



## Greek aid ship to try Gaza mission again

*A Greek vessel bearing several European politicians and doctors was set to leave the Cypriot port of Larnaca with the aim of delivering medical supplies to injured Palestinians in Gaza.*

*The mission of the Arion is to deliver tons of basic supplies to civilians injured in Israeli air strikes. A similar attempt last month to deliver aid was thwarted and the group planning the mission, the Free Gaza Movement, claims to have received anonymous death threats.*

*Yesterday Alekos Alavanos, the parliamentary group leader of the Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA) asked Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis to ensure the safety of the mission. Bakoyannis said the government could not intervene in the activities of nongovernmental organizations and added that shipments of humanitarian aid from the government were still waiting at border crossings.*

## A floating museum...

*The Liberty, one of hundreds of US cargo ships built during World War II, is escorted into Piraeus. The vessel, a donation from the USA, is to become a floating museum. After the war, Greek shipping firms purchased dozens of 'Liberty ships' to replenish depleted fleets.*



# Kidnappers of Greek tycoon Pericles Panagopoulos demand 40m Euro

*The kidnapping of Mr Panagopoulos has sparked fears of a new wave of domestic terrorism in Greece. Kidnappers seized Greece's top shipping magnate and reportedly demanded a ransom of 40 million euro.*

Pericles Panagopoulos had just set off from his home in the Kavouri district, near Athens, when three armed and masked men stopped his car in a quiet lane, according to a construction worker who claimed to have seen the kidnapping. They smashed the driver's window with the butt of an AK47 rifle and ordered Mr Panagopoulos, 70, and his chauffeur out of the car, the witness said.

The men were pushed into a waiting vehicle. A van and a 4x4 car were seen leaving the scene.

Minutes later the chauffeur, whose name was not disclosed, was left at a deserted spot near Koropi, a town less than five miles from Athens international airport. Despite being hooded and handcuffed he managed to get help at a nearby house and went to the local police. The driver said that the kidnapers had set fire to both their vehicles.

The abduction comes a week after an attack on the Culture Ministry in central Athens, in which a policeman was seriously wounded. That attack was attributed to a shadowy group known as Revolutionary Struggle, which seems to be trying to emulate the notorious 17



November organization, responsible for terror acts over several decades.

Police launched a manhunt but although they played down terrorism in favour of purely criminal motivation a spokesman said that the anti-terrorist service was closely monitoring the case. The incident will inevitably create fears of a resurgence of hard-left extremist activity, in particular following the riots that gripped the country late last year.

Family friends say Mr Panagopoulos is not especially security conscious; Greek media reported that he had been without his usual motorcycle bodyguard.

Sources close to the family reported

that the magnate had unspecified health problems and that his life might be in danger if he did not take his regular medication.

Arguably the most successful Greek shipping tycoon since Aristotle Onassis, Mr Panagopoulos nonetheless kept a low profile. Unlike most of the country's ship-owners, who reside in the capital's leafy northern suburbs in vast gated villas, he has a relatively modest house not far from his office. Mr Panagopoulos set up Royal Cruise Line in 1971, when mass tourism to Greece was just beginning. Eighteen years later he sold the line at a handsome profit and in 1992 set up Attica Enterprises, now the country's largest ferry company.

His fortunes soared when he had the idea of linking Greece and Italy with high-speed ferries featuring cruise-liner comforts, at a time when the war in Yugoslavia had cut off Greece's road and rail connections with western Europe. The red and white SuperFast ferries were a huge success, as the myriad British lorry drivers and motoring tourists who used them will attest. In 2004 Mr Panagopoulos acquired Blue Star Ferries, a leading island-hopping line.

As the head of the passenger ship-owners' association, he was in a position to urge for higher fares and more efficient ferry routing in a heavily state-regulated market. This did not endear him to Greece's maritime unions.

In recent years he had delegated the running of most of his corporate empire to his son Alexander, retaining the management of a handful of ocean-going freighters.

The kidnapping was the first attack on a Greek ship-owner since 1996, when Yannis Peratikos was killed by 17 November on the grounds that he had put hundreds of people out of work by shutting down a loss-making shipyard. That extremist group often targeted wealthy business figures as symbols of capitalism.

In June, the chief executive of aluminium company Aluminil and chairman of the Federation of Industries in the northern city of Thessaloniki, George Milonas, was kidnapped before being released two weeks later after a ransom was paid.

## UK Premier Blasts Prince Harry's Racial Slur

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown said a racial slur used by Prince Harry to describe a fellow soldier was unacceptable, yet he added that the Prince's apology was sincere and therefore it should be accepted.

As soon as the news first appeared on the website of News of the World paper, the 24-year-old prince apologized.

Harry appeared in a video describing an Asian colleague of his as "Paki," a derogatory term used for Indians and Pakistanis. The release of the video footage urged some religious groups, as well as Tory leader David Cameron, to blast the Prince's slur.

"I think the sincerity of his apology cannot be doubted. It was a mistake, he has made the admission of that and, once he has made his apology, I think the British people are good enough to give someone who has actually been a role model for young people and has done well fighting for our country, gone into very difficult situations with bravery, I think they will give him the benefit of the doubt," Gordon Brown told GMTV television.

The Army said it would not launch a formal investigation into the matter because no complaint had been made.