

## **US Dispatch Two Ships, Aircraft To Assist MH370 SAR Operation**

**Bernama**

**9 March, 2014**

KUALA LUMPUR, March 9 (Bernama) -- The United States (US) has dispatched two of its navy ships to assist in the search and rescue (SAR) operation of the Malaysian Airlines (MAS) flight MH370, which was reported missing on Saturday.

The US embassy said in a statement Sunday that following a request from the Malaysian Government, the US navy had dispatched the USS Pinckney (DDG 91) and the USNS John Ericsson to assist in the SAR operation.

"We managed to send in our DDG 91, an Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer, to the scene and arrived this afternoon to assist in the search of the area.

"The DDG 91 carries two MH-60R helicopters that can be equipped for search and rescue missions," said the statement.

It said the USNS John Ericsson, a replenishment oilier operated by the Military Sealift Command, had sailed out from Singapore this morning to support the search and rescue efforts.

In addition to both the ships, a US Navy P-3C Orion aircraft that carries long-range search, radar and communications capabilities had departed from the Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, Japan this morning and had begun to search the area, it said.

According to the statement, a team from the National Transportation Safety Board and Federal Aviation Administration were currently enroute to the region to offer assistance.

"The US government continues to closely follow the development regarding the air craft and is assisting the Malaysian Government with search and rescue efforts.

"We extend our thoughts and prayers to the loved ones of those on board the MAS flight," it said.

The search and rescue operation was launched yesterday after MAS Flight MH370, carrying 227 passengers and 12 crew, went missing en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing about an hour after taking off from the KL International Airport at 12.41am Saturday.

It should have landed in Beijing at 6.30am the same day.

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