

U.S. Coast Guard encounters People's Republic of China military naval presence in Bering Sea

SEAPOWER

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JUNEAU, AK –The U.S. Coast Guard encountered multiple People's Republic of China military ships in the Bering Sea, Saturday and Sunday.

The crew of U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Kimball (WMSL 756) detected three vessels approximately 124 miles north of the Amchitka Pass in the Aleutian Islands, and an HC-130J aircrew from U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak detected an additional vessel approximately 84 miles north of the Amukta Pass.

All four of the People's Republic of China vessels were transiting in international waters but still inside the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone, which extends 200 nautical miles from

the U.S. shoreline.

“The Chinese naval presence operated in accordance with international rules and norms,” said Rear Adm. Megan Dean, Seventeenth Coast Guard District commander. “We met presence with presence to ensure there were no disruptions to U.S. interests in the maritime environment around Alaska.”

The Chinese vessels responded to U.S. Coast Guard radio communication and their stated purpose was “freedom of navigation operations.” Coast Guard cutter Kimball continued to monitor all ships until they transited south of the Aleutian Islands into the North Pacific Ocean. The Kimball continues to monitor activities in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone to ensure the safety of U.S. vessels and international commerce in the area.

The Coast Guard, in coordination with U.S. Northern Command, was fully aware of and tracked the Chinese naval presence. In September of 2021 and 2022, Coast Guard cutters deployed in the Bering Sea also encountered Chinese surface action groups.

The Kimball patrolled under Operation Frontier Sentinel, a Coast Guard operation designed to meet presence with presence when strategic competitors operate in and around U.S. waters. The U.S. Coast Guard’s presence strengthens the international rules-based order and promotes the conduct of operations in a manner that follows international norms.

Coast Guard Cutter Kimball is a 418-foot Legend-class national security cutter homeported in Honolulu, Hawaii.