



ICAS

Institute for China-America Studies

ICAS  
MARITIME AFFAIRS  
PROGRAM

HANDBILL

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Q2



# 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.



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# ICAS MARITIME AFFAIRS HANDBILL

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## Recent News in Global Maritime Affairs

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

#### [58% of ocean suffered at least one marine heatwave event in 2022](#)

April 22 - Jara News  
[Global]

According to the recently released *State of the Global Climate 2022* report, in 2022, 58% and 25% of the ocean surface suffered from one or more marine heatwave events or marine cold spells, respectively. Also, an estimated 36% of the rise in sea level in 2022 was specifically credited to ice loss from glaciers in Greenland and Antarctica.

#### [Cross-sectional research into mangrove blue carbon: A tale from two islands](#)

April 19 - Forest News  
[Southeast Asia, East Asia]

Lead researchers in a multidisciplinary research study spoke at a conference in Indonesia commenting on the state of mangrove studies in Indonesia. One researcher summarized that the “best course is, indeed, to rehabilitate mangrove areas to their original state with a management model that aligns conservation with economic activities to meet the needs of people.”

#### [New coral reef discovered in Ecuador's Galapagos Islands](#)

April 18 - Reuters  
[South America]

Ecuador's environment ministry announced on April 17 that a deepwater scientist found a new coral reef, approximately two kilometers in length and containing a wide variety of marine life, near the Galapagos Islands. It is being regarded as an important, valuable and even surprising discovery because many deepwater systems are already degraded.

### [Large seagrass bed discovered in Cornish bay](#)

April 16 - BBC

[Europe]

With the assistance of acoustic surveys, a seagrass bed of nearly 900 acres (360 hectares) was discovered in the St. Austell Bay in Cornwall, England. The discovery and accompanying report, which also notes the 122 different species of plants and animals found in the seabed, was published by Cornwall Wildlife Trust and Natural England.

### [First Carbon Credit Methodology for Seagrass Developed in France](#)

April 11 - *Carbon Credits*

[Europe]

Four organizations in Europe—EcoAct, Digital Realty France, Schneider Electric France and the Calanques National Park—have come together to create the first carbon credit accounting methodology in Europe for protecting seagrass beds that is expected to allow French companies to use the credits to offset emissions of up to 24,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per year.

### [The Nature Conservancy And Planet Collaborate To Map Blue Carbon](#)

April 5 - Planet

[Global]

Planet announced the details of how they have been helping accelerate The Nature Conservancy's Blue Carbon Explorer, a Google Maps engine tool that aims to map mangrove and seagrass blue carbon around the world. "These ecosystems really are a great ocean-climate link, and part of our strategy is to unlock this blue carbon potential for climate mitigation," said Lindsey Smart, Climate and Ocean Scientist at The Nature Conservancy.

### [Maps of sharks' journeys show marine protected areas alone won't save them](#)

April 5 - *Mongabay*

[South America]

Recent research shows that silky sharks may swim for longer distances and travel to a wider range of waters than previously thought. The finding could mean that current conservation methods—namely, the set-up of discrete marine protected areas—could be insufficient to prevent the species' extinction.

### ['Scary' new data on the last ice age raises concerns about future sea levels](#)

April 5 - *The Washington Post* [Paywall]

[The Antarctic, Europe, Global]

According to a new study, a giant ice sheet in Antarctica is retreating 2,000 feet a day. This indicates that melting ice could raise global sea levels at an unprecedented fast rate, and would lead to serious, “scary” consequences if the trend of global warming cannot be reversed.

### [CO2 in, methane out? Study highlights complexity of coastal carbon sinks](#)

March 29 - *Mongabay*

[Europe]

Researchers in the Baltic Sea found that, while blue carbon coastal ecosystems (mangrove forests, seagrass meadows, salt marshes, etc.) absorb significant amounts of carbon, these ecosystems might also be related to the release of methane, another greenhouse gas. It is yet unclear how methane was released from or near coastal ecosystems and to what extent.

