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Russian Bomber Low-Passes U.S. Destroyer in Black Sea

February 01, 2021



Russia's Sukhoi Su-24 frontline bomber. **Alexander Mishin / Wikicommons**

A Russian Sukhoi Su-24 frontline bomber has conducted a low pass over the United States Navy's guided-missile destroyer in the Black Sea, the U.S. Sixth Fleet reported Monday.

The USS Donald Cook has been stationed in neutral waters "to ensure security and stability in the region" as part of an operation under a NATO mandate, the Sixth Fleet tweeted alongside a video of the incident.

Embed:

> The @USNavy routinely operates in the Black Sea to reassure @NATO Allies & partners and ensure security & stability in the region.
>
> Today, 🇺🇸 #USSDonaldCook operating in international waters in the #BlackSea

> while a #Russian SU-24 does a low pass nearby.#PowerForPeace pic.twitter.com/6JGNZoncZb
>
> — U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa/U.S. 6th Fleet (@USNavyEurope) January 31, 2021

While Russian officials haven't yet commented on the incident, the state-run Rossiiskaya Gazeta newspaper hailed the Su-24's maneuver as "impressive."

The USS Donald Cook was deployed in the Black Sea on Jan. 23 and was soon joined by the USS Porter and replenishment oiler USNS Laramie to perform joint drills with NATO air units in the region.

"In response to Russia's illegal and illegitimate annexation of Crimea from Ukraine and its ongoing military build-up in the Black Sea, the Alliance has increased its defensive presence in the region and remains strongly committed to Black Sea security," NATO spokeswoman Oana Lungescu said in a statement last week.

Related article: Russia Stages Black Sea Warship Drills Amid U.S. Destroyer Presence

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko, in turn, labeled the ongoing drill "a disruption of regional security."

"NATO's decision to increase the number of stationing days of their military ship groups, the attempt to undermine the regime established by the Montreux convention... All this increases the potential for hostilities in the region," the state-run TASS news agency quoted Grushko as saying.

Russia's Black Sea Fleet confirmed it has been tracking the U.S. destroyer's movements and staged combative military drills in Black Sea waters last week.

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