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Russia Says It Helped U.S. Navy Save Face By Buzzing Aircraft

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Valery Sharifulin / TASS

A Russian fighter jet intercepted a U.S. Navy aircraft over the weekend to help America avoid a major international incident, the Russian military claims.

The Russian Su-30 fighter reportedly flew as close as 50 feet in front of the P-8A Poseidon surveillance aircraft over the Black Sea on Saturday, causing "violent turbulence" the Pentagon was cited as saying by CNN on Monday. The U.S. military characterized the 24-minute interaction as unsafe.

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A Russian air defense force commander said the Su-30 was scrambled to force the P-8A to change course as it was approaching the Russian border.

The U.S. Navy aircraft ignored the first signals, Major General Viktor Sevostyanov told the

Defense Ministry-run Krasnaya Zvezda newspaper on Wednesday.

“Only then did the Russian fighter perform the maneuver,” Sevostyanov was quoted as saying.

“Our pilots, in fact, helped their American colleagues avoid an international scandal.”

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