



# MAKING WAVES

A MARITIME NEWS BRIEF COVERING:

1. Maritime Security
2. Maritime Forces
3. Shipping Ports and Ocean Economy
4. Marine Environment
5. Geopolitics

EDITED BY:  
Ms Rashmi Yadav  
[rsf1.nmf@gmail.com](mailto:rsf1.nmf@gmail.com)

# CONTENTS

<b>MARITIME SECURITY</b>	<b>2-4</b>
A Timeline of Suspected Baltic Sea Sabotage Incidents	2
Chinese Ship Suspected of Cable Sabotage May Have Had Two AIS Devices	2
EU Enlists Researchers' Support to Tackle Smuggling and Security Threats at Sea	3
Sounion Salvaged! Complex Operation Prevents Major Environmental Disaster in Red Sea	3
Japan 'Gravely Concerned' About Maritime Tensions Escalating, Foreign Minister Says	4
<b>MARITIME FORCES</b>	<b>4-6</b>
Royal Navy Sailors Cancel Christmas to Track Russian Task Force	4
Indian Navy Showcases Operational Prowess in Visakhapatnam	5
Icebreaker 'Storis' Officially Joins US Coast Guard Fleet	5
China's Biggest Shipping Line Added to US Military Blacklist	6
NATO Launches Baltic Sentry Mission in Baltic Sea	6
<b>SHIPPING, PORTS AND OCEAN ECONOMY</b>	<b>7-9</b>
FuelEU Maritime Takes Effect: Shipping Industry Faces Historic Emissions Challenge	7
Red Sea Diversions Helped Container Shipping Dodge Overcapacity Crisis	7
ILA and USMX Reach Six-Year Contract Agreement, Averting US Port Crisis	8
Tariff Jitters Drive US Import Rush from China	8
Fuel Sales at Singapore Bunker Hub Hit Record Highs in 2024	8
<b>MARINE ENVIRONMENT</b>	<b>9-11</b>
The Fishing Industry's Role in Protecting the Marine Environment	9
Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria Agree on Joint Steps to Deal with Environmental Disaster in Black Sea	9
UN: Shadow Tanker Fleet Risks Rising	10
Ambipar Response: Environmental Partner in the Epic Sounion Tanker Salvage	10
BOEM Starts Environmental Review for Next US Offshore Wind Farm	11
<b>GEOPOLITICS</b>	<b>11-13</b>
Iran Mounts Naval Show of Force	11
Israel Targets Houthi Ports of Hodeidah and Ras Isa with More Airstrikes	12
Venezuela's Maduro Threatens to Invade Puerto Rico	12
Syria's New Rulers May Block Russia from Evacuating Naval Base	13
China Begins Patrolling Boundary of Its "Nine-Dash Line" Claim	13

# MARITIME SECURITY

## A TIMELINE OF SUSPECTED BALTIC SEA SABOTAGE INCIDENTS

Since 2022, many sabotage attempts have targeted vital infrastructure in the Baltic Sea, however the perpetrators have remained unpunished. One example is the December 2024 damage to the Finland-Estonia Estlink 2 cable, which was allegedly related to the oil tanker Eagle S and its circumvention of Russian oil sanctions. The Chinese ship Yi Peng 3 is accused of severing two fiber-optic cables in November 2024, while the NewNew Polar Bear is accused of causing damage to the Balticconnector pipeline in October 2023. While sabotage was proved, no one was found responsible for the 2022 Nord Stream explosions that disrupted Russian gas exports. These episodes have increased the vigilance of NATO and the Baltic countries.

**Editorial comment-** The Baltic Sea's deep-sea infrastructure remains highly vulnerable amid rising geopolitical tensions. Incidents like the Eagle S investigation and the Nord Stream blasts highlight the need for better surveillance, coordinated security efforts and robust international protocols to protect critical communications links.

