



ICAS MARITIME AFFAIRS HANDBILL

March 28, 2023

Volume 2, Issue 3

Recent News in Global Maritime Affairs

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

[Maritime, mining, steel, and energy industry leaders join forces to develop first-ever concept for a green corridor between South Africa and Europe](#)

Month 23 - *Hellenic Shipping News*

[Africa, Europe]

Top industry leaders from the maritime, mining, steel and energy sectors came together at the Global Maritime Forum to specifically explore concepts for South Africa-EU green corridor development. Maritime green corridors are quickly becoming recognized as “one of the most important tools to aid industry and governments in the decarbonization of the maritime sector.”

[Changes in mangrove blue carbon under elevated atmospheric CO₂](#)

March 20 - *Phys.org*

[Global, China]

Amidst a continually changing global environment, a group of scientists at Xiamen University have been studying the influence of elevated atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations on mangrove blue carbon production and climate change mitigation.

[Plastic paving: Egyptian startup turns millions of bags into tiles](#)

March 20 - *Reuters* [Paywall]

[North Africa, Mediterranean]

Egyptian startup company TileGreen is aiming to turn more than 5 billion plastic bags into tiles by 2025, having already recycled more than 5 million bags, to reduce waste going into the Mediterranean Sea.

[Operationalizing underwater hyperspectral imaging for blue carbon solutions](#)

March 17 - Hydro International

[Europe]

After five years of development, German technology startup company planblue is ready to release its underwater hyperspectral imaging (UHI) surveying platform and AI-driven automated data processing system to the market. The 'DiveRay' application, ranging in fields from plastic waste detection to coral reef biodiversity, was decided to initially be focused on the blue carbon market.

[Coastal city taps market for blue carbon](#)

March 17 - *China Daily*

[China]

On March 14, the Chinese coastal city of Ningbo auctioned off 2,340 metric tons of "blue carbon" credits; a concept first introduced in a report collaboration with the United Nations. A relatively new market in China, these credits were generated by three varieties of algae at Xihu Port and marks the first time a blue carbon credit has been auctioned in China.

[ENI installs wave energy converter off Italian coast](#)

March 15 - *Sea Technology*

[Europe]

Eni, an energy company based in Italy, has successfully finished installing the world's first Inertial Sea Wave Energy Converter (ISWEC) connected to the electricity grid of an island. The ISWEC is located about 800 meters off the coast of the Italian island of Pantelleria and can "reach 260 kW of peak power generation converted from wave energy."

[Ghana to grow mangroves to revive fish stocks, increase carbon storage](#)

March 13 - ESI

[Africa]

Supported by the World Bank's US\$13.5 million Mangrove Blue Carbon Pilot Programme and several financial supporters, Ghana is set to plant 3,000 hectares of mangroves along its coast. The increase in carbon storage is expected to help restore its fish habitats and protect its marine environment.

[There are 21,000 pieces of plastic in the ocean for each person on Earth](#)

March 8 - *The Washington Post* [Paywall]

[Global]

A new major study released by a group of international researchers concludes that roughly 2.4 million metric tons of plastic particles are currently in the Earth's oceans. The study pulls from almost 12,000 samples collected across 40 years of research in all major ocean basins.

[Huawei's Green Target Network and 5G Smart Ocean Projects Win Multiple GTI Awards](#)

March 3 - Huawei Technologies

[China, Global]

At the Mobile World Congress Barcelona 2023, Huawei Green Target Network's 5G Smart Ocean project won the GTI 'Market Development Award' for its “outstanding contributions to the digital transformation of the maritime industry.”

[Sunken Philippine tanker leaks industrial fuel oil into sea](#)

March 2 - Channel News Asia

[Southeast Asia]

After the Philippine tanker *Princess Empress* sank in rough seas off the coast of Oriental Mindoro province on March 2, it was discovered that some of its diesel fuel as well as some of the 800,000 liters of industrial fuel it had been carrying had leaked into the surrounding coastal sea.

