Russian Fighter Intercepts Navy P-8 over Mediterranean Sea

ARLINGTON, Va. – A U.S. Navy P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft was intercepted in international airspace on June 4 by a Russian SU-35 fighter over the Mediterranean Sea, the U.S. 6th Fleet reported in a release.

The P-8A was intercepted "three times over the course of 175 minutes," the release said. "The first and third interaction were deemed safe. The second interaction was determined to be unsafe due to the SU-35 conducting a high-speed pass directly in front of the mission aircraft, which put our pilots and crew at risk. The crew of the P-8A reported wake turbulence following the second interaction. The duration of the intercept was approximately 28 minutes."

The 6th Fleet called the interaction "irresponsible."

"We expect them to behave within international standards set to ensure safety and to prevent incidents, including the 1972 Agreement for the Prevention of Incidents On and Over the High Seas (INCSEA)," the release said. "Unsafe actions increase the risk of

miscalculation and potential for midair collisions. The U.S. aircraft was operating consistent with international law and did not provoke this Russian activity.”