

Allmode Intelligence Section

Advisory: 042 (Environmental Activism)

Advisory Type: Dealing With Environmental Activism

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Intro

On the 6th April 2015, activists from the Environmental Pressure group, Greenpeace, scaled and boarded the drilling platform, Polar Pioneer¹. She is currently being transported across the Pacific Ocean from Malaysia to Seattle, from where she is to be based during an upcoming drilling campaign in Alaskan arctic waters². Dockwise's heavy lift vessel, the Blue Marlin is conducting the transportation operation.



Figure 1: The Polar Pioneer atop the Blue Marlin

The Polar Pioneer is owned and operated by Transocean, under contract to Shell. The boarding took place some 750 miles NW of Hawaii³.



Figure 2: Greenpeace Chart tracking their pursuit of the Polar Pioneer/Blue Marlin (Greenpeace.org)

This is the latest in a string of high profile boardings and attempted boardings conducted by Greenpeace directed against drilling platforms and companies linked to Arctic and Antarctic drilling.

¹ OilAndGasPeople.com, "Greenpeace Video Emerges of Shell Polar Pioneer Boarding", (08 Apr 2015)

² CNN, "Greenpeace activists occupy Shell oil rig in middle of Pacific", (07 Apr 2015)

³ gCaptain.com, "Shell Seeks to Remove Greenpeace Activists From Drilling Rig", (07 Apr 2015)

Means And Motive

Greenpeace is a large organisation with 2,400 permanent staff and around 15,000 active volunteers⁴. They have a fleet of up to 3 “mothership” style vessels and numerous small and fast-craft at their disposal.

Their motive for taking action in this instance is to prevent drilling for hydrocarbons in Arctic waters, for which they cite safety issues, immediate spill/pollution dangers and concerns over the downstream impact and climate change⁵.

Historic Examples

Ever since the mid-nineties, when the activists from Greenpeace brought worldwide attention to the practices of the oil and gas industry, by the boarding of the Brent Spar oil storage buoy, the industry has tried to change its procedures and plan for incidents which may bring the industry unwanted attention or reputational damage.

However, despite this, modern day activists have continued to adopt a pro-active and media savvy campaign against the oil and gas industry and have continued to successfully board and occupy many rigs since.



Figure 3: Gazprom Prirazlomnaya

Some examples of these are the Russian energy giants Gazprom rig, the Prirazlomnaya, which was boarded by six Greenpeace activists in August 2012. The activists spent several hours hanging off the side of the Prirazlomnaya platform in the Pechora Sea attached to the rig's mooring lines. They had prepared for a long occupation by bringing up supplies, including the tents, but evacuated after rig workers threw pieces of metal at them, after they had earlier been blasted with water cannons. However, they had the time to send tweets and hang a banner saying, ‘Don’t kill the Arctic’. The reaction of the crew could be seen in a bad light by the consumer, as they were peaceful protestors.

Similarly, a year earlier, the Danish owned drilling platform, the Leiv Eiriksson, operated by Cairn Energy off the Greenland Coast, was boarded by around eighteen Greenpeace activists, demanding the release of their oil spill response document. Three of the activists remained on the platform, hung from the underside of the rig in an Arctic survival pod, with enough supplies to last them for ten days. However, the activists were arrested by the Danish police and issued with substantial fines for breaching security and carrying out protests on the platform. Nevertheless, the protest of the activists did succeed in making Cairn Energy release their oil spill plan in August, thereby yet again gaining credibility for upholding environmental rights.

More recently, worldwide attention was captured with the arrest of 30 Greenpeace activists in September 2013, who were detained by 20 armed Russian Navy Commandos from their vessel, the Arctic Sunrise and held for more than two months in Russian jails, accused of piracy and later hooliganism. Russian treatment of the activists was condemned by the media, but the incident again gained much publicity and highlighted the increasing push into the Arctic.

In May 2014, some members of the same group, called the ‘Arctic 30’ along with numerous other activists, performed a spectacular protest to publicise the first shipment of Arctic oil to the port of Rotterdam, using a Russian tanker. The forty four activists used paragliders, climbers, a fleet of boats and inflatables to block the path of the tanker and attempt to prevent it from offloading the cargo. The activists were arrested by the Dutch armed anti-terror police, but were later released without charge.

