



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on July 14, 2020

Secretary of State Pompeo Announces New Policy Over China's South China Sea Claims

Secretary of State Michael Pompeo issued a statement on Monday directly and forcefully challenging China's claims to most of the South China Sea:



Today we are strengthening U.S. policy in a vital, contentious part of that region — the South China Sea. We are making clear: Beijing's claims to offshore resources across most of the South China Sea are completely unlawful, as is its campaign of bullying to control them....

Beijing uses intimidation to undermine the sovereign rights of Southeast Asian coastal states [the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, and Vietnam], bully them out of offshore resources, assert unilateral dominion, and replace international law with "might makes right."

In 2009, the Communist Chinese unilaterally and arbitrarily drew a circle around what it considered its sovereign territory, a series of nine dashes on the map of the South China Sea extending from the Paracel Islands (about 200 miles due East of Da Nang, Vietnam), south to Malaysia, curving north to enclose the Spratley Islands and ending 50 miles offshore of Taiwan. The enormous waters see nearly \$5 trillion worth of global trade passing through them every year.

Said Pompeo: "The PRC (Peoples Republic of China) has no legal grounds to unilaterally impose its will on the region. Beijing has offered no coherent legal basis for its 'Nine-Dashed Line' claim in the South China Sea."

The Philippines challenged China's claim at the Permanent Court of Arbitration, which has operated to settle nation-state disputes since 1899. The tribunal ruled in favor of the Philippines. The communists running China rejected the ruling, calling it a "sham."

But now, with the State Department's new alignment, it supports that decision, taking the side of the Philippines, as well as the other affected parties. Said Pompeo:

As the United States has previously stated ... the Arbitral Tribunal's decision is final and legally binding on both parties.

Today we are aligning the U.S. position on the PRC's maritime claims in the SCS (South China Sea) with the Tribunal's decision.

That means that the communists running China cannot lawfully assert their arbitrary claim of sovereignty represented by the "nine-dash lines" it drew in 2009, and "the United States rejects any PRC claim to waters beyond a 12-nautical mile territorial sea," said Pompeo.

He summed up the United States' new foreign policy with respect to the South China Sea:

The world will not allow Beijing to treat the South China Sea as its maritime empire. America



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stands with our Southeast Asian allies and partners in protecting their sovereign rights to offshore resources, consistent with their rights and obligations under international law.

We stand with the international community in defense of freedom of the seas and respect for sovereignty and reject any push to impose “might makes right” in the South China Sea or the wider region.

The new foreign policy “alignment” clearly and unequivocally challenges not only China’s claim to most of the South China Sea but also its move to extend its national sovereignty slowly but inexorably over more and more of the Earth’s surface. Authors Michael Pillsbury and Jonathan Ward are among many now warning of China’s intentions to be the world’s sovereign nation no later than 2049, the 100-year anniversary of its takeover of China.

The new policy threatens China’s Maritime Safety Administration (MSA), which stated that it “considers control of the South China Sea as crucial [not only to] its foreign trade routes [but also to its] aspiration to surpass the U.S. as the dominant military power in the Asia-Pacific region.”

As author Ward noted in his *China’s Vision of Victory*:

The Communist Party’s objective — the objective of one hundred years of national effort — is China’s preeminence.

This is a vision of a world in which China’s “comprehensive national power” is second to none and unconstrained. A Chinese world order ... would mean a world where China has no rival and no peer.

Pompeo’s announcement directly confronts and challenges the communists running China in that effort.

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