[2] Maritime Economy and Shipping [2]

[Blue economy opportunities are significant: NDA Commandant](#)

March 25 - *The Hindustan Times* [Paywall]

[South Pacific]

At a college workshop series, the commandant of India's National Defence Academy explained how opportunities in the blue economy in the Indian Ocean region are bright. He also noted that “effectively harnessing the blue economy, sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improving livelihoods...necessitates maritime governance and responsible resource management.”

[Taiwan exports to India keep rising as rest of world orders less](#)

March 20 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]

[South Asia, East Asia, Global]

In 2022, India imported nearly 18% more from Taiwan, year on year, as Taiwan's global exports simultaneously saw a 18.3% decline. Taiwanese manufacturers have also begun opening plants in India. Most of the shift is accredited to India's growing economy and consumer interest in electronics following almost three years of tight Covid-19 controls.

[Australia Bans Dutch Cargo Ship in Safety Crackdown](#)

March 20 - *The Maritime Executive*

[South Pacific, Europe, Global]

In the latest effort to move forward with “crackdown on poor performers in the maritime industry,” the Australian Maritime Safety Authority has issued a 90-day ban to the Dutch-flagged general cargo ship the *Flevogracht* due to a defective rescue boat engine.

[New shipping deal aims to decarbonise maritime industry with biofuels](#)

March 17 - *gasworld*

[Global, Europe]

The Mediterranean Shipping Company and the Global Centre for Maritime Decarbonisation (GCMD) have signed a five-year Impact Partnership agreement “committed to helping tackle climate change and...help drive the green transition” in the shipping industry. “Despite economic uncertainties, decarbonising shipping will need liners...to make hard commitments for the industry to progress towards IMO’s 2030 and 2050 goals,” explains GCMD’s CEO.

[Large cruise vessel building seen as milestone](#)

March 16 - *China Daily*

[China]

China has almost completed construction of its first domestically built large, Vista-class cruise ship. The ship is expected to set multiple first-time achievements, including China’s largest duty-free shopping center aboard an oceangoing vessel and the world’s first cruise ship with complete coverage by a 5G network.

[Amazon becomes a founding member of the Zero Emission Maritime Buyers Alliance](#)

March 15 - *Splash 247*

[Global, United States]

Amazon, along with clothing firm Patagonia, German coffee chain Tchibo and non-profit organization Aspen Institute, have founded the Zero Emission Maritime Buyers Alliance (ZEMBA). Part of the Cargo Owners for Zero Emissions Vessels (coZEB) initiative, ZEMBA is looking for other freight buyers to join.

[MSC Takes Delivery of the World’s Biggest Ultra Large Container Ship](#)

March 13 - *The Maritime Executive*

[Global, Europe]

On March 9, Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) took delivery of the MSC *Irinia*, the world’s biggest “ultra large” container ship with a carry capacity of 24,346 TEU (twenty-foot equivalent unit). The MSC *Irinia* is part of MSC’s continued expansion that is expected to continue in coming months.

[China to develop dredger ‘more powerful than artificial island-builder of South China Sea’](#)

March 12 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]

[China, South China Sea]

China’s Tianjin Waterway Bureau, a subsidiary of the state-owned China Communications Construction Company, has announced that they are developing the Tian Kun, a dredger 50% more powerful than its existing “super island builder” vessel, the Tian Jing.

[South Korea breaks China's dominance in February to steal No 1 spot for global ship orders](#)

March 9 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]

[East Asia, China, Global]

In February, South Korean shipbuilders received orders for 34 ships totalling 1.56 million compensated gross tonnage (CGT), equal to about 74% of all global orders last month, while Chinese counterparts received orders for nine vessels, equal to about 8%. Comparatively, in the previous month, China booked 45% of global shipbuilding orders while South Korea booked 33%.

[UAE issues new law on Dubai Ports Authority to boost maritime trade](#)

March 2 - *Arab News*

[Middle East]

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, vice president and prime minister of the United Arab Emirates, has issued a new law designed to “advance the Dubai Ports Authority’s position as a leading global model in port operation, management, and terminal handling.” Among other changes, the law formally affiliates Drydocks World-Dubai, a part of DP World, with Dubai Ports Authority.