## [2] Maritime Economy and Shipping [2]

### [UAE container ship docks in Kuwait opening direct maritime trade route](#)

April 17 - *Zawya*

[Middle East]

On April 17, after a container freight ship of the Abu Dhabi Ports Group docked at Al-Shuwaikh Port in Kuwait, the Acting Director General of Kuwait Ports Authority Issa Al-Mulla commented that the docking marked the inauguration of a direct maritime navigational route between Khalifa Port and Al-Shuwaikh Port.

### [Germany reexamines Cosco Shipping's investment in Hamburg port](#)

April 16 - *Seatrade Maritime News*

[Europe]

Leaders in Germany are reassessing an investment deal, originally agreed upon in September 2021, that would allow China's COSCO Shipping firm to buy a 35% stake in the German port of Hamburg.

### [Schneider Electric takes on feasibility study for UK's first green maritime corridor](#)

April 14 - *Ship Technology*

[Europe]

Schneider Electric, a French-based multinational company, will be a “technical partner” in an eight-month long consultancy project to design and deliver the UK's first green maritime corridor between Dover in the United Kingdom and the ports of Calais and Dunkirk in France. The new project is part of the UK's Clean Maritime Demonstration Competition (CMDC).

### [Textron awarded US Navy mine sweep system contract](#)

April 12 - *Sea Technology*

[United States, Global]

Private company Textron Systems secured a 36-month, \$20.8 million contract to create the U.S. Navy's next-generation mine sweep system (MAGNUSS) for the Common Unmanned Surface Vessel platform. Collaborating with General Dynamics-Applied Physical Sciences Corporation and American Superconductor, the system aims to safely and efficiently neutralize mines.

### [Maersk divestment to further offshore solutions](#)

April 11 - *Sea Technology*

[Global]

A.P. Moller-Maersk will divest Maersk Supply Service (MSS), a leading offshore marine services provider, to its parent company A.P. Moller Holding. The deal completes Maersk's strategy to separate energy-related activities and focus on integrated logistics. MSS will continue to trade under its current name, servicing the offshore wind industry as a key growth area.

### [Exclusive: China plans \\$500 million subsea internet cable to rival US-backed project](#)

April 6 - *Reuters*

[China, Asia, Middle East, Europe]

Three of China's top state-owned telecommunications companies are planning to lay a \$500 million undersea fiber-optic internet cable network to connect Asia, the Middle East and Europe. So far, this project appears very similar to a separate U.S.-backed project and is seen by some as a sign of an "intensifying tech war."

### [Congress Seeks Details on Spying Risks From Chinese Cargo Cranes](#)

April 3 - *The Wall Street Journal* [Paywall]

[United States, China]

U.S. lawmakers are concerned about potential security vulnerabilities from Chinese-made cranes at American ports and are working to investigate potential risks to U.S. cybersecurity and critical infrastructure. Currently, about 80% of cranes at U.S. ports use Chinese software from a company with ties to China's military.

### [In Croatia, U.S. Campaigned to Stop Chinese Bid on Key Port](#)

April 2 - *The Wall Street Journal* [Paywall]

[Europe, China, United States]

A U.S.-led campaign, with support from the European Union, prevented Chinese state-owned firms from securing a 50-year deal to build and operate a container terminal in Croatia's Rijeka port. Using diplomacy and declassified intelligence, the U.S. backed an alternative offer by Danish company A.P.

Moller-Maersk. Croatia eventually awarded the €2.7 billion concession to Maersk's APM Terminals and Croatian firm ENNA Logic.

### [Govt to Identify 100 Districts to Develop as Export Hubs: DGFT](#)

April 1 - *The Economic Times* [Paywall]

[South Asia]

The Indian government plans to designate nearly 100 districts as export hubs, involving young officials for a bottom-up approach, according to Directorate General of Foreign Trade Santosh Kumar Sarangi.

