



ICAS MARITIME AFFAIRS HANDBILL

February 22, 2022

Volume 1, Issue 1

To our readers,

The team at ICAS is proud to present the newly developed **ICAS Maritime Affairs Program (MAP) Handbill!** The MAP Handbill is a monthly newsletter that highlights the major news stories, research products, analyses, and events occurring in and regarding the maritime domain across the past month.

The *first* and largest section of the Handbill compiles and summarizes major 'Recent News in Global Maritime Affairs', organized into four topics:

1. Climate Change and Blue Carbon Economy
2. Maritime Economy and Shipping
3. Ocean Governance and Maritime Cooperation
4. Maritime Security and Defense

The *second* section of the Handbill is a collection of major 'Peer-Reviewed Research on Maritime Issues.' This includes but is not limited to major government releases, expert opinions, and detailed analyses on current issues in global maritime affairs; especially issues that involve the United States and/or China.

The *third* section of the Handbill lists recent and upcoming 'Events on the Maritime Domain' for our readers' awareness and potential interest; especially events that may involve U.S.-China relations.

The *fourth* section of the Handbill, the 'Handbill Spotlight', is a short-form written background and analysis of a specific issue related to maritime affairs. The topic changes with every issue and can be a general concept (UNCLOS, FONOPs, etc.), a specific location (Guam, Djibouti, the Malacca Strait, etc.), or a particular tool (F-35C, ballistic missile, USS 7th Fleet, etc.). The goal of the Spotlight is to help our readers quickly and accurately understand the basic background of a vital topic in maritime affairs and how that topic relates to what is currently happening today.

The *fifth* and final section of the Handbill highlights the new and upcoming activity in the ICAS Maritime Affairs Program from the last month. This can include announcements of new interactive maritime issue tracker maps, upcoming events and event summaries, newly published expert issue briefs and commentaries, and maritime-related media appearances by our ICAS team.

With that, the ICAS Team is excited to share with you the first issue of the ICAS MAP Handbill! We hope that this product will help our readers keep aware of important activity in global maritime affairs, especially as they might relate to the United States and China, and fuel our readers' knowledge to better navigate the vital and complex environment that makes up the maritime domain.

Kind regards,
Jessica Martin - Chief Editor, ICAS MAP Handbill

Recent News in Global Maritime Affairs

[1] Climate Change and Blue Carbon Economy [1]

[U.S. Department of Energy Awards \\$5.7 Million for GE-Led Carbon Capture Technology Integration](#)

February 18 - *Business Ghana*
[United States]

The General Electric (GE) company recently announced that the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Fossil Energy and Carbon Management will be awarding \$5,771,670 to GE's front-end engineering design (FEED) study "Retrofittable Advanced Combined Cycle Integration for Flexible Decarbonized Generation." The funding is focused on carbon capture, utilization, and storage (CCUS) for power generation applications and comes with a goal of reaching commercial deployment by 2030.

[Conservation International Statement on the Creation of the Global Blue Carbon Coalition](#)

February 11 - *Conservation International*
[Global]

At the One Ocean Summit taking place on February 11 in Brest, the governments of Columbia, Costa Rica and France announced the establishment of a Global Blue Carbon Coalition. The Coalition aims at providing climate financing, building scientific and technical capacity, and establishing global standards concerning blue carbon ecosystems such as salt marshes, seagrass beds and mangroves. Other members of the global coalition include Conservation International, AXA, Bank of America, Blue Ventures, Climate Asset Management, IUCN, Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance, and the Voluntary Carbon Markets Integrity Initiative. IOC-Unesco, HSBC and Verra will also join the initial working group.

[The EBRD joins the Clean Oceans Initiative](#)

February 11 - *European Bank for Reconstruction and Development*
[Europe]

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development announced that it would be joining other development banks in the Clean Oceans Initiative (COI)—an initiative launched in 2018 that aims for its participants to collectively invest up to €4 billion by 2025 into projects that prevent plastic waste from polluting the sea.

[Sri Lanka to benefit from Blue Climate Fund](#)

February 7 - *The Island Online*

[South Asia]

In a cross-continent partnership inspired by the UN Climate Agreement and UN Sustainable Goals, Japan's Sojitz Corporation and Nippon Trading East have signed a memorandum of understanding with the Worldview International Foundation (WIF) to begin a Blue Climate Fund for nations in Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Sri Lanka is set to be a primary investment target with a starting capital of \$25 million, which is to go towards planting 25,000 hectares of mangroves in Sri Lanka. Dr. Arne Fjortoft, Secretary General of WIF, calls this Fund “inspiring news for millions of people around the globe.”

[A 'blue carbon' market in Virginia: Eastern Shore seagrass restoration soon to launch first credit program of its kind](#)

February 5 - Yahoo

[United States]

The Nature Conservancy, the University of Virginia and the Virginia Institute of Marine Science under William & Mary College are working with the state of Virginia to launch a carbon credit program linked to seagrass—the first official blue carbon seagrass project in the world.

