



ICAS

Institute for China-America Studies

ICAS
MARITIME AFFAIRS
PROGRAM

HANDBILL

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ICAS MARITIME AFFAIRS PROGRAM

The ICAS Maritime Affairs Program (MAP) gathers, displays, and debates both the historic and the newly developed maritime related issues, including U.S.-China interaction on maritime affairs.

The goal of this program is to inform and stimulate open, fact-based, intellectual discussion on an array of topics including but not limited to international law of the sea, maritime security, fisheries, shipping, oil and natural gas management, and marine environment protection.

There are four featured products currently associated with the ICAS MAP Program:

- **MAP Issue Trackers:** An online, collaborative platform designed to encourage intellectual exchange on maritime developments and issues around the world. The longest-running project at ICAS, it currently features trackers for three regions: Polar, South China Sea, and the East China Sea.
- **MAP Publications:** Written pieces that analyze and explore the evolving and long-standing multinational interactions uniquely found in the maritime realm. MAP publications can range in size from blog posts and commentaries to the Handbill newsletter and full-length books,
- **MAP Events:** Multilateral events designed to promote the free and equal exchange of ideas on maritime affairs and international law, especially as they relate to U.S.-China relations.
- **MAP Media:** A variety of short-form periodicals and Twitter campaigns (#ICASMAP, #MAPWave) to keep our audience informed of major news events as they occur.



Learn more on the ICAS MAP Program webpage



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Recent News in Global Maritime Affairs

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

[Blue carbon studies can support climate change mitigation: ministry](#)

January 30 - *Antara News*
[Southeast Asia]

While giving a seminar on blue carbon in Jakarta, Indonesia's Minister of Environment and Forestry announced that a study on preparing blue carbon ecosystems is very important in climate change mitigation. "We are very focused on ecology because if the sea is damaged, then the blue economy or the ecology will also be damaged and blue carbon will not be obtained," Minister Siti Nurbaya Bakar explained.

[Despite killer floods, Nigerian presidential frontrunners dismiss climate change](#)

January 25 - *Climate Home News*
[Africa]

With less than one month until general elections are held, Nigeria's leading presidential candidates reportedly have yet to take the issue of climate change, which has been bringing massive inland flooding, seriously amidst the backdrop of bombing campaigns by Islamist group Boko Haram.

[Indonesia, WEF join hands to unlock blue carbon potential](#)

January 23 - *The Jakarta Post*
[South Pacific, Global]

The government of Indonesia and the World Economic Forum announced a new partnership to support blue carbon restoration and relevant ocean conservation efforts in Indonesia, including by creating a roadmap for Indonesia's blue carbon priorities and bringing in stakeholders across various sectors.

[Graves sink, fisheries shrink as climate change hits Fiji](#)

January 20 - *The Japan Times*

[South Pacific]

As a result of climate change, an increasing number of coastal villages in Fiji are being submerged, leading to significant relocation needs and consequent economic, social and cultural problems. Fiji's fishery system is also under challenge due to climate-related risks, affecting the livelihoods of around half of the country's rural population.

[Pacific islands urge Japan to delay release of Fukushima waste over contamination fears](#)

January 18 - *Reuters* [Paywall]

[Japan, Pacific Ocean]

Pacific Island states are urging Japan to delay releasing the nuclear waste water from the Fukushima nuclear power plant, expressing concerns about potential nuclear contamination and the consequent impacts on their local ecosystem and fisheries.

[Newfoundlanders identify with the ocean. Now some are moving inland.](#)

January 16 - *The Washington Post* [Paywall]

[Canada]

In Newfoundland, Canada, former members of the fishery communities are planning for relocation away from the coasts in light of climate change and consequent extreme weather events and disasters.

[Oceans surged to another record-high temperature in 2022](#)

January 11 - *The Washington Post* [Paywall]

[Global]

The ocean heat content, considered a "strong marker of climate change," reached a record high in 2022; the highest it has been since reliable measurements began being taken in the late 1950s. The level of ocean heat broke records for three consecutive years in 2020, 2021 and 2022, leading to concerns by researchers and experts.

[China brushes off environment fears over East Africa pipeline](#)

January 10 - *Nikkei Asia*

[China, Africa]

Two Chinese Engineering and Construction companies are responsible for building part of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline Project that will transport oil pumped in Uganda to Tanzania for transport. Local residents and environmental advocacy groups are opposing the project because it will displace people and pollute the environment which millions rely upon.

[Workshop discusses marine spatial planning for sustainable oceans in Việt Nam](#)

January 7 - Viet Nam News

[South Asia]

Vietnamese government representatives and experts from the United Nations and Norway held a workshop to discuss the master plan on “sustainable exploitation and use of coastal resources for 2021-30, with a vision to 2045.” The plan seeks to sustainably develop the coastal zone while proactively adapting climate changes.

[New study: Methane emissions offset carbon uptake in Baltic macroalgae habitats](#)

January 4 - Newswise

[Baltic Sea]

A new study conducted and published by Askö Laboratory shows that, to some extent, the bladderwrack macroalgae native to the Baltic Sea’s seafloor “emits significant amounts of methane” that can “offset the uptake of atmospheric carbon dioxide by these algae.”

[2] Maritime Economy and Shipping [2]

[Qatar to explore Lebanese offshore gas after maritime deal with Israel](#)

January 29 - i24 News

[Middle East]

Following a historic Israeli-Lebanese maritime border deal, Qatar just announced its state-run QatarEnergy will receive a 30% stake in two blocks of Lebanon’s exclusive economic zone to explore Lebanon’s Qana-Sidon gas field.

[Maritime shipping bunkers more fuel in Rotterdam in 2022](#)

January 27 - Hellenic Shipping News

[Global, Europe]

In 2022, maritime shipping bunkered significantly more fuel in Rotterdam than the year before, 10.8 million compared to the previous 10.2 million. Subsequently, demand for “fuel oil, gas oil, methanol and LNG” was 6.3% higher in 2022. Rotterdam remains Europe’s leading bunker port.

[Centre for Maritime Economy and Connectivity to be set up in India](#)

January 23 - Fibre2Fashion

[South Asia]

India has planned to establish a Centre for Maritime Economy and Connectivity, which proposed to build a transshipment port at Galathea Bay. Indian officials believe it will lay a foundation for the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) member nations and even beyond the shore.

[US importers shipping more to America's east coast ports than west coast amid global supply chain shifts](#)

January 18 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]
[United States, Global]

Unlike a few years ago, America's east coast ports now swallow more imports than those on the west coast, marking a notable shift in shipping origin diversification and further U.S.-China decoupling. The supply chain bottlenecks during the pandemic are believed to have fostered this shift and infrastructure revamp.

[Huawei's automated smart terminal at Tianjin Port offers glimpse of company's future under US sanctions](#)

January 17 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]
[China, United States, Global]

Huawei Technologies Co. built an automated 'smart terminal' at the Port of Tianjin in an effort to innovate revenue to recover from smartphone business loss under U.S. sanctions. The terminal operates using technologies like self-driving vehicles, 5G, Internet of Things, and cloud computing.

[China's trade surplus swells to \\$877.6B as exports grow](#)

January 13 - *AP News*
[China, Global]

China's global trade surplus expanded by 29.7% in 2022 despite weakening Western demand and domestic pandemic control measures, setting the highest record for any economy. Its bilateral annual trade surplus with the United States widened by 1.8%. However, forecasters expect Chinese export growth to shrink further in the face of a potential recession in the West.

[World's Biggest Ship Skips India in Blow to Its Trade Goals](#)

January 10 - *Bloomberg* [Paywall]
[India, South Asia, Global]

After the *Ever Alot*, the world's largest boxship at 400 meters long, was able to dock in Sri Lanka and Malaysia but not India due to poor infrastructure, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's goal of making India the "world's factory" is now being considerably questioned.

[Saudi Ports record 13% annual rise in 2022 freight tons](#)

January 9 - *India Shipping News*
[Middle East, Global]

With the progression of the Saudi Ports Authority's mission to upgrade the nation's ports, Saudi Arabia hit a 13% annual rise in 2022 cargo throughput in a positive progression towards the logistic hub ambitions set by the National Transport and Logistics Strategy (NTLS).

