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A joint military drill between the US and the Philippines begins today, and will last until next Friday, May 15th. The annual exercise is known as 'Shoulder-to-Shoulder' or 'Balikatan' in Filipino.

about 10,000 personnel from both countries are expected to take part. 55 military airplanes from the US will also participate. The Philippines will dispatch two FA-50 fighter jets, which were recently purchased from South Korea.

It is the first time since 2005 that the country has fighter jets participating in the drill. The Filipino military said the US will deploy an M-142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System -- or HIMARS -- for the first time on Palawan island, near the disputed waters of the South China Sea.

Australia will send eighty officers to take part in the drill, after observing last year. Japan has been invited to observe this time around.