[Kelp Gets on the Carbon-Credit Bandwagon](#)

February 1 - *Hakai Magazine*

[North America]

On behalf of Canada's Coastal First Nations, the Ostrom Climate Solutions company has been heavily researching just how much kelp and seaweed locks up carbon once it falls to the ocean floor and how eligible this sediment is for carbon credits. Ostrom Climate Solutions is not the only company to be researching seaweed on this subject. Since its founding in 2020, global environmental initiative Oceans 2050 has also been researching seaweed and seaweed farms in 13 countries on five continents, with the majority of these countries being in Asia.

[Australia to recognize carbon credits from new sources including blue carbon](#)

January 19 - *S&P Global*

[South Pacific]

On January 19, the Australian Minister for Industry, Energy and Emissions Reductions announced that Australia's Emissions Reduction Fund strategy will now include coastal wetland carbon sinks in its list of types of projects permitted to generate carbon credits. Australia's carbon market regularly identifies eligible projects that can generate Australian Carbon Credit Units which can then be traded or sold for profit.

[Offsets 'handed out like Monopoly money'](#)

January 19 - *The Naracoorte Herald*

[South Pacific]

Experts are responding with mixed reactions to Canberra's intent behind its recent expansion of the types of projects included in its Emissions Reduction Fund strategy. Polly Hemming of The Australia Institute, who worked in the Department of Industry until 2020, said she has no confidence in the new inclusions given how the government is “grossly overestimating the capacity of coastal ecosystems” to provide blue carbon. Alternatively, Chief Executive Shahana McKenzie of the multi-representative BioEnergy Australia energy group believes it is positive news and hopes that it will “spur on [Australian] development in this space” to match the “thousands of projects” across Europe.

[Community project helps Kenya aim for climate goals one mangrove tree at a time](#)

January 10 - *Mongabay*

[Africa]

After 25 years of consistent mangrove harvesting along the southeastern coast of Kenya for fuelwood and building material, the more than 1,110 acres of mangrove deforestation—more than 10% of its original area—is being felt by the community in recurring floods and reduced population of marine species. Due to this, three villages launched the Vanga Blue Forest reforestation project in 2019. This project, included in Kenya's nationally determined contributions under the 2015 Paris Agreement, also highlights the role of mangroves as a store of blue carbon.

[Magic mangroves a 'blue carbon' buffer for Great Barrier Reef](#)

January 8 - *The Sydney Morning Herald*

[Australia]

Last June, a team of researchers from the University of Wollongong (UOW) visited the Howick Islands far off the northeastern coast of Queensland and, comparing it to past data, discovered that the mangroves there were expanding. Dr. Jeff Kelleway, a professor and researcher at UOW, specifically noted the importance of mangroves in blue carbon development and containment, calling mangroves ‘virtually unmatched’ by any other ecosystem in their ability to store carbon. The team plans to return to the Howick Islands for future research trips with new mapping technologies to learn more about how the region is changing.

[2] Maritime Economy and Shipping [2]

[A cargo ship full of luxury cars is on fire and adrift in the middle of the Atlantic](#)

February 18 - CNN Business

[Europe, United States]

On February 16, about 90 nautical miles southwest of Portugal's Azores islands, the 656 foot-long cargo ship *Felicity Ace* caught fire in the North Atlantic during its trip from Germany to the U.S. state of Rhode Island. The ship, which has the capacity to carry over 17,000 metric tons of cargo, was confirmed to be carrying Porches and Volkswagens. All 22 crew members were forced to abandon the ship with the aid of the Portuguese Navy. The owner is arranging for the ship to be towed to a place where the fire can be safely stopped.

[India and UAE sign major investment pact, over \\$100 billion in bilateral trade](#)

February 18 - CNBC

[South Asia, Middle East]

India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) announced they have signed the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (UAE-India CEPA). This agreement, which is expected to increase bilateral trade to over \$100 billion by 2027, is the first bilateral trade agreement completed by the UAE and India's first in the Middle East and North Africa region. Maritime and air transport services are among the sectors listed that will benefit from the agreement.

[Senate Confirms Federal Maritime Commissioner](#)

February 14 - *Transport Topics*

[United States]

Max Vekich—U.S. President Joe Biden's nominee to serve on the U.S. Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) through 2026—has been confirmed (51-43) by the U.S. Senate. During the confirmation process, Vekich acknowledged the increasingly difficult maritime industry environment: "Recent events have brought attention to challenges exporters face in securing containers for their goods and space aboard ships, as well as the high costs for transporting commodities." With his confirmation, the five-member FMC board now has a 3-2 majority for Democrats.

Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine on the Decision of the Russian Federation to Block Parts of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait

February 10 - Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine

[Eastern Europe]

On February 10, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine released an official statement “strongly” protesting against Russia’s blocking of parts of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait. The statement says that the blocking, which is being done “under the pretext of holding regular naval exercises,” makes the navigation in both seas “virtually impossible” and an “unjustified complication” of international shipping; especially for Ukrainian ports.