### [Philippine fishermen struggle as oil spill keeps them ashore](#)

March 29 - *The Jakarta Post* [Paywall]

[Southeast Asia]

Four weeks after it sank, a tanker originally carrying 210,000 gallons (800,000 liters) of thick oil continues to leak pollutants into renowned marine life habitats off of the Philippines' central island of Mindoro, severely and visually harming the local fishing industry.

## [3] Ocean Governance and Maritime Cooperation [3]

### [Philippines Opens 'More Lines Of Communication' With China To Resolve Maritime Conflict](#)

April 23 - *qCaptain*

[Southeast Asia, China]

Following his meeting with China's Foreign Minister Qin Gang in Manila, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said the Philippines and China have agreed to establish "more lines of communications" to "talk directly to one another and iron things out" over issues related to the West Philippine Sea. Minister Qin said China is also ready to "truly implement a consensus."

### [Việt Nam protests China's unilateral fishing ban in East Sea](#)

April 20 - *Viet Nam News*

[Southeast Asia, China]

Speaking during a regular press conference in Hanoi, the deputy spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs repeated Vietnam's protest of China's unilateral, annual fishing ban, explaining among other concerns that it "violates our sovereignty towards the Hoàng Sa (Paracel) archipelago." This year, the ban is set to run from May 1 to August 16 across several parts of the South China Sea.

### [South Korea repels North Korean patrol boat that crossed sea border](#)

April 16 - PBS News Hour

[East Asia]

While also following a Chinese fishing boat, the South Korean military fired warning shots in an effort to deter a North Korean patrol boat that crossed the disputed western sea boundary. There was no direct firing between the South and North Korean vessels, but the South Korean vessel did collide with the Chinese fishing boat.

### [Australia Says No Single Power Should Dominate Indo-Pacific](#)

April 16 - Bloomberg [Paywall]

[Pacific Ocean, Southeast Asia]

Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong has come forward to oppose the concept of a single power dominating the Indo-Pacific region, stating that “countries don’t want to live in a closed, hierarchical region where the rules are dictated by a single major power to suit its own interests.”

### [Top French court orders closure of fisheries amid mass dolphin deaths](#)

April 14 - Mongabay

[Europe]

In a sign of tightening maritime regulations, France’s Council of State has ordered the closure of areas to fisheries during portions of the year to prevent injuring or killing dolphins during fishing activities.

### [Malaysia says it will protect its rights in South China Sea](#)

April 8 - Reuters

[Southeast Asia]

Malaysia's foreign ministry said in a statement that Malaysia is “unequivocally and firmly committed to protecting Malaysia's sovereignty, sovereign rights and interests in its maritime areas in the South China Sea.” The statement came after Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim suggested that he was “ready to negotiate” with China on disputed oil and gas exploration rights.

### [China Ready to Speed Up Talks With Asean Over South China Sea](#)

April 1 - Bloomberg [Paywall]

[China, Southeast Asia, South China Sea]

Beijing announced that it is prepared to speed up consultations with Southeast Asian states for a code of conduct to cover the South China Sea. The remarks came from Chinese Premier Li Qiang during a recent visit to Beijing by Malaysian Prime Minister, Anwar Ibrahim.



## [Deep-sea mining meeting closes without resolving whether mining can start in July](#)

March 31 - *Mongabay*

[Global]

During meetings of the International Seabed Authority to last from March 7-31, member states remain divided on whether to approve certain deep-sea mining practices. According to observers, the meeting concluded with inconclusive results and it remains ambiguous whether the deep-sea mining in question is authorized to begin in July 2023.

### [4] Maritime Security and Defense [4]

## [China sends 12 military aircraft, 4 ships around Taiwan, issues navigation warning in Yellow Sea](#)

April 18 - *Taiwan News*

[East Asia, China]

On the evening of April 17, China's Shandong Maritime Safety Administration warned that its military would be conducting "major military activities" in the Yellow Sea the following morning for four hours and declared a navigation warning. Meanwhile, in the hours before the declared warning was set to begin, 12 Chinese military aircraft and four ships were detected around Taiwan, according to Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense.

