## **RELEASE IN FULL**

From:

Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>

Sent:

Thursday, June 28, 2012 7:11 AM

To:

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Subject:

Fw: China starts "combat ready" patrols in disputed seas (Reuters)

Great.

**From**: OpsNewsTicker@state.gov [mailto:OpsNewsTicker@state.gov]

Sent: Thursday, June 28, 2012 07:04 AM

To: NEWS-Mahogany

**Subject**: China starts "combat ready" patrols in disputed seas (Reuters)

BEIJING (Reuters) - China has begun combat-ready patrols in the waters around a disputed group of islands in the South China Sea, the Defence Ministry said on Thursday, the latest escalation in tensions over the potentially resource-rich area.

Asked about what China would do in response to Vietnamese air patrols over the Spratly Islands, the ministry's spokesman Geng Yansheng said Beijing would "resolutely oppose any militarily provocative behaviour".

"In order to protect national sovereignty and our security and development interests, the Chinese military has already set up a normal, combat-ready patrol system in seas under our control," he said.

"The Chinese military's resolve and will to defend territorial sovereignty and protect our maritime rights and interests is firm and unshakeable," Geng added, according to a transcript posted on the ministry's website (www.mod.gov.cn).

He did not elaborate. The ministry forbids foreign reporters to attend its monthly briefings.

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