Federal Maritime Commission Continues to Grapple with Detention and Demurrage Issues

February 8 - JDSupra

[United States]

During one of their latest meetings in late January, the five-person U.S. Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) addressed ocean carriers’ detention and demurrage practices as well as how to confront insufficient supply chain data transparency. With the COVID-19 pandemic having “fueled” the already increasing supply chain congestion across the transportation industry, U.S. President Biden and the Department of Justice (DOJ) have marked the issue as a priority to resolve. As a result, the FMC signed its first-ever joint memorandum of understanding with the DOJ’s Antitrust Division to, among other factors, promote “healthy competition in the maritime industry.”

Klobuchar Introduces Legislation to Ease Export Shipping Backlogs, Boost U.S. Exports

February 3 - Office of U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar

[United States]

In the first week of February, U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar introduced a new legislation to “update federal regulations for the global shipping industry” to help with American exports to the international market. The new legislation was inspired by supply chain “disruptions and vulnerabilities” especially seen in the last two years and the reports of ocean carriers returning to Asia with empty containers instead of agricultural or other Western products.

Los Angeles and Shanghai Plan World’s First Green Shipping Corridor

January 31 - *The Maritime Executive*

[Global]

In the wake of the COP26 conference, the Port of Los Angeles and the Port of Shanghai have agreed to a partnership that aims to mitigate air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions in

maritime shipping. Among other items, the partnership sets a goal of developing a “Green Shipping Corridor Implementation Plan” by the end of 2022 and launching the world’s first zero-carbon trans-Pacific containerships by 2030. C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, launched in 2019 by 100 of the world’s mayors, is leading this initiative.

2022 shipping costs ‘will be higher than ever before’

January 13 - *Seatrade Maritime News*

[Global]

According to Peter Sand, chief analyst at Xeneta Shipping Index, the average cost of shipping in 2022 will be “higher than ever before” due to shippers’ difficulties to secure shipping capacity and container lines’ heavy focus on long-term rates. “Shippers should brace for sharp increases in the rates they are paying,” says Sand, as transpacific rates remain well above pre-pandemic levels.

MSC Recognized as World’s Largest Container Line Surpassing Maersk

January 5 - *The Maritime Executive*

[Global]

As of the start of 2022, the Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) is now regarded as the world’s largest containership company by capacity, peaking out ahead of Maersk—who has led the rankings for decades—by just 1,888 TEU. Founded in 1970 with one vessel, MSC’s current fleet includes 645 ships with a rated capacity of 4,284,728 TEU. MSC reports that it pays call at 500 ports on more than 230 trade routes, transporting more than 23 million TEU per year along the way.

Saudi Ports Authority signs deal to ease settlement of commercial maritime disputes

January 2 - *The National News*

[Middle East]

The Saudi Ports Authority, also known as Mawani, announced the signing of a preliminary agreement with the Saudi Centre for Commercial Arbitration to help better resolve maritime-related disputes. At its core, the agreement focuses on establishing an “appropriate environment” and exploring different avenues for efficient and effective dispute resolution related to maritime trade in the biggest Arab economy.

[3] Ocean Governance and Maritime Cooperation [3]

[Sullivan's Island votes to take legal action against controversial maritime forest settlement](#)

February 16 - NBC News 2
[United States]

Residents and town officials in Sullivan's Island, South Carolina have hired an attorney to find a way to de-legalize the cutting of Sullivan's Island Maritime Forest. An attorney was hired after a large section of forest described as "roughly the width of a house" was cleared. The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, which recently suggested local discussions be held on the matter, said they have not received any tree cutting permits themselves.

[Tanzania: President Calls for Improved Ocean Governance](#)

February 12 - All Africa
[Africa]

On February 11, Tanzania's president Samia Suluhu Hassan participated in the High Level Segment session of the three-day One Ocean Summit in Brest, France. During the session, President Samia called the ocean "a common good" and also talked about the need for improved ocean governance. A statement issued by Dar es Salaam earlier that week noted that the governments of Tanzania and France would be signing agreements on development projects and cooperation in the blue economy during the Summit.

[U.S. resumes mediation efforts in Israel-Lebanon maritime dispute](#)

February 2 - Axios
[Middle East]

The U.S. has resumed its efforts to mediate a dispute between Israel and Lebanon over their maritime border. The two countries began talks in 2020 to resolve their dispute over a 330 square-mile wedge in the eastern Mediterranean potentially rich with natural gas reserves, but talks stalled due to the pandemic and political instability in Beirut. Since the current Lebanese government softened its maritime claims last November, U.S. State Department energy envoy Amos Hochstein—the lead U.S. mediator—is pushing for a resolution to the dispute before Lebanon's upcoming parliamentary elections in May.

[Panel: New U.S. South China Sea Report Designed to Push Back Against Beijing's Expansive Claims](#)

January 25 - USNI News
[South China Sea]

In January, the U.S. Department of State released a report explaining the legal rationale behind its challenge of China's maritime claims in the South China Sea. The report, the 150th issue of the State Department's *Limits in the Seas* series, argues that China's maritime claims have "no basis in law" and are inconsistent with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). State Department officials described the report as a much-needed update to a similar report from 2014, as Beijing's maritime policy has grown "more aggressive" since then.

