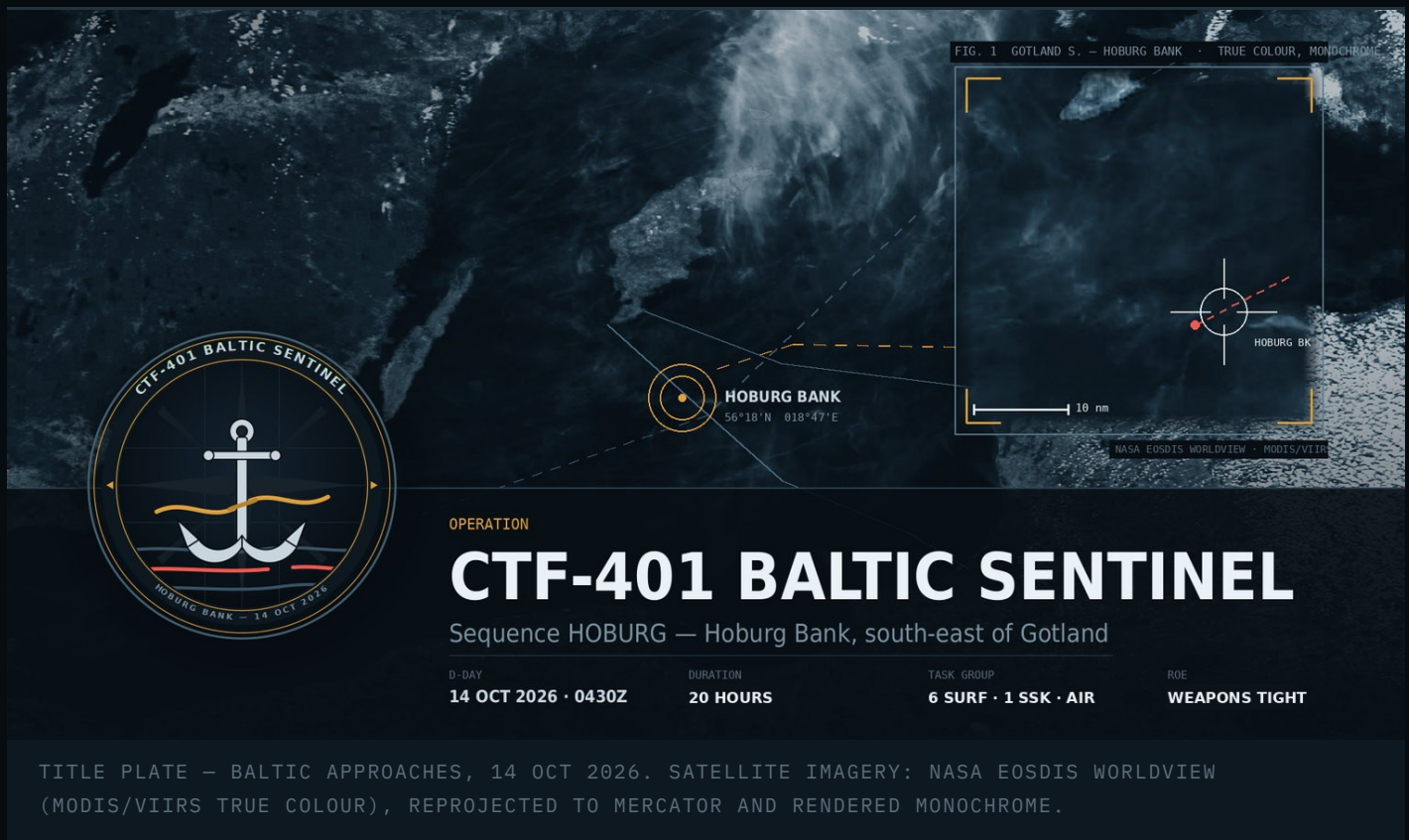




OPORD 26-114 · ANNEX B (INTELLIGENCE) · SERIAL 04

Hoburg Bank

Briefing pack · Operation BALTIC SENTINEL, sequence HOBURG · 14–15 October 2026

Originator	Fusion support	For
HKV J2 Maritime, Stockholm	ATHENA-M (NATO) · MUST · FRA	Commander, CTF-401
As of	Supersedes	Next serial
14 OCT 26, 0430Z	Serial 03, 0200Z	On change

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You have twenty hours, six warships, a submarine nobody knows about, and a rule that says you may not shoot first. Two bulk carriers are dragging their anchors over two cables, and only one of them means it. By noon you will be guarding a cable ship; by night, hunting a submarine with the same aircraft. And a government in Stockholm is watching the news.