## [Taiwan suspects Chinese ships cut islands' internet cables](#)

April 18 - *AP News*

[East Asia, China]

Taiwan's National Communications Commission said Chinese fishing and cargo ships are suspected of cutting internet cables in Matsu, a Taiwanese island whose residents rely on two submarine internet cables leading to Taiwan's main island.

## [US, allies stage drills as N. Korea warns of security crisis](#)

April 17 - *AP News*

[United States, East Asia]

China's PLA was put on "high alert at all times" after the U.S. sent its guided-missile destroyer the USS *Milius* through the Taiwan Strait on April 16 in what the U.S. Navy defines as a "routine" transit in international waters.

### [Russia puts Pacific Fleet on high alert in surprise inspection](#)

April 15 - *The Japan Times* [Paywall]

[Russia, Pacific Ocean]

In an interview on state television, Russia's Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu explained how Russia put its Pacific naval fleet on high alert as part of a surprise inspection "to increase the ability of the Armed Forces to repel the aggression of a probable enemy from the direction of ocean and sea."

### [China says Taiwan encirclement drills a 'serious warning'](#)

April 12 - *AP News*

[China, East Asia]

On April 12, China said that the three days of "large-scale air and sea exercises" that simulated an encirclement of Taiwan were intended as a "serious warning" to pro-independence leaders and supporters. Having ended on April 10, the drills directly followed Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen's meeting with U.S. House Speaker Kevin McCarthy in California.

### [Carrier USS George H.W. Bush Leaves Mediterranean Sea After 230 Days](#)

April 12 - *USNI News*

[United States, the Mediterranean]

After 230 days in the Mediterranean Sea, the George H.W. Bush (CVN-77) carrier strike group is sailing back to Virginia as of April 19, leaving no U.S. carrier in the Mediterranean region for the first time since December 2021.

### [US, Philippines hold largest war drills near disputed waters](#)

April 11 - *AP News*

[United States, Southeast Asia]

On April 11, U.S. and Philippine military forces launched their annual Balikatan combat exercise, which will run up to April 28. This year's is the largest joint exercise between the two in decades, involving more than 17,600 military personnel.

### [South China Sea: PLA forces tail US warship near disputed Spratly Islands as live-fire drills around Taiwan enter day 3](#)

April 10 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]

[South China Sea, United States, China]

Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS *Milius* sailed within 12 nautical miles of Mischief Reef, a key man-made island in South China Sea controlled by China, as part of a freedom of navigation operation. In response, China said the U.S. Navy "illegally intruded" and reiterated that "China has indisputable sovereignty over islands in the South China Sea and their nearby waters."

### [North Korea conducts another underwater nuclear drone test](#)

April 8 - *The Japan Times* [Paywall]  
[East Asia]

North Korea completed an underwater nuclear-capable drone test, with North Korea state media claiming that the drone cruised 1,000 kilometers for 71 hours and 6 minutes and successfully hit a simulated target.

### [U.S. Sends Attack Submarine to Middle East as Tensions Rise Between Iran and Israel](#)

April 8 - *The New York Times* [Paywall]  
[Middle East, United States]

On April 8, the U.S. Navy announced it sent an attack submarine to the Middle East following a warning of increased tensions between Iran and Israel.

### [Chinese Naval Surveillance Ship Docks in South African Port](#)

April 5 - *Bloomberg* [Paywall]  
[China, Africa]

The *Yuan Wang 5*, a Chinese surveillance ship that can reportedly track rocket and spacecraft launches, docked at South Africa's eastern port of Durban. The docking, which follows an increased level of joint naval activities between South Africa and China as well as another case of Iranian warships docking in Cape Town, has brought concerns from observers.

### [Philippines Announce 4 New Locations to Host U.S. Troops](#)

April 3 - *USNI News*  
[Southeast Asia, United States]

On March 3, the Philippines announced four more locations that will be hosting U.S. troops under the bilateral Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA). Two of these locations will be in the province of Cagayan, and the other two will be in the municipality of Gamu and province of Palawan.

