

China: U.S. ship broke international law

by UPI

BEIJING - China said Tuesday a U.S. Navy vessel conducting activities in the South China Sea violated international and Chinese maritime laws.

The Pentagon a day earlier said five Chinese vessels blocked and surrounded the Impeccable, a U.S. surveillance ship, in international waters Sunday.

"China has lodged a solemn representation to the United States as the ... Impeccable conducted activities in China's special economic zone in the South China Sea without China's permission," the country's state-run Xinhua news agency quoted Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Ma Zhaoxu as saying. "We demand that the United States put an immediate stop to related activities and take effective measures to prevent similar acts from happening."

The spokesman said the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea and several Chinese laws regulate foreign vessels' activities in China's exclusive economic zones.

The United States and other nations consider most of the South China Sea to be international waters, but China claims an economic exclusion zone extending about 230 miles from its coast, The New York Times (NYSE:NYT) reported.

The Pentagon said the confrontation occurred about 75 miles from the island of Hainan, where China has an underground naval complex.

"It's not clear what the Chinese intentions were," Capt. Jeff Breslau, a spokesman for the U.S. Pacific Command, said Tuesday. "There have been a few incidents over the past week and a half. But who orchestrated this latest one, and why, we don't know."

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