

Belousov Awards Warship Captain for 'Skillfully and Decisively' Firing Flares at Danish Helicopter

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The corvette Soobrazitelnyy. **Damien** (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Russia's Defense Ministry [said](#) Wednesday that Defense Minister Andrei Belousov awarded a ship captain for his "skillful and decisive actions" after firing signal flares at a Danish military helicopter in the Baltic Sea earlier this week.

The captain, who was not identified by name, received Russia's medal "For Courage" following an incident during which his ship, the Baltic Fleet corvette Soobrazitelnyy, "prevented a provocation by a Danish helicopter" in international waters by launching two signal flares at the aircraft.

In a statement, Russia's Defense Ministry claimed that the Danish helicopter failed to respond to the Soobrazitelnyy's radio calls when it was detected in the southwestern Baltic Sea on Monday. The helicopter left the vicinity of the Russian ship after the flares were fired, it added.

Danish Defense Minister Jeppe Bruus [accused](#) the crew of the Soobrazitelny of making no attempt to contact the helicopter, which he said narrowly avoided the flare signals that were launched in its direction.

Related article: [Denmark Summons Russian Ambassador After Frigate Fires Flares Toward Military Helicopter](#)

Bruus said the helicopter was following its usual route to photograph the corvette as part of a routine operation that it has done several times before.

Russia has “increased their willingness to take risks in terms of how far they are prepared to go,” Bruus said in comments to Reuters.

Russia’s Ambassador to Copenhagen Vladimir Barbin, who was [summoned](#) over the incident, in turn [accused](#) Danish military aircraft of “dangerous maneuvers near Russian warships,” creating the risk of collision. Barbin claimed Denmark has rejected Moscow’s proposals to sign a maritime and airspace agreement that could help prevent future incidents.

Denmark’s Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen blamed Russia for seeking to “sow fear and discord” over Monday’s close encounter, while European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen called it part of “a broader pattern of Russian aggression and provocation against Europe.”

The Danish straits are the main sea route in and out of the Baltic Sea for commercial and military shipping. They are also a major artery for global oil shipments, including from Russia's so-called "shadow fleet" of oil tankers used to circumvent Western sanctions.

Reuters contributed reporting.

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