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Russian Military Planes Spotted Near Alaska During Patrol Mission

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A U.S. fighter jet shadowing a Russian bomber. **U.S. Department of Defense**

The North American Aerospace Defense Command said that it spotted Russian military aircraft flying near Alaska on Tuesday, with Russia's Defense Ministry later confirming its air force carried out a routine patrol in the area.

While the aircraft did not enter U.S. or Canadian sovereign airspace, NORAD said it did enter the Alaskan Air Defense Identification Zone, a stretch of international airspace where foreign aircraft are monitored for national defense purposes.

NORAD did not specify the number or type of aircraft involved, but emphasized that the activity was "not seen as a threat." Russian military flights in the area occur regularly and are closely tracked, the command said.

According to a statement later issued by Russia's Defense Ministry, Tu-95MS strategic bombers carried out a planned 15-hour patrol over international waters of the Bering Sea.

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The bombers were accompanied by Su-35S and Su-30SM fighter jets and performed mid-air refueling during the mission. At various stages of the flight, the aircraft were shadowed by foreign fighter jets, the ministry said.

A video released by the military showed two F-16 aircraft flying near the Russian planes.

Russia's Defense Ministry said the flights were conducted "in strict accordance with international airspace regulations" and noted that its long-range aviation crews routinely operate over neutral waters of the Arctic, Pacific Ocean and other maritime zones.

NORAD also tracked similar Russian flights in April. Last September, the U.S. military released a video of what it called "unsafe, unprofessional" behavior by a Russian Su-35 near Alaska.

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