[3] Ocean Governance and Maritime Cooperation [3]

[Taiwan calls on Britain to support its bid for Pacific trade pact](#)

March 20 - *Reuters* [Paywall]

[East Asia, Europe]

On March 20, Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen called on Britain to support its bid for a major "pan-Pacific free trade pact", the CPTPP, that London has already applied to enter. China opposes Taiwan joining the pact separate from China.

[Indonesia, South Korea strengthen cooperation in maritime affairs](#)

March 14 - *Antara News*

[South Asia, East Asia]

On March 13, top government representatives from Indonesia's and South Korea's maritime affairs industries held an annual joint commission meeting to “intensify maritime and technological cooperation with discussions regarding climate change mitigation, blue economy, and marine aquaculture technology.” Cooperation in joint research related to the expansion of blue carbon ecosystems was emphasized in later statements.

[India, Australia call for code of conduct in South China Sea to be effective](#)

March 11 - ANI News

[South Asia, South Pacific, South China Sea]

After the prime ministers of India and Australia completed a visit to New Delhi, they released a joint statement emphasizing the “importance of being able to exercise rights and freedom in all seas and oceans consistent with international law, particularly the UNCLOS, including freedom of navigation.” The statement also called the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea, which has recently been revived for completion, to be effective, substantive and fully consistent with international law.

[ASEAN and China aim for South China Sea 'hotline' trial in 2023](#)

March 10 - Nikkei Asia [Paywall]

[Southeast Asia, China, South China Sea]

Following renewed discussions with officials in Beijing, China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) will work to conduct a “security hotline” trial in 2023 for “incident management” in the South China Sea.

[SECNAV, Navy Maritime Intel Director Give Warnings About Illegal Chinese Fishing](#)

March 6 - USNI News

[United States, China, South America]

At a maritime conference in Panama, Office of Naval Intelligence Commander Michael Studeman and U.S. Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro said China should be held accountable for carrying out illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, which they have been doing on “an industrial scale.”

[Ocean treaty: Historic agreement reached after decade of talks](#)

March 5 - BBC News

[Global]

On March 4, after 38 hours of talks at the United Nations headquarters in New York, the United Nations finally agreed on the terms of the High Seas Treaty; a historic agreement to help establish marine protected areas in international waters. Negotiations on this treaty had previously been held up for more than a decade over various disagreements on issues like funding and fishing rights.

[Japan and U.S. negotiating return of detained navy officer](#)

March 5 - The Japan Times [Paywall]

[Japan, United States]

Japan and the United States are in the middle of negotiations regarding the return of a US Navy officer, convicted of a fatal car crash in 2021, to the United States. Criticism over the events and resulting, lengthy detention in Japan has been growing, and now U.S. President Joe Biden and some members of the U.S. Congress have become involved.

['Quad' ministers vow to address challenges in South and East China seas](#)

March 3 - *The Japan Times* [Paywall]

[Indo-Pacific]

In a joint statement issued after a meeting in New Delhi on March 3, the foreign ministers of India, Japan, the United States and Australia—collectively known as “the Quad”—expressed concerns about the “militarization of disputed features” and the “dangerous use of coast guard vessels and maritime militia” by Beijing in the East China Sea and the South China Sea.

[4] Maritime Security and Defense [4]

[North Korea's flurry of launches continues as U.S. carrier trains with South](#)

March 27 - *The Japan Times* [Paywall]

[East Asia, United States]

On March 27, for the 10th time in 2023, North Korea launched “short-range ballistic missiles” into the Sea of Japan. This and at least one other launch of “strategic cruise missiles” from a “8.24 Yongung” submarine, the latter being North Korea’s first missile test of its kind, took place as South Korea and the U.S. conducted their regular, 11-day “Freedom Shield” joint exercise.

[US Navy challenges Beijing's South China Sea claims, gets angry reaction](#)

March 24 - CNN

[South China Sea, United States, China]

On March 23, China's Southern Theatre Command said it monitored and drove away the USS *Milius*, a guided-missile destroyer, that they said had intruded into China's territorial waters around the Paracel Islands in the South China Sea. The next day, the US Navy's 7th Fleet said they were conducting a freedom of navigation operation sailing through those waters.