Source: [Here](#) 03<sup>rd</sup> January 2024

## CHINESE SHIP SUSPECTED OF CABLE SABOTAGE MAY HAVE HAD TWO AIS DEVICES

Taiwan's coast guard suspects that a Chinese-owned ship, *Xing Shun 39* (IMO 8358427), damaged a subsea communications cable near Keelung and used two AIS transponders to evade detection. Reported by Chungwha Telecom on 3 January 2025, the incident involved the Trans-Pacific Express cable, linking Asia and the US. When intercepted by the Coast Guard Administration (CGA), rough seas prevented boarding, and the vessel departed for Busan, South Korea, switching identities between *Xing Shun 39* and a fake *Shunxing-39*. Taiwanese authorities have sought assistance from Busan officials, are investigating potential legal action, and reviewing their protocols for handling cable sabotage cases.

**Editorial comment:** The damage of a subsea cable off Taiwan's north coast underscores vulnerabilities in tracking systems and maritime security. The ship's use of dual AIS identities to evade detection reveals a need for tighter regulations on AIS devices and more robust monitoring mechanisms. Taiwan is responding to the sabotage in the right direction but regional coordination and stronger international enforcement are critical in preventing similar attacks on vital Subsea infrastructure.

Source: [Here](#) 7 January 2024

## EU ENLISTS RESEARCHERS' SUPPORT TO TACKLE SMUGGLING AND SECURITY THREATS AT SEA

In order to monitor the seas of Europe, in July 2024, a Common Information Sharing Environment (CISE) became operational enabling more cooperation between maritime authorities. Developed by the EU CISE 2020 project, the platform bridges different surveillance systems to overcome data gaps and facilitates border control services. This will help countries in combating smuggling, illegal fishing, monitoring pollution levels and security threats, as it translates data into a common language. Future steps will include the integration of customs and border agencies through the Customs Extended Common Information Sharing Environment (CE-CISE). This initiative, supported by the CONNECTOR project, which enhances cooperation and information sharing among EU customs, border, and maritime authorities, aims to streamline intelligence sharing and coordinated operations. Trials in 2025 will test these capabilities, fostering cooperation and better management of EU external borders.

**Editorial comment:** While dealing with maritime security, the Common Information Sharing Environment (CISE) created by the EU promotes seamless data exchange between countries. It tackles issues like smuggling, illegal fishing, and border threats while improving maritime safety and commerce. Future integration with customs agencies through CE-CISE is expected to enhance coordination and intelligence exchange, resulting in an efficient and effective border management system in the EU.

**Source:** [Here](#) 07 January 2025

## SOUNION SALVAGED! COMPLEX OPERATION PREVENTS MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTER IN RED SEA

Maritime security firm Ambrey successfully recovered MT SOUNION, a Greek-owned oil tanker which was heavily damaged by the Houthi militants in the Red Sea in August 2024. The ship, carrying one million barrels of crude oil, was struck by anti-ship missiles, boarded, and set on fire, posing significant environmental hazards. The operation involved clearing unexploded ordnance, firefighting and towing the vessel to safety. The operation was supported by EUNAVFOR and brought together more than 200 experts from across the globe. As of early October, the SOUNION had been stabilised, its cargo safely offloaded, and an environmental disaster averted, underscoring the critical need for enhanced maritime security in the region.

**Editorial comment-** The recovery of MT SOUNION reinforces the importance of a strong maritime security and environmental protection framework in vulnerable locations like the Red Sea. The rapid response consisting of over 200 experts, forces from the EUNAVFOR and private organizations prevented ecological ruin, highlighting the importance of co-operation and immediate action. The incident highlights the increasing vulnerability of shipping to armed conflict, and the urgent need for robust international mechanisms to protect critical waterways and the environment.

**Source:** [Here](#) 10 January 2025

## **JAPAN 'GRAVELY CONCERNED' ABOUT MARITIME TENSIONS ESCALATING, FOREIGN MINISTER SAYS**

The Japanese government expresses serious concern over the increasing tensions in the South China Sea and firmly opposes unilateral changes in the status quo, declared Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya during his recent trip to the Philippines. As a new government under Donald Trump prepares to take office, Foreign Minister Iwaya has also pledged to provide Manila with development and security aid and to fortify trilateral ties with the United States, saying that Japan remains undeterred with its involvement on regional security concerns. Japan, though not a claimant in the South China Sea disputes, asserted that its role arises out of its maritime concerns and its commitment to the international community in maintaining a rules-based order. Japan and the Philippines' advancement of military pacts and cooperation has shown their determination to confront China and slow its expanding dominance in the region.