### [Six crew members kidnapped after Gulf of Guinea pirate attack](#)

March 31 - *Alarabiya News*  
[Africa, Europe]

In mid-March, the Liberian-flagged oil and chemical tanker *Monjasa Reformer* was hijacked by armed pirates while transiting approximately 140 miles off the coast through the Gulf of Guinea, with six of the 16 crew members being kidnapped. The tanker was temporarily unknown, though it was later found by the French navy off the coast of Sao Tome and Principe.

## [AUKUS Agreement Will Help Deter China from Taiwan Invasion, Says Former PACOM CO](#)

March 31 - USNI News

[United States, Indo-Pacific]

Speaking at a think tank event in Washington, D.C., former commander of the U.S. Pacific Command Harry Harris said the technology-sharing AUKUS agreement “will serve certainly as a deterrent in the mindset of the Chinese military when they consider things like acting against their neighbors, acting on the global stage in negative and nefarious ways.”

## Peer-Reviewed Research on Maritime Issues

- Government Release: Australian Government, Defence - [“National Defence: Defence Strategic Review 2023”](#) [April 24]
- Government Release: Group of Seven - [“G7 Japan 2023 - Foreign Ministers’ Communiqué”](#) [April 18]
- Government Release: U.S. Department of State - [“Renewal of the Charter for the Shipping Coordinating Committee”](#) [April 7]
- Government Release: U.S. Congressional Research Service - [“Navy LPD-17 Flight II and LHA Amphibious Ship Programs: Background and Issues for Congress”](#) [Updated March 31]
- Government Release: U.S. Congressional Research Service - [“Coast Guard Polar Security Cutter \(Polar Icebreaker\) Program: Background and Issues for Congress”](#) [Updated March 30]
- Press Release: Government of Western Australia - [“Consultation to improve protection of shipwrecks in WA waters”](#) [April 11]
- Press Release: Ministry of Foreign Affairs Malaysia - [“Malaysia’s Position on the South China Sea”](#) [April 8]
- Press Release: U.S. Embassy in the Philippines - [“Philippine, U.S. troops to hold largest ever Balikatan Exercise from April 11 to 28”](#) [April 4]
- Press Release: United Kingdom National Oceanography Centre - [“New research set to improve vital hurricane forecasts”](#) [April 3]
- Podcast: *The Economist* [“What does Kinmen island reveal about China’s plans for taking Taiwan?”](#) [April 18]
- Podcast: CIMSEC [“Sea Control 425 - Sweden’s Navy in NATO with Dr. Sebastian Bruns”](#) [April 6]
- Journal Article: [“Assessing the impact of the global subsea telecommunications network on sedimentary organic carbon stocks”](#) [*Nature* - April 12]
- Opinion: [“Shoulder-to-shoulder”](#) [*Manila Standard* - April 24]
- Opinion: [“Op-Ed: Outsiders Needed to Digitalize Ocean Freight Industry”](#) [*The Maritime Executive* - April 20]
- Opinion: [“Safe Harbors: Securing Ports to Protect the Nation’s Critical Maritime Infrastructure”](#) [MITRE - April 19]
- Opinion: [“The US is about to blow up a fake warship in the South China Sea - but naval rivalry with Beijing is very real and growing”](#) [*The Conversation* - April 19]
- Opinion: [“Blue carbon is a natural climate solution with big potential”](#) [*Popular Science* - April 17]