1 Situation

1.1 Why anyone is here at all

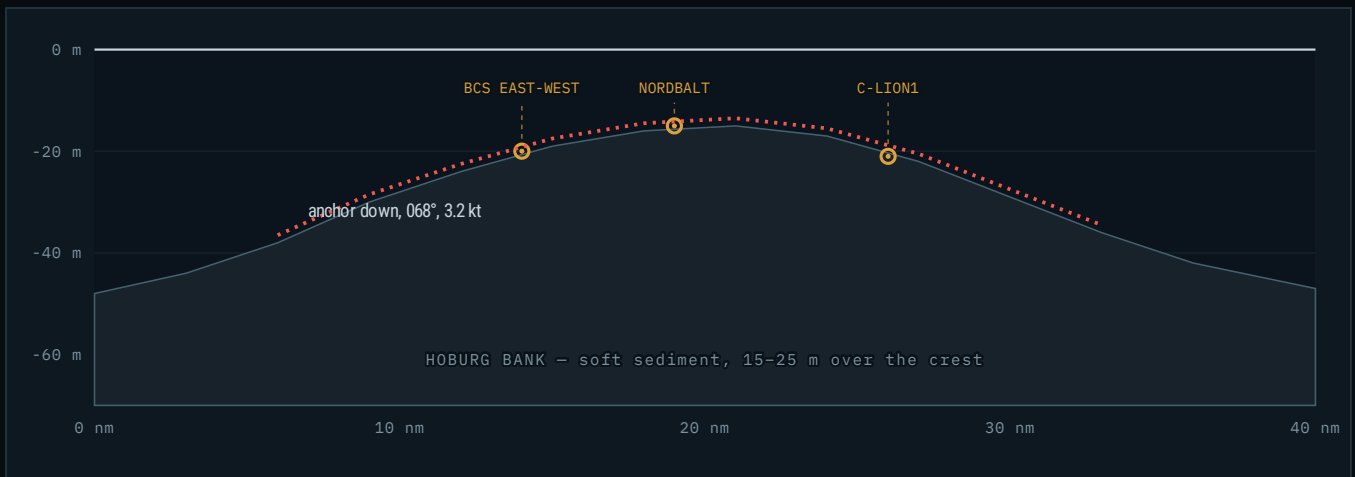
Operation Baltic Sentry has held since January 2025. For eighteen months the combination of standing patrols, aerial surveillance and the visible willingness of Baltic states to board and detain brought the rate of “accidental” anchor damage down to near zero. That ended in March 2026.

The method has not changed since *Eagle S* and *Vezhen*: an ageing hull under a flag of convenience, a mixed crew, insurance that unravels when you pull on it, and an anchor walked across the seabed for tens of miles. What has changed is the escort, and now the pairing. Tonight there are two ships.

1.2 The ground, which in this case is the seabed

Hoburg Bank and the Northern Midsjö Bank, south-east of Gotland, are where the Baltic's undersea infrastructure converges. NordBalt runs Sweden to Lithuania. The Latvia–Gotland link carries a third of Latvia's international traffic. The BCS East-West Interlink runs Gotland to the Baltic states. Depths over the crest are fifteen to forty metres on soft sediment — which is why an anchor holds there just enough to do damage, and not enough to stop the ship.

FIGURE 1 — DEPTH PROFILE ALONG THE NORDBALT CORRIDOR, 068°



Three cable systems cross the bank within a few miles of each other. This is not a coincidence of geography that the other side has failed to notice.

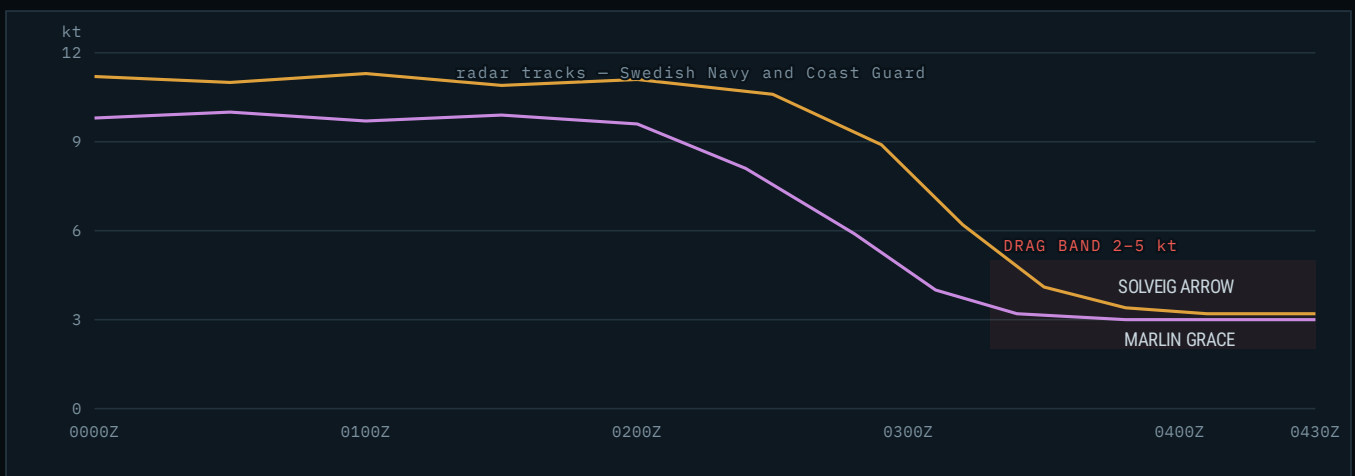
1.3 The night before

At 0115Z Svenska kraftnät reported the **BCS East-West Interlink** parted south-east of Gotland. No ship has been associated with it. The Norwegian cable ship **NCS ENDEAVOUR** is under contract to recover and splice it. The engineers estimate eleven hours of work on site, and more for every other cable the bank loses tonight.

