

Philippines urges neighbors to stand together more strongly against China in the South China Sea

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said Monday that he had no choice but to defend his country's territory in the South China Sea against what he called Chinese aggression and illegal actions in pursuit of Beijing's own territorial claims.

"It is unfortunate that despite the clarity provided by international law, provocative, unilateral and illegal actions continue to infringe upon our sovereignty, our sovereign rights and jurisdictions," Marcos told the Lowy Institute international policy think tank in the Australian city of Melbourne.

China claims sovereignty over virtually the entire South China Sea, which is one of the world's most crucial waterways for shipping. That has put it at odds with the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei, which all maintain claims to islands, reefs and undersea resources in the region.

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