[Ransomware Attack Hits Ship-Tracking Firm Royal Dirkzwager](#)

March 22 - *The Maritime Executive*

[Europe]

On March 6, a group of ransomware hackers attacked Dutch shipping intelligence agency Royal Dirkzwager, resulting in the disabling of all four of its services for more than one week. According to one source, Dirkzwager has entered negotiations with the hackers.

[China, Cambodia hold first-ever joint maritime military exercises](#)

March 20 - *Reuters* [Paywall]

[China, South Asia]

In mid-March, China and Cambodia held their first-ever joint maritime military exercises in Cambodian waters. The “Gold Dragon-2023” exercise involved three Chinese and Cambodian ships and more than 200 officers and soldiers.

[Australia won't promise to side with US in Taiwan conflict](#)

March 20 - *Associated Press*

[South Pacific, Europe, United States]

During a summit in California, U.S. President Biden, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak finalized a decades-long plan that will ultimately boost their military capabilities in the Indo-Pacific. The U.S. will speed up Australia's purchase of as many as five nuclear-powered submarines by arranging for Canberra's first few to be built in the U.S. Australia's defense minister later clarified that Australia has made "absolutely" no promises over Taiwan.

[China, Russia, Iran hold joint naval drills in Gulf of Oman](#)

March 15 - *Associated Press*

[Middle East, China, Russia]

On March 15, the navies of China, Russia, Iran and several other nations began a 5-day joint military exercise in the Gulf of Oman. China's Defense Ministry said the drills are designed to "help deepen practical cooperation between the participating countries' navies...and inject positive energy into regional peace and stability."

[Moscow will try to retrieve U.S. drone wreckage in Black Sea after Pentagon blames Russian jet for crash](#)

March 15 - *CBS News*

[Black Sea, Russia, United States]

After a Russian Su-27 fighter jet collided with and forced down one of two US Air Force Reaper drones flying over international waters over the Black Sea on March 14, Russia said it would attempt to retrieve any wreckage of the drone. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Mark Milley said the drone is "U.S. property" though there is "probably not a lot to recover" anyways.

[China and Russia Denounce U.S., Allies Over Submarine Deal](#)

March 14 - *The Wall Street Journal* [Paywall]

[China, Russia, United States, South Pacific]

Beijing and Moscow each criticized the plan to speed up the sale of U.S. nuclear-powered submarines and technology to Australia, expressing concern that the agreement risks the increase of weapons proliferation.

[China's 3rd aircraft carrier Fujian 'makes smooth progress' in mooring trials ahead of expected maiden voyage](#)

March 13 - *Global Times*

[China, Global]

China's third aircraft carrier, the 80,000 ton-class *Fujian*, is currently undergoing various tests and sea trials in preparation for its full deployment later this year, as advertised by a CCTV special report and interview.

[China Ships Still Operating Near Pag-asa, Says Philippine Coast Guard](#)

March 11 - *USNI News*

[South China Sea]

During a maritime domain awareness flight conducted by the Philippine coast guard on March 8, Chinese ships were still seen operating around (Pagasa) Thitu Island. However, there was a "decrease in the number of suspected CMM vessels," down to 15 from about 42 reported the week before.

[Philippines launches strategy of publicizing Chinese actions](#)

March 8 - *Associated Press*

[South China Sea]

While increasing patrols in disputed waters in the South China Sea, the Philippine coast guard has also launched a new strategy of opposing "Chinese 'gray zone' activities" via public exposure. Coast guard Commodore Jay Terriela explained this method checks Chinese actions, "allows like-minded states to express condemnation," and forces China "to come out in the open or to publicly lie."

Peer-Reviewed Research on Maritime Issues

- Government Release: The White House - ["WHAT THEY ARE SAYING: President Biden Champions Conservation, Takes Action to Protect Lands and Waters"](#) [March 23]
- Government Release: Federal Maritime Commission - ["Testimony of Chairman Maffei before Congress: "Review of Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Request for the Federal Maritime Transportation Programs, and Implementation of the Ocean Shipping Reform Act of 2022""](#) [March 23]
- Government Release: European Commission - ["European Green Deal: Agreement reached on cutting maritime transport emissions by promoting sustainable fuels for shipping"](#) [March 23]
- Government Release: UK House of Commons Transport Committee - [Maritime 2050: Fifth Report of Session 2022-23](#) [March 15]
- Government Release: U.S. Department of State - ["AUKUS Leaders' Announcement"](#) [March 13]