[China expands Shenhai-1 gas field in South China Sea with eye on Greater Bay Area energy transition](#)

January 4 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]

[South China Sea, China]

Amidst a backdrop of several technical difficulties, China has begun construction on the second phase of Shenhai-1, its first independently run ultra-deep sea gas field. This field is an important source of natural gas and contributes to the "dual carbon" transformation in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area.

[New joint venture shipping deal signed by Bahri](#)

January 2 - *The Maritime Standard*

[Middle East, Global]

Two leading shipping groups, Bahri and Ajlan & Bros Holding Group (ABHG), have agreed to form a new joint venture company in vessel ownership, operation, and management to better achieve Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 objectives for the maritime sector.

[3] Ocean Governance and Maritime Cooperation [3]

[Gulf of Guinea records significant decline in maritime incidents](#)

January 26 - *Ghana Business News*

[Africa]

As explained in a Regional Maritime University report, the number of incidents occurring in the Gulf of Guinea has significantly declined over the last two years, from 132 in 2020 to 41 in 2022. The decline is credited to "a strong commitment and collaborative efforts by countries in the Region," support from international partners, and "training programmes."

[Australia wants smart sea mines to put China in check](#)

January 25 - *Asia Times*

[Australia, South Pacific, China]

After AUKUS left Australia unsure about the procurement of nuclear submarines, Australia has renewed its interest in indigenous sea mining capabilities. A local newspaper reported that Australia is prepared to spend up to US\$698 million to acquire "smart sea mines" from an unspecified European supplier "which will help to secure sea lines of communication."

[Tip-top shape. To encourage more Indian flag tonnage ships, govt to ban vessels over 25 years](#)

January 21 - *The Hindu Business Line* [Paywall]

[South Asia]

On January 13, in an effort to encourage domestic shipbuilding, India's Directorate General of Shipping drafted an order banning tankers, bulk carriers and general cargo ships that are 25 years or older from calling on Indian ports.

[Mauritius: Workshop focuses on Marine Spatial Planning Zoning framework](#)

January 19 - *News Invasion 24*

[Africa]

In Port-Louis, capital city of Mauritius, an official two-day workshop on "Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) Zoning" was held with expert participants from Mauritius and Seychelles. The workshop was organized with the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme.

[DOI Transfers Offshore Wind Regulation Governance from BOEM to BSEE](#)

January 17 - *North American WindPower*

[United States]

The U.S. Department of the Interior is transferring the responsibility for regulations governing offshore renewable energy activities from the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement. The move was made to ensure that "future clean energy development and operations continue to occur in a safe and environmentally responsible manner."

[Regional Ocean Partnerships receive federal authorization](#)

January 12 - *Newsires*

[The Americas]

The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) was recently given federal jurisdiction over the four existing Regional Ocean Partnerships (ROPs), one of which is the Gulf of Mexico Alliance. In addition to encouraging coordination and collaboration between ROP partners, this change also establishes "governance structures and procedures" for existing and future ROPs.

[Philippines top court voids old South China Sea energy deal](#)

January 10 - *Reuters* [Paywall]

[South China Sea]

On January 10, the Philippines' Supreme Court voided the 2005 South China Sea energy exploration deal made with Chinese and Vietnamese firms, declaring them illegal on the grounds that the constitution "does not allow foreign entities to exploit natural resources."

[Dhaka, Washington discuss cooperation on defence, IPS, maritime security](#)

January 9 - *Dhaka Tribune*

[South Asia, United States]

During an official diplomatic visit to Bangladesh, Rear Admiral Eileen Laubacher, Senior Director for South Asia on the National Security Council, discussed defense and development cooperation, the Indo-Pacific Strategy, and “maritime safety and security,” among other bilateral issues of interest.

[US to keep working with Bangladesh in different areas: Biden](#)

January 8 - *New Age*

[South Asia]

At a celebration of the 50th anniversary of U.S.-Bangladesh relations in Washington, U.S. President Joe Biden celebrated the two’s “enduring partnership” and expressed hope that the two nations will “continue to work on democratic governance, climate change, refugees, and maritime security.”

[China, Philippines Vow 'Friendly' Handling Of Maritime Spats](#)

January 4 - *Barron’s*

[South China Sea, China, Southeast Asia]

During a New Year's meeting in Beijing, Chinese and Philippine presidents Xi Jinping and Ferdinand Marcos called for “friendly consultation to appropriately resolve maritime issues.” There is also discussion on a communication agreement to “avoid miscalculation and miscommunication” though both sides still defended their own maritime rights.

[4] Maritime Security and Defense [4]

[US Marines officially opens first new base in 70 years on island of Guam](#)

January 27 - *CNN*

[United States, Pacific Ocean, China]

The US Marine Corps has officially opened their newest military base—their first since 1952—on Guam, the United States’ westernmost Pacific Island. “We want to already be inside so if there’s a conflict, the stand-in forces are already forward,” explained Gen. David Berger, USMC commandant.

[Russia, China to hold naval drills off South Africa](#)

January 19 - *AP*

[Russia, China, Africa]

In mid-February, South Africa will hold a 10-day naval drill with their Russian and Chinese counterparts as part of the BRICS alliance with the backdrop of the ongoing Ukraine War. The drill will be held in the Indian Ocean off of South Africa’s east coast near Durban and Richards Bay.

[China Undergoing 'Build-Up in Every Warfare Area,' Says ONI Commander](#)

January 16 - USNI News

[United States, China]

In an online interview with the Intelligence and National Security Alliance, commander of the Office of Naval Intelligence Rear Adm. Michael Studeman explained that “China is the number one challenge to America” and currently focused on “build-up in every warfare area.”

[Iran will send ships to Panama Canal in military mission](#)

January 12 - *The Washington Times* [Paywall]

[Middle East, South America]

In a public speech, Iran's Commander of the Navy Shahram Irani announced that Iran's “navy units [that] are getting closer to the coasts of the Americas” and Iran would dispatch warships to the Panama Canal in 2023. The explicit notices are a rare sign of Iranian military expansion beyond the Middle East.

[China looks set to build naval base in Argentina, a 'gateway' to Antarctica: Reports](#)

January 11 - WIO News

[Antarctic, China, South America]

According to French intelligence reports, China is currently searching to build a port and/or naval base in the Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego province of Argentina as a likely “gateway” to Antarctica.

[U.S. Marines to set up unit in Okinawa for defense of remote Japanese islands](#)

January 10 - *The Japan Times*

[United States, Japan]

The US Marine Corp has decided to set up a “Marine Littoral Regiment” (MLR) rapid reaction unit in the Japanese island of Okinawa, ready for operations by 2026, though there are concerns of backlash from locals over land usage. MLRs reportedly include about 1,800 to 2,000 personnel.

[Chinese navy warship spotted in South Pacific may have been on high seas resupply trial run: analysts](#)

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

[China, France, South Pacific]

After a PLA Navy guided-missile destroyer (052D) *Yinchuan* was seen operating in the South Pacific near New Caledonia, observers wonder if it was “testing the waters” for high seas resupply capacity. The French navy tracked the *Yinchuan*'s movements, which had also been seen earlier in December sailing near French Polynesia.

[U.S. Sails Warship Through Taiwan Strait as China Watches Sternly](#)

January 6 - *The Wall Street Journal* [Paywall]

[China, United States, East Asia]

The U.S. 7th Fleet conducted the first sail-through of the Taiwan Strait in 2023 in a “routine transit” following about nine publicly announced sailings in 2022 and a high of 15 such sailings in 2020. The Chinese Eastern Theater Command said it followed and monitored the ship during its trip with one colonel dismissing the trip as “big hype.”

[China’s advanced Fujian aircraft carrier ready to start sea trials this year, a boost for military capacity](#)

January 3 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]

[China, Global]

China’s third and most complex aircraft carrier, the *Fujian*, is expected to begin sea trials in 2023 as part of Xi Jinping’s Two Centenaries goals to “return the nation to the forefront of global powers by 2049,” the People’s Republic of China’s 100th anniversary.

