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**BLINKEN TO UNDERLINE ████████ SUPPORT FOR PHILIPPINES AS IT CLASHES WITH CHINA IN DISPUTED SEA**

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Jim Gomez

*Secretary of State Antony Blinken will underscore Washingtons ironclad commitment to its alliance with the Philippines on Tuesday, as clashes between Chinese and Filipino forces in the disputed South China Sea turn more hostile, the U.S. State Department said.*

Blinken, the latest high-level official to visit the U.S. treaty ally, met his Philippine counterpart, Enrique Manalo Tuesday, before planned meetings with Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and other top officials in Manila.

Next month, President Joe Biden will host Marcos and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida in a White House summit amid growing concerns over increasingly aggressive Chinese actions in the South China Sea and North Koreas nuclear program.

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