- Government Release: Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of the Philippines - [“Statement of the Spokesperson of the Chinese Embassy in the Philippines on U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines MaryKay Carlson’s Remarks on EDCA cooperation and South China Sea”](#) [March 12]
- Government Release: European Commission - [“Questions and Answers on the EU Maritime Security Strategy”](#) [March 10]
- Government Release: U.S. Department of State - [“U.S Delegation Announced \\$6 billion USD in Commitments to Address Threats to Our Ocean, Doubling Last Year’s Pledge”](#) [March 3]
- Government Release: European Commission - [“Our Ocean Conference: EU announces €816.5 million worth of commitments to protect the ocean*”](#) [March 2]
- Opinion: [“It’s high time to step up the protection of Europe’s critical maritime infrastructure”](#) [Modern Diplomacy - March 25]
- Opinion: [“FuelEU Maritime Marks the ‘Beginning of the End’ for Dirty Fuels in Shipping”](#) [qCaptain - March 23]
- Opinion: [“After South China Sea setback, Beijing seeks to arm itself with international law – like the West”](#) [South China Morning Post - March 20] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“Net-zero shipping: where there’s a will”](#) [Energy Monitor - March 20]
- Opinion: [“North Korea Launches Strategic Cruise Missiles from Submarine”](#) [Center for Strategic & International Studies - March 13]
- Opinion: [“How the submarine deal fits into the complex U.S. strategy for the Pacific”](#) [The Washington Post - March 13] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“How an old Chinese map transformed the South China Sea into a flashpoint”](#) [The Manila Times - March 9]
- Opinion: [“The High Seas Treaty Is an Extraordinary Diplomatic Achievement”](#) [Carnegie Endowment for International Peace - March 8]
- Opinion: [“China must not derail revived South China Sea code of conduct talks”](#) [South China Morning Post - March 7] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Maritime Security & Geopolitics in Indian Ocean Region”](#) [Modern Diplomacy - March 25]
- Analysis: [“U.S. and China wage war beneath the waves – over internet cables”](#) [Reuters - March 24] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“3 ocean sequestration technologies you should know”](#) [GreenBiz - March 23]
- Analysis: [“The man behind the protests at Pakistan’s Belt and Road hub at the port of Gwadar”](#) [The China Project - March 22]
- Analysis: [“Why Empty Containers Piled Up at Chinese Ports”](#) [Caixin Global - March 21] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Human capital in shipping’s digital age: The maritime recruiter’s perspective”](#) [Hellenic Shipping News - March 18]
- Analysis: [“AUKUS Is About Far More Than Submarines”](#) [The National Interest - March 18]
- Analysis: [“AUKUS Submarine Agreement: Historic but Not Yet Smooth Sailing”](#) [Center for Strategic & International Studies - March 17]
- Analysis: [“Seaweed Is Having Its Moment in the Sun”](#) [The New York Times - March 15] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“How Beijing Boxed America Out of the South China Sea”](#) [The Wall Street Journal - March 11] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“First Stalled, Now at Full Sail: China's Rush Toward a South China Sea Code of Conduct”](#) [Australian Institute of International Affairs - March 8]
- Analysis: [“No. 19 | Seeking Deterrence in the High North”](#) [Wilson Center Polar Institute - March 8]

- Analysis: [“\(Almost\) Everyone is drilling inside the nine-dash line”](#) [Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative - March 8]
- Analysis: [“South Korea’s first Indo-Pacific strategy: Seoul’s strategic narratives, ambiguous messages and key challenges”](#) [The Sasakawa Peace Foundation - March 1]

