Senate Bill Would Require More DDGs in Rota



The USS Roosevelt returns to Naval Station Rota, Spain, on May 16 after a scheduled underway. The Roosevelt is the first Flight IIA Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer stationed there. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Katie Cox

ARLINGTON, Va. — The Senate Armed Services Committee has marked up its version of the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to require a plan to increase the number of Navy destroyers based in Rota, Spain.

The mark-up, released June 11, "[r]equires the Chief of Naval Operations and Commander of U.S. European Command to submit a detailed plan to base two additional destroyers at our base in Rota, Spain, as soon as practicable."

As part of the NDAA bill, the requirement must be approved by the full Senate, the House of Representatives and the president before it becomes policy.

The Navy currently bases four Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers (DDGs) at Naval Station Rota as units of the U.S. 6th Fleet. One of the primary roles of the ships is to conduct ballistic-missile defense patrols in the Mediterranean Sea in support of European Command.

The Navy is in the process of replacing the four DDGs originally forward-deployed in Rota with more modern versions of the Arleigh Burke class. The USS Roosevelt, a Flight IIA DDG, arrived in Rota on May 16 to replace the USS Carney, a Flight I ship. Other newer DDGs eventually will arrive to replace the USS Ross, USS Donald Cook and USS Porter in Rota.

The Roosevelt is a Flight IIA DDG that brings the Aegis

Baseline 9/Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) 5.1 Advanced Capability Build upgrade to the Aegis Combat System. The system “integrates its weapons and sensors to include Cooperative Engagement Capability; Evolved Sea Sparrow Missile; Mk15 Close-In Weapons System Block 1B; and the Mk41 Vertical Launching System, capable of supporting Standard Missile (SM) 3 and newer variants. These capabilities vastly increase the sea-based BMD force structure and contribute to NATO’s robust integrated air and missile defense (IAMD) architecture,” the release said.

The Roosevelt and the future replacement DDGs will operate MH-60R helicopters. The Navy plans to station a full MH-60R squadron in Rota by the time the three remaining Flight I/II DDGs are replaced in 2022.