar diverse bestemmingen op de Rijn en Moezel brengen.

Geladen word in Gorinchem op de eigen terminal van HTS. Schepen tot 18 meter lengte en 55 ton gewicht kunnen mee. Elke week is er een afvaart naar Basel, maar u kunt ook afgeladen worden in bijvoorbeeld Straatsburg, Mannheim, Mainz of Koblenz. Op deze manier hoeft niet eerst de Rijn tegen de stroom te worden opgevaren. Ook schippers die naar Zuid Frankrijk willen kunnen gebruik maken van deze service. We zetten u dan af bij het begin van de Moezel, of desgewenst in Mulhouse zodat u zo het Canal du Rhine au Rhône in kunt varen.

Vanaf 17 Mei gaat de dienst van start. De reistijd van uw schip is tussen de 2 en 3 dagen afhankelijk van de bestemming. Zelf moet u de trein of het vliegtuig nemen naar het lospunt, maar u kunt licht reizen want alles is al aan boord van uw jacht zodat uw avontuurlijke vakantie direct na lossing kan beginnen.

Contact; Jan te Siepe - Starclass Yacht Transport

Tel 0652630115 - info@starclassyachts.com



Tug **Retriever** arriving with material barge **H-405** in Porto Amboim, Angola. Heerema Marine Contractor's latest ASD tug '**Lucala**' seen alongside making preparations for mooring the barge together with the **Retriever**. The new Heerema Yard with 300 meters deepwater bulkhead can be seen in the background.

Photo : Capt Jan Berghuis ©

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The **MARIETJE ANDREA** seen in Rotterdam – Photo : Michel Kodde ©

Containership Company Makes First Voyage

Niche carrier in trans-Pacific trade plans to grow as recession ebbs The Containership Company, the newest entrant in the trans-Pacific trade, began its service on a promising note as the **Taicang Dragon** arrived at the TraPac terminal at the Port of Los Angeles with 77 percent of its capacity filled. Jakob Tolstrup-Moller, chief executive officer, said during welcoming ceremonies Monday that the second voyage next week is already more than 98 percent booked leaving China, and The Containership Co.'s third voyage is over-subscribed. The line, with offices in Norway and Denmark, begins service as the trans-Pacific trade is working its way out of the worst recession in the 50-year history of container shipping.

Franck J. Kayser, chief operating officer, said freight rates in the trans-Pacific are increasing, although they "haven't gone to the insane level" that has been reached in the Asia-Europe trade. While inbound voyages from China are operating at near capacity, the line is still working to develop export accounts. "I would like to see more cargo outbound. I think it's coming," Tolstrup-Moller said. The Containership Co. is truly a niche carrier in the largest U.S. trade lane. The established carriers in the trans-Pacific operate large vessels of 8,000 20-foot equivalent units capacity; they call at multiple ports in Asia and in the United States, and they have extensive intermodal services from the West Coast to the U.S. interior.

The five Containership Co. vessels have a capacity of 2,500 to 3,000 TEUs. The line operates a port-to-port service linking Taicang, which is located about 40 miles northwest of Shanghai, with Los Angeles. The Containership Co. carries cargo booked primarily by non vessel-operating common carriers rather than beneficial cargo owners.

Tolstrup-Moller said that by the end of 2010 the line intends to start a second service from South China to Los Angeles and a third service to the TraPac terminal, possibly calling at ports in South and North China. The line will consider deploying larger vessels of up to 4,000-TEU capacity on those services, he said. **Source: The Journal of Commerce**



Above seen the new UT 766 CD PSV **ER GEORGINA** arriving at Aberdeen on Tues 4th May 2010.

Photo : Barry Standerline ©



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Petrobras hires seven new vessels within the Brazilian Shipping Companies (BSC) program

Petrobras signed, at the Company's main office building (EDISE), in Rio de Janeiro, seven contracts for the construction of vessels for charter, for a term of 15 years, within the Brazilian Shipping Companies (BSC) Program, completing the 19 ships planned for this phase of the program.

Kingfish do Brasil Navegação Ltda. will build three vessels of 45,000 deadweight tons (DWT) for dark products (oil, fuel oil, among others), while Pancoast Navegação Ltda. will build four 30,000-DWT vessels, two for light products (naphtha, diesel, kerosene, gasoline) and two for dark products. The BSC program is an inseparable part of a set of initiatives Petrobras has undertaken to drive naval construction in Brazil. The initiative is aimed to reduce maritime

fleet dependence on the external market and generate jobs, always using international cost and quality parameters as reference. **Source: Petrobras Agency**

MAN donates gensets to hospital ship

MAN Diesel & Turbo is supplying the charitable organisation Mercy Ships International with four new 5L21/31 type on-board power generators for a hospital ship.