**Editorial comment:** While on a visit to the Philippines, Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya asserted that Japan took a very serious view of the alteration of the status quo in the South China Sea through unilateral moves, and thus voiced its concern over rising tensions in the area. He voiced Japan's support on maritime security for the Philippines and also reiterated the trilateral cooperation with the US and the Philippines to counter regional challenges. Japan confines itself to not having direct claims in this regard but gets a concerned unwillingness for military pacts and security assistance amid China's assertive actions.

**Source:** [Here](#) 15 January 2025

## **MARITIME FORCES**

### **ROYAL NAVY SAILORS CANCEL CHRISTMAS TO TRACK RUSSIAN TASK FORCE**

Royal Navy's frigate HMS Somerset Christmas holiday was cut short as she was called to shadow a Russian naval group sailing past the British Isles. On December 27, the ship sailed from Devonport to intercept a Russian corvette Soobrazitelny and its two support ships in the North Sea. The ship used its onboard sensors and its helicopter to trace the Russian ships. Even with the emotional timing of the recall, the crew focused on the mission, which ended on New Year's Eve, with the Russian ships remaining in international waters.

**Editorial comment-** The speedy return to duty of the Royal Navy frigate HMS Somerset over the Christmas holiday highlights the pressures inherent in delivering maritime security, including during seasonal periods of festivity. Recalled back from Christmas Day, the crew shadowed a Russian naval task group through fog for five days, facilitating Russian ship transits through British waters in safety. The crew's professionalism, along with the support of their families, was paramount in successfully completing the mission, despite disruption to their annual holiday.

**Source-** [Here](#) 01 January 2025

## INDIAN NAVY SHOWCASES OPERATIONAL PROWESS IN VISAKHAPATNAM

The Operational Demonstration by Eastern Naval Command at Ramakrishna Beach on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January 2025 in Visakhapatnam was a magnificent affair, with all kinds of naval capabilities on show, including ships, submarines, MARCOS operations, amphibious landings, and search-rescue missions. Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu was the Chief Guest, while Vice Admiral Rajesh Pendharkar presided over the proceedings. The grand finale comprised a laser and drone show, cultural performances, and a Retreat ceremony. The Chief Minister was of the opinion that the Navy must be commended for its contribution in development and in security issues, and also reiterated the fact that Andhra Pradesh enjoys close ties with the Navy. Vice Admiral Pendharkar also commended the state by highlighting its support to the Indian Navy and thanked the citizens for being supportive as well as enthusiastic for the Indian Navy.

**Editorial comment-** The Indian Navy's Op Demo at Visakhapatnam's Ramakrishna Beach displayed its maritime strength, from precision drills to MARCOS elite operations and humanitarian missions like search-and-rescue demonstrations. Dignitaries like Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu and Vice Admiral Rajesh Pendharkar were present on the occasion in support of Andhra Pradesh's crucial role in India's maritime strategy and to develop public pride over Indian Navy's will in restoring regional stability and maritime security.

**Source-** [Here](#) 04 January 2025

## ICEBREAKER 'STORIS' OFFICIALLY JOINS US COAST GUARD FLEET

The icebreaking offshore supply vessel Aiviq, currently known as CGC Storis, is the first polar icebreaker to be sent to the US Coast Guard in almost 25 years. The goal of the acquisition, which is part of a \$125 million agreement with Offshore Service Vessels LLC, is to increase the Coast Guard's visibility in Arctic areas. The ship, which started working for Shell Oil in Alaska in 2012 as a supply support ship, will be repainted and redesigned at Tampa Ship LLC. In 2026, the Storis will patrol the Arctic for the first time; crew selection will start in 2025. The Polar Security Cutter, the first new heavy icebreaker in fifty years, is currently being built at Bollinger Shipbuilding and should be finished by 2030. In the Arctic, where growing Russian and Chinese engagement is creating national security threats, this is a critical step in strengthening US capabilities.

**Editorial comment-** The addition of CGC Storis to the US Coast Guard fleet is a key step in strengthening Arctic operations necessitated by growing geopolitical tensions. While Russia and China expand their icebreaking capabilities, the US too has to maintain a strong presence in the region. The Storis, along with the upcoming Polar Security Cutter, is vital for the modernization of the fleet and has national security implications to the US

**Source-** [Here](#) 06 January 2025

## CHINA'S BIGGEST SHIPPING LINE ADDED TO US MILITARY BLACKLIST

On January 7, 2025, the United States placed China State Shipbuilding Corp., China Shipbuilding Trading Co., and Cosco Shipping Holdings, the country's biggest shipping line, on a blacklist.

