

Sweden Issues Formal Request to Beijing Over Chinese Vessel's Alleged Role in Undersea Cable Damage

Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said he is determined to conduct a search of the vessel to 'find out what happened.'

24

16

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The Chinese bulk carrier Yi Peng 3 is anchored in the sea of Kattegat, near the city of Granaa in Jutland, Denmark, on Nov. 20, 2024. Mikkel Berg Pedersen/Ritzau Scanpix via AP, File



By Owen Evans

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Sweden has formally requested China's cooperation in its investigation into the damage sustained by two undersea cables in the Baltic Sea.

Two undersea fiber-optic cables in the Baltic Sea were damaged within 24 hours of the Chinese cargo ship Yi Peng 3's movements in the area.

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A formal request for cooperation was made to Beijing based on findings from the investigation, Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said on Thursday.



What Happened'



It expresses our determination to conduct a search of the vessel to find out what happened," Kristersson said.

China's foreign ministry said on Wednesday that the communications channels with Sweden and other relevant parties were "unobstructed," when asked about the Swedish request.

Beijing previously called for the vessel's rights to normal navigation to be protected.

Telia Lietuva's 135-mile cable between Lithuania and Sweden's Gotland went offline on Nov. 17 at 8 a.m., followed by the 745-mile Cinia C-Lion1 cable linking Finland and Germany, which failed on Nov. 18 at 2 a.m.

The Yi Peng 3, a 75,200-dwt (deadweight ton) bulk carrier flagged under China, traveled through the Baltic Sea at the time the two incidents occurred and is now sitting idle in international waters, inside Denmark's exclusive economic zone.



The Chinese bulk carrier Yi Peng 3 (in background) is anchored and being monitored by Danish naval vessels in the sea of Kattegat, near the city of Granaa in Jutland, Denmark, on Nov. 20, 2024. Mikkel Berg Pedersen/Ritzau Scanpix via AP

Cables

There are now at least three coast guard and naval vessels from NATO countries still shadowing the Chinese vessel.

According to Marine Traffic, the German coast guard dispatched the patrol ship Bad Dübén to be near the vessel. The Swedish coast guard patrol ship Poseidon (KBV 001) is also close.

A spokesman for the Swedish coast guard told The Epoch Times by email that it is monitoring the situation with KBV 001 and is “prepared to act if requested.”

A spokeswoman for Sweden's prosecutor's office told The Epoch Times by email that it had "nothing to add at the moment."

She referred The Epoch Times to a Nov. 27 statement that said that "crime scene investigations" regarding the internet cables are now closed and that "analysis of the material is ongoing."

A spokesman for the Danish armed forces previously told The Epoch Times that they are present in the area near the Yi Peng 3 but that its military currently "has no further comments."

Authorities in Finland have launched investigations.

Grey Zone

The C-Lion1 cable runs alongside the Nord Stream pipelines.

The multibillion-dollar Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines, which transport gas under the Baltic Sea, were ruptured by a series of blasts in the Swedish and Danish economic zones in September 2022 that released vast amounts of methane into the air seven months after the Russia-Ukraine war began.

Furthermore, just over a year ago, the Hong Kong-registered Newnew Polar Bear container ship was suspected of damaging an Estonia-Finland gas pipeline and two undersea cables between Estonia, Finland, and Sweden.

According to defense experts at Taiwan's Institute for National Defense and Security Research, Beijing's capabilities and its record of using gray zone warfare tactics make the regime a prime suspect.

"It's reasonable to suspect Russia and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) are behind it," Su Tzu-yun, director of the institute's division of defense strategy and resources, told The Epoch Times, referring to the undersea robotic capabilities of China and Russia and the previous damaging of cables around Europe.

Lily Zhou and Reuters contributed to this report.

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