[University of Portsmouth professor to help meet global challenges as UNESCO Chair in Ocean Governance](#)

January 5 - University of Portsmouth *The News*
[Global]

Professor Pierre Failler, Professor of Economics and Director of the Centre for Blue Governance at the University of Portsmouth, is set to be named the next UNESCO Chair in Ocean Governance. Commenting on the announcement, Failler explained "[t]he Chair means that we will be working in close partnership with UNESCO officials to improve the governance of the world's oceans...At the moment intentions are good but too fragmented. It's time for countries and science to stop working in isolation and work together."

[4] Maritime Security and Defense [4]

[India Gets First National Maritime Security Coordinator](#)

February 16 - NDTV
[South Asia]

A year after the creation of the post was approved by India's Cabinet Committee on Security, New Delhi has appointed Vice Admiral (ret'd) G Ashok Kumar as India's first national maritime security coordinator (NMSC). G Ashok Kumar is a recently retired former Navy vice chief and, in his new post, is tasked to coordinate between India's Navy, Coast Guard, other security agencies involved in maritime security, and 13 coastal states and Union Territories.

[Bennett touts maritime security cooperation with US](#)

February 8 - *The Times of Israel*
[Middle East]

Israel's Prime Minister Naftali Bennett announced that Israel is working alongside the US Navy's 5th Fleet and regional allies such as Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates to counter threats at

sea “in sailing and shipping lanes.” Although he did not specifically give a name to the perpetrators, it is suspected that the statements are in reference to attacks against Israeli-owned ships allegedly conducted by Iran in response to reported Israeli strikes on Iranian fuel tankers.

[US Navy wants to get crashed stealth fighter back -- before China can](#)

January 26 - CNN

[South China Sea]

During routine operations, an F-35C—the US Navy’s newest jet with a price point of \$100 million—crash-landed on the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson, soon after falling to the ocean floor in the highly contested South China Sea. The pilot and six sailors aboard the carrier were injured. As the Navy work to salvage the plane swiftly, analysts explain concerns that China would try to locate, survey, or recover the plane for itself. Once an American salvage vessel arrives, recovery of the plane could take up to 120 days.

[Tekever raises \\$23M for industrial drone technology optimized for maritime surveillance](#)

January 24 - Tech Crunch

[South America]

Tekever, a Portuguese drone development company that specializes in developing AI for drones for maritime deployment, has raised \$23 million from a variety of strategic investors from the maritime industry to continue their work. The fundraising is a sign of expanding interest in the field and a wider breadth of business opportunities—government and commercial—for drones made for maritime deployment.

[2 U.S. Aircraft Carriers Now in South China Sea as Chinese Air Force Flies 39 Aircraft Near Taiwan](#)

January 24 - USNI News

[South China Sea]

After conducting joint exercises in the Philippine Sea the prior week, two US Navy carrier strike groups—Carl Vinson and Abraham Lincoln—began dual carrier operations in the South China Sea on January 23. On the same day, Taiwan said China’s PLA Air Force flew 39 planes into Taiwan’s air defense identification zone.

[U.S. Navy Denies Chinese Claims of Expelling Destroyer From Waters Near Paracel Islands](#)

January 20 - USNI News
[South China Sea]

In late January, China's People Liberation Army (PLA) Navy made a public statement that they "warned...off" the American destroyer USS *Benfold* away from islands in the South China Sea after the destroyer "trespassed into China's territorial waters." The PLA Navy spokesman said they "solemnly demand the US side to immediately stop such provocative actions," repeating their intent to "safeguard China sovereignty." The US Navy denied this claim, stating that the USS *Benfold* was conducting a FONOP "in accordance with international law." The US Navy spokesman said that the statement "is the latest in a long string of PRC actions to misrepresent lawful U.S. maritime operations and assert its excessive and illegitimate maritime claims."

[India joins Quad partners, Japan and South Korea for Sea Dragon exercise](#)

January 7 - Hindustan Times
[Asia-Pacific, North America]

The members of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, or Quad (United States, India, Japan and Australia) participated in joint multinational naval exercise Sea Dragon 2022 with Canada and South Korea. While the exercise, held this year at Andersen Air Force Base in Guam, mainly focuses on anti-submarine warfare training, as explained by Japanese Commander Tomoyuki Michiyama, it also works to "strengthen cooperation and deepen mutual understanding among the participating navies and air forces."

