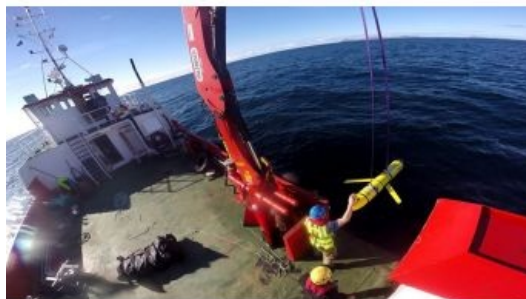


U.S. Glider Seized in South China Sea



On Friday 16 December 2016, using appropriate government-to-government channels, the U.S. Defense Department called upon China to immediately return an unmanned underwater vehicle that it unlawfully seized in the South China Sea, according to Pentagon Press Secretary Peter Cook in a statement.

Earlier, Pentagon press operations director Navy Capt. Jeff Davis told reporters that a Chinese Navy Dalang-III class submarine rescue vessel launched a small boat and retrieved the UUV as the oceanographic survey ship USNS *Bowditch* was attempting to retrieve it and a second UUV in the South China Sea.

The incident occurred in international waters about 50 nautical miles northwest of Subic Bay Naval Air Station in the Philippines, Davis told reporters.

International Law Compliance

"The UUV is a sovereign immune vessel of the United States. We call upon China to return our UUV immediately and to comply with all of its obligations under international law," Cook said. Bridge-to-bridge communications took place between the *Bowditch* and Chinese ships, but demands to have the UUV returned were ignored, according to Davis. "The USNS *Bowditch* and the UUV - an unclassified 'ocean glider' system used around the world to gather military oceanographic data such as salinity, water temperature, and sound speed - were conducting routine operations in accordance with international law," Cook said.

Calls to Return UUV Ignored

Davis said the Chinese ignored repeated U.S. calls for them to return the U.S. property. "It is clearly marked; we'd like to have it back and [would] like this to never happen again. As [the Chinese ship] went sailing off into distance, [it] said, 'We are returning to normal operations,'" Davis said. "We need to find out what the Chinese have to say about it," he said. Davis said the entire incident occurred within a 500-yard area.

Crew members aboard the VOS *Raasay* recover U.S. and British Royal Navy ocean gliders taking part in the Unmanned Warrior exercise off the northwest coast of Scotland, 8 October 2016. A similar unmanned underwater vehicle was seized by the Chinese Navy in international waters off the coast of the Philippines 15 December 2016. Image courtesy: Cmdr. Santiago Carrizosa, US Navy.