[Southeast Asia nations boosting submarine orders amid US-China rivalry](#)

December 28 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]

[Southeast Asia, Global]

Many navies in Southeast Asian nations have been acquiring or enhancing their submarine fleets in recent years as U.S.-China relations continually harden and the security of sea lines of communications in the region appear to fluctuate.

Peer-Reviewed Research on Maritime Issues

- Government Release: Supreme Court of the Philippines - [“SC Declares Unconstitutional the Joint Marine Seismic Undertaking Among Philippine, Vietnamese, and Chinese Oil Firms”](#) [January 10]
- Government Release: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China - [“JOINT STATEMENT BETWEEN THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA AND THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES”](#) [January 5]
- Government Release: Peace and Security Council of the African Union - [“Communiqué: The 1128th meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council \(AUPSC\) on Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea \[EN/FR\]”](#) [January 2]
- Government Release: Government of the Virgin Islands - [”Strategic Blue Economy Roadmap Approved By Cabinet”](#) [December 29]
- Government Release: The Government of the Republic of Korea - [Strategy for a Free, Peaceful, and Prosperous Indo-Pacific Region](#) [December 2022]

- Press Release: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration - [“Record drought gripped much of the U.S. in 2022”](#) [January 10]
- Opinion: [“Getting it together: Pacific engagement still lacks coordination”](#) [The Interpreter - January 30]
- Opinion: [“Conference tackles ocean law, environmental justice and human rights”](#) [Mail & Guardian - January 18]
- Opinion: [“The Delicate Dance of Antarctic Tourism”](#) [Mother Jones - January 14]
- Opinion: [“Pew Experts Share How Global Cooperation Improves Fisheries Management”](#) [Pew - January 9]
- Opinion: [“No. 18 | Mitigating Transboundary Risks in the Bering Strait”](#) [Wilson Center - January 9]
- Opinion: [“Dry bulk shipping market outlook – a difficult year ahead”](#) [Seatrade Maritime News - January 6]
- Opinion: [“Reinventing the Indo-Pacific”](#) [The Economist - January 4] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“China's Lockdowns are Over, but its Shipping Outlook is Still Mixed”](#) [The Maritime Executive - January 1]
- Opinion: [“Advancing Ocean Solutions Through Research, Partnerships and Innovation”](#) [Sea Technology - January 2023]
- Opinion: [“Bigger Fleets Win”](#) [U.S. Naval Institute - January 2023]
- Opinion: [“The case against US interference in the South China Sea”](#) [Almayadeen - December 31]
- Analysis: [“Will China win over the South China Sea?”](#) [GIS Reports - January 30]
- Analysis: [“China’s ocean power stations set to go commercial”](#) [China Dialogue Ocean - January 26]
- Analysis: [“The Return of Export Controls: A Risky Tactic That Requires Cooperation From Allies”](#) [Foreign Affairs - January 24] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“How Blue are our Economies?”](#) [The Global Americans - January 23]
- Analysis: [“How Belize’s bright biodiversity is inextricably linked to blue carbon”](#) [Global Voices - January 23]
- Analysis: [“Assessment of South Korea’s New Indo-Pacific Strategy”](#) [Center for Strategic & International Studies - January 19]
- Analysis: [“Bringing Back the Fleet? A review of NWP-3 fleet warfare, change 1”](#) [Center for International Maritime Security - January 18]
- Analysis: [“Challenges And Expectations For Conservation And Restoration Of Seagrass Beds As Blue Carbon Ecosystems”](#) [Eurasia Review - January 7]
- Analysis: [“Why is every western country obsessed with Red Sea?”](#) [TFI Global News - January 6]
- Analysis: [“Maritime Law and Its Conception”](#) [Live Law - January 5]
- Analysis: [“Sharpening Surface Force Lethality: The Latest in Surface Warfare Advanced Tactical Training”](#) [Center for International Maritime Security - January 3]
- Analysis: [“ChatGPT bot caught spreading misinformation on maritime law. Here’s how”](#) [TradeWinds - January 2]
- Analysis: [“Can the North Sea become Europe’s new economic powerhouse?”](#) [The Economist - January 1] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Nigeria has a coastal litter problem: It’s time to clean up, says researcher”](#) [Phys.org - December 30]
- Analysis: [“Grindrod Shipping Is Cheap Compared To Other Dry Bulk Stocks”](#) [Seeking Alpha - December 30]

Events on the Maritime Domain

- On January 18, 2023, the Center for Strategic & International Studies Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, along with several event partners, hosted the hybrid [“Ocean Security Forum 2023”](#). The full recordings are available.
- On January 23, 2023, the East-West Center held a hybrid [“Conversation with German Special Envoy Ambassador Beate Grzeski on Germany's Perspectives and Engagement in the Pacific Region.”](#)
- On January 26, 2023, the Wilson Center Polar Institute held an online event on [“Achieving Security in the Arctic: the Role of DHS and its Components.”](#)
- On January 26, 2023, the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission held a public hearing on [“China's Military Diplomacy and Overseas Security Activities.”](#)
- On January 31, 2023, the Sasakawa Peace Foundation and Yokosuka Council on Asia-Pacific Studies will hold an in-person seminar event on [“The Japan-U.S. Alliance and the Senkaku Islands: A Source of Conflict or Strategically Important?”](#) in Sasebo, Nagasaki, Japan.
- On February 9, 2023, the Wilson Center Polar Institute and Center for Maritime Strategy will hold a virtual event on [“Deterring Russia at Sea in the High North.”](#)
- From February 21-23, 2023, Arctic360 will hold its [“Arctic360 Annual Conference”](#) which will focus on “Accelerating Cooperation, Innovation & Opportunity.”
- From March 4-6, 2023, the Arctic Circle and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation will hold the [“Arctic Circle Japan Forum”](#) in Tokyo. 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 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 opens February 20, 2023.

Handbill Spotlight

The Black Sea

Issue Background ¹

The [Black Sea](#), referred to by some in Greece as the “Euxine Sea” (Greek for “hospitable”), is a [nearly enclosed sea](#) uniquely situated between the continents of Europe and Asia. Lying along the margins of the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea with a surface area of about 436,400 km², a volume of about 547,000 km³ and a maximum [depth](#) of about 2,212 meters, the Black Sea borders six

¹ Image Source: Topographic Map of the Black Sea and surrounding area, [Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 2014](#)

nations—Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine—with a varied coastline of approximately 5,800 km, including the Sea of Azov in the North.

Historically, the Black Sea has also been called by other names, simply being referred to as “the sea,” but also the “Inhospitable Sea” and “Hospitable Sea” before and after times of colonization and as it built up in infamy for being difficult to traverse. Eventually, it was named “the Black Sea” though no one has been able to determine the true origin of the name. One such reason may be that the color ‘black’ represents the Northern cardinal direction, meaning the “Black Sea” was also referred to as the “Northern Sea.” Alternatively, the name may simply be a reference to the unique color of the water during winter storms.



Given its location and breadth, the Black Sea experiences an [array of climates](#) throughout the year. It is also home to a [sparse](#) number of islands and territories administered by various bordering countries, with Ukraine controlling the Sea’s largest island, Dzharylhach, at 56 km². Many of these islands are at the core of an active regional marine ecosystem known for its nutrient-rich, brackish waters and variety of animal and plant species at varying locations and depths. Furthermore, the Black Sea is naturally [anoxic](#) and is the largest water body with a meromictic basin; that is, it is virtually absent of dissolved oxygen and the water rarely cycles between the upper and lower layers, so the lower layers not subject to fresh rainfalls and rivers are completely free of oxygen—and any marine life that relies on oxygen. The Black Sea’s anoxic nature is what particularly makes the Black Sea attractive for specialized ecological studies and deep sea explorations of natural gas and oil.

