Deep-sea diving

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Some media outlets are claiming, apparently in all seriousness, that six private individuals of unknown nationality rented a private recreational boat in Germany in an operation to blow up the Nord Stream pipelines last September.

Surely, the media are not too conversant with the kind of technical environment required to successfully blow up 4 large steel pipelines, each more than a meter in diameter, with a 40 mm wall thickness and covered by 110 mm of reinforced concrete, the pipe reaching a mass of nearly 2 metric tons per meter, at a depth of 100 meters in an area exposed to tidal currents.

100 m is very deep for diving and working on the sea bottom. To do so you need all sorts of technical equipment, and you most certainly do not scuba dive for such a job. Also, for the support vessel to remain in position in the currents 100 m above a fixed point, you need 4 anchor lines at least, all about 500 meters long, and a secondary tugboat to tow and drop the anchors on a 1 km circle around the boat. If not, you need the kind of so-called dynamic positioning and lots of power offered only in some heavy offshore tugboats and advanced oil and gas support and survey vessels.

Clearly the media have not thought it out, probably out of sheer ignorance, although they never seem to acknowledge that some areas of knowledge are perhaps outside the realm of their universal and all-encompassing wisdom, albeit somewhat immature at times.

This is not to say that some assertive activists did not attempt to blow up the pipelines, but one shouldn't bet too much on their having been successful. The pipelines were blown up indeed, in a heavy operation that involved professional equipment but was more than possibly conducted by others.

That one skilled and well equipped mountaineer reached the top of Mt. Everest surely does not mean that scores of less skilled but unsuccessful attempts were not undertaken.

See also the pipeline profile analysis I wrote in October 2022.