Although there have been no obvious repercussions, this brings the focus on China's robust maritime sector, which owns more than half of the world's merchant fleet. As a crucial area of geopolitical influence, the US wants to limit China's rapid growth in shipbuilding and shipping. Following the news, Cosco and Cnooc's stock prices declined. The latest penalties show Dmitry Gorbachev that they are reversing the trend between Beijing and Washington: these two heavyweights are unlikely to make amends over a short distance in the context of supply networks and the Arctic.

**Editorial comment:** Growing worries over China's dominance in the world's maritime commerce are reflected in the US blacklisting of China's leading shipping line and shipbuilders. As Washington looks to limit China's dominance in global supply chains, this action, made ahead of Trump's return to the White House, underscores the rising contradiction between national security and economic dependency.

**Source:** [Here](#) 07 January 2025

## NATO LAUNCHES BALTIC SENTRY MISSION IN BALTIC SEA

NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte said in Helsinki, Finland, that the organization has launched Operation Baltic Sentry to improve surveillance and avert any threats to the Baltic Sea's underwater infrastructure. General Chris Cavoli, NATO's Supreme Allied Commander, is in charge of this operation, which includes navy drones, frigates, and maritime patrol planes. The Baltic states' leaders restated their commitment to minimizing environmental degradation in the Baltic Sea and to fighting Russian shadow fleets that damage ships and injure sailors. NATO ships from the Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 and Mine Countermeasures Group 1 will improve local security, while Germans representing Commander Task Force Baltic (CTF Baltic), will collaborate in regional naval operations. Towards lowering the chances of environmental problems, NATO's approach will depend on tougher regulations on Russian shadow fleet ships and the enforcement of sanctions.

**Editorial comment:** NATO's Baltic Sentry operation confirms the Atlantic Alliance's unwavering dedication to protect essential underwater infrastructure in the Baltic Sea as security threats continue to rise. The employment of various technologies which include naval drones and intensified surveillance demonstrates a joint effort among the allies to defend against the threats posed by the Russian "shadow fleet". Successful cooperation and faster implementation are going to be the main factors in preventing possible risks.

**Source:** [Here](#) 15 January 2025

# SHIPPING, PORTS AND OCEAN ECONOMY

---

## FUELEU MARITIME TAKES EFFECT: SHIPPING INDUSTRY FACES HISTORIC EMISSIONS CHALLENGE AS 2025 BEGINS

The European Union's FuelEU Maritime regulation, effective from January 1, 2025, marks a significant step in the shipping industry's decarbonization, targeting vessels over 5,000 gross tons calling at EU ports. This regulation mandates a gradual reduction in greenhouse gas intensity from marine fuels, starting with a 2% cut in 2025, aiming for an 80% reduction by 2050. As part of the EU's Fit for 55 initiative, which seeks a 55% emissions cut by 2030, the regulation offers flexibility, allowing operators to use various fuels such as biofuels, LNG, methanol, ammonia, and hydrogen. However, there are still issues to be resolved, such as the requirement to train 450,000 seafarers by 2030, high prices, and restricted fuel supply. Notwithstanding these challenges, the rule is a definite step toward long-term marine decarbonization as carbon permit costs increase.

**Editorial comment:** The FuelEU is a crucial stage in the decarbonization of shipping in EU maritime legislation, which aims to establish rigorous emission reduction targets. Although the rule faces obstacles including high cost, fuel supply, and crew training, it is forcing shipowners to carefully consider their investments. Nonetheless, it encompasses the industry's shift to more environmentally friendly fuels and long-term investments, making marine decarbonization one of the most crucial aspects of global climate action.