Peer-Reviewed Research on Maritime Issues

- Government Release: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs - [Limits in the Seas No. 150: People's Republic of China: Maritime Claims in the South China Sea](#) [January 2022]
 - [Limits in the Seas No. 150 State Supplement](#)
 - [Chinese translation of the Limits in the Seas No. 150 Executive Summary](#)
- Government Release: Congressional Research Service - [China Naval Modernization: Implications for U.S. Navy Capabilities—Background and Issues for Congress](#) [January 20]
- Press Release: The World Bank - ["Croatia Has Potential to Become a Blue Economy Champion in the European Union"](#) [January 19]
- Opinion: ["Conservatives need a climate plan that will position Canada for a future of clean growth"](#) [*The Globe and Mail* - February 18]

- Opinion: [“China Coast Guard: On a trajectory for peace or conflict?”](#) [Center for International Maritime Security - February 16]
- Opinion: [“Time to follow through on NOAA’s marine conservation and the blue economy plan”](#) [The Hill - January 28]
- Opinion: [“Isn’t the Earth more blue than green, then why focus on the green economy first?”](#) [The Times of India - January 26]
- Opinion: [“Maritime Monitoring: AIS Implications of China’s New Data Policy”](#) [9Dashline - January 25]
- Opinion: [“Whether green, blue, or turquoise, hydrogen needs to be clean and cheap”](#) [Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists - January 21]
- Opinion: [“Modern governments all need a ministry of the oceans – here’s why”](#) [The Conversation - January 10]
- Opinion: [“Is Economic Growth Compatible With Decarbonization?”](#) [The Maritime Executive - January 2]
- Opinion: [“The Need for Chinese Stakeholder Participation in Maritime Environmental Governance”](#) [Modern Diplomacy - January 1]
- Analysis: [“Seabed mining equity dilemmas in the Pacific”](#) [Eco-Business - February 2]
- Analysis: [“Governing the Blue Economy in Alaska and North Norway”](#) [The Arctic Institute - January 18]
- Analysis: [“Mastering Expeditionary IUU Fisheries Enforcement in the Bahamas”](#) [Center for International Maritime Security - January 18]
- Analysis: [“The Indo-Pacific region, maritime focus, and ocean governance”](#) [Observer Research Institute - January 8]
- Analysis: [“Magic mangroves a ‘blue carbon’ buffer for Great Barrier Reef”](#) [The Sydney Morning Herald - January 8]

Events on the Maritime Domain



- On January 18, the Ocean Policy Research Institute of The Sasakawa Peace Foundation and Japan Society of Ocean Policy co-hosted an online symposium [ECOP Japan Symposium: Toward creating ECOP network in UN Decade of Ocean Science](#). An English-language summary and recording of the event is available.
- From February 9-11, the French Government alongside the United Nations held its [One Ocean Summit](#) in Brest, France and Online where various high-level global leaders and experts [gathered](#) to speak, discuss and “promote a cleaner, healthier and safer ocean.”
- From February 16-18, the U.S. Naval Institute and AFCEA International held their 32nd annual [WEST 2022](#) conference in San Diego, California where senior officials from the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security participated in panels and gave keynote discussions for operators and industry leaders.
- On February 24 (JST), the Ocean Policy Research Institute of The Sasakawa Peace Foundation will be holding an online seminar on [Building Ocean Big Data for Making Marine Policy](#).

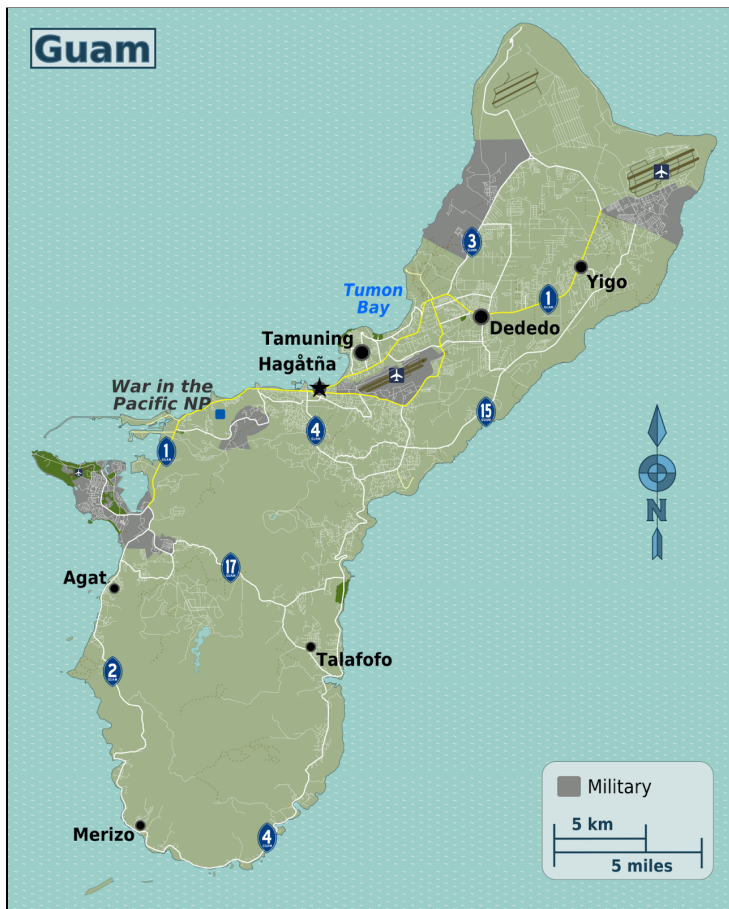
- On February 24, Pacific Forum will be hosting its [U.S.-Singapore Tech & Innovation Virtual Dialogue #4: Advancing Sustainable and Equitable Digital Solutions](#), held with support from the U.S. Embassy Singapore.
- From March 16-17, Asia Pacific Maritime (APM) will be holding its [2022 Conference](#) in-person in and online from Singapore, which is set to bring experts together to discuss various topics on maritime and shipping affairs.
- From March 22-23, Oceanology International will be holding their virtual conference [Connecting The Global Ocean Technology Community](#) that brings together businesses, academics and government players in ocean technology. The conference will also be held in-person in London, Excel from March 15-17.
- On March 31, South China Morning Post will host its [Climate Change Hong Kong Summit](#) to be held in person in Hong Kong.
- From April 26-28, the DSNAM Foundation and MARLOG will be holding the [7th World Maritime Technology Conference](#) in Denmark.

