

U.S. Shifts Military Forces, Interceptor Missiles Closer To China

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In an effort to counterbalance China's growing military prowess, the U.S. is working to station naval and Marine forces in the Asia-Pacific region.

The most controversial move, as far as the Chinese are concerned, is the decision to base some of the U.S. Navy's most modern combat ships, littoral combat ships, in Singapore, which possesses strategic importance for shipping.

Singapore sits along the Straits of Malacca, through which thousands of ships pass each year between the Indian and Pacific Oceans. It's also located on the southern edge of the South China Sea, over which Vietnam, the Philippines and other countries have ongoing territorial disputes.

The Department of Defense is still negotiating with Singapore officials to station Littoral Combat Ships at the seven-year-old Changi Naval Base. The vessels can handle missions ranging from anti-piracy to submarine tracking to special operations.

In addition to the naval plans, the U.S. is preparing to permanently base anywhere from 250 to 2,500 Marines in northern Australia. The decision will allow the U.S. to more quickly deploy front-line military forces in the region in the event of a crisis.

The U.S. has already deployed anti-missile systems in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan.

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