- Opinion: [“New EU maritime security strategy: adjusting the compass?”](#) [International Institute for Strategic Studies - April 11]
- Opinion: [“South China Sea: Asean needs to compromise with China to settle protracted code of conduct dispute”](#) [South China Morning Post - April 11] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“United States Sends Armed Submarine to the Middle East as Tensions with Tehran Escalate”](#) [IR Insider - April 10]
- Opinion: [“The Case for Capping Sea-Level Rise: A More Tangible Way to Measure the Harm From Climate Change”](#) [Foreign Affairs - April 3] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“California Salmon Stocks Are Crashing. A Fishing Ban Looks Certain.”](#) [The New York Times - April 3] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Trading Water for Sun: How the Abraham Accords opened the door for a green energy exchange between Israel and Jordan.”](#) [The Wilson Quarterly - Spring 2023]
- Analysis: [“The Challenge of Blue Carbon”](#) [Nautilus - April 21]
- Analysis: [“Charting fuel choices as the shipping industry sails toward net zero”](#) [McKinsey & Company - April 20]
- Analysis: [“The Impact of Conflict on Trade”](#) [CIMSEC - April 20]
- Analysis: [“Ukraine war: The Russian ships accused of North Sea sabotage”](#) [BBC - April 19]
- Analysis: [“The AUKUS Deal and India’s Submarine Dilemma”](#) [The Diplomat - April 14]
- Analysis: [“Is there a ‘lighter side’ to our possible environmental apocalypse? \(commentary\)”](#) [Mongabay - April 12]
- Analysis: [“2022 Russian Maritime Doctrine: Implications for NATO & the Future of Great Power Competition in the Arctic”](#) [The Arctic Institute - April 11]
- Analysis: [“Carriers and precision attacks: The takeaways from China's latest Taiwan drills”](#) [Reuters - April 11]
- Analysis: [“Rivalry between America and China has spread to the Indian Ocean”](#) [The Economist - April 10] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Analysis: China's intensifying nuclear-armed submarine patrols add complexity for U.S. allies”](#) [Reuters - April 3]
- Analysis: [“In Taiwan’s Waters, a Hunt for Tiny, Wriggling ‘Gold’”](#) [The New York Times - March 31] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Perilous prospects: Tensions flare at Malaysian, Vietnamese oil and gas fields”](#) [Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative - March 30]
- Analysis: [“Terrorism as an evolving threat to Southeast Asia’s maritime security”](#) [Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative - March 28]

## Events on the Maritime Domain



- On March 27, 2023, CIFOR-ICRAF and several other universities and institutions in Indonesia and South Korea held an international symposium titled [“Beyond Blue Carbon: Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation with Blue Carbon: Cross-sectional Research from Two Islands”](#) in Denpasar, Indonesia.
- 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.
- On April 19, 2023, the East-West Center held a webinar to discuss [“Social-Ecological Mapping of Fish Value Chains.”](#)
- On April 20, 2023, the Center for Strategic & International Studies China Power Project held a webcast titled [“The Fourth Taiwan Strait Crisis Continued?: Assessing China’s April 2023 Military Exercises Against Taiwan.”](#) A full recording is available.
- On April 24, 2023, the Wilson Center held a hybrid conversation with Monica Medina, the Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, on [U.S. Environmental Diplomacy](#). A full recording is available.
- On April 25, 2023, the Wilson Center Asia Program will hold an in-person and online discussion on [“The Road Ahead for U.S.-Japan Economic Security Partnership in the Indo-Pacific.”](#)
- On April 27, 2023, the Wilson Center Polar Institute along with the Fulbright Arctic Initiative and the U.S. Department of State will hold a symposium on [Science Diplomacy in the Arctic](#) to share and highlight the key findings by 19 Fulbright Arctic-based research scholars from eight different Arctic nations.
- On May 4, 2023, the Center for Strategic & International Studies Southeast Asia Program will hold [A Conversation with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. of the Philippines](#). This hybrid event is part of the CSIS ASEAN Leadership Forum.
- From May 11-12, 2023, Spinnaker will be holding its annual [Maritime People & Culture Conference 2023](#) in London, United Kingdom.
- From May 23-25, 2023, the U.S. Naval War College will hold [The 5th Annual Alexander C. Cushing International Law Conference: “International Law and Conflict at Sea.”](#) Registration is still open.
- From May 24-25, 2023, the European Commission will be celebrating its annual [European Maritime Day 2023](#) during which Europe’s maritime community will meet in Brest, France “to network, discuss and outline joint action on maritime affairs and sustainable blue economy.”
- 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

