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Russia Says Chased U.S. Navy Ship From Its Waters

By AFP

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The Russian navy said its Admiral Tributs destroyer chased away a U.S. Navy vessel in the Sea of Japan.
Dmitry Yefremov/TASS

Moscow said Friday that one of its warships chased away a U.S. Navy destroyer after it attempted to violate Russia's territorial waters in the Sea of Japan, but Washington denied this.

The incident took place as Russia and China were conducting naval exercises in the area.

The Russian Defense Ministry said in a statement that at around 5 p.m. local time (0800 GMT), the destroyer USS Chafee, which had been operating in the Sea of Japan for several days, "approached the territorial waters of the Russian Federation and attempted to cross the border."

Russia's Admiral Tributs destroyer issued a warning to the U.S. ship "about the

inadmissibility of such actions."

However, the USS Chafee ignored the warning and "took action to violate the national border of the Russian Federation," according to the Russian Defense Ministry.

"Acting within the framework of the international rules of navigation, the Admiral Tributs set a course for ousting the intruder from the Russian territorial waters."

After that, the USS Chafee turned around and set off "on the opposite course" when it was less than 60 meters away from the Russian ship.

The U.S. Navy dismissed the Russian account as "false."

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It said in a statement that its ship "was conducting routine operations in international water in the Sea of Japan" when a Russian destroyer came within approximately 65 yards of the USS Chafee "while the ship was preparing for flight operations."

"The interaction was safe and professional," the U.S. navy said.

The U.S. Navy acknowledged that Russia had notified it that it was conducting maneuvers in the area, but the notice "was not in effect at the time of the interaction."

The U.S. ship "conducted operations in accordance with international law and custom," the statement read. "The United States will continue to fly, sail, and operate where international law allows."

Incidents involving the Russian Navy are rare in the Pacific. The region is dominated by China, which takes a dim view of the United States and its allies patrolling the region's international waters to assert their right to freedom of navigation.

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