Coast Guard Crews Observe Chinese Warships near Alaska



During a routine maritime patrol in the Bering Sea and Arctic region, U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf spotted and established radio contact with Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) task force in international waters within the U.S. exclusive economic zone, Aug. 30, 2021. All interactions between the U.S. Coast Guard and PLAN were in accordance with international laws and norms. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Ensign Bridget Boyle*

JUNEAU, Alaska – The U.S. Coast Guard demonstrated its commitment to the Bering Sea and Arctic region with deployments of national security cutters Bertholf and Kimball, and a U.S. Arctic patrol by icebreaker Healy, the Coast Guard 17th District said in a Sept. 13 release.

"Security in the Bering Sea and the Arctic is homeland security," said Vice Adm. Michael McAllister, commander Coast Guard Pacific Area. "The U.S. Coast Guard is continuously present in this important region to uphold American interests and protect U.S. economic prosperity."

Crews interacted with local, national and international vessels throughout the Arctic. During the deployment, Bertholf and Kimball observed four ships from the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) operating as close as 46 miles off the Aleutian Island coast. While the ships were within the U.S. exclusive economic zone, they followed international laws and norms and at no point entered U.S. territorial waters.

The PLAN task force included a guided-missile cruiser, a guided-missile destroyer, a general intelligence vessel, and an auxiliary vessel. The Chinese vessels conducted military and surveillance operations during their deployment to the Bering Sea and North Pacific Ocean.

All interactions between the U.S. Coast Guard and PLAN were in accordance with international standards set forth in the Western Pacific Naval Symposium’s Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea and Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea.

The Bering Sea produces more than 50 percent of the nation’s fish and shellfish harvest – worth more than $5 billion annually – and is the gateway to the Arctic, which encompasses 900,000 square miles of the U.S. exclusive economic zone off the Alaskan coast.

Bertholf and Kimball are 418-foot legend-class national security cutters homeported in Alameda, California, and Honolulu, Hawaii, respectively.

Healy is a 420-foot medium icebreaker homeported in Seattle.