1.4 The trigger

By 0430Z two Handymax bulk carriers of 45,000 dwt, built within two years of each other, are making about three knots over the bank with their anchors down, twenty-five miles apart: **M/V SOLVEIG ARROW** over NordBalt, **M/V MARLIN GRACE** over the Latvia-Gotland link. At that draught, on that bottom, three knots is what a ship makes when something is in the mud behind her.

FIGURE 2 – THE TWO BULK CARRIERS, SPEED OVER GROUND, 0000Z-0430Z



Both decelerated over about forty minutes and then flattened at three knots. From a radar screen the two signatures are the same. **From a radar screen they will stay the same: what**

separates a ship dragging on purpose from a ship with her anchor out and a broken windlass is the angle of the cable at her bow, and that is seen from close aboard or not at all.

THE THING TO UNDERSTAND BEFORE YOU START

Both ships are outside Swedish territorial waters. You may board a ship there with her flag state's consent, or if she turns out to have no nationality. You may not board her because you are sure. Finding the saboteur and being allowed to stop her are two different problems, and the cable is being lost while you solve them.

2 Enemy

2.1 Where this section comes from

The disposition that follows fuses Swedish Navy and Coast Guard radar, MUST reporting, FRA signals intelligence, and the NATO fusion cell ATHENA-M, which correlates AIS histories, ELINT bearings, satellite passes and commercial vessel-tracking data and proposes tracks with an explicit confidence. It is a tool, not an oracle.

CONFIDENCE SCALE

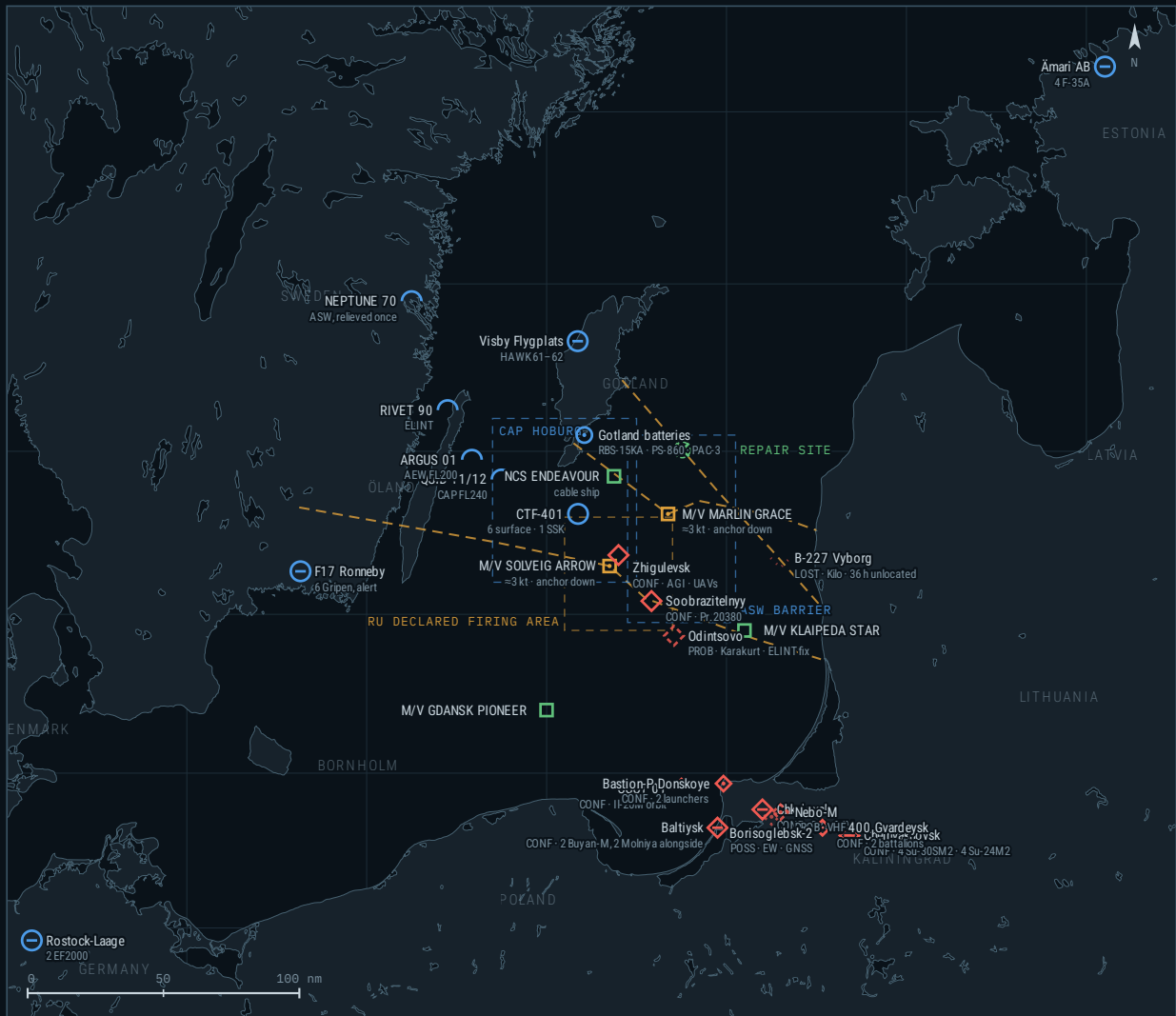
- CONFIRMED** A current sensor hold, or two independent sources agreeing inside the last hour.
- PROBABLE** One source, or a cross-fix with a stated error box.
- POSSIBLE** Pattern-of-life inference or a stale fix.
- UNLOCATED** Known to exist, known to be at sea, not held.