Events on the Maritime Domain

- From February 27-March 1, 2023, the [“10th Annual World Ocean Summit & Expo”](#) was held in-person in Lisbon, Portugal.
- On March 1, 2023, the East-West Center held a hybrid event on [“Damming Rivers in Cambodia: Impacts of Water-Grabbing on Land and Resource Access”](#) out of Honolulu, Hawaii.
- On March 3, 2023, the Wilson Center and the U.S. Department of State co-hosted a hybrid event on [“Strengthening U.S. Cooperation on Marine Protection in Latin America,”](#) webcast live from Panama City, Panama. A full recording is available.
- From March 4-6, 2023, the Arctic Circle and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation held the [“Arctic Circle Japan Forum”](#) in Tokyo. Full videos will be available on [their YouTube channel](#) shortly.
- On March 6, 2023, the Center for Strategic & International Studies held a webinar on [“Deterring a Cross-Strait Conflict: Beijing’s Assessment of Evolving U.S. Strategy.”](#) A full recording is available.
- On March 13, 2023, the Wilson Center held an online event on [“The Blue Planet Turns Green: Algae Fouls Waters as the World Struggles to Grow More Food in a Changing Climate.”](#) A full recording is available.
- On March 14, 2023, the East-West Center in Washington, in partnership with the U.S. Department of State Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, held the [“Indo-Pacific Strategy Conference: U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy at One Year.”](#) which included keynote remarks from Daniel J. Kritenbrink, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. A recording of his remarks is available.
- On March 15, 2023, the East-West Center held an EWC Insights virtual event on [“Collaboration and Outreach of the 6PAC at the IMO.”](#)
- On March 16, 2023, the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Delegation of the European Union to Japan, and ESIWA co-sponsored a public symposium seminar on [“The EU as a Maritime Security Actor in the Indo-Pacific.”](#)
- On March 21, 2023, the Wilson Center and the Centre for the Ocean and the Arctic co-sponsored an online event on [“The Arctic Ocean and Climate Change in a Time of Tension.”](#) A full recording is available.
- From March 29-31, 2023, several sponsors and co-hosts will hold [“Arctic Encounter Anchorage 2023.”](#) the largest Arctic convention in North America, in Anchorage, Alaska. The extensive list of confirmed speakers—including ambassadors, lawmakers, educators, researchers and scientists from Arctic states and Arctic observers—and [draft agenda](#) is available.
- On March 30, 2023, the Center for a New American Security will be holding a [Virtual Fireside Chat: The Biden Administration’s Indo-Pacific Strategy with Kurt Campbell](#). Registration is still open.
- From April 3-5, 2023, the Navy League of the United States will be conducting their [Sea-Air-Space 2023](#) convention in Maryland with multiple keynote speakers and other open forums.

- From April 19-22, 2023, the University of Massachusetts' Department of Earth, Geographic, and Climate Sciences & Climate System Research center will be hosting the in-person [52nd International Arctic Workshop](#); “a friendly, informal, and relaxed conference open to all students and professionals interested in the Arctic.” The abstract submission deadline is March 31, 2023 and registration for attendance is still open.
- From June 5-8, 2023, the IEEE Oceanic Engineering Society and Marine Technology Society will be hosting the [“OCEANS 2023 Limerick - Blue Ocean Planet Earth”](#) in person in Limerick, Ireland; an event for “global maritime professionals to learn, innovate, and lead in the protection and utilization of the world’s largest natural resource – our Oceans.” Registration is still open.

Handbill Spotlight

Strait of Malacca

Issue Background ¹

The Strait of Malacca is located on the Western perimeter of the South China Sea. Running between the Eastern coast of the Indonesian island of Sumatra and the Western coast of Malaysia, it [stretches](#) 65-250 km wide and 800 km long. Despite the relatively narrow size, the Strait of Malacca is one of the world’s busiest straits for maritime shipping. As Asia, more specifically China and Southeast Asian countries, plays an increasingly important role in the global supply chain, both the [economic and strategic importance](#) of the Strait of Malacca will continue to increase in the forthcoming years.



The Strait of Malacca is not only important for regional countries as they benefit from the connectivity brought about by the geographic advantages of the strait. Global powers, such as the United States, the United Kingdom and France, currently also view, or have [at some point in history](#)

¹ Image Source: Generic map of the Malacca Strait (Public Domain, [Wikimedia](#))

also viewed, this strait as an equally important choke point as the Suez Canal, if not more. The [US Navy](#) has included the Strait of Malacca as one of the eleven critical choke points of global maritime shipping. The [British Empire benefited](#) from the shipping route between British Malaya (later Singapore and Malaysia) and Hong Kong during its prime time that boosted its trade with China and shipped countless valuable goods back to Europe. The Strait of Malacca was the only route that ensured British success in Asia at the time.