Source: [Here](#) 02 January 2025

## RED SEA DIVERSIONS HELPED CONTAINER SHIPPING DODGE OVERCAPACITY CRISIS

In 2024, the container shipping sector was on the brink of an overcapacity crisis, which was fortunately avoided due to an unexpected saviour — the Red Sea crisis, which redirected vessels via the Cape of Good Hope. According to Alphaliner, the global container fleet expanded by 10.6% in 2024, adding nearly 3 million TEU of capacity. However, of this, 59%, or 1.75 million TEU, were used in Asia-Europe trade using the longer route, and not the Red Sea. Because of the extended route and trip duration, the total number of idle tons was kept to a minimum, ranging from 0.6% to 6% of the total ships, preventing the capacity excess at the end of the year.

**Editorial comment:** In 2024, the container shipping industry avoided a serious overcapacity crisis, mainly caused by the Red Sea crisis, by rerouting the vessels via the Cape of Good Hope. Despite a sharp increase in shipping volumes of 10.6%, long-distance travel is likely to gain momentum, with the Asia-Europe trade route alone accounting for 59% of shipping volume growth. This unexpected change has led to a significant underestimation of the number of unprofitable ships, reflecting the significant impact of geopolitical turmoil and global shipping fluctuations.

Source: [Here](#) 02 January 2025

## ILA AND USMX REACH SIX-YEAR CONTRACT AGREEMENT, AVERTING US PORT CRISIS

In order to prevent the continuous interruptions of supply lines between East Coast and Gulf Coast ports, the ILA and USMX came to an initial six-year Master Contract. This preliminary agreement, which was created on January 7 and was due to come in force in January 15, is currently settling mediation over port automation and pay increases in response to a three-day walkout in October, 2024. The goal of the agreement is to protect jobs while embracing the technology needed to increase production, efficiency, and job growth in the future. This is necessary for the nation to avoid a catastrophe during President-elect Donald Trump's impending transition.

**Editorial comment:** The ILA-USMX agreement allows ports along the East and Gulf Coast to be modernized and jobs to be protected without affecting the US economy at this crucial time. The agreement, which combines worker safety with technological advancements, highlights the interests of labour and port efficiency as President-elect Trump takes office.

**Source:** [Here](#) 08 January 2025

## TARIFF JITTERS DRIVE US IMPORT RUSH FROM CHINA

As businesses increased their stockpiles in anticipation of Donald Trump's proposed tariffs, which were predicted to spark a trade war between the US and China, US imports from China skyrocketed to what was likely a record high in late 2023. With notable gains in clothing, toys, furniture, and electronics, imports increased 14.5% year over year in December. While Wal-Mart welcomed an increase in imports, Helen of Troy Ltd. and MSC Industrial Direct have been accumulating inventories to avoid the impact of the levy. The analysis is further complicated by strong consumer demand in the US and importers stocking up on goods to guard against potential disruptions, such as Houthi attacks on shipping near the Suez Canal and a labor dispute at East Coast and Gulf of Mexico seaports.

**Editorial comment:** Companies were rushing to avoid potential trade disruptions, as seen by the spike in US imports from China before President-elect Trump's anticipated tariffs. His planned tariffs have caused people to stockpile goods, which is an example of the increasing unpredictability of global supply networks. The dynamics of trade between the United States and China will be shaped for years to come by how these tensions develop.

**Source:** [Here](#) 15 January 2025

## FUEL SALES AT SINGAPORE BUNKER HUB HIT RECORD HIGHS IN 2024

Following a record-breaking 51.82 million tons in 2023, Singapore's marine fuel sales soared to 54.92 million metric tons in 2024. Another was the enormous throughput of 41.12 million TEUs of containers and the 3.11 billion gross tons of vessel arrival tonnage. The amount of high-sulfur marine gasoline increased by 21% to 20.15 million tons. Sales of low-sulfur gasoline fell by 4%. Alternative fuel sales increased dramatically: sales of liquefied natural gas increased by more than 400%, while sales of biofuel blends increased by 69% which demonstrates the industry's haste to cut emissions.

**Editorial comment:** Record marine fuel sales for Singapore in 2024 reveal both the demand for traditional fuels driven by scrubber-equipped vessels and a notable shift toward greener alternatives. This change is an effective reaction of the industry to geopolitical pressures and sustainability goals and a key step towards cleaner maritime practices.