The **Africa Mercy** is the world's largest civilian hospital ship and provides free medical care in African coastal areas to those who otherwise couldn't afford it. Thus MAN Diesel & Turbo grants a donation of around €350,000 for the benefit of the organisation.

The **Africa Mercy** is equipped to the same standard as a medium-sized hospital, with six operating theatres, modern X-ray and computer tomography equipment, a dental practice, a pharmacy, and more besides. There are also facilities for the approximately 400 voluntary crew members and their families, who often live on board for months at a time, and includes recreation rooms, a large kitchen, a laundry, and a school for up to 60 children. All these amenities require a lot of electricity, which is produced on board by diesel-powered generators.

Because the **Africa Mercy** is a converted Danish rail ferry, built in 1980, it had become essential to replace the on-board power gensets in order to provide the vessel with a reliable supply of power and enable it to remain in service. As a result, the ship's power supplies will be provided by four 5L21/31 type MAN engines, each with an output of 1,000kW. They will be mounted in such a way as to cause minimum vibration, as any vibration transmitted to the operating theatres could make the surgeons' task more difficult. The engines are due to be installed when the vessel puts into port in South Africa in September 2010.

"Some of the world's poorest countries are situated on the African coast. Many people in these areas have no hope of receiving medical treatment, either because the medical infrastructure is not there or because it is only accessible to the few who can afford it. Mercy Ships does something remarkable by providing free assistance on its hospital ship in these very areas. We are delighted to support this vital initiative with our own diesel engines. It's important to us to fulfil our social responsibility even in economically difficult times," says Klaus Stahlmann, ceo of MAN Diesel & Turbo SE.

Don Stephens, founder and president of Mercy Ships, welcomed the donation "We are delighted that MAN wants to support our work with the underprivileged in Africa. Thanks to this partnership and the new diesel generators from

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MAN Diesel & Turbo, Mercy Ships will be able to reduce its fuel consumption and CO2 emissions by 20% and also cut annual fuel costs substantially. The money we save will be used for the direct benefit of patients on board the **Africa Mercy.**"



The **CITY OF BERYTUS** seen arriving at the breakers in Gent – Photo : Adri van de Wege (c)



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The **NORDLAND** seen at the Westerscheldt River – Photo : Henk de Winde (c)



The **BELUGA FANTASTIC** seen in Barcelona May 2nd – Photo : Ronald de Bloeme ©

BOURBON wins contracts for 8 Bourbon Liberty supply vessels and 5 crew boats for Petrobras in Brazil

Bourbon Offshore Maritima, formerly Delba Maritima Navegação, the BOURBON subsidiary in Brazil, has strengthened its position on the Brazilian market by signing contracts with Petrobras for 13 new vessels. The contracts cover:

- 1 Bourbon Liberty 200, an 80-tonne traction AHTS (Anchor Handling Tug Supply vessel), for three years from May 2010;
- 7 Bourbon Liberty 100, a PSV (Platform Supply Vessel), for four years. These vessels will be put into service between June and October 2010;
- 5 18-metre passenger transport crew boats, for 8 years. These vessels will join other vessels of the same type that have already been working for Petrobras in Brazil for two years and have given full satisfaction.

Christian Lefèvre, Executive Vice-President and Chief Operating Officer of BOURBON announced:

"We are delighted to have been selected by Petrobras. This is a real boost to BOURBON in its strategy of investing in innovative high-performance vessels that help clients reduce their costs, in particular through our Bourbon Liberty series. It also demonstrates that the offshore market in Brazil offers numerous development opportunities that BOURBON is well equipped to support, through its subsidiary Bourbon Offshore Maritima, by offering our full array of services and technical expertise from a local base."

With 40 Bourbon Liberty vessels currently in service, these contracts for 8 new vessels underline the success of this range of vessels whose features are ideally suited both to continental offshore and deepwater offshore. Bourbon Offshore Maritima's fleet will thus be increased from 17 vessels (11 supply and 6 boats) to 30 vessels (19 supply and 11 crew boats) between now and the end of the year. **Source: Bourbon Offshore**



Seen Wednesday 02 April 2008: one of the last SD14th: Cosco's "**An Dong Jian**" downstream on the Huang Po.
Just passing "The Bunt" (Shanghai)
Photo : Capt. Ronald R. Jansen ©

.... PHOTO OF THE DAY



The **SMIT AMANDLA** seen leaving Cape Town – **Photo : Glenn Kasner ©**

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