Recent Events

The Strait of Malacca continues to play [an important role in global shipping](#), particularly in energy trade, as globalization pushes for an increasingly integrated global market. The rise of the Asian economies, including the economic success of Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, South Korea and, most importantly, China, has brought this strait [unforeseeable amount of shipping volumes](#). This is particularly true during the first decade of the 21st century. That said, as economic power develops, power dynamics have also shifted dramatically in the region. Sitting on the Western perimeter of the South China Sea, the importance of the Strait of Malacca has often been brought up during the second decade of the 21st century when [territorial and maritime disputes among regional claimants](#) and the tensions resulting from [the U.S.-China strategic competition](#) stir up concerns over security and stability over maritime shipping in the region. Whether the South China Sea could remain as a holistically peaceful, calm region will greatly determine the future of the Strait of Malacca.

Furthermore, at the beginning of the third decade of the 21st century, [concerns over resilience of global supply chains](#) have also arisen. China, as a major growing economic power, has pushed for its [Belt and Road Initiative](#) (BRI) with an aim to boost both land-based and maritime-based connectivity between China and the world. Beijing has shown its ambition to include the Strait of Malacca into its grand view. That decision has met strong opposition from the United States, which sees Beijing's BRI as an attempt to jeopardize openness and freedom of navigation in Asia.

Keep In Mind

As the only reliable shipping nexus that connects the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean, the stability of the Strait of Malacca has not only brought up discussions over how to manage the region but also by whom the region should be managed. Regional countries, including [Singapore](#), Malaysia, and Indonesia, have similar yet still different ideas as to how the order of the Strait should be managed. Moreover, there are also other countries that seek to diversify, and therefore weaken the role of the Strait of Malacca by creating alternative shipping routes between the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean. There are several other small natural straits in the region, though none currently as clearly direct or ultimately useful as the Strait of Malacca. Thailand has made a pioneering attempt to dig up the [Thai canal](#), also known as the Kra canal, to provide a different route from the Bay of Thailand to the Indian Ocean. That has not only brought concerns and discussions from China and the United States, but also India. One can only expect that the Strait of Malacca will become increasingly international as the balance of power continues to develop in the region.

This issue's Spotlight was written by Yilun Zhang, ICAS Research Associate & Manager, Trade 'n Technology Program.

ICAS Maritime Affairs Program: New and Upcoming

— Upcoming MAP Event —

Roles of Asian Observers in Arctic Governance: Adapting to a Changing Arctic Council

April 13, 2023

9:30 AM – 11:00 AM EST

VIRTUAL ROUNDTABLE
April 13, 2023 | 9:30-11:00 am EST

ROLES OF ASIAN OBSERVERS IN ARCTIC GOVERNANCE

Adapting to a Changing Arctic Council

OPENING REMARKS
Jia WANG
Interim Director, China Institute, University of Alberta

MODERATOR
Nong HONG
Executive Director, Institute for China-America Studies

SPEAKERS
ZHAO Long
Senior Fellow and Deputy Director, Institute for Global Governance Studies, Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, China
Sakiko HATAYA
Research Fellow, Ocean Policy Research Institute of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan
KIM Wonhee
Senior Researcher, Korea Institute of Ocean Science and Technology, South Korea
Anurag BISEN
Research Fellow, Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, India
Christopher LEN
Independent Scholar, Singapore

Logos: ICAS, MAP, CHINA INSTITUTE, UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Climate change has increased accessibility to potential Arctic resources, changing the geopolitical landscape and broadening the international focus on the Arctic to include more geographically distant countries such as China, Japan, South Korea, India, and Singapore. Seeking observer status in the Arctic Council is regarded by these Asian countries to be an important step towards ensuring that they are involved in determining the future of the Arctic; a region which they believe will influence their economic interests and global environmental concerns.

Triggered by the Ukraine conflict, the March 2022 joint statement by the Arctic Council states to pause participation in all meetings of the Arctic Council indicates grave impediments to international cooperation in the Arctic. So long as this statement is in play, the premier forum for Arctic governance, which tended to be immune from geopolitical tensions, can no longer function in its consensus-based format. This subsequently opened up an ongoing debate on the future of the Arctic Council.