While its jurisdiction does fall under the umbrella of international law of the sea, the Black Sea is also subject to local legislation and regulations. Most notable of these is the [Montreux Convention of 1936](#), which gives all six countries that sit on the Black Sea unlimited access to the Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits but severely limits any other parties' access and permissions, making external participation heavily regulated and, as some may describe, restricted. In 1992, the six border countries of the Black Sea ratified the [Bucharest Convention](#) on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution and founded the intergovernmental [Black Sea Commission](#), which holds annual meetings and carries out other tasks to monitor and address pollution and conservation of this unique sea. Since 1992, the Commission has adopted [two Strategic Action Plans](#) (1996 & 2009), both of which specifically discuss the rehabilitation and protection of the Black Sea, and [four declarations](#) (1993, 2002, 2007, & 2009) that are also directly related to environmental protection. The [World Wildlife Fund](#) and similar international groups are also very active in the Black Sea region given its unique environment.

Apart from its environmental uniqueness, the Black Sea has also been a vital region for economic growth and international trade for centuries. At least one-fifth of the 180 species of fish that live in the Black Sea are [considered](#) commercially important. Also born by the 1992 Convention, the [Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation](#) entered into force in 1999 and works to “ensure peace, stability and prosperity, encouraging friendly and good-neighborly relations in the Black Sea region.” The Bosphorus Strait, a natural strait located in Istanbul, Turkey, is the sole linking maritime route between the Black Sea with the rest of the world, with about 48,000 ships passing through it annually; a rate three and four times denser than the Suez and Panama Canal traffic, respectively. About [32 km in length](#), the width of the Bosphorus varies between 730-3,300 meters while the depth varies between 30-120 meters.

Recent Events

Since the 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea—the peninsula that separates the Sea of Azov from the rest of the Black Sea—the Black Sea has understandably received increased levels of attention; and that attention only [multiplied](#) with Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. [Three-quarters](#) of Ukraine's naval fleet was based at the Sevastopol Naval Base in Crimea, which was raided and taken over by Russia in the 2014 annexation, and Kyiv has been working to rebuild its fleet ever since.

The Black Sea cannot be separated from the ongoing Ukraine-Russia war, and not just because two of the six coastal countries are at the heart of it. One of the first stories to go viral in the wake of the invasion, which promptly became a symbol of resistance, was the [verbal and physical defense](#) of Snake Island against a Russian warship. Ukrainian ports and their [shipyards](#) quickly became the focus of Russian bombing attacks to enact the heaviest damage, which Ukraine returned with a [drone attack](#) on the Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol in October. It cannot be denied; Ukraine and Russia are currently fighting a naval war in the Black Sea. For months in mid-late 2022, the international community worked on a deal with Russia to specifically allow Ukraine to safely export grain from its Black Sea ports through a humanitarian corridor in Istanbul; a deal that was [halted](#) and [restarted](#) multiple times and the [focus](#) of many Western eyes for months. And as it presently stands, the Black Sea continues to be at the center of the conflict. In January 2023, as new [reports](#)

told of a sudden surge of Russian Navy ships and submarines moving out of their base “en masse,” Ukraine’s historic coastal city of Odessa, which is often described as the “pearl of the Black Sea,” was [added](#) to the UNESCO World Heritage list in an effort to preserve its historic center.

Setting the Ukraine–Russia conflict aside, given its depth and anoxic nature, the Black Sea continues to be seen as an attractive source for environmental exploration as well as oil and natural gas opportunities with [rough estimates](#) in various unexplored fields [reaching](#) the hundreds of billion cubic meters marks. In December 2022, Turkey [announced](#) that its natural gas findings in the Black Sea now amount to 710 billion cubic meters. Offshore wind potential and other renewables are also now regularly on the discussion table. In addition to its geostrategic location, the Black Sea will continue to be prized and explored for its energy source potentials in the coming decades, as regional states have already come to accept and fight on behalf of.

Keep In Mind

The Black Sea is an exceedingly unique region; in its content, in its location, in its natural characteristics, and its human history, both recent and ancient. The Black Sea itself is understood to be of very [high geostrategic importance](#) to control, especially during any time of regional conflict, such as the current Ukraine–Russia conflict. As summarized in [2018](#), “[m]any experts believe that whoever controls or dominates the Black Sea can easily project power to the European continent, mainly in the Balkans and Central Europe, but also in the Eastern Mediterranean as well as the South Caucasus and the northern Middle East.” More specifically, [observers](#) believe the Black Sea to be “a critical intersection” for NATO nations to maintain control over as a defensive barrier. Coupled with the emerging energy discoveries in the region and the drive for green energy over the last few years, participants and observers alike will not be soon forgetting the importance of the Black Sea. For instance, in July 2022, the U.S. 117th Congress introduced the [Black Sea Security Act of 2022](#) that would further tighten diplomatic, democratic and economic relations with Black Sea countries apart from Russia. And [others](#) have wondered whether the naval war in the Black Sea can be used to prepare for a potential war with China over Taiwan; an interesting consideration despite how the list of differences in the two situations and regions is longer than the list of similarities.

In terms of achieving stability in the Black Sea region, there is no simple answer. Some analysts are [suggesting](#) to “kick Russia’s Navy out of the Black Sea”; an idea that may have some merit if Russia was not a coastal state to the Black Sea and, also, a significant global power aside from that. While it undeniably brings its own frustrations and complications, it is more productive to actively involve all who are involved, or else all the hard work and time spent in building a solution can come to naught. Parties can successfully work alongside those they disagree with if a goal of progress and stability is agreed upon. The [Black Sea Grain Initiative](#) is an excellent recent case study—with all of its imperfections and ultimate successes—for compromise in the Black Sea. Maybe global powers ought to recognize and accept the futility of winning wholesale via ‘knock-outs’ and fall back more on the realistic idea that ‘a really good compromise is the one that leaves both sides equally dissatisfied.’

This issue’s Spotlight was written by Jessica Martin, ICAS Research Associate & Chief Editor, ICAS Newsletters.

ICAS Maritime Affairs Program: New and Upcoming

— BCCC Commentary —

Challenges and Expectations for the Conservation and Restoration of Seagrass beds as Blue Carbon Ecosystems

By Keita Furukawa

December 31, 2022

“...On December 27, 2022, the Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism (MLIT) issued a press release on the promotion of “Blue Infrastructure Expansion Project for Life-Nurturing Ports”. Focusing on the effects of marine and coastal ecosystems in terms of carbon dioxide absorption and water purification, the project aims to contribute to the realization of carbon neutrality through the expansion of carbon dioxide sinks and to enrich marine biodiversity. Through this project, the MLIT aims to expand seagrass beds, seaweed habitats, tidal flats, and other bio-symbiotic port structures by promoting public-private partnerships to take the lead in this effort. We are hoping that this policy decision will encourage more stakeholders to participate in the conservation, restoration, and creation of blue carbon ecosystems...”

Read Online:

<https://chinaus-icas.org/research/challenges-and-expectations-for-the-conservation-and-restoration-of-seagrass-beds-as-blue-carbon-ecosystems/>

— ICAS Program Announcement —

The Chinese-language version of the ICAS Blue Carbon & Climate Change Quarterly 2022 Q4 is out!

“蓝碳与气候变化”主题研究第四季度季刊中文精选版现已发布！



Chinese, Concentrated (中文精选版):

<https://chinaus-icas.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/ICAS-BCCC-Quarterly-2022-Q4-CHN.pdf>

English, Full (英文原版):

<https://chinaus-icas.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/ICAS-BCCC-Quarterly-2022-Q4.pdf>



ICAS MARITIME AFFAIRS HANDBILL

February 28, 2023

Volume 2, Issue 2

Recent News in Global Maritime Affairs

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

[Last year was the second hottest on record for the Gulf of Maine](#)

February 27 - *The Ellsworth American*
[United States]

The Gulf of Maine is undeniably heating up, “as much as 99 percent faster than the world’s other oceans,” severely threatening the region’s fish, kelp, phytoplankton, and other sea life at alarming rates. Data from the Gulf of Maine Research Institute shows the 10 hottest years in the Gulf happened in the last 11 years.

