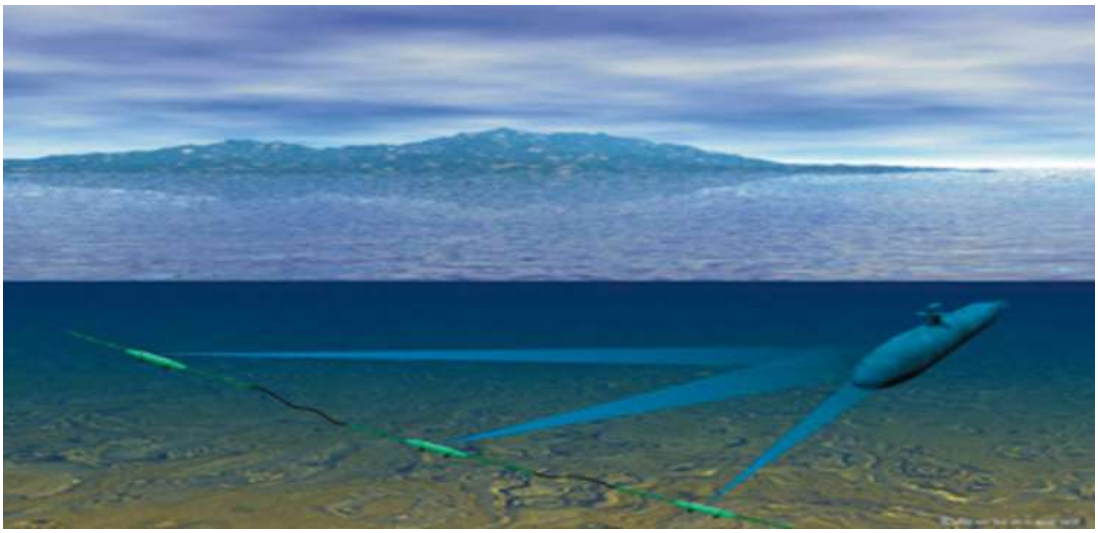
SYNERGING ENERGIES

Centre for Global Studies / Центр Глобалістики

CONCEALED ACTIVITY OF THE RUSSIAN NAVY IN THE AREA OF THE NORD STREAM 2 PIPELINE AT COMPLETION STAGE



CGS S21 Expert Group

At the final stage of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline's construction **(from April 10 to August 30, 2021)**, military servants of the separate special unit of the Russian Navy were noticed and identified in the work zone. In particular:

- a group of four servicemen from the Main Directorate of Deep-Water Research (MDDR) of the Russian Ministry of Defense, arrived from the main office that is located in Peterhof, near St.Petersburg[1];

- a group of seven servicemen from the Russian Navy's Baltic Fleet Separate Special Purpose Detachment No.313 for countering underwater diversionary forces (based in Baltiysk (former Pillau), near Kaliningrad (former Königsberg);

- a group of seven servicemen from the Emergency Rescue Squad No.342 of the Baltic Fleet of the Russian Navy (based in Baltiysk).

This unified group of eighteen stayed in rotation on board of the civil ships of the Marine Rescue Service subordinated to the Federal Agency of Maritime and River Transport of the Ministry of Transport of the Russian Federation – Multipurpose salvage tug "Captain Beklemishev" (off. Salvage/Rescue vessel) and multipurpose salvage vessels "Spasatel Karev" and "Bakhtemir" that are designed as dual-purpose ships and may be used for both civil and military purposes.

Multipurpose salvage vessels:
Bakhtemir (on the left) and Spasatel Karev (on the right)

Bakhtemir is the newest Russian vessel in its class that appeared in Russian Maritime Register of Shipping in 2019. It is equipped with a diver rapid deployment station that allows frogmen to make an immersion for up to 60 meters and light operating class MSS-3000 remotely operated underwater vehicles (ROV).

[1] MDDR or Glavnoe Upravlienie Glubokovodnych Issledovanii (GUGI) or military unit 45707 is one of the most classified military units of the Russian Federation, which plans and is engaged in special underwater operations

Reference: The MSS-3000 ROV is capable to operate at the depths down to 3,000 meters. It is equipped with 8 propulsion engines, 4 Full HD cameras and hydraulic rope cutter.