2.2 Assessed disposition, 0430Z

TRACK	CONTACT	CLASS / ROLE	POSITION 0430Z	CONFIDENCE	BASIS
H-0011	Zhigulevsk	Pr.864 Vishnya AGI – SIGINT, UAVs embarked	56°22'N 018°48'E	CONFIRMED	Radar hold since 0206Z, near the southern bulker

TRACK	CONTACT	CLASS / ROLE	POSITION 0430Z	CONFIDENCE	BASIS
H-0014	Soobrazitelnyy	Pr.20380 corvette – Kh-35U, Redut	56°05'N 019°10'E	CONFIRMED	Radar hold; emissions classified at 0357Z
H-0019	Odintsovo	Pr.22800 Karakurt – Kalibr, Pantsir-M	55°52'N 019°25'E	PROBABLE	ELINT cross-fix at 0402Z, ±11 nm
H-0023	B-227 Vyborg	Pr.877 Kilo SSK	–	UNLOCATED	Sailed Kronstadt 12 Oct. No contact in 36 h
A-0102	COOT 01	II-20M – ELINT	54°54'N 019°30'E	CONFIRMED	Racetrack orbit since 0215Z
S-0301	Baltiysk	2 Buyan-M, 2 Molniya alongside	54°39'N 019°54'E	CONFIRMED	Optical pass 0338Z. Crews embarked
S-0304	Chernyakhovsk	4 Su-30SM2, 4 Su-24M	54°36'N 021°22'E	CONFIRMED	Two airframes at cockpit alert since 0300Z
S-0311	Bastion-P, Donskoye	2 launchers, P-800 Oniks	54°56'N 019°58'E	CONFIRMED	Radar radiating intermittently since 0244Z
S-0315	S-400, Gvardeysk	2 battalions, 48N6DM + 40N6	54°39'N 021°04'E	CONFIRMED	Engagement radar up at 0410Z
S-0327	Borisoglebsk-2	GNSS and communications jamming	54°43'N 020°30'E ±6 nm	POSSIBLE	Sited from the 2025 deployment. No emissions yet
–	Research vessel, GUGI	Deep-sea research, submersibles	–	POSSIBLE	Assessed at sea in the central Baltic

FIGURE 3 – COMMON OPERATING PICTURE, 0430Z



Allied and neutral tracks are held. The two bulk carriers are drawn in amber: of interest, not identified. Russian tracks are drawn at the confidence assigned to them. This is the picture you own – not the picture that exists.

2.3 What the Baltic Fleet is likely to do

MOST LIKELY COURSE OF ACTION

Watch, film and obstruct, and never fire. The *Zhigulevsk* stays with the bulkers and launches drones over whatever you do. Trawlers without AIS turn up where your cable ship is working, with their gear out. A lawful boarding is answered by a show of force from Baltiysk: corvettes at speed, fire-control radars off, a great deal of television. Kaliningrad jams satellite navigation when it will hurt most.