[“World’s first” salmon and kelp farm launched](#)

February 21 - *The Fish Site*
[Atlantic Ocean, Europe]

In Steigen, Norway, the world’s first combined salmon and kelp farm has opened via the joint collaboration between environmental and farming groups Folla Alger, Cermaq and SINTEF Ocean. “Fish farming and kelp farming are both industries for the future,” explained the chairman of Folla Alger.

[New expedition seeks to reduce risk of extracting metals on the sea floor](#)

February 20 - National Oceanography Centre
[Central America, Global]

A group of scientists from the United Kingdom National Oceanography Centre have begun a 7 week-long Seabed Mining And Resilience To Experimental impact (SMARTeX) project as part of their commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The expedition will start in Costa Rica and conclude in the Central Pacific.

[Sea Ice Surrounding Antarctica Hit a New Record Low, Putting Ice Shelves at Risk](#)

February 17 - *Science Alert*

[The Antarctic]

The U.S. National Snow and Ice Data Center reported that Antarctica's sea ice fell to 737,000 square miles in mid-February; the lowest level since records first began being recorded in 1979, even with a "couple more weeks likely left in the melt season."

[Warming seas are carving into glacier that could trigger sea level rise](#)

February 15 - *The Washington Post* [Paywall]

[The Antarctic, Global]

A group of more than two dozen Antarctic scientists analyzing Thwaites Glacier, Earth's widest glacier, discovered that warm seawater is getting "channeled into crevasses...essentially, upside-down trenches" and accelerating risks of ice shelves breaking off and global sea levels rising.

[Rising seas threaten 'mass exodus on a biblical scale,' UN chief warns](#)

February 14 - *The Guardian*

[Global]

In an address to the UN security council, United Nations Secretary General António Guterres depicted the intense threat of the increasing pace of rising sea levels, calling it a "threat-multiplier" applicable to all continents and emphasizing the resulting "mass" of global refugees to come.

[Blue Carbon and Government of Zambia sign MoU to unlock the potential of carbon removal projects](#)

February 8 - *Gulf News*

[Africa, Middle East]

The Dubai-based company Blue Carbon, created by a member of the Dubai Royal Family to "support carbon removal projects across the world," has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Government of Zambia to initiate net zero carbon projects for Zambia's 8 million hectares of forest.

[Denmark awards first CO2 storage licences in the North Sea](#)

February 6 - *Reuters* [Paywall]

[Europe]

Denmark's Ministry of Climate, Energy and Utilities has awarded its first licenses to "capture and store carbon in the North Sea" to three domestic energy companies. Denmark regards carbon capture and storage technology as key to reaching its target of net zero carbon emissions by 2045.

[Japan looks beyond territorial waters for wind power amid green push](#)

February 5 - *The Japan Times* [Paywall]

[Japan, East Asia]

Japan is now looking into building wind power facilities beyond its territorial waters and into its exclusive economic zone. A panel of experts confirmed the concept's feasibility, thus initiating alterations or additions to domestic laws and Japan's holistic marine strategy.

[Brazil sinks aircraft carrier in Atlantic despite presence of asbestos and toxic materials](#)

February 4 - *The Guardian*

[South America, Global]

The Brazilian navy conducted a "planned and controlled sinking" of the decommissioned, six-decade old aircraft carrier *São Paulo* off the Brazilian coast in the Atlantic Ocean. The action invited the criticism of many environmentalists who protested the sinking due to ship's possession of "tons of asbestos, heavy metals and other toxic materials" that would enter the marine environment.

[2] Maritime Economy and Shipping [2]

[Sheikh Mohammed issues law renaming Dubai Maritime City Authority](#)

February 22 - *Zawya*

[Middle East]

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates, issued Law No. (3) of 2023, which renamed Dubai Maritime City Authority to Dubai Maritime Authority and formally affiliated it with the Ports, Customs, and Free Zone Corporation.

[US-Made Rare Earths to Skip China In Supply Deal With Japan](#)

February 22 - *Bloomberg* [Paywall]

[United States, Japan, China]

America's only rare-earths producer, MP Materials Corp., has agreed a deal to ship output from its new processing plant directly to Japan. The adjustment is part of a larger effort by the U.S. to "stabilize, diversify, and strengthen a supply chain of critical importance" by reducing China's role.

[Cosco Shipping in 3m teu expansion at Quanzhou port](#)

February 20 - *Seatrade Maritime News*

[China, Global]

China's shipping giant Cosco has invested in two berths projects at Quanzhou port that involve "smart port and green low-carbon" solutions developed internally. Once completed, the annual handling capacity of the Shihu port area will increase by 40% to 3 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs).

[Cyprus pushes for EU support over shipping industry sanctions impact](#)

February 20 - *Seatrade Maritime News*

[Europe]

Cyprus has stepped up efforts to shore up support for the shipping industry hit by sanctions on Russia. The EU's third largest shipping power has approached Belarus, which is currently in deep need for support to counterbalance the impact of an oil price cap on Russian crude shipments.

[US: EU's largest maritime freight partner in Q2 2022](#)

February 15 - *Eurostat*

[Europe, United States]

In the second quarter of 2022, the U.S. surpassed Russia and became the EU's largest maritime freight transport partner with a total of 61 million tonnes. Compared with the same quarter of 2021, maritime transport between the EU and Russia declined by 22.1%, while traffic between EU and the U.S. increased by 21.1%.

[PIMEC 2023: Mushahid proposes '5-point action plan to promote Blue Economy' worth \\$100b](#)

February 12 - *Pakistan Today*

[Middle East, Global]

Pakistan's Chairman of the Senate Defence Committee, Senator Mushahid Hussain, proposed a 5-point action plan to promote the blue economy. He suggested that developing the China Pakistan Economic Corridor and building a strategic partnership between Pakistan, China and Saudi Arabia would be an alternative approach for Islamabad to establish its new development path.

[Biggest Shipping Companies Signal Global Trade Slowdown](#)

February 8 - *The Wall Street Journal* [Paywall]

[Global]

A.P. Moller-Maersk A/S, one of the world's largest ocean freight companies, warned that the global shipping industry could suffer an 80% in earnings due to weakening demand to ship containers. The company saw a sharp demand falling from both the U.S. and Europe during the pandemic, which changed the landscape of global shipping.

[FMC Orders MSC to Justify Fees as Reform Act Enforcement Increases](#)

February 7 - *The Maritime Executive*

[Europe, United States]

The U.S. Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) continues its aim of cracking down on fees and unreasonable business practices of major ocean carriers. In a "showcase" order against Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC), the FMC seeks to investigate MSC's conduct, fee, and charges that it believes violate the U.S. Ocean Shipping Reform Act of 2022.

[Morocco, Mauritania to Improve Collaboration in Fisheries Research](#)

February 5 - *Morocco World News*

[Africa]

On February 4, Morocco and Mauritania signed a protocol on cooperation in fisheries research. The protocol seeks to improve the cooperation between the two countries's fishery research agencies and work to harmonize their methods of collecting information, and focus more research on common problems in aquaculture that are of importance to both countries.

[India cuts customs duty on shrimp feed](#)

February 2 - *Aquafeed*

[South Asia, Global]

With the end goal of supporting the income of seafood exporters and promoting exports, the government of India announced a reduction of customs duty on shrimp feed. About 50% of the shrimp feed and fishmeal used in India are imported.

[3] Ocean Governance and Maritime Cooperation [3]

[Russia Amends Arctic Policy Prioritizing 'National Interest' and Removing Cooperation Within Arctic Council](#)

February 26 - *High North News*

[The Arctic, Russia]

On February 21, Russia's Kremlin officially revised its Arctic policy, previously published in March 2020. Among other adjustments, the amended version removes any mentions of the Arctic Council and replaces the call for the "strengthening of good neighborly relations" with an emphasis on self-reliance, bilateral relations, and the protection of the Russian Federation's national interests.

[Cyprus and UK ink agreement to strengthen shipping relations](#)

February 24 - *Seatrade Maritime News*

[Europe, The Mediterranean]

On February 21, top representatives from the United Kingdom and Cyprus signed a memorandum of understanding on bilateral shipping relations. The British representative described the agreement as "a new chapter in [bilateral] relations" while the minister from Cyprus called collaboration a perpetual "cornerstone of Cyprus' vision."

