Third Unsafe Intercept by Russia in U.S. 6th Fleet in Two Months



Two Russian aircraft intercept a P-8A Poseidon assigned to the U.S. 6th Fleet over the Mediterranean Sea on May 26. U.S. Navy MEDITERRANEAN SEA – For the third time in two months, Russian pilots flew in an unsafe and unprofessional manner while intercepting a U.S. Navy P-8A maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft in the U.S. Sixth Fleet on May 26, the 6th Fleet said in a release.

"On May 26, a U.S. Navy P-8A aircraft was flying in the eastern Mediterranean over international waters and was intercepted by two Russian Su-35 aircraft over a period of 65 minutes," the release said. "The intercept was determined to be unsafe and unprofessional due to the Russian pilots taking close station on each wing of the P-8A simultaneously, restricting the P-8A's ability to safely maneuver.

"The unnecessary actions of the Russian Su-35 pilots were inconsistent with good airmanship and international flight rules and jeopardized the safety of flight of both aircraft.

"While the Russian aircraft was operating in international airspace, this interaction was irresponsible. We expect them to operate 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). Actions like these increase the potential for midair collisions.

"This incident follows two unsafe interactions in April, over the same waters.

“In all cases, the U.S. aircraft were operating in international airspace, consistent with international law, with due regard for safety of flight, and did not provoke this Russian activity.”