**Source:** [Here](#) 15 January 2025

## MARINE ENVIRONMENT

---

### THE FISHING INDUSTRY'S ROLE IN PROTECTING THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT

Phil Haslam, Managing Director of the North Atlantic Fishing Company, highlights the responsibility of the fishing industry to balance its essential role in food production as well as protecting the marine ecosystems. The fishing industry employs millions of people worldwide and also ensures global food security. The impact of fishing industry on environment, especially on oceans needs to be managed in order to ensure long term feasibility of marine life and the livelihoods dependent on it. People involved in fishing know how to protect ecosystems and use sustainable practices, which are essential for future generations. If the right balance is ensured, the fishing industry can serve both global food security and ocean health. Therefore, by using advanced technology and adopting better management methods, we can reduce the ecological footprint and make sure that the fish stocks are available for future generations.

**Editorial comment:** North Atlantic Fishing Company Managing Director Phil Haslam stresses that the fishing sector has to control its effects on world food supply and marine conservation. Sustainable practices are essential because healthy seas safeguard offshore energy, tourism, sustainable shipping, and fisheries. Additionally, since billions of people rely on fish for nourishment, it will be crucial to manage fish populations sustainably, reduce bycatch, and develop ecologically friendly technology. In order to reconcile feeding expanding populations with maintaining healthy seas for future generations, the commercial fishing sector will need to take a step toward sustainable capturing techniques.

**Source:** [Here](#) 7 January 2025

### UKRAINE, ROMANIA, BULGARIA AGREE ON JOINT STEPS TO DEAL WITH ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTER IN BLACK SEA

Ukraine, Romania, and Bulgaria have entered into an alliance to deal with the environmental crisis in the Black Sea due to spillage of oil after the accident of two Russian tankers in the Kerch Strait. There is a lack of accurate information about this major accident and the spill has already reached Yevpatoriya in Ukraine. The marine ecosystem of Black Sea has been severely weakened by this incident, with the initial damage estimated at \$14 billion with the aftermath possibly being even perilous. Ukraine has been having consultations at the highest levels possible. After submitting to

the International Maritime Organization for its Meeting on Pollution Prevention and Response on January 27-31, Ukraine will also release data to the public.

**Editorial comment:** The Black Sea oil spill following the accident of a Russian tanker has brought to the fore the vulnerability of the environmental condition of the region with an estimated damage of \$14 billion. Ukraine, Romania, and Bulgaria have formed an alliance to solve this crisis. However, this incident underscores the requirement for better international coordination and preventive measures in the ecological protection of critical ecosystems. This disaster begs for greater accountability in managing global environmental risks.

**Source:** [Here](#) 13 January 2025

## UN: SHADOW TANKER FLEET RISKS RISING

Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization Arsenio Dominguez has cautioned that uncontrolled oil tankers of the "shadow fleet" can cause a significant threat to the maritime environment and the life of seafarers. These obsolete ships, that the Russian, Iranian, and Venezuelan operators flout sanctions to run, have experienced multifarious bumps, and system failures that have brought peril to both human beings and green spaces. According to Dominguez, the seriousness of the threats is intensifying as ship operators engage in activities that are non-compliant with IMO rules, especially when conducting ship-to-ship oil transfers under very minimal safety protocols. Not many of the small flag registries that the shadow fleet operators use and most of which are in relatively under-regulated countries do not see to it that international regulations are strictly obeyed. The IMO is set to address such escalating risks during its meeting in March, as the main focus turns to increased oversight and stricter regulations to prevent any more incidents.

**Editorial comment:** The expanding shadow fleet consists of uncontrolled oil tankers used by sanctioned countries such as Venezuela, Iran, and Russia. The heightened safety and environmental risks associated with the shadow fleet have raised serious concerns, according to IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez. There are more mishaps and a higher danger to seafarers and marine ecosystems as a result of older ships and improper ship-to-ship transfers. Even though Dominguez demanded more oversight and adherence, the issue is exacerbated by the smaller flag registries' laxity. To guarantee environmental integrity and safety in marine operations, the IMO has to bolster its regulatory supervision to address these shortcomings.

