

Obama: U.S. To Increase Military Activities In Australia Next Year

By [Global Research](#)

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CANBERRA, Nov. 16 (Xinhua) — The United States is stepping up its commitment in the Asia-Pacific, with U.S. President Barack Obama on Wednesday announcing the United States will boost military activities in Australia from 2012.

In a joint press conference held here after a meeting between Obama and Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard, the pair announced the two countries have agreed to increase joint military initiatives to enhance the alliance between the two nations.

From 2012, the United States will boost its military activities in Australia in stages. A force of around 250 marines will be accommodated and begin training in the Northern Territory of Australia next year.

The U.S. forces, which will bring with them vehicles, ships and aircraft, will then be increased to a battalion strength group of 1,000 by 2014 and will have a 2,500-strong Marine Air-Ground Task Force by 2016.

Exercises will involve joint training and combat operations, live firing, evacuations, disaster relief and humanitarian assistance.

Also over the next two years, more U.S. aircraft will come to Tindal base in Northern Territory for training and exercises.

“The U.S. has no stronger ally than Australia, bound by common values and rights,” Obama said. “With my visit, I am making it clear that the U.S. is stepping up its commitment in the Asia Pacific.”

Gillard said “the increased U.S. presence would reinforce stability in the Asia-Pacific.”

“It will be good for our Australian Defense Force to increase their capabilities, by joint training with the U.S. Marines and personnel,” she said. “It will mean that we are postured to better respond together, along with other partners in the Asia-Pacific, to any regional contingency including the provision of humanitarian assistance and dealing with natural disasters.”

The agreement will not involve a permanent U.S. military base in Australia.

Currently, there are around 300 U.S. military personnel posted in Australia for two to three years at a time.

During Wednesday's bilateral meeting, the two leaders have also discussed global economy, a clean energy future for the two nations and the planet, and the forthcoming East Asia Summit.

Obama arrived in Canberra of Australia on Wednesday afternoon. He will visit Australian War Memorial, and address the parliament on Thursday morning, before visiting Darwin, Northern Territory of Australia. He will then leave for Indonesia on Thursday afternoon.

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