

# *China Denounces U.S. Warship Patrol in South China Sea*

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Beijing, May 10 (RHC)-- China has denounced the United States for sending yet another warship close to an island in the South China Sea, saying the move "threatened peace and stability."

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang told a daily news briefing on Tuesday that the U.S. warship entered the strategic waters without Beijing's permission. Guided-missile destroyer, USS William P. Lawrence, sailed within 12 nautical miles of a land feature in the South China known as Fiery Cross Reef on Tuesday.

U.S. Defense Department spokesman Bill Urban said the voyage was made to "challenge excessive maritime claims of some claimants in the South China Sea." Pentagon claimed that the warship conducted a "routine freedom of navigation operation" near Fiery Cross.

"This action by the U.S. side threatened China's sovereignty and security interests, endangered the staff and facilities on the reef, and damaged regional peace and stability," Kang said.

It is the third time in less than a year that Washington has sent its warships to the sea in a move repeatedly condemned by China as "the real militarization" of the region.

The South China Sea has become a source of tension between China, the U.S., and some other regional countries who are seeking control of trade routes and mineral deposits there.

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