

## 《China hits back at U.S. over military plane landing on South》

China hits back at U.S. criticism over a Chinese military aircraft that landed on a reef in the South China Sea, saying dispatching military aircraft for humanitarian purposes is an international norm.



Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying says that the participation of military planes in disaster relief, humanitarian assistance and evacuating civilians is a common practice around the world. She made the comment on Tuesday, April 19, 2016 in response to Pentagon's questioning over China's recent use of a military aircraft but not a civilian one to evacuate sick workers on Yongshu Jiao to Sanya. [Photo:fmprc.gov]

A Chinese navy patrol plane picked up three seriously sick workers on Yongshu Jiao and transported them to Sanya of Hainan Province in south China, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said.

Hua was speaking to reporters when asked to comment on remarks of U.S. Pentagon spokesman Jeff Davis that "it is unclear why the Chinese used a military aircraft, as opposed to a civilian one" to evacuate the workers.

"As we all know, the participation of military planes in disaster relief, humanitarian assistance and evacuating civilians is a common practice around the world," Hua said.

Chinese military aircraft have been frequently seen during earthquake and other disaster relief. On Chinese soil, Chinese military planes and personnel will show up whenever they are needed, Hua said.

"It is the military's responsibility and people's expectation," she said.

The spokesperson questioned why the United States sends military ships and planes, instead of civilian ones, to what they described as efforts to maintain freedom of navigation in the South China Sea.

Hua urged the United States to take real actions to safeguard peace and stability on the sea.

"Serving the people whole-heartedly is the mission of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Rescuing the people in danger is a fine tradition of the PLA," China's Defense Ministry said in a statement on its website.

"When people's lives are at risk, the U.S. is still obsessed with questioning whether a military or civilian plane should be the choice," the defense ministry said, expressing doubt whether the U.S. military would stand aloof if U.S. citizens fell suddenly ill on U.S. soil.

China holds indisputable sovereignty to the Nansha Islands and its surrounding waters. The construction and defense facility deployment on relevant islands and reefs are within China's sovereignty, the ministry said, urging the United States to stop pointing fingers.

