

Second Unsafe Intercept by Russia Reported in U.S. 6th Fleet AOR

MEDITERRANEAN SEA – For the second time in four days, Russian pilots flew in an unsafe and unprofessional manner while intercepting a U.S. Navy P-8A maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft April 19 in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of responsibility (AOR), according to a release from the 6th Fleet.

A P-8A aircraft flying in international airspace over the Mediterranean Sea was intercepted twice by a Russian SU-35 over a period of about 100 minutes. The first intercept was deemed safe and professional. The second intercept was determined to be unsafe and unprofessional due to the SU-35 conducting a high-speed, high-powered maneuver that decreased aircraft separation to within 25 feet, directly in front of the P-8A, exposing the U.S. aircraft to wake turbulence and jet exhaust.

In response, the P-8A, which was operating at a constant altitude and airspeed, descended to create separation and ensure safety of both aircraft.

The unnecessary actions of the Russian SU-35 pilot were inconsistent with good airmanship and international flight rules, seriously jeopardizing the safety of flight of both aircraft.

This incident follows an April 15 interaction over the same waters, where a Russian SU-35 flew inverted within 25 feet of the U.S. P-8A.

In both cases, the U.S. aircraft were operating consistent with international law and did not provoke this Russian

activity.