Laser From Chinese Destroyer Targets Navy P-8A Poseidon



A P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft. A Poseidon was targeted by a laser from a Chinese destroyer on Feb. 17, according to the U.S. Pacific Fleet. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Bryan Niegel

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii – A U.S. Navy P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft was lased by People's Republic of China (PRC) navy destroyer 161 on Feb. 17 while flying in airspace above international waters about 380 miles west of Guam, according to the U.S. Pacific Fleet's public affairs office.

The P-8A was operating in international airspace. The PRC navy destroyer's actions were deemed unsafe and unprofessional.

Additionally, these acts violate the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES), a multilateral agreement reached at the 2014 Western Pacific Naval Symposium to reduce the chance of incidents at sea, according to the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

The CUES agreement specifically addresses the use of lasers that could harm personnel or damage equipment. The destroyer's actions were also inconsistent with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between U.S. Defense Department and the Ministry of National Defense of the PRC regarding rules of behavior for safety of air and maritime encounters.

The laser, which was not visible to the naked eye, was captured by a sensor onboard the P-8A. Weapons-grade lasers could potentially cause serious harm to aircrew and mariners as well as ship and aircraft systems.

The P-8A is assigned to VP-45, based at Jacksonville, Florida, and is forward-deployed to Kadena Air Force Base in Okinawa, Japan. The squadron conducts routine operations, maritime

patrol and reconnaissance in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations.

Navy aircraft routinely fly in the Philippine Sea and have done so for many years and aircraft and ships will continue to fly, sail and operate anywhere international law allows.