What does the suspension of the Arctic Council meetings mean for Arctic Council observers? Will Norway, who will take over the chairmanship in May 2023, make any progress to break through the current ties? Will the debate on the concept of an “Arctic Council 2.0” gain support among non-Arctic states who have a deep interest in Arctic governance? Will non-Arctic countries such as China, Japan, South Korea, India, and Singapore – which have growing Arctic interests and have contributed much to Arctic research – welcome the opportunity for them to establish a more solid role in this region’s affairs? How will the observers adapt to a changing Arctic Council?

This event, co-organized by the China Institute of the University of Alberta, will bring together scholars from the five Asian observers of the Arctic Council, China, Japan, South Korea, India, and Singapore to exchange their views on this critical issue.

RSVP: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_IJ90heywTUCpaAZaGhYpDw

Learn More:

<https://chinaus-icas.org/event/roles-of-asian-observers-in-arctic-governance-adapting-to-a-changing-arctic-council/>

– MAP Commentary –

What does the High Seas Treaty imply for China in the South China Sea and the Arctic Ocean?

By Nong Hong

March 17, 2023

March 4th marks a historic achievement of the law of the sea community with a legally binding agreement reached by the Intergovernmental Conference on Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) after almost 20 years’ negotiation. The BBNJ Agreement, now also called High Seas Treaty, is the culmination of discussions that began in 2004 under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to enhance the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in the oceans beyond the exclusive economic zones (EEZ) and continental shelves of states. The new instrument will offer protection to the nearly two-thirds of the ocean that is beyond national jurisdiction and address existing inequalities in sharing the benefits accrued from the organisms of these areas...

Continue Reading:

<https://chinaus-icas.org/research/what-does-the-high-seas-treaty-imply-for-china-in-the-south-china-sea-and-the-arctic-ocean/>

– BCCC Commentary –

“Greenwashing” is slowing down the needed progress in renewable electricity studies

By Zhangchen Wang

March 27, 2023

The renewable energy industry is now entering a stage of high-speed growth as countries pay more attention to reducing carbon emissions. Considering the enormous additions of the fossil fuel industry to the global CO₂ emissions output, a transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy to generate electricity will be the only path to curb climate change. In fact, this transition has already begun. Currently, more than a fourth of global electricity production capacity comes from renewable energy, leading the proportion of fossil fuels-generated power to decrease in recent years....Although the emergence of such “greenwashing” activities further prove the preference of the public and general market toward renewable energy and its unprecedented potential, it is still necessary to prevent this misleading information from both causing unfair competition and consequently damaging the environment...

Continue Reading:

<https://chinaus-icas.org/research/greenwashing-is-slowing-down-the-needed-progress-in-renewable-electricity-studies/>

– ICAS Issue Brief –

The New Marcos Administration: Re-Paving the Philippines’ Grand Strategic Path

By Jessica Martin

March 9, 2023

Key Takeaways:

- Since President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr.’s inauguration in June 2022, the Philippines’ new administration appears to have been open and direct in its heavy encouragement of bilateral partnerships and emphasis on self-defense. Marcos Jr. is already working towards a clear, new vision for the Philippines in the wake of the preceding administration’s about-face reputation.
- While Manila’s diplomatic moves—many of which have already strengthened Philippine-U.S. relations—may not significantly alter Philippine-China relations, they are already impacting U.S.-China bilateral relations.
- Between years of built up suspicions and verbal battles, the health of the U.S.-China relationship may very well be at its ‘sourest’ point ever; a fact that may persist as the U.S. renews and enhances its security cooperation with one of China’s neighbors.
- Although a foreign diplomatic plan already appears to be underway, the Marcos administration is still settling in. If ‘Step 1’ in Marcos’ plan is to reestablish trust in Manila on the global stage, then what is ‘Step 2’ and beyond? Regardless, the world can expect to continue to see Manila’s foreign ministry in action for months, if not years, to come.

Read Online: <https://chinaus-icas.org/research/the-new-marcos-administration/>