**Source:** [Here](#) 14 January 2025

## AMBIPAR RESPONSE: ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNER IN THE EPIC SOUNION TANKER SALVAGE

After the Houthi missile hit on the Sounion tanker IMO: 9312145 in the Red Sea on August 21, 2024, Ambipar Group's emergency division was crucial in averting an environmental catastrophe. Together with Megatugs Salvage & Towage, EODEX Ambrey, and EUNAVFOR, Ambipar put out the fire, preventing the spilling of 150,000 tonnes of crude oil into the ocean. Four times as much pollution would have resulted from it as from the Exxon Valdez disaster. Teams from Brazil, Spain, and the UK were deployed by Ambipar to guarantee environmental safety both now and in

the future. This operation highlights Ambipar's dedication to sustainable, creative solutions for challenging marine issues as well as its leadership in the management of global environmental disasters.

**Editorial comment:** Ambipar Response played a crucial role in preventing a serious oil spill into the Red Sea after the Sounion tanker was hit by a Houthi missile on August 21, 2024. Collaborating with international partners and harnessing state-of-the-art technology, Ambipar successfully extinguished the fire in an operation that protected crucial ecosystems. The operation showcases the importance of preparedness in managing environmental crises and reports Ambipar's leadership in sustainable crisis management.

**Source:** [Here](#) 14 January 2025

## BOEM STARTS ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FOR NEXT US OFFSHORE WIND FARM

According to BOEM, the Vineyard Wind project, which is situated in deepwater south off the coast of Block Island, is being assessed by the US Bureau of Ocean Energy Management as part of the environmental evaluation process. Vineyard Offshore recommended the establishment of the Excelsior Wind project, which is anticipated to generate 1,350 megawatts of wind energy from the offshore lease area, in its application to the state of New York. The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) selected it at the city's third wind energy auction. Although these green energy leaders made their announcement in October 2023, NYSERDA did not really provide agreements for those prizes. In September 2024, the project was resurrected as part of the new request for ideas.

**Editorial comment:** Just before the presidential transition, BOEM's announcement of the Vineyard Mid-Atlantic Offshore Wind project worried stakeholders, especially former President Trump. One of the main ideas is that if he manages to stop this kind of activity, then this could delay the progress on dealing with energy issues in a more environmentally friendly manner. Despite the opportunities of reducing emissions and supporting an autonomous energy system, the industry faces unresolved future regulatory challenges. The US continues to experience political turmoil, therefore there is an increased need for sustainability and innovation driven energy policies.

**Source:** [Here](#) 14 January 2025

## GEOPOLITICS

### IRAN MOUNTS NAVAL SHOW OF FORCE

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) is all set to showcase its military capabilities with a series of naval exercise from 11 January 2025 to 27 January 2025. The two weeks will involve 300 combat vessels in the Strait of Hormuz, which will be followed by an exercise in the Gulf and the two weeks will culminate in a large fleet review. Equipped with advanced cruise missiles and air defence system, two new Shahid Soleimani-class catamarans will also be unveiled. The IRGC will also conduct air defence drills near nuclear sites by publicising its underground missile and

drone complexes. The IRGC's internal security exercises involving 110,000 Basij volunteers, stress its primary objective is to protect the regime from growing dangers.

**Editorial comment:** Naval and security exercises which will be showcased by Iran, from 11 to 27 January 2025, will include IRCG's largest fleet review, and unveiling of advanced defence vessels underscoring its strategy to display strength to deter threats. These drills combined with internal security exercises with 110,000 Basij volunteers establishes the fact that the focus is both on external challenges as well as internal opposition. Even so, the demonstration might lead to heightened regional tensions, particularly in the crucial Strait of Hormuz, which could raise questions about Iran's balance between defence and domestic governance.

**Source:** [Here](#) 8 January 2025

## ISRAEL TARGETS HOUTHI PORTS OF HODEIDAH AND RAS ISA WITH MORE AIRSTRIKES

The Israeli Air force conducted multiple retaliatory strikes against Houthi targets in western Yemen, which included dual use ports in Ras Isa and Hodeidah. US and British forces supported the operation by attacking different sites. There are reports which say that there has been significant damage, with fires at Ras Isa and Hodeidah which are Yemen's primary food import hub. Prime Minister Netanyahu has vowed continued strikes against the Iran-backed Houthi regime while labelling it as a part of Iran's terrorist agenda in the Middle East. The action taken by the Israeli Air Force has also incapacitated operations at the Hodeidah port.