Handbill Spotlight

Issue Background ¹

Guam, a 210 square mile island located in the Micronesia subregion of the Pacific Ocean, is the southernmost of the Mariana Islands and the largest island in Micronesia. It is also located within the Second Island Chain in the Pacific. In 1898, after almost four centuries under Spanish rule, it [became a territory](#) of the United States following Spain's defeat in the Spanish-American War as part of the Treaty of Paris of 1898. Thereafter, Guam swiftly became a vital maritime port for merchants and warships alike traveling throughout the region and, except for a brief time when it was under Japanese control during World War II, has since been the westernmost point of the United States' territory.

A few years after it was recaptured from the Japanese, the [Guam Organic Act of 1950](#) was put into U.S. federal law. This



¹ Image Source: Map of Guam, [Wikipedia Commons, CC4.0, Peter Fitzgerald](#)

Act redesignated Guam as an unincorporated territory of the U.S. and established a legislature, governorship, and judiciary system for Guam. The Act also grants U.S. citizenship to residents of Guam and includes a limited Bill of Rights though, as residents of a territory, residents of Guam cannot vote in U.S. federal elections. Today, it is home to 168,000 Americans and known most as a tourist destination and small-scale U.S. military outpost for the Indo-Pacific.

Recent Events

Today, Guam primarily operates as a military outpost and tourist destination. As an official U.S. territory, it still [receives funds](#) from the U.S. Department of the Interior and [other programs](#) for sustainment of and developments on the island. And even [amidst](#) the [fight against a pandemic](#), Guam is an increasingly active and vital [port](#) for the U.S. military's operations in the Pacific.

Travel restrictions due to the pandemic have naturally caused most recent activity in Guam to be centered around naval deployments and exercises rather than economic or tourist engagements. For instance, Naval Port Guam was the [chosen port](#) for the aircraft carrier USS *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN-71) for 2 months during the early days of the pandemic. From January 2020 to December 2021, Unmanned Patrol Squadron (VUP) 19—the US Navy's first MQ-4C Triton squadron—[conducted a deployment](#) including “large, high-altitude surveillance drones” that was “mostly conducted out of Guam.” This past January, Anderson Air Force Base was the site of the [joint multinational naval exercise](#) Sea Dragon 2022 involving the U.S., India, Japan, Australia, Canada and South Korea. Last December, the Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine USS *Jefferson City* (SSN-759) officially [moved its homeport](#) from Joint Base Pearl Harbor–Hickam, where it has been since 2014, to Naval Base Guam. According to a news release, the change of homeport is part of the Navy's focus “to bring [the United States'] most capable submarines to theater with the greatest amount of striking power and operational capability to beat in the timeliest manner.” And a few weeks later, a [port visit](#) by the ballistic-missile submarine USS *Nevada* (SSBN-733) made it the first visit by an Ohio-class since 2016. Analyst Thomas Shugart [noted](#) that, intended or not, visits like the *Nevada*'s “sends a message” of the U.S. military's capabilities in and access to the Pacific. The U.S. military has not been quiet in Guam.

Keep In Mind

For most, Guam remains under the radar; often misunderstood, or even looked over entirely. Its small size and far-out location makes this understandable. For most Americans, the small, far-off island might bring to mind an exotic retreat, but many may be unable to confidently confirm that it is indeed an official territory of the United States. Fewer still could successfully point it out on a map. Could you?

The strategic importance of its location is clear when reviewing World War II. Days after the attack on Pearl Harbor that sparked the United States' participation in World War II, Guam came under Japanese control and [remained](#) in that position for most of World War II. In the summer of 1944, the U.S. returned to reclaim the Marianas and Guam in what became known as the [Battle of Guam](#) that officially ended with Japan's surrender of the war on August 10, 1944. Militaries do not battle over worthless locations; especially ones so far from their homes and backup support.

Now that the world fights across cyber channels more than water channels, and now that decades of research and development has rapidly expanded military equipment's capabilities, perhaps Guam's unique vantage point and strategically sound location is not as vital as it once was. But forgetting its presence—and its potential—is a mistake.