MSS-3000 remotely operated underwater vehicle.
http://mil.today/2019/Navy44/

Increased activity of the group was observed in Danish and German Exclusive Economic Zones in the area of the fiber optic submarine telecommunications cable systems *Baltica* (it connects Poland, Sweden and Denmark) and *Denmark-Poland 2* (connects Poland with Bornholm Island and reinforces *Baltica*). A suspicious activity was fixed 2-3 miles away from the pipeline.

Image 1. The map of fiber optic submarine telecommunications cable system *Denmark-Poland 2*

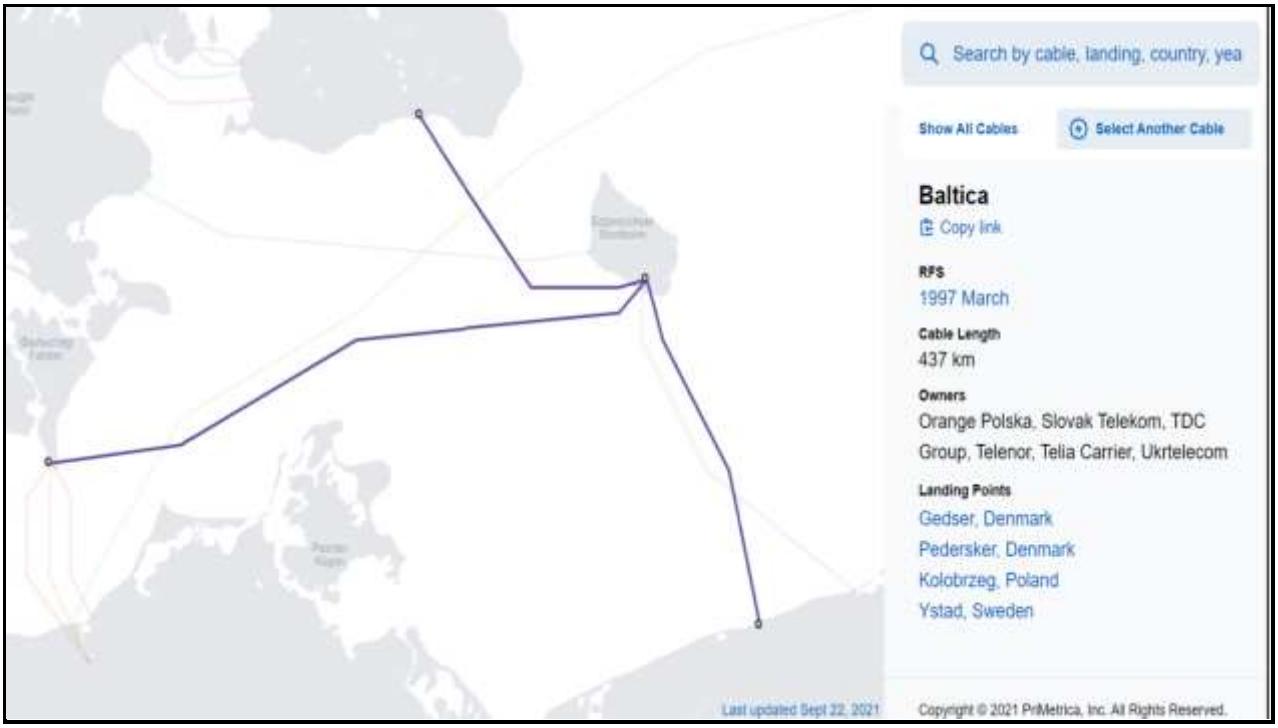


Image 2. The map of fiber optic submarine telecommunications cable system *Baltica*

Besides *Bakhtemir's* MSS-3000 ROV, the group also used an own ROV "Marlin-350".

Reference: The Marlin-350 unmanned remotely operated vehicle (ROV) was developed by the JSC Tetis PRO and designed for search and survey various underwater objects as well as for underwater technical works, search, survey and rescuer works in coastal and internal waters at up to 350 meters depth.