[Indonesia Tells Beijing It Wants Actionable Code on South China Sea](#)

February 22 - *Jakarta Globe*

[Southeast Asia, South China Sea]

Indonesia, the current ASEAN chair, told Beijing's Qin Gang during his visit to Jakarta that it wants an actionable Code of Conduct (CoC) on the South China Sea after years of delay. During a joint press briefing, Indonesia's Foreign Affairs Minister Retno Marsudi explained "we will resume the CoC negotiations, and also intensify the talks in person"; an idea that Ambassador Qin Gang echoed.

[Republic of Korea Assumes Command of Anti-Piracy Task Force](#)

February 17 - U.S. Navy

[Africa, Global]

In February, the Republic of Korea Navy assumed command of the Combined Task Force (CTF) 151 from the Brazilian Navy. CTF 151, headquartered in Bahrain, is one of four task forces under Combined Maritime Forces that bring together 38 member-nations and partners and specifically works to "deter, disrupt and suppress piracy and armed robbery at sea, outside the Horn of Africa."

[PACFLEET CO Paparo Talks Combat Logistics, Chinese Coercion](#)

February 14 - *USNI News*

[United States, China, Global]

In a conference keynote address, U.S. Pacific Fleet commander Adm. Samuel Paparo said the world is living in "a period of intense competition and high stakes." Paparo emphasized the "intentional malign behavior by the PRC and the Chinese Communist Party...see[n] in the form of territorial aggression...[and] unprofessional and unsafe behavior at sea" cannot be normalized.

[MARAD finds many breaches of law during checks on Essequibo, Mazaruni rivers](#)

February 11 - *Stabroek News*

[Africa, Global]

During a series of spot checks on the Essequibo and Mazaruni rivers in North Africa, the U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration Department (MARAD) encountered "many cases of non-compliance with the Maritime Law." The exercise was conducted with support from the Guyana Coast Guard.

[China pulls back from global subsea cable project as US tensions mount](#)

February 10 - *Financial Times* [Paywall]

[China, Europe, Global]

Amidst another rise in strained U.S.-China relations, China has decided to rescind its participation in the internet cable project 'Sea-Me-We 6'; a subsea pipeline project that would physically connect

Southeast Asia's internet with that of Western Europe through 19,200 kilometers of cables. Another partner in the US\$500 million project called China's participation "important but not critical".

[Senegal, Liberia ink MoU to curb illegal fishing](#)

February 8 - *North Africa Post*

[Africa]

In Dakar, Senegal, the top representatives from Senegal and Liberia on fisheries and the maritime economy signed a memorandum of understanding to jointly counter "illegal and unauthorized" fishing both within their maritime borders and at international levels.

[House tackles Blue Economy Act; PH eyed as maritime 'powerhouse'](#)

February 7 - *Manila Bulletin*

[Southeast Asia]

On February 7, the Philippines' House Committee on Economic Affairs initiated deliberations on the newly proposed 'Blue Economy Act', also known as "An Act Establishing a Framework for Blue Economy, Promoting Stewardship and Sustainable Development of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems and Resources". The Act would bring a variety of structural and focus changes to the Philippines.

[National Assembly passes Pakistan Maritime Zone Bill 2021](#)

February 3 - *Dunya News*

[Middle East]

On February 3, Pakistan's National Assembly passed the Pakistan Maritime Zones Bill, 2021. This 2021 bill was designed to amend and/or revise the 1976 Territorial Water Maritime Zone Act (amended in 1997) that is currently in force.

[4] Maritime Security and Defense [4]

[Japan, NZ to speed up intel sharing pact amid China concerns](#)

February 27 - *The Washington Post* [Paywall]

[East Asia, Indo-Pacific, United States, Global]

During a meeting on February 27 in Tokyo, the foreign ministers of New Zealand and Japan agreed to accelerate talks regarding an intelligence sharing pact. A statement released by Japan's Foreign Ministry also explained that the two nations pledged to ensure the "rights, freedoms and sovereignty of all countries [in the Pacific Island region] regardless of size or power are protected."

[Philippines eyes South China Sea patrols with US, Australia](#)

February 22 - AP

[South China Sea, United States]

The top defense officials of the Philippines, Australia, and the United States are in discussions over establishing joint patrols in the South China Sea amidst “increasingly aggressive actions” by China in the disputed waters. U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin visited Manila in person earlier this month.

[Multinational exercise AMAN to enhance cooperation with world navies](#)

February 22 - *Daily Times*

[Middle East, Global]

From February 10-14, Pakistan’s navy hosted 52 nations for the 8th multinational, biennial naval exercise “AMAN-23” in the North Arabian Sea, led by the slogan “Together for Peace.” The 1st International Maritime Expo and 10th International Maritime Conference (IMC-23), held in Karachi, both coincided with AMAN-23.

[Japan, South Korea and U.S. stage rare joint naval drill after North Korean launches](#)

February 22 - *The Japan Times* [Paywall]

[East Asia, United States, Pacific Ocean]

The Japanese, South Korean and U.S. navies conducted a rare, joint naval exercise in the Sea of Japan. The exercise, which took place days after North Korea reportedly fired a Hwasong-15 intercontinental ballistic missile off the shores of Hokkaido, was "focused on ballistic missile information-sharing" and promoting trilateral security cooperation.

[South Africa Criticized for Naval Exercise With Russia and China](#)

February 17 - *The Wall Street Journal* [Paywall]

[Africa, China, Global]

South Africa is drawing criticism for planning an 11-day trilateral exercise with Russia and China, held off South Africa’s east coast, that overlaps with the anniversary of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. It is the second exercise of its kind since 2019 between the three countries who also interact under the BRICS framework.

[China Harasses PCG Vessel Amid Increased Philippine Maritime Security Cooperation With Japan, U.S.](#)

February 15 - *Naval News*

[East Asia, Southeast Asia]

Coinciding with bilateral meetings between the Philippines and representatives of Japan and the United States, both of which resulted in strengthened bilateral naval partnerships, a China Coast

Guard vessel was reported harassing a Philippine Coast Guard vessel with lasers during a resupply mission off the coast of the Philippines.

[Navy Wants More Middle East Countries in Unmanned Maritime Awareness Network](#)

February 14 - USNI News

[United States, Middle East, Global]

Vice Admiral Brad Cooper, commander of the US Navy's 5th Fleet stationed in the Middle East, announced the US Navy's encouragement for Gulf Cooperation Council nations to expand their use of unmanned systems. Such systems, which Cooper noted already have the widespread interest of everyone in the Gulf council, can "essentially triple how far you can see."

[Japan, Philippines agree to boost defence ties amid China tension](#)

February 10 - Al Jazeera

[East Asia, Southeast Asia]

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. signed a formal defense agreement that will allow Japanese troops to join training exercises related to natural disasters and humanitarian projects. The agreement is seen as a positive step by the Philippines towards broader bilateral military cooperation, both with Japan and with other regional nations.

[US warship operates in Black Sea in first instance since Russian invasion of Ukraine](#)

February 7 - The Jerusalem Post

[Middle East, Europe, United States]

During the first week of February, U.S. Navy destroyer USS Nitze was seen operating in the Black Sea and visiting Turkey, marking the closest that a U.S. warship has been to Russia since the Russian invasion of Ukraine began last February.