MOST DANGEROUS COURSE OF ACTION

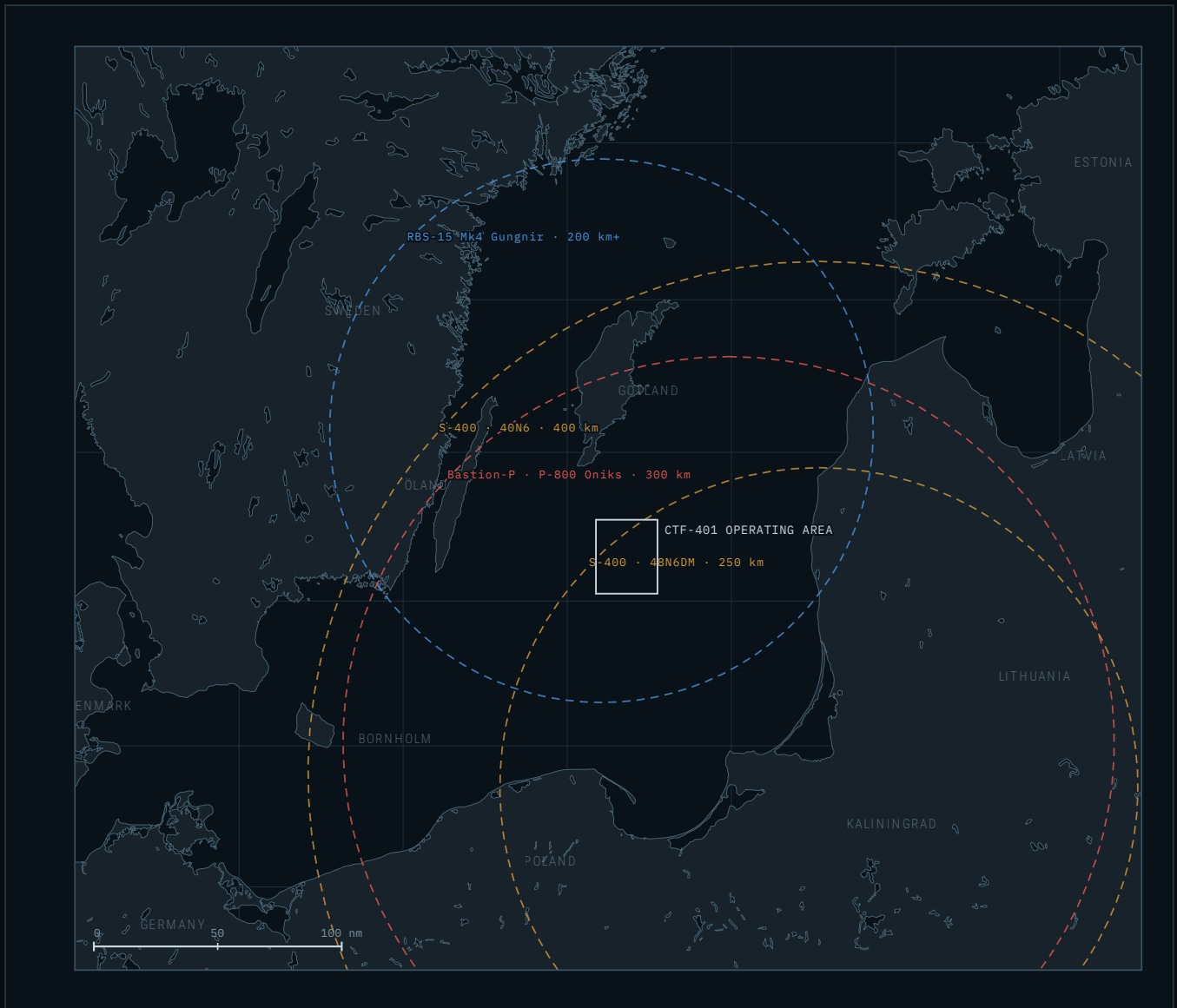
A boarding without legal basis is called piracy, and the corvettes sail with release delegated while aircraft from Chernyakhovsk join them. Or one of your weapons

goes into the water after the Kilo, hit or miss, and Gvardeysk answers against your aircraft. Both begin with something you did.

2.4 What you are operating inside

The whole of your operating area sits under the Bastion-P envelope at Donskoye and inside the outer S-400 ring at Gvardeysk. You cannot suppress either without starting the war this operation exists to prevent.

FIGURE 4 – WEAPON ENGAGEMENT ZONES, ASSESSED



Ranges are the assessed maximum against a surface or air target with third-party targeting, drawn from the assessed launcher positions. The Gotland RBS-15 ring is shown for comparison – note what it covers, and what firing it would mean.

2.5 What nobody can tell you

Which ship. HKV J2 thinks the ship that has gone dark on AIS is the more likely to be tasked. The Coast Guard, which boarded *Vezhen* in January 2025, thinks the opposite: the ship with a mission keeps transmitting and keeps a windlass story ready. Neither will go above D4 until an anchor has been seen from close aboard.

The Kilo. B-227 *Vyborg* has not been held for thirty-six hours. FRA will tell you if Baltic Fleet submarine broadcasts change, and it will grade what it tells you. Treat the absence of a contact as the absence of information.

What cut the interlink. Nobody knows. The ships you can see tonight were not over it.

2.6 Vessel files

- **M/V SOLVEIG ARROW.** Handymax bulker, 45,000 dwt, built 1999, 189 m. Flag changed twice in fourteen months. Class withdrawn by her IACS society in 2024. Last four voyages from Ust-Luga or Primorsk.
- **M/V MARLIN GRACE.** Handymax bulker, 45,000 dwt, built 2001. Registered owner a single-director company in the Marshall Islands. Detained by port-state control in 2025 for windlass defects. Read that line twice, and then remember which of the two ships it is about.
- **Zhigulevsk.** Project 864 Vishnya-class collector. Orlan-type drones embarked. Lightly armed. She is not a threat to your ships; she is a threat to your legal position.

3 Friendly forces

UNIT	CLASS	FLAG	POSITION 0430Z	NOTES
HSwMS <i>Visby</i>	K31 Visby-class corvette	SWE	56°42'N 018°20'E	Flagship. Full EW fit: jams drones
HSwMS <i>Nyköping</i>	K34 Visby-class corvette	SWE	56°38'N 018°32'E	As above
HSwMS <i>Carlskrona</i>	P04 patrol ship	SWE	56°43'N 018°57'E	Boarding team. Nearer MARLIN GRACE
KBV 001 <i>Poseidon</i>	Coast Guard cutter	SWE	56°33'N 018°33'E	Boarding team. Nearer SOLVEIG ARROW

