



US reconnaissance plane intercepted by PLA jet over Yellow Sea

Staff Reporter 2015-09-23 16:11 (GMT+8)

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A Boeing RC-135 reconnaissance aircraft of the United States Air Force was intercepted by a JH-7 Flying Leopard fighter bomber of the People's Liberation Army Navy on Sept. 15, according to Bill Gertz, a senior editor of the Washington Free Beacon, in an article written on Sept. 22.

Peter Cook, the press secretary of the Pentagon, confirmed the incident on Tuesday for the first time, after it had already been reported in the Washington Free Beacon. He said that the RC-135 was 80 miles east of the Shandong peninsula above the Yellow Sea when it was intercepted by the JH-7. Cook said that the interception of the JH-7 was perceived as unsafe by the RC-135 air crew. There was no indication of a near-collision, however.

"My understanding is, and I don't have all the details, but the pilot believed that the plane passed in an unsafe fashion in front of the

plane," Cook said.

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Senator John McCain, the Senate Armed Services Committee chair, said the incident showed that China is continuing its pattern of aggressive behavior in the Asia-Pacific region despite the fact that Chinese president Xi Jinping is set to begin his visit to the United States this week.

"That this flight came amid negotiations of rules for air-to-air encounters and just one week ahead of President Xi's arrival in the United States raises further questions about China's intentions and the Obama administration's response thus far," said the Republican senator for Arizona. Washington and Beijing are unable to reach any agreement yet regarding the control of aerial interception in the region because China demands the United States to stop all surveillance flights near its coast.

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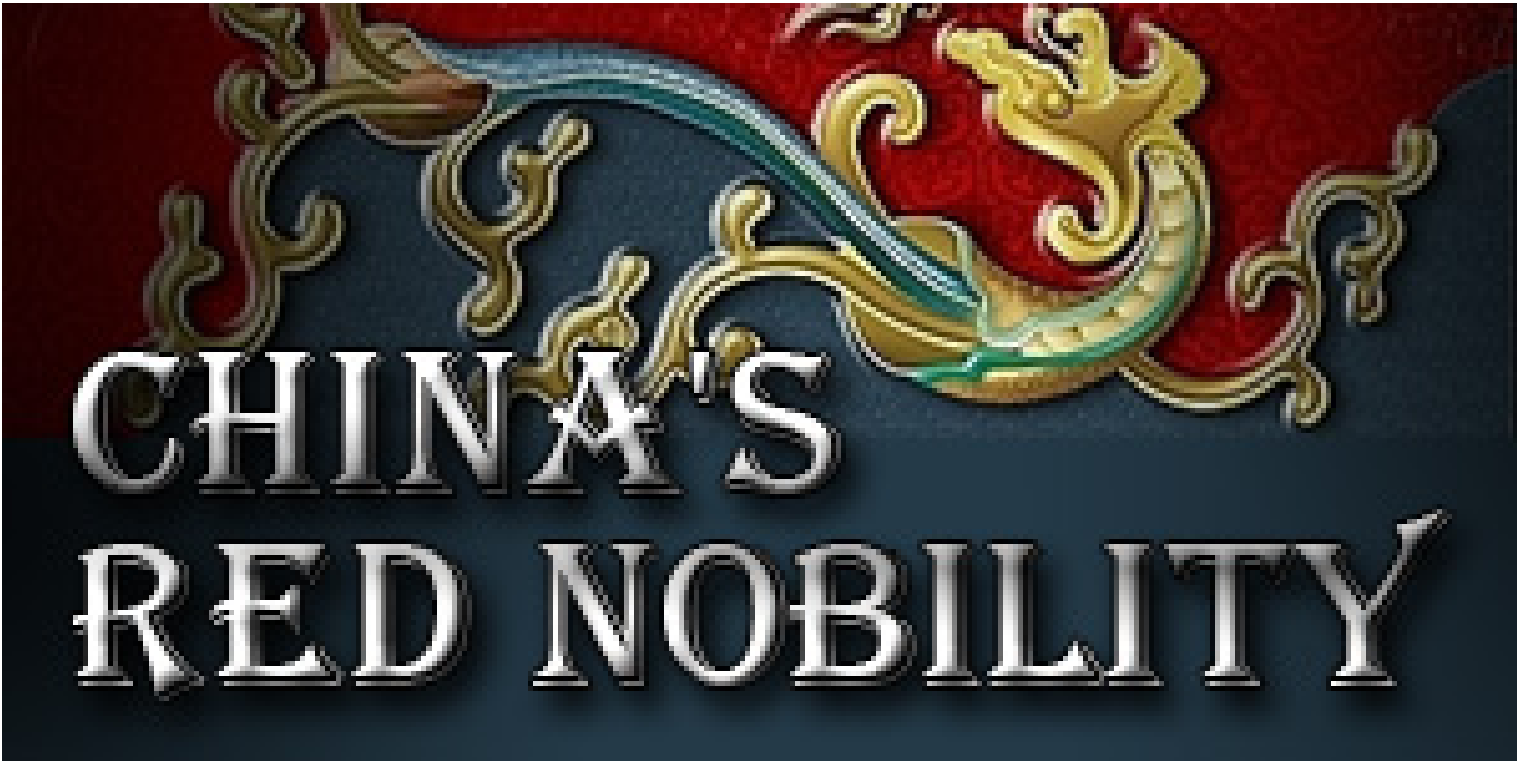
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