⁴ Greenpeace.org, "Get Involved"

⁵ Greenpeace.org, "The Crossing", (Apr 2015)

The activists are calling for an end to offshore Arctic oil drilling both in Russia and elsewhere in the world. The environmental group has heavily criticised international companies like Shell, BP and Statoil for their global Arctic ambitions as well as their joint ventures with Russian energy firms and are now targeting American interests in the search for Arctic oil. (Polar Pioneer April 2015).



Figure 4: Greenpeace Activists scaling the anchor chains of the Arctic Pioneer (Apr 2015)

In light of the need to explore and develop Arctic drilling, the need to reassure the consumers that this is a highly regulated and strictly controlled industry has never been more important. The right approach needs to be taken to the inevitability that activists are going to try to discredit the practice of Arctic drilling and attempt to board and protest on both rigs and the vessels that transport the cargo.

It is therefore essential that all involved in the industry, from the grass roots level up, know the costs of getting things wrong. To consider the reaction of the Spanish naval approach recently (November 2014) when a group of activists entered the exclusion zone (1 nm) around the oil ship Rowan Renaissance, working for the Spanish energy company Repsol. The activists approached the ship in their RHIB (rigid hull inflatable boat). They were asked to leave the area or face the consequences from the naval patrol vessel Relámpag, who deployed their own team in RHIBs. Subsequently, the activists were rammed by the naval RHIBs in a dramatically filmed incident. One of the activists sustained a broken leg, whilst another suffered cuts to her leg from the propellers.

The fallout of such incidents can be harmful and the public will always take sides, usually against the perceived aggressors, in this case the Spanish Navy. The negative publicity will then be attributed to the oil and gas industry.

It is therefore essential that all companies are trained and prepared to address the issues raised by activist action, that of health and safety issues, media attention, insurance, reputational damage and conflict management.

Modus Operandi

As can be seen in the below video, the boarding is achieved from small boats, launched and supported from an ocean going mothership, the MV Esperanza, formerly the Vikir-4 a 2076GT Soviet Navy Ice-class fire-fighting vessel.

Upon approaching the vessel, the activists seek to scale the freeboard with sophisticated climbing equipment (many Greenpeace activists, including the leading boarder in this operation are professional or "extreme sports" climbers⁶.)



Figure 5: MV Esperanza

In order to do so, the activists will identify a route using pre-existing rig structures such as grappaling points to facilitate their ascent (in this case the underside rail of one pontoon and an anchor). The activists are reliant of the physical structure of the rig to allow them to board – some rigs being easier to board than others due to their design (note the sheer "hull" of Gazprom's Prirazlomnaya rig in Video 3 & 4 below).

The videos below demonstrate the ingenuity, skill and determination of such activists to scale seemingly inaccessible structures⁷.

Upon boarding, the activists will identify a sheltered (but inaccessible) space in which to stow themselves, lifting extra personnel and supplies from the small craft in order to prolong their protest. (Video 2)⁸



Video 1: Greenpeace activists board Shell Polar Pioneer (Transported atop heavy lift vessel, Blue Marlin)

[Click Here For Video](#)



Video 2: Activists can be seen embarking further personnel, and using climbing equipment to load supplies for a protracted demonstration

[Click Here For Video](#)

How Might This Affect Shipping?

Although Greenpeace (along with other environmental action groups) are committed to the pursuit and implementation of peaceful protest, their activities can still be highly damaging and sometimes potentially dangerous. Their main impact is financial, but there is a high possibility of severe reputational damage if not dealt with correctly. They are legally and politically sophisticated, with a professional and dogged media and PR campaign. It is likely that they will be able to spin any situation, occurrence, incident or comment (real or perceived) to their advantage.