UNIT	CLASS	FLAG	POSITION 0430Z	NOTES
FGS <i>Sachsen</i>	F219 Type F124 frigate	DEU	56°30'N 017°55'E	Area air defence. Does not board
FGS <i>Braunschweig</i>	F260 Type K130 corvette	DEU	56°26'N 018°10'E	Fastest hull. Does not board
HSwMS <i>Uppland</i>	Gotland-class SSK	SWE	56°30'N 018°33'E, 40 m	Not declared. AIP, ace crew

CALLSIGN	TYPE	BASE	STATE	NOTES
ARGUS 01	S 100B Argus	F17 Ronneby	AIRBORNE	The picture depends on it. No second airframe
QUID 11 / 12	JAS 39C Gripen	F17 Ronneby	AIRBORNE	CAP HOBURG. QUID 13–14 and 21–24 on alert
NEPTUNE 70	P-8A Poseidon	Keflavík	AIRBORNE	ASW. Relieved once, by NEPTUNE 71. A third only if NATO agrees
HAWK 61 / 62	Hkp 14F (NH90)	Visby Flygplats	ALERT	Low-level anchor observation; dipping sonar
RIVET 90	RC-135V	orbit	AIRBORNE	Sensor only
VIKING 51–52 · LIGHTNING 31–34	EF2000 · F-35A	Laage · Ämari	ALERT	Not under command

THE THREE ASSETS THAT DECIDE THIS

The two boarding ships. Each is nearer one of the bulkers than the other. Where they are when the law arrives is the whole morning.

The P-8A. One aircraft at a time, all day and all night, for the repair and for the submarine. Where it is after dark is a decision, not a default.

HSwMS *Uppland*. Not declared to anyone. The only card you hold that the other side has not counted.

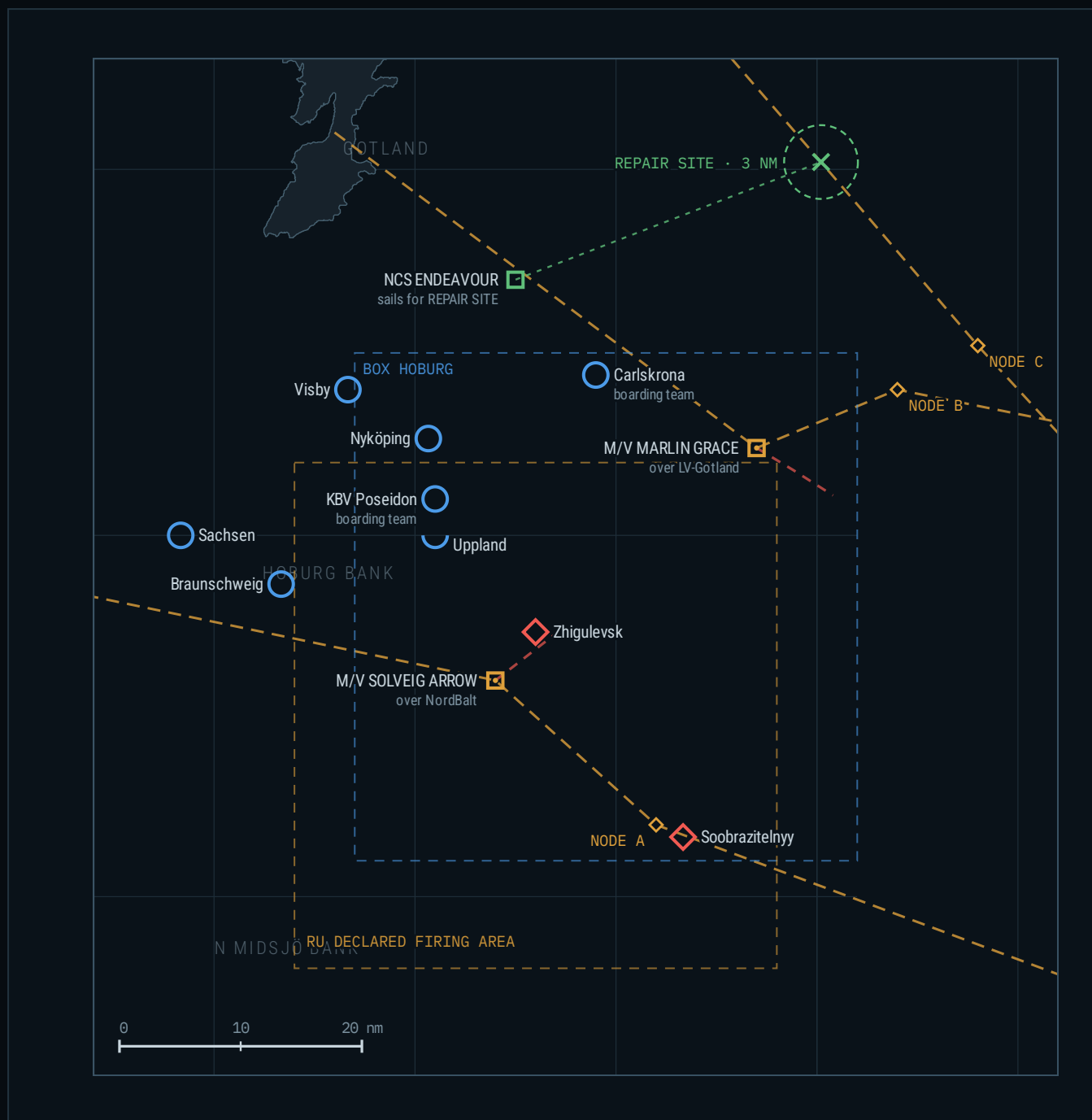
4 Mission and intent

CTF-401 stops the anchor dragging over the Hoburg Bank cables, protects the repair of the BCS East-West Interlink and holds the Baltic Fleet submarine away from the cable nodes — without becoming the party that first uses force.