**Editorial comment:** The Israeli-led strikes, supported by US and UK forces, on Houthi targets in Yemen highlights the rising complication in the Middle eastern conflicts. With Iran-backed Houthis retaliating against Israel amid ongoing tensions in Gaza, these attacks reflect the growing regional entanglement of proxy wars. Attacks on dual-use facilities, like ports and power stations bring to light the blurred lines between military objectives and civilian infrastructure. As the situation advances, the focus should remain on mitigating regional fallout and preventing further escalation.

**Source:** [Here](#) 10 January 2025

## VENEZUELA'S MADURO THREATENS TO INVADE PUERTO RICO

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro threatened to "liberate" Puerto Rico from US control, taking a cue from Latin America's independence movements. However, given the limited naval capabilities of Venezuela, which exercises control over four enfeebled tank landing ships, such an invasion is improbable, if not impossible. Puerto Rico's Governor, Jenniffer González-Colón, has urged the yet-to-be-sworn-in US administration of President Donald Trump to take vigorous action to ensure US sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity. This is another chapter in the thriving narrative of maritime security dynamics in the greater Caribbean region as Venezuela's naval capabilities are under scrutiny, following months of sanctions and limited operational capacity.

**Editorial comment:** Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro's pecuniary threat to "liberate" Puerto Rico speaks of the maritime concerns over Venezuela's proximity to the island. But Venezuela does not have too big a naval force; with only four age old tank landing ships. The

limited amphibious capacity notwithstanding, the remarks indicate potential security opportunism for a variety of characters in the Caribbean region. As the Caribbean region is heavily dependent on maritime routes, US lawmakers and officials called for a strong response to protect US territories and sovereignty of navigation from Venezuelan provocations.

**Source:** [Here](#) 14 January 2025

## SYRIA'S NEW RULERS MAY BLOCK RUSSIA FROM EVACUATING NAVAL BASE

Ukraine's military intelligence says access for Russia to its naval bases in Syria's Tartus has been blocked, where it has usually stored considerable military equipment. The Russian vessel Alexander Otrakovskiy is stuck offshore due to technical problems and cannot dock for repair. Tension intensified after the terrorist group Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) began an offensive against the Bashar al-Assad government, causing Russian military assets to withdraw into Tartus and Latakia. The Mediterranean Flotilla of the Russian Navy is still offshore, and negotiations with HTS to allow port access have failed. Thus, Russia faces the spectacle of abandoning the equipment it cannot evacuate.

**Editorial comment:** Russia's problems in Tartus demonstrate the challenges the country faces in maintaining its presence in Syria amidst unrest. With military personnel leaving and logistical deficiencies, Russia faces a significant obstacle in negotiating with HTS, who are unwilling to secure strategic locations. This situation underscores the instability of the Middle East and the complexities of foreign military bases in volatile regions.

**Source:** [Here](#) 13 January 2025

## CHINA BEGINS PATROLLING BOUNDARY OF ITS "NINE-DASH LINE" CLAIM

China's Coast Guard has started patrolling a section of the "nine-dash line," a boundary demarcating Beijing's unilateral claim in the South China Sea, that envelops other countries' exclusive economic zones of several other countries. Large Coast Guard vessels from China have been operating off Zambales, Luzon, within 55 nautical miles of the Philippine coast. In response, the Philippine Coast Guard dispatched BRP Teresa Magbanua to monitor and confront this event, warning that the patrols were part of a strategy to legitimize China's illegal claims of sovereignty. In the Yellow Sea, fishing support facilities, widely regarded as a method for maintaining territorial expansion, have been erected by China in contested waters, which has South Korea deeply anxious about China's slowly creeping territorial control.

**Editorial comment:** Chinese vessels patrolling and building infrastructure in the South China Sea and Yellow Sea respectively are fundamentally aimed at normalizing its disputed claims. These actions challenge regional sovereignty delineated in the 2016 Hague ruling. It is in response to these deployments by China, that the Philippines and South Korea are keeping an eye on the Chinese vessels by sending their patrol vessels as well. It is imperative and essential to maintain a united front against China's encroachments, and more importantly, uphold maritime law and prevent China from unilaterally altering the status quo.

**Source:** [Here](#) 12 January 2025