Regarding Guam's place in the U.S.-China strategic competition, multiple experts, including the past two commanders of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, have specifically pointed to China as an upcoming, increasing threat to Guam. When it comes down to it, Guam is the farthest point West—and the only place in the West Pacific—where the U.S. military has the ability to freely and independently aggregate its forces. It has already been repeatedly [targeted](#) by North Korea in recent years and, while facing the coming years, military leaders have specifically cited China's rapid hypersonic technology development as a point of concern.

As Deputy Commander of USINDOPACOM Marine Lt. Gen. Stephen Sklenka [emphasized](#) last December, “[t]hose aren't idle threats. Those are based off of events that we're seeing unfold around us right now.” And Washington agrees. These ‘events’ are why the Department of Defense has [committed](#) about \$11 billion in funding for military construction projects on Guam over the next five years. At the top of these new projects is the new [Marine Corps Base Camp Blaz](#), which was activated in October 2020—the Corps' first new installation [since 1952](#)—and is set to house 5,000 marines and a strong regional defense agenda. How this funding is spent will be a hefty indicator of the role that Guam will play in the big picture of U.S. national security; especially as it relates to the United States' interactions with China and the rest of Asia.

So, is Guam arming up to be the United States' [“new front line against China”](#)? It appears time—and Guam's upcoming development projects—will tell.

This issue's Spotlight was written by Jessica Martin, ICAS Research Assistant & Chief Editor of the MAP Handbill

ICAS Maritime Affairs Program: New and Upcoming

— ICAS Program Announcement —

Introducing the ICAS Blue Carbon & Climate Change Program!

ICAS is proud to announce the release of the **ICAS Blue Carbon and Climate Change (BCCC) Program!** In this program, our core

program staff and external program partners will explore pathways for sustainably developing the blue carbon economy and combating climate change through open dialogue and novel policy research. Most prominently, the program endeavors to find new pathways for multilateral

The logo for the ICAS Blue Carbon & Climate Change Program (BCCC) features the letters 'BCCC' in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font. The letters are set against a dark background with a subtle, circular, ripple-like pattern in shades of blue and purple.

**ICAS BLUE CARBON &
CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAM**

engagement and mediation in areas of competition to promote mutually beneficial cooperation on climate change where possible.

The program will feature four primary projects:

1. [BCCC Quarterly](#): Each quarter, ICAS will release a newsletter which will record the most important trends and developments regarding blue carbon policies and regulations in China, the U.S., and other regions, as well as international regimes such as the United Nations. The ICAS team will also produce a Chinese language version of this product to disseminate to an Asian audience so that both sides have access to our research.
2. [BCCC Research](#): The BCCC Program Team will release multiple commentaries, issue briefs, and reports each year that explore the complexities and emerging news in the field of blue carbon.
3. [BCCC Events](#): Hosted periodically throughout the year, ICAS Blue Carbon & Climate Change (BCCC) events promote the free and equal exchange of ideas on policy pathways for sustainably developing the blue carbon economy and combating climate change, especially as they relate to or involve the United States, China, and other regions.
4. [BCCC Media](#): ICAS Blue Carbon & Climate Change media projects include but are not limited to short-form periodicals and Twitter campaigns.

Explore the BCCC Home Page to learn more:

<https://chinaus-icas.org/icas-blue-carbon-climate-change-program/>

— Upcoming ICAS Event —

Information regarding a virtual, inaugural event introducing the ICAS Blue Carbon & Climate Change Program, to include expert discussion with our staff and fellows, will be announced soon!

Subscribe to stay informed of our events, projects, regular newsletters, and program updates:

<https://chinaus-icas.org/subscribe/>

— Maritime Issue Brief —

Having its Cake and Eating it Too: The U.S. and State Practice in Outlying Archipelagos

By Alec Caruana

January 18, 2022

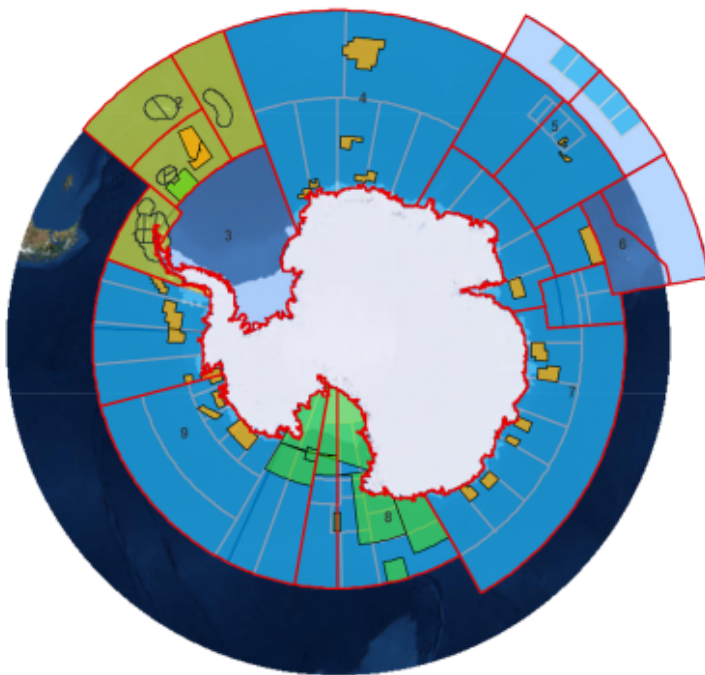
Key Takeaways

- The *State Practice Supplement to Limits in the Seas no. 150*, released by the U.S. State Department on January 12, advances a critique of China's maritime claims in the South China Sea that departs from Washington's previous rationale.
- While the U.S. has historically interpreted UNCLOS as prohibiting continental states from applying straight baselines to their outlying archipelagos across the board, the *State Practice Supplement* instead engages Chinese maritime claims on the level of *de-facto* state practice and its capacity to generate customary international law which contradicts the Convention.