⁶ Greenpeace.org, "The Crossing", (Apr 2015)

⁷ Fuelfix.com, "Arctic activists scale Shell-contracted rig", (06 Apr 2015)

⁸ Greenpeace.org, "How to Climb an Oil Rig - in Pictures" (08 Apr 2015)

- 1) Loss of time (and revenue) on a drilling campaign is easy to recognise as an immediate and quantifiable cost when becoming involved with protesting environmentalists. However, further, hidden losses may be forthcoming:
- 2) Deliberate or (more likely) accidental damage to the rig's systems/structure is a distinct possibility during an environmentalist boarding – leading to the cost of repair and replacement. Even if no damage is caused, the integrity and functionality of the rig's systems will have to be inspected/assessed post-boarding in order to ensure that they are serviceable and safe to operate. This must include a health and safety and Dropped Object Prevention Scheme survey when protestors have been (or are suspected as having had access to) areas above the working decks of the rig – leading to further delay and expense.
- 3) Over the course of a prolonged protest, biological hazards may be generated, such as human waste and food waste, used medical supplies etc. While, due to the ecologically focussed nature of these groups, they are likely to be concerned with the correct cleaning and disposal of such materials, it cannot be taken as a guarantee. A biological hazard survey and/or cleaning may be necessary.
- 4) Having made contact with the rig's structure and/or boarded, the protestors may be considered as under the duty of care of the company for their health and safety. Every effort must be made to ensure that no harm comes to them (and certainly no attempt to *cause* them harm). See below videos for examples where harm has been (deliberately) caused to protestors in order to prevent or deter boarding:



Figure 4: Greenpeace Activists attempt to board GazProm rig in Arctic Waters. Russian coastguard fire numerous warning shots, GazProm crew turn firehoses on protestors.

[Click Here For Video](#)



Figure 3: Spanish Coastguard ram Greenpeace activists' vessel, causing man-overboard and serious injury

[Click Here For Video](#)

- 5) Health and Safety legislation will differ depending on the flag state of the vessel/platform involved. However, to use UK law as an example, Section 3 of the Health and safety At Work Act 1974 stipulates that an employer is responsible for the safety of anybody on their property – including “trespassers⁹” (or, in this case, stowaways). Similar provisions are also included in EU regulations pertinent to any European flagged ship¹⁰. The law as it applies to your flag state must be carefully examined for similar provisions.
- 6) Your company Health and Safety policy will include a commitment to an incident free workplace and to mitigating the impact of any foreseeable hazards. Has an environmentalist boarding been considered in this context. What would the impact of a protestor injuring him/herself on your facility have of your safety record, your insurance, your client and your reputation?

⁹ Health and Safety At Work Act, 1974 (UK)

¹⁰ Management of Health and safety At Work Regulations, 1999 (EU)

- 7) SOLAS also stipulates that the protesters would be due lifesaving assistance should they come onto difficulty before, during or after a (failed) boarding attempt. Should the actions of the rig/vessel have any role in the *cause* of this distress, legal ramifications are likely.
- 8) Due to Greenpeace’s well developed network of in-house legal support, prosecution is likely were any harm to come to their protestors. Whether the position is legally defensible or not, it is likely to involve a lengthy, expensive and reputationally damaging court case
- 9) They are adept at the use of social and other media to publicise their objectives and to denigrate their opponents. All of their operations will be filmed and carefully recorded. Any mistreatment or other acts that could be interpreted negatively are likely to be widely publicised and again, be severely reputationally damaging.
- 10) Due to the high level of media coverage likely to follow such an event (see videos attached) consideration must be given to the wider security risk that this may engender. A breach in security such as this, albeit instigated by “peaceful” protesters in this instance can (if widely publicised) highlight gaps in security and weaknesses (both physical and procedural) that may be capitalised upon by terrorist, piratical or criminal entities who wish to exploit the same weaknesses for more nefarious ends (such as robbery, hijack or a terrorist attack.) A comprehensive review of security measures must be undertaken, accounting for the publication of detailed photographs and video evidence of how to board the platform. Environmentalists may (inadvertently) have given pirates and/or terrorists an invaluable resource detailing how to conduct an attack. (see Greenpeace, “How to climb an Oil Rig – In pictures”¹¹)

Table 1: Potential Environmentalist Courses of Action

Most Likely Course of Action	Most Dangerous Course of action
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Short term, high profile, peaceful occupation of drilling platforms, particularly those linked with Arctic or Antarctic drilling operations (or with any company, or drilling contractor operating in these areas. 2) Delay and loss of revenue due to interference with drilling campaign. 3) The causation of Falling Object hazards 4) The causation of biological hazards 5) Reputational damage. 6) Publication of security weaknesses that may inform and encourage other environmentalist groups. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Deliberate or accidental structural or mechanical damage. The causation of Falling Object hazards 2) Causation of accident, injury or dangerous occurrence (involving themselves or the crew) leading to legal ramifications. 3) Adverse media attention and damage to reputation caused by poor handling of situation by rig’s crew. 4) Publication of security weaknesses that may inform and encourage criminal, pirate or terrorist organisations

¹¹ Greenpeace.org, "How to Climb an Oil Rig - in Pictures" (08 Apr 2015)

What precautions could be taken?

