

Daily Memo: Gas Leaks in Nord Stream Pipelines

by Geopolitical Futures - September 27, 2022

Gas leaks. Danish authorities reported on Monday night **a gas leak off the coast of the island of Bornholm coming from the defunct Nord Stream 2 pipeline in the Baltic Sea**. Two more leaks were later reported on both lines of Nord Stream 1, which is operational. Nord Stream AG, the operator of the pipelines, **called the simultaneous destruction of three strings of the system “unprecedented”** and said it was impossible to know how long it would take to repair it. Russia’s Gazprom reduced deliveries via Nord Stream 1 over the summer and shut them completely in early September, ostensibly for maintenance. Nord Stream 2 was supposed to be operational this year, but Germany suspended the approval process after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

Strange encounter. A U.S. Coast Guard vessel last week **encountered three Chinese naval ships and four Russian naval ships in the Bering Sea** off the coast of Alaska’s Kiska Island, U.S. officials revealed on Monday. The vessels, including a Chinese guided missile cruiser and a Russian destroyer, dispersed after a U.S. patrol boat spotted them sailing in single formation. The Bering Sea is a strategic waterway with access to the Arctic Ocean, an increasingly important area of interest **featured heavily in Russia’s new naval doctrine**.

Spying allegations. Russia’s ambassador to Japan was summoned to the Japanese Foreign Ministry after **a Japanese consul was detained on Monday** by Russia’s FSB security agency for suspected spying and declared persona non grata. Russia accused the consul of obtaining classified information. Tokyo denied any wrongdoing. A day earlier, **Japan announced new sanctions against Russia**, adding 21 defense-linked organizations to its sanctions list and banning the export of products related to chemical weapons.

Satellite exchange. Russia and China **signed contracts** for the deployment of Russia’s GLONASS satellite system in China and China’s Beidou satellite system in Russia following a meeting on Tuesday of a bilateral committee for strategic cooperation on satellite navigation projects. Russia is expanding cooperation with the East as it faces increasing pressure from the West.

Disruption. The Switzerland-based Glencore mining group is **facing uncertainty as one of its largest buyers, China’s Maik Metals International, experiences liquidity issues**. Maik accounted for 80 percent of Glencore’s copper sales, which have recently fallen significantly. The Chinese commodities trader recently **announced that it was considering a broad restructuring**.

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