

US protests against China landing its military jets in South China Sea

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Washington: The US has expressed concern over China landing its military jets on a man-made island in South China Sea and asked Beijing to keep its prior commitments not to deploy military aircraft at its outposts.

"We're aware that a Chinese military aircraft landed at Fiery Cross Reef on Sunday in what China described as a humanitarian operation to evacuate three ill workers," Pentagon spokesman Capt Jeff Davis told CNN after news reports appeared that China has landed a military jet on a man-made island in the disputed waters of the South China Sea.

"It is unclear why the Chinese used a military aircraft, as opposed to a civilian one," Davis said.

"We urge China to reaffirm that it has no plans to deploy or rotate military aircraft at its outposts in the Spratly's, in keeping with China's prior assurances," he said.

China said it landed a military aircraft on this newly build island for the first time to evacuate three critically ill construction workers.

However, experts here have described this as China asserting its military power in the South China Sea.

The Chinese move comes days after the US Defence Secretary Ashton Carter landed aboard a US aircraft carrier, which experts said was aimed at delivering a message to China.

- PTI