

U.S. Fighter Jets and Ships Deployed in the Philippines Against China

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PHL to ask US to deploy fighter jets, ships for Spratlys

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The Philippines will ask for the assistance of the United States to deploy a squadron of fighter jets and two more military ships amid increasing tensions with China in the disputed islands in the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea).

Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario said he will meet with US Secretary of States Hillary Clinton and high officials of Pentagon in his visit to Washington, D.C., early next year to discuss the need to increase the Philippines's military presence in the area.

The request for US military assistance was first discussed during the visit of Clinton in the Philippines in November.

"We're trying to get assistance from several countries [to strengthen military capability] and the US has expressed willingness to assist us as we work on a minimum, credible defense posture [in the disputed islands in West Philippine Sea]," said del Rosario in a press luncheon briefing on Wednesday at a hotel in Pasay City.

He said the Philippines will request two more Hamilton class cutters with the first one delivered mid this year and a squadron or 12 units of fighter jets to be deployed on the disputed islands that are believed to be rich in natural gas and marine resources.

Moves to strengthen the country's military capability came amid Chinese deployment of more navy ships in the disputed Spratly Islands in the South China Sea. "We need to stand up and defend our territorial claims on what we think is ours," said del Rosario.

He also believes that the US foreign policy is to re-engage Asia to a greater extent as it believes that the region has taken the role as key driver of economic growth.

He said the US is also planning to station Marines in Australia and Singapore amid increasing tensions in the disputed Spratly Islands.

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Four Asean members — Philippines, Vietnam, Brunei and Malaysia — are claimants to parts

of Spratly Islands, along with Taipei. China is claiming the entire Spratlys.

Other Asean members include Indonesia, Laos, Cambodia, Singapore, Burma/Myanmar and Thailand.

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