Get eyes on both anchors before you put a team on either, and get the law on your side before a cable parts, not after it. Then give the cable ship her perimeter and keep it. At night, decide where the aircraft is.

I accept a late repair before I accept a device on a cable. I do not accept a torpedo in the water. And I will not accept losing Stockholm.

FIGURE 5 – THE BANK IN DETAIL, 0430Z



Both merchants with their projected drag at current speed, the three cable nodes, and REPAIR SITE with its three-mile perimeter. Note how far each boarding ship is from each merchant, and how far the cable ship has to go.

5 Rules and the law

1 Weapons tight in every domain, including subsurface.

In practice: a P-8A on an anti-submarine patrol will attack a submarine it has not identified unless it is told not to. It has been told. A torpedo in the water, even a miss, is an act of war, and the S-400s will answer it against your aircraft.

2 Boarding outside territorial waters only with the flag state's consent, or when the ship has no nationality.

In practice: the answer takes the better part of an hour. *No record* makes a ship stateless and a boarding lawful. A refusal can change once a cable has parted under that ship, or once one of your warships has seen her anchor under load. The action warns you once if you have no basis; a second order boards anyway, and that is on you.

3 Electronic attack against drones is authorised. Shooting one down is an escalation.

In practice: a Visby within twenty-five miles breaks the link. If one of your ships is within five miles of where it comes down, you get the wreck.

4 No merchant ship is fired upon or fired across. No unit crosses LINE AMBER.

In practice: there is no tactical success available that redeems firing first.

6 Execution

Three problems, one after the other and then all at once. How you solve them is yours; what follows is what each of them is made of.

THE ANCHORS

Two ships, one cable each, and a law that needs an answer you do not control. What you need to know is on the ships themselves and in two foreign registries; neither comes to you on its own schedule. Cable is lost while you find out.

THE REPAIR

NCS ENDEAVOUR works only while her perimeter is clear and her position is steady. Everything that stops her is deniable, unarmed and patient, and none of it is stopped by a weapon. Her hours are the day's hours.

THE SUBMARINE

Somewhere on the bank a Kilo has a job to do before dawn. Three nodes, one aircraft at a time, a submarine that does not want to be found, and the same aircraft wanted over the repair.

ALL DAY

Stockholm, section 8. The special actions that turn all of this into orders are described in section 7.

7 Special actions

7.1 How they work

CMO cannot board a ship, call a registry or run a cabinet. Those acts are special actions, in the **Special Actions** menu. Each click is one order, given now and recorded with its time. Answers come back as messages, some at once, some after a delay. When an action cannot be carried out, the message says why: too far, too fast, too soon, already done. Nothing can be undone.

7.2 The law

- **Flag state — check registry and ask consent.** The Foreign Ministry asks the registry of the flag the ship claims. One of three answers comes back: consent, refusal, or *no record*, which makes her a ship without nationality. One request per ship. After a refusal, one renewed request is possible, and only with a report from one of your warships that her anchor is under load. The registry weighs that report and can still refuse. The first answer is about the flag, not about the anchor.
- **Board.** A boarding team goes across from the nearer of the two boarding ships. The legal adviser tells you whether you have a basis. Without one, a second order is still carried out, and its consequences are yours. The team reports what it finds aboard, and nothing more.

7.3 The anchors

- **Radio — order to weigh anchor.** A VHF order from one of your warships. A master may comply, argue or ignore you, and distance matters. It cannot be repeated at will.
- **Anchor reports** are not an action. They arrive on their own when a warship or a helicopter gets close enough and low enough, graded by the observer.

7.4 The air

- **Directed jamming — UAV datalink.** A Visby-class corvette breaks the link of the nearest drone and it comes down. Whether anything can be recovered depends on who is near.

7.5 The repair

- **Repair — perimeter report.** NCS ENDEAVOUR says what is stopping her work and how far your nearest warship is from each cause.
- **Repair — switch to fallback positioning.** Once. It costs work now and changes what can stop her later.

7.6 Intelligence

- **SIGINT — request assessment.** FRA answers with a graded assessment of what it can see at that moment. Its capacity tonight is limited, and a grade is a grade, not a promise.

7.7 The government

- **Communication — publish evidence.** Needs something to publish.
- **Communication — reassuring statement.** Can backfire if events contradict it.
- **Diplomacy — summon the Russian ambassador.**
- **Diplomacy — request NATO ASW support.** Depends on how the allies judge Stockholm's handling of the crisis.

Each has its own rest period. Each can also answer the event open at that moment, if it is one of the answers the event lists.

