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### Russian Aircraft Flies Near U.S. Navy Ship in Black Sea

By Jim Garamone  
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, April 14, 2014 – A Russian attack aircraft repeatedly flew near the USS Donald Cook in international waters in the Black Sea on April 12, a Pentagon spokesman said today.



Sailors man the rails as the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Donald Cook arrives at Naval Station Rota, Spain, Feb. 11, 2014. Donald Cook is the first of four Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers to be stationed in Rota. U.S. Navy photo by Seaman Edward Gutierrez III (Click photo for screen-resolution image); [high-resolution image](#) available.

The USS Cook was patrolling in the western Black Sea when an unarmed Russian Su-24 Fencer attack aircraft repeatedly flew near the Navy ship, Army Col. Steve Warren told reporters.

"The aircraft did not respond to multiple queries and warnings from Donald Cook, and the event ended without incident after approximately 90 minutes," Warren said. "This provocative and unprofessional Russian action is inconsistent with international protocols and previous agreements on the professional interaction between our militaries."

Two Russian aircraft were present, but only one took part in the provocative actions, Warren said. The aircraft flew from near sea level to a couple of thousand feet, he added, but never overflew the U.S. Arleigh Burke-class destroyer.

"The Russian plane made a total of 12 passes," he said.

The wingman stayed at a considerably higher altitude, Warren said.

Officials later said the aircraft approached within about 1,000 yards of the ship. The USS Cook was never in danger, Warren said.

"The Donald Cook is more than capable of defending itself against two Su-24s," the colonel said.

Warren said he does not think this is an example of a young pilot joyriding. "I would have difficulty believing that two Russian pilots, on their own, would choose to take such an action," he said. "We've seen the Russians conduct themselves unprofessionally and in violation of international norms in Ukraine for several months, and these continued acts of provocation and unprofessionalism do nothing to de-escalate the situation in Ukraine, which we called on the Russians to do."

The Cook arrived in the Black Sea on April 10. The ship is now making a port call in Constanta, Romania.

(Follow Jim Garamone on Twitter: [@GaramoneAFPS](#))

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