

Coincidence? Ship Loses Power Just Before Verrazano Narrows Bridge

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Ok, when K.M. sent along this story, I knew I'd have to share it and blog about it, because this is one that I'm about 50/50 with, for the simple reason that "two is a coincidence, three is a pattern," but also because the story is about one of my favorite bridges in the world, the elegant Verrazano Narrows suspension bridge in New York City, the massive structure connecting the Brooklyn and Staten Island boroughs.

The story concerns a French shipping company's ship that lost power just before the Verrazano Bridge, and required the assistance of three additional tug boats to stop the ship. Here's the story:

[Massive Ship Reportedly "Lost Power" in NYC Harbor, Right Before Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge](#)

Coming as it does mere weeks – days really – after the disastrous collision of the Dali with the Francis Scott Key Bridge and the latter's dramatic collapse, this incident does leave one wondering. The Dali clearly was losing power repeatedly, and the ship's systems appeared not to be functioning properly. And then, the last minute turn out of the main channel and the ship headed directly for the south

pylon, and we know the rest.

But not to worry here! *The Wall Street Journal* is on duty and reassures us a similar incident here would be impossible:

While the Verrazzano shares some characteristics with the Key Bridge, there are also important differences,” an opinion piece in the [Wall Street Journal](#) recently read, adding:

“First, its massive vertical supports are positioned much closer to land than the Key Bridge’s—1,000 feet away from the harbor’s navigation channel—making them considerably less likely to be hit by an errant vessel. The towers also are surrounded by rock islands, which would force any ship heading toward the supports to run aground before striking the tower. Additional safety projects have further hardened protections, even adding an air gap sensor system that detects vertical clearances between the bridge and large vessels passing underneath.”

And then *Zero Hedge* adds it’s own high octane speculation in the form of a recommendation:

The collapse of the Baltimore bridge has sparked discussions in corporate media about America’s vulnerable infrastructure. Within government, high-level officials are likely concerned about terrorists crippling the nation through a series of infrastructure attacks. Maybe it’s time the US government vet all foreign crews of commercial vessels entering America’s waters...

Perhaps it *is* time for such vetting, but perhaps it is also time to start taking seriously the possibility of *technological* hijacking of such systems, even of the types of redundant systems one finds on ships.

And while we’re at it, I don’t know about you, but I for one am less than reassured by *The Wall Street Journal’s* glib

dismissal of any idea that this incident might have been a repeat of the Baltimore disaster, for a large cargo ship running aground on the islands surrounding the the Verrazano-Narrows Suspension towers might do so in such a way to form an impediment or for that matter a complete blockage of the main channel, which could have disrupted normal shipping traffic for several days, and possibly weeks, until the ship could be freed.

So one can colour me moderately skeptical that this incident is *not* unrelated to the Baltimore disaster: it's a bit *too* coincidental and too close in time to the Baltimore bridge collapse to be ignored, but on the other hand, two is still just a coincidence...

... unless, of course, one wants to locate the two incidents in a wider, and apparently "disconnected" context like the USS *Donald Cook*, *Fitzgerald*, and *John McCain* incidents. Perhaps even the Havana Syndrome incidents. *Then* things become much more interesting.

See you on the flip side...

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