Peer-Reviewed Research on Maritime Issues

- Government Release: U.S. Department of State - "[U.S. Support for the Philippines in the South China Sea](#)" [February 13]
- Government Release: U.S. Congressional Research Service - [U.S.-China Strategic Competition in South and East China Seas: Background and Issues for Congress](#) [Updated February 8]
- Government Release: Australia-UK Ministerial Consultations - "[Joint statement - AUKMIN Statement](#)" [February 3]
- Government Release: United States Arctic Research Commission - [Report on the Goals and Objectives for Arctic Research 2023-2024 for the US Arctic Research Program Plan](#) [January 2023]
- Press Release: Government of Ireland - "[New Measures to tackle pollution, biodiversity loss and climate impacts on Ireland's Seas](#)" [February 27]

- Press Release: U.S. Department of Transportation - [“USDOT Announces More Than \\$660 Million Available Through the Port Infrastructure Development Program”](#) [February 8]
- Speech: North Atlantic Treaty Organization - [“Speech by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at Keio University”](#) [February 1]
- Journal Article: [“Blue carbon sinks in South Africa and the need for restoration to enhance carbon sequestration”](#) [Science of The Total Environment - Volume 859, Part 1, February 10, 2023]
- Report: [“The Disruption of Arctic Exceptionalism: Managing Environmental Change in Light of Russian Aggression”](#) [German Council on Foreign Relations, Alfred Wegener Institute, and Wilson Center - February 2023]
- Report: [“Navigating Breakup: Security Realities of Freezing Politics and Thawing Landscapes in the Arctic”](#) [Norwegian Institute of International Affairs and Wilson Center - February 17]
- White Paper: [“Indian Coastal Green Shipping Programme”](#) [DNV - January 2023]
- Analysis: [“Russia, Ukraine in Black Sea Stalemate a Year Into Russo-Ukraine Conflict”](#) [USNI News - February 23]
- Analysis: [“Fighting DMO, pt. 1: Defining distributed maritime operations and the future of naval warfare”](#) [CIMSEC - February 20]
- Analysis: [“Indonesia-Vietnam EEZ pact sends firm message to China”](#) [Asia Times - February 17]
- Analysis: [“Sweden’s Arctic Advantages: Critical Minerals, Space, and Data”](#) [Wilson Center - February 14]
- Analysis: [“Navigating the new world of sanctions”](#) [Seatrade Maritime News - February 14]
- Analysis: [“Rules of engagement and undersea incursions: Reacting to foreign submarines in territorial waters”](#) [CIMSEC - February 6]
- Analysis: [“Can a French Shipping Giant Make Marseille the Capital of the Mediterranean?”](#) [Foreign Policy - February 4] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Prioritizing the Indian Ocean in US Indo-Pacific Strategy”](#) [Stimson - February 3]
- Analysis: [“The U.S. military has big plans for an Australian port. So does the Chinese firm that controls it”](#) [Los Angeles Times - February 2]
- Analysis: [“Egypt just seized part of Libya’s maritime zone. What’s the story behind the Egyptian decree no one is talking about?”](#) [Atlantic Council - February 2]
- Analysis: [“How US Marines are being reshaped for China threat”](#) [BBC - February 1]
- Opinion: [“Decarbonizing The Shipping Sector Is A Long Trip But Within Reach”](#) [Forbes - February 27] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“China in crosshairs of new ocean shipping reforms”](#) [Freight Waves - February 17]
- Opinion: [“Environmental and political reconciliation needed for the South China Sea”](#) [Modern Diplomacy - February 8]
- Opinion: [“Why Even in a Crisis India May Not Block Maritime Trade With China”](#) [The Diplomat - February 4]
- Opinion: [“The United States must act to stop illegal fishing in 2023”](#) [Brookings - February 3]
- Opinion: [“The U.S. Needs a Black Sea Strategy”](#) [Barron’s - February 2]
- Opinion: [“China’s put-upon maritime neighbours are pushing back”](#) [The Economist - February 1] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“Enforcement of Fisheries Rules Will Enhance Maritime Governance and Security”](#) [Pew Charitable Trusts - February 1]

Events on the Maritime Domain



- On February 9, 2023, the Wilson Center Polar Institute and Center for Maritime Strategy held a virtual event on [“Deterring Russia at Sea in the High North.”](#) A full recording of the event is available online.
- On February 10, 2023, Brookings held a webinar on [“Geostrategic competition and US, Chinese, and Russian overseas basing.”](#) A full recording of the event is available online.
- On February 15, 2023, the Wilson Center Polar Institute and the US Arctic Research Commission held an event to discuss the [“Release of the US Arctic Research Commission 2023-2024 Goals Report.”](#) A full recording of the event is available online.
- From February 21-23, 2023, Arctic360 held its [“Arctic360 Annual Conference”](#) which focused on “Accelerating Cooperation, Innovation & Opportunity.”
- On February 22, 2023, multiple Wilson Center programs hosted an online event on [“Greening BRI Governance in Southeast Asia, Latin America and Beyond.”](#) A full recording of the event is available online.
- From February 27-March 1, 2023, the [“10th Annual World Ocean Summit & Expo”](#) will be held in-person in Lisbon, Portugal. “This year, the summit will steer progress by addressing the greatest challenges facing the ocean: climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. High-level policy discussions will continue to be at the heart of plenary sessions.”
- From February 27-March 3, 2023, the International Maritime Organization, the Australia Maritime Safety Authority, and the Pacific Community will hold both the [“Pacific Women in Maritime \(PacWIMA\) Conference”](#) and the [“Pacific Regional Maritime Search and Rescue \(PACSAR\) Workshop”](#) in Queensland, Australia.
- On March 1, 2023, the East-West Center will hold a hybrid event on [“Damming Rivers in Cambodia: Impacts of Water-Grabbing on Land and Resource Access”](#) out of Honolulu, HI.
- On March 3, 2023, the Wilson Center and the U.S. Department of State will co-host a hybrid event on [“Strengthening U.S. Cooperation on Marine Protection in Latin America.”](#) The event will be webcast live.
- From March 4-6, 2023, the Arctic Circle and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation will hold the [“Arctic Circle Japan Forum”](#) in Tokyo. Registration is still open.
- On March 6, the Center for Strategic & International Studies will hold a webinar on [“Deterring a Cross-Strait Conflict: Beijing’s Assessment of Evolving U.S. Strategy.”](#)
- 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 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 opens February 20, 2023.

Handbill Spotlight

Carrier Strike Group

Issue Background ¹

A carrier strike group (CSG) is a type of operational formation in the US Navy. While the most defining feature of the formation is its capital ship—the aircraft carrier—the inclusion of several surface and sub-surface escort ships gives CSGs the resilience to maintain a preeminent military presence wherever they may be deployed. As such, the Pentagon frequently uses carrier strike groups to project sea power in areas of strategic importance to the United States.

Today, the U.S. is unique among the world's nations in sustaining a [fleet of eleven](#) large-deck, nuclear-powered aircraft carriers—more than double that of its closest competitors.² However, the organization of aircraft carriers in formation with smaller escorts emerged ubiquitously during the Second World War out of practical necessity. Aircraft carriers are essentially fast and massive mobile airports. They can move anywhere that there is a deep enough ocean, and the aircraft which take off from their decks can out-range the cannons of any surface ship by over ten times. But, their powerful offensive capabilities make them prime targets for the enemy, further complicated by their conspicuous size. By the end of the Pacific War, informed by several key battles, the US Navy began to outclass Japan by grouping several carriers of different sizes with cruiser and destroyer escorts to inculcate the mobile runways against attacks from air, surface, and submarine vantage points.



¹ Image Source: [Nimitz Carrier Strike Group And Makin Island Amphibious Readiness Group Conduct Photoex Exercise](#), US Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Samuel Osborn, February 15, 2023, via DVIDS, Public Domain.

² The UK, Indian, and Chinese navies each operate only two aircraft carriers of comparable size to their U.S. counterparts.

With the end of open hostilities and the transition into the Cold War period, the battle capabilities of multi-carrier formations became less important to the U.S. in comparison to global deterrence and the need to protect Transatlantic supply routes from Soviet submarines lest open conflict break out between the superpowers. In this context, the contemporary CSG was born. These formations [typically consist of](#) one nuclear-powered ‘supercarrier’ (over 1,000 feet long with 70-80 aircraft on deck), two guided-missile cruisers, two anti-aircraft destroyers, one frigate, two submarines, and a supply ship. The Navy currently maintains eleven CSGs: two³ are tasked with training and certifying the Atlantic and Pacific fleets, five are based in Virginia, three are based in California, and one—Carrier Strike Group 11—is forward-deployed in Japan.