- The supplement relies primarily on drawing distinctions on the bases of archipelagic geography and *opinio juris* in an attempt to isolate Beijing's claims as unique in their excesses and reliance on customary norms.
- This document demonstrates the Biden Administration's willingness to bring the U.S. position on international maritime law away from a 'purist' reading of UNCLOS and more in line with the sensitivity to general state practice seen in the rest of the world.
- This new formulation seems to be motivated by a desire in Washington to allow for some more pragmatically lax interpretations of UNCLOS while still maintaining the United States' credibility as a champion of international maritime law, a useful tool in its campaign against Beijing's 'excessive maritime claims.'
- While the supplement is a step in the right direction, several argumentative flaws still undergird where the U.S. draws the line between 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' baseline practice. These contradictions must be resolved if China is going to respond to U.S. criticism in good faith.

Read Online: <https://chinaus-icas.org/research/having-its-cake-and-eating-it-too/>

— Maritime Issue Tracker Announcement —



Announcing Phase 2 of the ICAS MAP Antarctic Issue Tracker: Marine Conservation

ICAS is proud to launch Phase 2 of its Antarctic Maritime Issue Tracker! In light of the growing importance of Antarctica and its living resources, the new Marine Conservation Tracker details the CCAMLR systems that govern the conservation and sustainable management of marine living resources in Antarctica.

Accompanying this tracker release is a new commentary by Research Associate Matt Geraci on the roles that the United States and China play in Antarctic maritime governance and marine conservation regimes.

Explore Phase 2: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/6fa05ed66f5b4c858d729e0da8fc9e92>

– MAP Commentary –

The Roles of the United States and China in Antarctic Maritime Governance

By Matt Geraci

February 3, 2022

When ecosystem management and marine life conservation come to mind, Antarctica and its surrounding waters are rarely considered by the average person. However, as one of the few relatively pristine ecosystems left in the world, Antarctica's fisheries are becoming increasingly important as ocean warming could cause catch from the world's fisheries to decline by as much as 24.1 percent in the 21st century, according to the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Add in the compounding effects of overfishing and illegal fishing, and the maximum catch yield could be further impacted. Communities dependent on fishing for their income, livelihoods, and food security would be significantly affected by such a decline, not to mention the potential global economic consequences for a critical industry to decline so drastically. Maintaining the massive ocean and sea regions surrounding Antarctica is essential to mitigate these impacts...

...In light of the growing importance of Antarctica and its living resources, the Institute for China-America Studies has expanded its Antarctic Maritime Issue Tracker to include a visualized and interactive information tool for understanding the role that CCAMLR plays in sustainably managing fisheries and encouraging collaborative scientific research.

Read Online:

<https://chinaus-icas.org/research/the-roles-of-the-united-states-and-china-in-antarctic-maritime-governance/>

– MAP Commentary –

A Different Approach to UNCLOS

By Nong Hong

January 19, 2022

On Jan. 12, the U.S. State Department released a study – Limits in the Sea No.150 – regarding China's maritime claims in the South China Sea. It concluded that the claims are plainly inconsistent with international law as reflected in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Most of the critiques in the study, based on the U.S. presumption of China's articulation of its South China Sea maritime claims following the arbitration in 2016, is not really much different from other governmental statements or announcements by the United States since that time....

In the context of the South China Sea, the question of whether the ratification of UNCLOS will deprive a coastal state of a claimed historical right is a typical example of the weight given to treaty law and customary international law. The question is who gets to write the codes on the rules-based order.

Read Online: <https://chinaus-icas.org/research/a-different-approach-to-unclos/>

— MAP Academic Engagement —

Who Owns Antarctica? The Geopolitics of the Seventh Continent

Tuesday, April 5, 2022

6:00am – 8:00am EST

On April 5, 2022, ICAS Executive Director Dr. Nong Hong will be participating in a Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies conference “Who Owns Antarctica? The Geopolitics of the Seventh Continent” alongside other expert speakers. She will be discussing the important question: “Will China Compete for the Poles?”

Learn more about the event and the other speakers:

<https://chinaus-icas.org/event/dr-nong-hong-to-speak-at-the-graduate-institute-genevas-who-owns-antarctica-the-geopolitics-of-the-seventh-continent-conference/>

Register to watch:

<https://www.graduateinstitute.ch/communications/events/who-owns-antarctica-geopolitics-seventh-continent>