U.S. Navy, JMSDF Conduct Bilateral Operations in South China Sea

U.K. Royal Navy aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth (R08), U.S. Navy Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70), and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Izumo-class helicopter destroyer JS Kaga (DDH 184) sail together as part of Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX) 2021, Oct. 17, 2021. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Erin C. Zorich*

SOUTH CHINA SEA – The Carl Vinson Carrier Strike Group and JS Kaga (DDH 184) are conducting maritime security operations and exercises, Lt. Cmdr. Miranda Williams, USS Carl Vinson, said in an Oct. 25 release.

Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Izumo-class helicopter destroyer JS Kaga (DDH 184) and U.S. Navy Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 1 are conducting bilateral operations in the South China Sea for the first time since Vinson Carrier Strike Group (VINCSG) deployed this summer.

While in the South China Sea, Japan and U.S. Navy units are conducting maritime security operations, to include flight operations, coordinated tactical training between surface and air units, refueling-at-sea evolutions and maritime strike exercises.

Cooperative maritime engagements and U.S. carrier operations in the South China Sea are part of the U.S. Navy's routine presence in the Indo-Pacific.

"Bilateral operations are one key component in our collective maritime readiness," said Rear Adm. Dan Martin, commander, CSG

1. “The Indo-Pacific is a dynamic region and by continuing to conduct routine operations with our allies and partners throughout international waters and airspace, we demonstrate our unwavering commitment to upholding international law, on the sea and in the air, and to ensuring that all nations can do the same without fear or contest.”

Since arriving in the U.S. 7th Fleet region, CSG 1 units have participated in multiple operations and exercises with JMSDF units, most recently MALABAR 2021 and Maritime Partnership Exercise. JMSDF Rear Adm. IKEUCHI Izuru, Commanding Officer of IPD21 force, Commander of Escort Flotilla 3 said maritime alliances and partnerships are vital to maritime security and underpin the free flow of commerce and access to resources in the region.

“Through a series of large-scale exercises, the JMSDF was able to enhance its tactical capabilities as well as strengthen its cooperative relationship with the navies of participating countries,” said Rear Adm. IKEUCHI Izuru, Commanding Officer of IPD21 force, Commander of Escort Flotilla 3. “Our activities in the South China Sea and Indian Ocean, which are important international maritime traffic routes, together with the navies of our allies and partners who share our fundamental values and strategic interests, demonstrate our unity and strong will to realize a “free and open Indo-Pacific” based on law.”

Led by Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 1, U.S. Navy units operating in the SCS include aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70); Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Lake Champlain (CG 57) and USS Shiloh (CG 67); Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Stockdale (DDG 106) of Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 1; and nine squadrons of embarked Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 2.

CVW-2 consists of an F-35C squadron, the “Argonauts” of Strike

Fighter Squadron (VFA) 147; three F/A-18E/F Super Hornet squadrons, the “Bounty Hunters” of VFA-2, the “Stingers” of VFA-113, and the “Golden Dragons” of VFA-192; the “Gauntlets” of Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 136, operating the EA-18G Growler; the “Black Eagles” of Airborne Command and Control Squadron (VAW) 113, operating the E-2D Advanced Hawkeye; the “Titans” of Fleet Logistics Multi-Mission Squadron (VRM) 30, operating the CMV-22B Osprey; the “Black Knights” of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 4, operating the MH-60S Seahawk; and the “Blue Hawks” of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 78, operating the MH-60R Seahawk.

This marks the second time that a carrier strike group is operating in the South China Sea with the advanced capabilities of the F-35C Lightning II and Navy CMV-22B Osprey.

CSG 1 is deployed to the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific region.