

A Bridge in Baltimore: A Speculative Analysis

[A Bridge in Baltimore, Part Two: A Speculative Analysis](#)

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On Monday last [I attempted to gather](#) together some significant and representative articles about the collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore harbor after one of its load-bearing pylons was struck by the container ship *Dali* as it was attempting to leave the harbor. I indicated then that I would offer, in Part Two of the blog, a speculative analysis of what I think might have happened, and, by implication, who might have been behind the incident.

I say “incident” because I do not, as of this writing, believe for a moment that this was a simple and sad accident as the goobernment and the F.I.B. (Federal Investigation Bureau) would have us believe. The government and its spokesmen are inveterate liars, and judging by the articles so many of you gathered and sent and which composed our article “round-up” in Part One, there are many out there who had the same initial reaction to the F.I.B.’s announcement as I: we simply don’t believe the “it-wasn’t-terrorism” narridigm.

But such events require more than just skepticism of government “obfuscations” in order to argue for the incident having been deliberately planned.

In Monday’s blog, I briefly mentioned that in order to understand the event, one might have to seek to situate it in a much wider context than even current geopolitical events such as the Moscow terrorist attacks. I did not, however,

specify what that wider context might be, other than to include in the “round-up” of articles an article noting that global positioning systems in the Baltic region of Europe appeared to have been subject to massive jamming and spoofing over a 63 hour period, interfering with aircraft and ship positions during that period. Most assessments agree that this is the result of Russian electronic warfare measures, and on that score, I would concur.

But it is the capability *itself* that I wished to highlight by including that article, because that capability alludes to three other episodes in recent years that have also exercised my attention, and long-time regular readers here might recognize what they are: the *USS Donald Cook* Incident, the *USS Fitzgerald* Incident, and the *USS John McCain* Incident. In each of these incidents, a US Navy warship was involved. In the last two incidents, merchant ships collided with the warships under circumstances that I regard as peculiar and unusual, and while time and space do not permit me to review all those details here, the explanations of the Navy and the press at the time of the latter two incidents explained them as accidents and the result of poor decisions and training on the part of the officers and crews of the warships, in addition to the poor training on the part of the merchant vessels’ crews that collided with them. Aiding in these explanations are the fact that they occurred in some of the busiest shipping lanes in the world: the Malacca straits near Singapore (in the case of the *McCain*) and the busy waterways near Tokyo and Yokohama, Japan (in the case of the *Fitzgerald*). At the time of both incidents, I argued the behavior of the merchant ships that actually did the colliding with the US navy warships was suggestive of those ship’s steerage having been technologically (and perhaps remotely) accessed and controlled, and that the collisions may have been deliberate. At the time, some friends who had spent time in the Navy assured me that my speculations were nonsense, and that the accidents were, indeed, accidents. However, I remained then,

and remain now, unpersuaded, and continue to believe that my speculations in this regard may be viable explanations. The relevance of those speculations to the Francis Scott Key Bridge Incident will be immediately apparent to the reader. We'll return to that point in a moment.

What convinced me that such speculations were a possibility were the two *USS Donald Cook* Incidents. The first Incident, if the reader does not recall, occurred while the Aegis-class frigate was in the Black Sea in the tense weeks' and months' aftermath of the Maiden coup. An "obsolescent" Russian Sukhoi-22 fighter jet approached the ship on a very low altitude attack trajectory, and then apparently engaged some sort of electronic warfare technology *that completely shut down* the *Donald Cook's* sophisticated electronics, leaving the vessel essentially a helpless bit of floating metal in the Black Sea.

Message received: the *Donald Cook* managed to restore enough of its electronics to limp to the Romanian port of Constanza (for "rest of the crew" as we were told at the time). A few months later, in the Baltic, the Incident was repeated, again with the *Donald Cook* and, once again, a Russian Sukhoi-22 fighter jet which approached at very low altitude on a mock attack run, and again, interfered with the warship's electronics. Apparently the "crew rest" in Constanza, Romania had not fixed the problem. Message *not* received. (And sorry, no, I am not buying the idea that the US navy deliberately provoked the incidents to learn about Russian electronic capabilities, and that the US Navy is perfectly capable of countering them.)

This technological ability implies the possibility that a ship's systems might be remotely accessed, interfered with, and possibly even commandeered to the extent that a crew no longer has control of the ship. And this in turn implies the possibility that such an event may have occurred with the *Dali's* collision with the pylon of the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore. That *something* was happening on

the *Dali's* bridge and engine rooms is apparent from the video that, by now, we have all seen: the ship makes its way down the channel, loses power, regains it, loses it again, regains it, smoke begins to pour out of a funnel toward the stern, the ship then appears to turn out of the main channel and to starboard and thus toward the southern pylon of the bridge, power goes out and on again, the ship hits the pylon, and the bridge collapses, taking the lives of some pot hole repair crews with it. Notably, as all of this is occurring, road traffic on the bridge continues until it suddenly stops in time for the bridge to be vacant of road traffic just before the collision. This is also a crucial point, for it means that there was communication between the ship and the shore, and that authorities were alerted to a problem on the ship, and to stop traffic from entering the bridge. This in turn means that the crew *knew there was a problem, and that a collision was possible*. This implies, in its turn, that the crew recognized either that they had lost control of the ship or were about to.

