

Chinese military urges U.S. to stop provocative actions in South China Sea

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(Photo: USS John S. McCain / file AFP / US Navy / Gavin Shields)

Beijing, October 11 (RHC)-- China has called on the United States to “restrict military operations in the sea and air” in the South China Sea and to refrain from provocation, after the U.S. destroyer John S.

McCain entered waters around the disputed Paracel Islands.

“We demand the U.S. immediately stop such provocative actions, (and) strictly control and restrict military operations in the sea and air,” a Chinese military spokesperson said in Beijing.

The country’s military will take all measures necessary to safeguard national sovereignty, as well as to maintain peace and stability in the South China Sea, the spokesperson added.

China’s terse reaction was sparked by recent U.S. activities in the disputed region, namely the movements of the USS John S. McCain, which has entered waters around the Paracel Islands, which are claimed by China. Over the past few years, Washington has frequently conducted so-called “freedom of navigation” missions – as well as aerial surveillance missions – in the region, insisting that such operations safeguard marine traffic there.

Beijing, on the contrary, has repeatedly urged the U.S. to halt all military activity in the South China Sea, warning that it only creates further tension in the already-sensitive region. U.S. operations have resulted in multiple maritime and air incidents between American and Chinese militaries.

The resource-rich South China Sea is a constant source of tension among South-Eastern Asian countries. The region is the subject of overlapping territorial and maritime claims by several states, including China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei. Apart from harboring vast natural resources, the region is also an important waterway, with trillions of dollars-worth in trade passing through it each year.

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