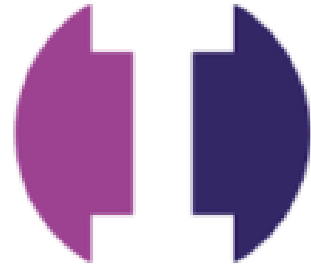




MARINE
Safety Forum



INTEGRITY
— QHSE —



Hybrid Warfare in the North Sea

Emerging Security Threats to Maritime Traffic and Offshore
Infrastructure

Hybrid Warfare in the North Sea

What is the Hybrid Warfare threat?

- Hybrid Warfare creates pressure without open conflict.
- It remains below the threshold for conventional response
- In the maritime space, it often looks routine until it doesn't.
- Typical signs are surveillance, loitering and unusual vessel behaviour.
- Its purpose is to test response, create uncertainty, undermine confidence.
- Offshore teams will usually feel it before they can define it.

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The Threat Picture

- The North Sea is a critical operating space.
- The threat is not just direct attack, but sustained hybrid activity.
- It is more posturing and preparation rather than immediate sabotage.
- The main objective is often to test the UK response.
- Resilience, reporting and communication are now as important as physical security measures.

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The North Sea – Strategic Importance

- The North Sea is central to UK energy security and economic resilience.
- It is critical to NATO's northern flank.
- Its proximity to the GIUK Gap adds to its strategic importance.
- As Arctic competition and militarisation increase, pressure on the UK's northern maritime approaches increases.
- Tension in the Arctic increases the strategic importance of the North Sea.

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What operators will see

- Unusual behaviour at sea, not necessarily hostile action.
- Close approaches, loitering, AIS irregularity or poor compliance.
- Suspicious drones, unusual lights or repeated odd behaviour may be the clearest warning signs
- Consequence - confusion, distraction and increased collision or operating risk.
- A marine safety problem before it becomes a wider security problem.

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Responses -what good looks like

- Early reporting of unusual behaviour, safety-zone issues and suspicious marine activity.
- Clear watchkeeping, identification, escalation and evidence-capture routines.
- Screenshots, tracks, timings, positions and photographs are evidence
- Calm control is critical - overreaction can be as unhelpful as under-reporting.
- The aim - support safety, resilience and decision-making without fuelling unnecessary alarm

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What the future may look like

- Increased activity
- The North Sea will become more strategically important as energy security and Arctic competition intensify.
- Hostile activity will probably remain deniable, ambiguous to test response rather than trigger conflict.
- Operators may face more disruption, more reporting demands and more close-call events.
- Preparedness, coordination and resilience will matter more than ever

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Closing message

- The North Sea is now a more contested and strategically important operating space.
- Most operators will first encounter this through unusual marine behaviour, not headline-level attack.
- The biggest practical risks are disruption, confusion, close-call events and pressure on routine operations
- The best defence - strong awareness, disciplined reporting and coordinated response.
- The task is to stay alert, stay factual and stay operationally calm

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Questions?