



Bombers supplement NATO forces

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WASHINGTON (AFP) -- Five B-1B Lancer bombers are deploying to Europe to beef up the U.S. contribution to NATO's Operation Allied Force. The planes will depart Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D., and be ready for air operations by April 1.

Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen approved a request from U.S. European Command Commander in Chief Gen. Wesley K. Clark for the additional assets to prosecute the air campaign over the former Republic of Yugoslavia.

The B-1B is an all-weather, long-range strategic bomber capable of flying intercontinental missions without refueling. The aircraft can fly at Mach 1.2 at sea level and carry up to 84 Mark-82 conventional 500-pound bombs as well as 30 antiarmor/artillery cluster bomb unit munitions.

Besides the B-1Bs, four B-52H Stratofortress bombers are moving from Minot AFB, N.D., to Royal Air Force Fairford, England. These B-52Hs, scheduled to arrive March 29, will replace some of the eight B-52H's already at RAF Fairford, which will return to the United States.

The B-52H model is specially designed to fire conventional air-launched cruise missiles, and can carry up to 20 CALCMs; six under each wing and eight internally.

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