So what do we have? We have (1) power losses, (2) smoke indicating that the ship's big diesel engines might be being restarted, or some other possibility, (3) a probable notification of shore personnel that controlled access to the bridge by someone in the ship's crew, or possibly by the harbor pilot, to shut the bridge down, and finally(4) a starboard turn of the ship directly toward the southern pylon. We must not assume that the communication from the ship to the shore to alert the bridge controllers to shut down traffic occurred on the ship's communications systems. If there was interference with the ship's electronics (suggested by the power outages), other systems – cell phones, radios, &c – in the possession of the crew might not have been effected and hence might have been used. You'll note that, in the articles gathered thus far, we have heard little to nothing about the composition of the crew other than that the ship's master was, suggestively, Ukrainian. We do not know who the harbor

pilot(s) was or were, and we know nothing about the crew nor what they might have observed on the ship as all this was transpiring. I find this point to be extremely suspicious, for it might indicate that the crew has been sequestered and deliberately kept from public view in order to insure "they are able to read their lines correctly." I suggest that these peculiar facts align with the idea of a commandeering of at least some of the ship's systems by technology, and a crew seeking to regain control of the ship (hence the power outages and warning of shore personnel). Technology is indicated for a very different reason, namely, the requirements of Lloyd's of London and other major insurers that such ships have redundant systems for steering and so on. For a ship to collide with a bridge pylon *after* a perfectly executed starboard turn might indicate not only the failure of redundant systems to work to avoid collision; it might also mean that the steering was operating, but the warnings from the ship to shore to shut the bridge down might further indicate that the crew lost *control* of it.

This type of argumentation makes the *other* indications of a well-planned and executed infrastructure attack even more compelling: (1) the fact that, by collapsing the bridge, US military sealift capability is affected by stranding two sealift ships in the Baltimore harbor, (2) the possible collapse of the bridge onto a major underwater energy pipeline, (3) the closure of the harbor itself, (4) the symbolic nature of collapsing a bridge named for the composer of the lyrics to the USA's national anthem, and finally, and not least (5) the timing of the attack for a time *when the least possible collateral loss of life* would occur. Imagine if the attack had occurred at 5PM, or 7AM, at the height of the evening or morning rush hours, and you get the idea: the loss of life would have been much much higher. If one argues, as I am, that the Incident was a deliberate attack and not an "accident", then this factor of timing indicates the type of player or agency involved: one (1) capable of planning and

executing such an event, (2) in possession of the technology to do it (if indeed a technology was involved), and (3) someone deliberately trying to inflict serious damage while minimizing loss of life.

In this respect the speculations of Tom Luongo, whose article I included in Monday's blog, are well worth pondering. Was it Russia? Are we looking at a potential retaliation by that country for the Moscow terrorist attack? Possibly. Certainly the attempt to minimize collateral loss of life might indicate this. The one key factor that would argue against this being a Russian operation is the timing: there would not appear to be enough time between the Moscow attacks and the Francis Scott Key Bridge Incident to organize such a complex operation, and to position the personnel and (if I am correct) the technology to do it. On the other hand, arguing in *favor* of a Russian operation is the simple fact that only Russia has demonstrated a technological electronic capability that might include the ability to commandeer a ship's control systems. (Here, I must make mention of those UFO incidents over Malmstrom Air Force Base, and in Wyoming, where UFOs allegedly remotely and electronically interfered with the electronics of a flight of Minutemen ICBMs, changing their targeting data entirely remotely. As has been noted by Richard Hastings in his book *UFOs and Nukes*, the Air Force contracted with Boeing to find out what had happened, and Boeing was able to reproduce the incident remotely, implying both that such technology is not ipso facto "extraterrestrial", and that remote electronic commandeering of such systems is possible). So if it was Russian, what about the timing? We must not rule out the possibility that if this *is* a Russian response or "horizontal escalation" for the West's activities in the Ukraine since 2014, that this might be a response to *older* incidents than the Moscow terrorist attacks, such as the West's attacks on the Kerch Strait bridge. Viewing it in this fashion removes the problem posed by the timing of it as a retaliation for the Moscow Terror attacks. It might be retaliation for some other,

older attack on Russia.

Might this be someone *else's* attack? Luongo makes an intriguing case that it may have been, up to and including the sclerotic powers of Europe like the U.K. or France, whose "leaders" like Boris Johnson or President Macron have given ample public testimony to their desire to see the Ukrainian war linger on and on, with the US's continuing financial support, a support which has obviously wavered in recent months. Could it even be a third party, a non-state actor, intent on sewing enough chaos and confusion – and ill-will – into Russo-American relations? Again, possibly.

In the final analysis, a reasonable case can be made for all these possibilities, but in my opinion, not enough information is yet known to indicate which of these possibilities might be the most likely.

But one thing seems to emerge clearly from the collapsed wreckage, the bent and twisted girders, of the namesake bridge of the author of the USA's national anthem lyrics: this was no accident. If you believe the F.I.B., then I have a bridge in Baltimore to sell you. So let's call it what it is: it isn't the Francis Scott Key Bridge Incident. It's the Francis Scott Key Bridge Attack. So why the fib of the F.I.B.? Think geopolitics... and insurance... and independent insurance investigators ...

See you on the flip side...

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Cover image credit: Adm. Linda L. Fagan, commandant of the Coast Guard, Vice Adm. Peter W. Gautier, deputy commandant for operations, Governor Wes Moore, governor of Maryland, and Mayor Brandon Scott, mayor of Baltimore, transit by Coast Guard boat to assess the Francis Scott Key Bridge collapse in Baltimore, Maryland, March 29, 2024. The Key Bridge

was struck by the Singapore-flagged cargo ship Dali early morning on March 26, 2024. (U. S. Coast Guard photo by [Petty Officer 1st Class Brandon Giles](#))