1) *The Hierarchy of Prevention:*

ELIMINATION

Do not become a target: prior negotiation and consultation with groups such as Greenpeace, focussing on the stringent anti-pollution and health and safety controls should be considered in order to allay any safety or environmental concerns.

AVOIDANCE

If this fails to have the desired effect, attempt to avoid adverse attention from environmental groups. Intelligent scheduling of the movement and deployment of units may allow the company to take advantage of their lack of resources (having only 1 ice-class ship) to conduct their operations “out of reach” of environmentalists ‘marine assets. Consider routing to put distance between your asset and theirs.

DE-ESCALATION

If this is practically or financially dis-advantageous, and your unit has become the target of an environmentalist group, attempt to de-escalate the situation by allowing them to “make their point” in a way that does not disrupt your operations. Consider allowing them to approach to a reasonable distance for their “photo-op” without allowing them to breach your exclusion zone or attempting a boarding.

**DO NOT BE
BOARDED**

If a boarding attempt is unavoidable, it would be beneficial not to become boarded. However, this should only be achieved by passive, physical/structural means that will be pre-prepared to make the unit difficult to scale without causing undue harm to anyone who makes the attempt. These measures should be considered early, if not in the design phase, then before any proposed Arctic drilling campaign.

**CAUSE NO HARM
& MINIMISE
REPUTATIONAL
DAMAGE**

If there are no passive measures to prevent boarding (or these have been overcome) do not attempt physical active resistance to the boarders (water hoses, dropping objects etc.) This is highly likely to be illegal (as it is not in self-defence of human life), leading to severe legal and reputational repercussions. Attempt to “manage” the boarding on your own terms, up to and including providing assistance. Therefore there can be no accusations of neglecting your duty of care to their health and safety, and you will be able to **contain** the boarders on an area of the unit **of your choice** – rather than allowing them to board independently, and have the run of the platform (potentially in restricted areas or areas that are inaccessible to the crew). This will also allow for a speedy disembarkation at a time of your choosing.

**MIMIMISE IMPACT
TO OPERATIONS**

If the activists have gained access (with or without assistance) to the working/living areas of the rig they should be treated humanely and managed like any other stowaway. (see below) this will keep them away from any restricted areas, and allow you to continue your operation without undue delay, or the potential for legal, financial or reputational damage.

2) **Plans policies and procedures:**

This type of event is likely to become ever more likely. However, some organisations will not have adequately planned for it. Prior planning and consideration should be given to this scenario including, but not limited to, 3 key documents:

a) **The Ship's security plan:**

All ship's Security Plans will include instructions on the actions to be taken when under threat of an illegal boarding. However, may do not differentiate or offer advice based on the **motive** of the potential boarders, or their likely level of threat. Most plans will, naturally be written with pirates or armed criminals in mind, where the use of physical force and active resistance is justifiable as it is in defence of human life. However, to unthinkingly follow the same procedures in response to an (albeit illegal) but peaceful protest is likely to be illegal itself, and potentially legally and reputationally damaging. This eventually should be planned for and agreed as policy – not left to the unguided interpretation of those on the front line dealing with the situation

b) **The ISM shipboard safety management manual (or company safety management system)**

Particular consideration should be given to the health and safety of unintended boarders and stowaways, who may be operation on areas of the unit not intended for human occupation and engaging in activities that would not usually be considered (scaling the rig for example). It should also include what care and management should be afforded once any boarders have gained access to the unit. If your plan does not consider this as an eventuality – it may be high time for a review.

c) **Emergency contingency plans**

ECP's should be tailored to consider this as a possibility.