Recent Events

With such substantial operational diversity and depth, CSGs have been involved in several practical engagements since the end of the Cold War. One such application is their use as mobile bases for air strikes on land targets as in: the [1995 NATO bombing of Yugoslavia](#), the [2003 invasion of Iraq](#), and the [2017 missile strikes in Syria](#). However, due to their unmatched power, CSGs have also been deployed more symbolically to signal American commitment to a given cause, or resolve to deter a rival. Take, for example, the involvement of CSGs in the humanitarian response to the [2004 Indian Ocean tsunami](#), the [2006–2016 NATO anti-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia](#), and various annual joint exercises (such as [RIMPAC](#)) in the Western Pacific and South China Sea.

Recently, CSG-10, with the USS *George H.W. Bush* as its flagship, has been operating in the eastern Mediterranean. A destroyer attached to the formation, the USS *Nitze*, made news on February 3 when it made [a port call](#) in the Bosphorus Strait; the closest that a U.S. vessel has come to entering the [Black Sea](#) since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine last year. Additionally, the formation sailed towards Antakya and was placed on standby to [assist with humanitarian efforts](#) following the devastating earthquake that hit the Turkish-Syrian border region earlier this month. The Sixth Fleet described the activities as signals of U.S. commitment to Türkiye, the main NATO ally in the region.

And halfway across the world in Asia, CSG-11, headed by the USS *Nimitz*, made headlines for its operations in the South China Sea. In a joint exercise with an amphibious ready group (ARG) of the Marine Corps, the *Nimitz* CSG conducted [“integrated expeditionary strike force operations”](#) near the Spratly Islands on February 11. China, which [claims sovereign rights and jurisdiction in large swathes of the South China Sea](#), released footage on February 16 from the deck of an aircraft carrier of its own, the *Shandong*, issuing [warnings in Chinese and English](#). It is yet unclear whether these announcements were in response to the ongoing U.S. exercises or simply part of the Chinese Navy’s own drills preparing for a potential future encounter with the U.S. Nevertheless, this ‘like-for-like’ response to a CSG is certainly a novel signal of China’s disquiet with U.S. operations in the region. Coming amid a period of heightened tensions, this may have implications on how Washington utilizes the formation going forward.

³ CSG-4 and CSG-15, respectively.

Keep In Mind

Since 2020, U.S. maritime strategy has revolved around [countering threats posed by “determined rivals” Russia and China](#) with a particular emphasis on the latter as “the most pressing, long-term strategic threat.” In this strategy, and [subsequent documents](#) released by the Navy, the Pentagon emphasizes the continued relevance of carrier strike groups in its “sea control and power projection” aims. Joined by this, however, is a sensitivity to China’s growing ability to counter American naval operations in its near-abroad through asymmetric military modernization.

Military commentators are divided over the extent to which Chinese defensive capabilities could neutralize the offensive advantage of a U.S. carrier strike group in open conflict. These arguments revolve around whether Chinese [hypersonic anti-ship missiles](#), [fifth generation fighters](#) and [stealth bombers, cyber weapons](#), and [forward submarine bases](#) give it an asymmetric advantage against American carriers which denies their ability to operate in the South and East China seas.⁴ Aware of this potential vulnerability, U.S. officials are prioritizing research and development and are experimenting with new tactics aimed at denying China’s defensive advantage. For example, last August, the Navy [deployed an amphibious assault ship](#)⁵ to the South China Sea with a deck full of F-35B stealth fighters, widely regarded as far more [useful and resilient against Chinese defenses](#) than helicopters. The USS *Makin Island* amphibious assault ship also hosted several F-35s in its joint exercises with the *Nimitz* CSG earlier this month. This suggests that Washington may intend to counter China’s A2/AD capabilities in part through further enhancing U.S. carrier dominance; introducing smaller carriers into CSGs that allow them to ‘flood the zone’ with short-takeoff fifth-generation aircraft like [the F-35](#).

Nevertheless, the concerns of wargamers over how a potential conflict with Beijing could play out miss the fact that U.S.-China military competition hitherto (and hopefully forever) has been limited to the ‘gray zone’—conflict short of open war. Carrier strike groups continue to operate with great frequency on China’s doorstep which has a deterrent value in times of peace and crisis response that should not be understated. The near-continuous U.S. presence in the South China Sea over the past year shows that the Pentagon is not practically averse to operating in range of China’s defenses and can sustain this pressure through nuclear-powered CSGs unfettered by refueling range. This conspicuous American naval power must factor into Chinese calculations regarding Taiwan and the South China Sea.

It remains to be seen whether the pace of Chinese military development could eventually give the U.S. pause in how it uses carrier strike groups. Currently, China’s ability to directly counter CSG-type operations is limited by the reliance of its surface vessels on diesel fuel (though China’s indigenous carrier development efforts are [likely focusing on nuclear propulsion](#)). Nevertheless, the counter-exercises of the Chinese carrier *Shandong* and its escorts this month show that Beijing likely intends to step up its responses to U.S. operations in its near-abroad if bilateral relations continue to sour. In the words of the Chinese Navy, the show of force after a perceived incursion [“gives people an overwhelming sense of security.”](#) These drills and resolute language show that the

⁴ This strategy is called “Active Strategic Counterattacks on Exterior Lines” (ASCEL) by the PLA, and “Anti-Access/Area Denial” (A2/AD) by the U.S.

⁵ A smaller class of carrier that usually holds helicopters due to the limited room for takeoff.

deterrent effect of CSGs on China is steadily deteriorating, though their timing during the [‘balloon saga’](#) could point to factors beyond regional balance of power.

Does this mean that American CSGs can no longer operate with impunity in China’s backyard? One needn’t be so hasty, as there is still no demonstrable threat to U.S. forces in the gray zone beyond increased Chinese resolve. Additionally, pulling back the *Nimitz* CSG at this stage would only further weaken its deterrent effect. China’s heightened response, however, does entail a change in Washington’s optics calculations. The U.S. has not positioned an aircraft carrier in the Taiwan Strait [since the crisis of 1995](#). This is not because Washington now believes that a carrier in these waters would be immediately destroyed by Chinese defenses: it believes that the diplomatic fallout and indirect danger of such a move would outweigh its deterrent effect on a cross-strait invasion. Without any diplomatic and military-to-military efforts to restore U.S.-China relations in general, American carrier strike group operations in the South China Sea could also drift into this area of undue risk and limited effect—forcing the Pentagon to reconsider their efficacy.

This issue’s Spotlight was written by Alec Caruana, ICAS Research Assistant Intern.

ICAS Maritime Affairs Program: New and Upcoming

— MAP Commentary —

As war in Ukraine freezes the Arctic Council, how will Asia break the ice?

By Nong Hong
February 25, 2023



Geopolitics is complicating cooperation in the resource-rich, climate-critical Arctic region. The five Asian observer states of China, Japan, South Korea, Singapore and India need to examine their engagement in a globalised Arctic in flux.

The Ukraine crisis has changed the world in many ways, one of which is the functionality of the Arctic Council, a forum that Russia currently chairs. The decision by the other seven council

members in March last year to stop joining its meetings is a grave impediment to international cooperation in the Arctic. Concerns have also been raised over the role of the observer states, including China, Japan, South Korea, Singapore and India...

Read the Full Commentary Online:

<https://chinaus-icas.org/research/as-war-in-ukraine-freezes-the-arctic-council-how-will-asia-break-the-ice/>

This commentary & illustration was [originally](#) released in the South China Morning Post on February 25, 2023.



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 for ICAS, MAP, CHINA INSTITUTE, and UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA are displayed at the bottom.

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...

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– 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...

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– 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/>

The Institute for China-America Studies (ICAS) is an independent think tank in Washington D.C. ICAS focuses on the evolving dynamics in the U.S.-China relationship to promote greater collaboration and mutual understanding through sincere exchanges of fresh ideas, objective policy-oriented research, and fair assessments of this critical bilateral relationship.

We aim to provide a window into the worldviews of both the United States and China, and thereby serve as a vehicle to promote greater understanding between these two countries and societies.

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