8 Stockholm

The government measures three things it will not show you: its **international legitimacy**, **public opinion** at home, and **allied cohesion**. You will see them move through events — a newspaper, a call from Riga or Vilnius, a statement from Moscow, the Maltese registry asking for proof — each with a thirty-minute window and the answers that would serve. Unanswered, they cost.

You hold four levers: **publish evidence** (you need some first), a **reassuring statement** (which backfires if a cable parts within the hour), **summon the Russian ambassador**, and ask NATO for a **second maritime patrol aircraft** (the allies say yes only if they think Stockholm is handling this well).

THE LINE YOU DO NOT CROSS

If any of the three falls below 15, the government falls and the operation ends there. Rosenbad will warn you at 30 and at 20. Take the warning.

9 How you will be judged

The exact figures are in the scenario briefing. In the order they matter:

OUTCOME	EFFECT ON THE ASSESSMENT
The saboteur stopped before the first cable parts	Strongly positive
The interlink repaired	Strongly positive; every hour still to do at the end costs
No allied round fired for the whole sequence	Positive, and a drone shot down cancels it
The Kilo turned away before laying	Positive. A device laid unseen is found weeks later, and it costs more than one seen
The wrong ship boarded, or a boarding without legal basis	Negative; the second also brings the Baltic Fleet out armed
CTF-401 fires first, or the Kilo is sunk	Severely negative
The government falls	Defeat, whatever else went right

DIFFICULTY, FOR THE PLAYER RATHER THAN THE COMMANDER

TACTICAL

3/5

A perimeter to hold with hulls rather than weapons, drones to jam, and a submarine to find at night with one aircraft. Nothing to shoot, a great deal to position.

OPERATIONAL

4/5

Three problems over twenty hours for the same six ships and the same aircraft. Whatever you move to one is missing from another.

DECISION-MAKING

4/5

The more suspicious ship may be the innocent one, the law arrives after the cable parts, and a cabinet can fall while your ships are doing everything right at sea.

AXIS	RATING	WHY THIS VALUE
Complexity	3 / 5	About seventy units at the start, a dozen that need orders, fourteen special actions and a political layer. No strike package, no tanker plan.
Difficulty	4 / 5	A passive commander loses the government in the evening. A hasty one boards the wrong ship or boards without the law. The winning line asks for patience in the morning and speed at the same time.

10 Provenance

Everything above is written as though it were real. This section takes the mask off.

10.1 The operation this one sits inside

Baltic Sentry is a real NATO activity, launched on 15 January 2025 after the Estlink-2 cable cutting, reinforcing the German-led Commander Task Force Baltic at Rostock. CTF-401 is invented; the 400 series collides with nothing in service. Sweden joined NATO in March 2024; a Swedish-led task force in the Swedish economic zone is a projection.

10.2 The incidents the scenario is assembled from

DATE	INCIDENT	WHAT IT CONTRIBUTES HERE
7–8 Oct 2023	Balticconnector and EE-S1 damaged; <i>Newnew Polar Bear</i> suspected	The ship reached Russian waters before anyone acted. The reason there is a clock.
18 Nov 2024	BCS East-West Interlink and C-Lion1 cut; <i>Yi Peng 3</i> suspected	Shadowed but not boardable for a month. The legal constraint at the centre of this scenario, and the cable being repaired in it.
25 Dec 2024	Estlink-2 cut; <i>Eagle S</i> boarded by Finland	The precedent that makes a boarding thinkable.
26 Jan 2025	Sweden–Latvia cable damaged; Maltese-flagged <i>Vezhen</i> seized by Sweden	The investigation found no intent and the ship was released. Stopping a ship is not proving sabotage – and the honest ship with a broken windlass is a real possibility.
Dec 2025	Finnish data cable damaged; <i>Fitburg</i> under investigation	The most recent entry in the public record.

10.3 What is invented

- M/V SOLVEIG ARROW, M/V MARLIN GRACE, their owners and histories; the trawlers; NCS ENDEAVOUR. Any resemblance to real vessels is unintended.
- CTF-401, OPORD 26-114 and the ATHENA-M cell.
- Everything dated 2026: the dispositions, the readiness states and every event in the scenario.

10.4 Sources

- [Baltic Sea underwater infrastructure incidents](#)
- [How the Baltic Sea nations have tackled suspicious cable cuts](#), Atlantic Council
- [NATO launches Baltic Sentry mission in the Baltic Sea](#), USNI News
- [The 2024 Estlink-2 incident](#)
- [Baltic Sentry](#), SHAPE / NATO

Prepared for the Command: Modern Operations scenario **CTF-401 Baltic Sentinel, 2026 – The Hoburg Bank Incident**, first scenario of the *Europe 2026* campaign, by totobimbo. Every assessment in this pack is written from inside CTF-401's picture at 0430Z: it is what the commander believes, which is not the same as what is true. Where the pack is wrong, that is the design.

Civilian vessel names, the ATHENA-M cell and all intelligence products are invented. Military units,

bases, weapon systems and their ranges are real; their presence on this date is a projection.
Coastline from GSHHS full-resolution shorelines, Mercator projection, WGS 84.

HEMLIG / SECRET — REL NATO — EXERCISE — THIS IS A FICTIONAL DOCUMENT