3) **Prior physical preparation:**

Consider the modification or installation of passive means to deter, delay or prevent a boarding in a humane and safe way.

4) **Training & drills:**

Crew are unlikely to be familiar with this type of situation and may become very uncomfortable or unsure as to what to do. This could lead to serious and potentially damaging errors of judgement – as crewmembers may unduly escalate the situation, heightening risk and leaving the company vulnerable to legal, financial and reputational damage. Some suggested training may be (see Table 2 on page 9):

- STCW PDSD
- STCW HELM
- STCW Crowd Management
- STCW Crisis Management And Human Behaviour
- Conflict Management
- Allmode Dealing with Non-hostile belligerent action workshop

Thought should be given to including an environmentalist demonstration as one of the 3 or 18 monthly security drills/exercises as-per the provisions of the ISPS Code

5) **Actions during a boarding attempt:**

Passive resistance while also making every effort to preserve life and minimise risk to crew and boarders.

6) **Actions following an unsuccessful boarding:**

Consider rescue or the provision of lifesaving aid should the boarding party become endangered following a failed boarding or if injuries occur.

7) Actions following a successful boarding:

If boarders do gain access to the unit their further administration and management must be considered. Including, but not limited to:

- Administration and supervision of boarding personnel
- Searching of personnel and baggage
- Belongings record and storage
- Safety briefing/induction
- Master's/OIM's interviews
- Accommodation
- Chaperoning and supervision
- Victualing
- Hygiene and sustenance

8) Actions after disembarkation of protestors:

- Dropped Object Prevention Scheme survey
- Health & Safety and serviceability inspection of affected area
- Biological hazard survey and cleaning and decontamination as required

9) Back Office support and actions-on

- Liaison and consultation with belligerent groups
- Policy and procedures
- Authority of the Master/OIM
- Reporting
- Legal and insurance considerations
- Security considerations
- Casualty management
- Minimising impact on operations
- Media operations and reputation

(For further guidance on the above please refer to **“Allmode Best Management Practices for dealing with Environmental Activism (for the Offshore Oil And Gas Industry)”** – Available on request.

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Table 2: Formal Security Training By Industry: Current Status and Potential for Improvement

Body	Course	Dur.	Passenger/Ro-Ro/Cruise	Commercial Yacht	Commercial Maritime/Oil & Gas	Private Yacht
 Allmode INTERNATIONAL SECURITY SERVICES	Dealing with non-hostile action (Management)	2 Day	CSO, Crisis management Team	CSO, Crisis management Team	CSO, Crisis management Team	CSO, Crisis management Team
 Allmode INTERNATIONAL SECURITY SERVICES	Dealing with non-hostile action (Officers)	2 Day	Master, Deck Officers	Master, Deck Officers	Master, Deck Officers	Master, Deck Officers
 Allmode INTERNATIONAL SECURITY SERVICES	Dealing with non-hostile action (Crew)	1 Day	All Crew	All Crew	All Crew	All Crew
 IMO 	CSO	3 Day	CSO	CSO	CSO	CSO
 IMO 	SSO	3 Day	Master, SSO	Master, SSO	Master/OIM, SSO	Master, SSO
 IMO	Crisis Management & Human Behaviour	1 Day	All Crew	All Crew IF >12 Passengers	All Crew	All Crew
 IMO	HELM(M)	5 Day	C/O, 2 nd E/O	C/O, 2 nd E/O	C/O, 2 nd E/O	C/O, 2 nd E/O
 IMO	HELM(O)	5 Day	OOW	OOW	OOW	OOW
 IMO	PDSO	1 Day	Designated Security Duties	Designated Security Duties	Designated Security Duties	Designated Security Duties
 IMO	Crowd Management	1 Day	All Crew	All Crew IF >12 Passengers	All Crew	All Crew
 Allmode INTERNATIONAL SECURITY SERVICES	Crew Safe	1 day	All Crew	All Crew	All Crew	All Crew
 Various Training Providers	Conflict Management	1-5 Day	All Crew	All Crew	All Crew	All Crew
 IMO	First Aid (Master's)	4 Day	Master	Master	Master	Master
 IMO	Basic First Aid	1 Day	All Crew	All Crew	All Crew	All Crew

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