JMSDF Fleet Air Force, U.S. Navy's Task Force 70 Sign Memorandum to Increase Bilateral Electronic Attack Capability

NAVAL AIR FACILITY ATSUGI (Dec. 6, 2024) Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) Vice Adm. Koji Kaneshima, Commander, Fleet Air Force (CFAF), right, and U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Greg Newkirk, Commander, Task Force (CTF) 70, sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to increase bilateral operations between the forces' electronic attack squadrons, at the CFAF headquarters aboard Naval Air Facility Atsugi, Japan, Dec. 6. (U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Caroline H. Lui)
By Lt.Cmdr. Seth Koenig

NAVAL AIR FACILITY ATSUGI – Japan Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF) Vice Adm. Koji Kaneshima, Commander, Fleet Air Force (CFAF), and U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Greg Newkirk, Commander, Task Force (CTF) 70, signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to increase bilateral operations between the forces' electronic attack squadrons Dec. 6, 2024.

The signing, which took place at Naval Air Facility Atsugi in Kanagawa prefecture, Japan, represented a pledge between the two commanders to increase bilateral operations and training between the JMSDF Air Reconnaissance Squadron (VQ) 81 and CTF 70 electronic attack assets, which include Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 5's Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 141, as well as expeditionary electronic attack squadron detachments rotationally deploying to Japan from Whidbey Island, Washington.

“Today, ‘FUJIN’ MOU was revised for the purpose of further strengthening Integrated Fire capabilities between CFAF and CTF70,” said Kaneshima. “Besides that, with Rear Adm. Newkirk, we came to an agreement to promote ‘FUJIN’ program. We will keep developing the mutual understanding and tactical skills between the commands and units through the trainings and exercises.”

Task Force 70’s electronic attack squadrons fly EA-18G Growler aircraft, while VQ-81 flies UP-3D electronic attack aircraft, among other assets.

The EA-18G Growler integrates the latest electronic attack technology, including the ALQ-218 sensor for airborne situational awareness, as well as ALQ-99 pods capable of jamming adversarial radar and communications systems, and next-generation jamming technology as it is refined and implemented across the force.

“Today, we’re formalizing our commitment to generate real warfighting advantage by increasing and enhancing our combined technology and expertise in the field of electronic warfare,” said Newkirk. “Our work together moving forward will allow us to expand our shared air and maritime domain awareness, as well as refine and perfect our combined electronic attack capability.”

VAQ-141 is forward-deployed to Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni as part of Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 5, while the expeditionary VAQ-134 operates out of Misawa Air Base in the northern part of the country and Kadena Air Base in Okinawa in the southern part of the country.

Task Force 70 controls the preponderance of forward-deployed air and surface maneuver and striking forces in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations, overseeing Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15, Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 51 and

VAQ 134, as well as the ships and aircraft operating under Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 5, including the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS George Washington (CVN 73), the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Robert Smalls (CG 62), the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Shoup (DDG 86) and CVW-5.

U.S. 7th Fleet is the U.S. Navy’s largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, and routinely interacts and operates with allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific region.