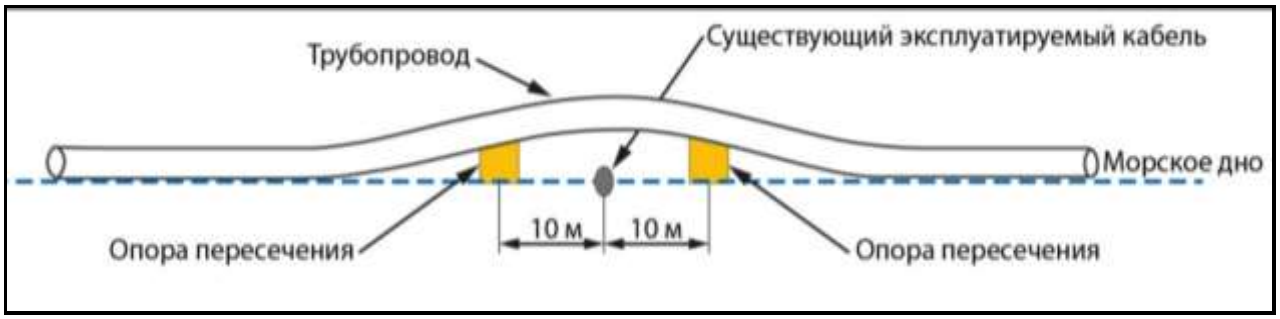
The Marlin-350 unmanned remotely operated vehicle (ROV)

The ROV is equipped with a circle scanning sonar and manipulator for objects capturing. **It can be used to set sonar markers.** A circle scanning sonar provides an opportunity to search objects at the bottom and in the water column, survey hydrotechnical constructions: maritime platforms, cables, pipelines. Parameters: 360-degree scan, range up to 60 meters; depth rated to 2000 meters.
It was approved for use in Armed Forces of the Russian Federation by secret Decree of the Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation No. 574 dated September 30, 2015.

Officially these vessels were approved to provide security for pipelayers "Fortuna" and "Akademik Cherskiy". A group of divers also has also received some monitoring tasks related to pipe laying process accuracy at the bottom.

At the same time, the special cargo transfer to the board of Bakhtemir was fixed in the night of April 21 from the boat "Bercut L-DC Arctica" and on May 8 during the raid in Kaliningrad port from the auxiliary boat "Yasnyi".

Given that the Nord Stream 2 pipeline crosses most of the submarine communication lines connecting the Scandinavian countries with the southern Baltic Sea countries, the pipeline corridor provides sample opportunities for covert access to gather information for units of the MDDR of the Russian Ministry of Defence. Below, a typical diagram of a fiber-optic line crossed by the Gazprom pipeline, is shown. This makes it possible to place appropriate devices for capturing information from the fiber optic in the part located under the pipeline.



Translation: трубопровод – pipeline; существующий эксплуатируемый кабель – existing operating cable; морское дно – seabottom; опора пересечения – intersection support.

Also, the pipeline corridor can be used for covert installation of underwater equipment, announced to perform certain types of monitoring and routine technical work, but designed for sabotage actions by special force at a certain day "D".

In our estimation, the group carried out reconnaissance work to prepare for the subsequent installation of data capturing devices on the above-mentioned European fiber optic telecommunications cable system, identifying the locations suitable for sonar station installation to control the underwater space of the western Baltic Sea within the Unified State System for Surface and Underwater Lighting HARMONY.

It should be borne in mind that in the corridor of each pipeline is laid its own fiber-optic cable, which provides communication and transmission of telemetry data on the operating parameters of the gas flow and the technical condition of the pipeline (SCADA). According to available information, the potential of fiber optics far exceeds the needs of standard communication and telemetry. The fiber optic has special terminals for external connection to it. Their number and location are kept secret. In our opinion, these terminals are just designed to connect buoy communication cables to the fiber optic cable for the transmission of sonar data.

During the maintenance (inspection) of pipelines and environmental monitoring, it is possible to ensure the concealment of placement and maintenance of sonar systems.

Consequently, independent security audit is needed for the North Stream 1; 2 corridors.

Preliminary, a system of criteria and indicators must consist of following set of data:

1. Provision of information about points, where fiber optic terminals are located, which might be used to connect and transmit data.

2. Sealing of fiber optic terminals to prevent their use for non-core purposes – to connect third-party sonar systems for transmitting information.

3. Provision by the operator company of information in advance to the countries through which the gas pipeline corridor has been laid, about the arrival of certain vessels, submarines, and other technical devices in the gas pipeline corridor, why they are sent and the nature of work to be performed.

4. Written consent of the operator company for unannounced verification – immediate granting at the request of the competent authority of access to control the pipeline corridor for any of the countries which have agreed to lay the gas pipeline within their national EEZ.

5. Provision by the operator company of the written guarantee, verified by an independent expertise body (NATO), that fiber optic terminals have no technical capacities to ensure transmission of telemetric data in the interests of the third parties.

Danish Ministry of Defense has only verified the gas pipeline route within the EEZ for the purpose of ensuring it is away from places of chemical weapons disposal. That is far from being a sufficient measure.