### Joint Naval Exercise

#### Issue Background

Joint military exercises is a relatively new strategic concept [credited](#) to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization alliance who has been conducting such exercises since 1951. A ‘joint naval exercise’ can be loosely defined as a structured, planned military exercise conducted between the naval or maritime units of two or more nations, typically with the end goal of strengthening the abilities, knowledge, interoperability and friendly relations of the parties involved. In another description, they [aim](#) “to project capabilities, hone operational skills, imbibe best practices and procedures, and enable mutual doctrinal learning” and are “used as a demonstration of close strategic relation among participating countries and also for political signalling.” Additionally, they [are](#) “often used by nations to display their military might” and typically conducted between friendly nations or neighbors.

While joint naval exercises can occur in one-off instances, they are more often regularly occurring, in which case the exercise is given a unique reference name (i.e., [Joint Warrior](#), [Malabar](#), [Resolute Hunter](#), or [RIMPAC](#)). Furthermore, the length and number of participants of joint naval exercises can vary extensively, depending on the end goal of the exercise and past precedents.

As noted by the term ‘joint’, joint naval exercises are different from—and even more telling than—naval exercises, drills or activities individually conducted by a single nation, such as [China’s recent unilateral naval exercises around Taiwan](#) in April or the U.S. Navy’s frequent freedom of navigation operations ([FONOPs](#)) [around the globe](#). Joint naval exercises also differ from joint naval patrolling, the latter of which [has been described](#) as “a cooperative operational deployment of navies for addressing common maritime threats or challenges” such as piracy, illegal fishing, human trafficking and other maritime crimes.

#### Recent Events

While they may not make headline news, joint naval exercises are happening around the world on a regular basis. The first part of 2023 has seen an abnormally high number of joint naval exercises—and their subsequent potential political messages—getting global attention.

To start, some of the regular, annual exercises were held in the first quarter of the year, several of which were marked as their largest ever. The 12th iteration of [Exercise Obangame Express](#), the [largest](#) multinational maritime exercise in Western and Central Africa, ran from January 23–February 3 out of Nigeria and involved 32 participating nations. The 8th installment of the near-annual [International Maritime Exercise](#), [involving](#) 50 participating countries and employing “more than 7,000 personnel, 35 ships and more than 30 unmanned AI systems,” was held for 18 days in February in the Middle East. Nearby, the largest ever U.S.-Israeli [Exercise Juniper Oak](#) was held one month earlier. [Exercise Balikatan](#), the most significant annual exercise between the U.S. and the Philippines

and its largest iteration yet, was launched on April 11 and is set to run through April 28. The bilateral U.S.–Republic of Korea [Exercise Ssang Yong](#) ran from March 23–April 3 around the Korean Peninsula. [Exercise Noble Dina](#), a two-week long training between Greece, France, Cyprus, Italy and the U.S. in the Mediterranean, was held in late March. [Exercise Arctic Forge](#), a month-long effort between the U.S., Africa and Europe that focuses on interoperability and training in the Arctic region, was held in February and March.



Capt. Tony Chavez, commanding officer of amphibious assault ship USS Makin Island (LHD 8), left center, and Capt. Andria Slough, executive officer of Makin Island, front right, give a tour of the flight deck for Vice Adm. Myung Soo Kim, commander, Republic of Korea (ROK) Fleet, center, during a key leader engagement aboard Makin Island for Operation Ssang Yong 2023 (SY23), held March 24 in South Korea. SY23 is a U.S./ROK joint landing drill to strengthen the alliance's combat readiness, ensure tailored capabilities for defense, and improve interoperability to protect peace by strength. (Photo By: Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Joshua Martinez, Public Domain)

There are also several first or near-first cases being held that strongly suggest the formation or strengthening of a new or existing partnership. The [European Union and the U.S.](#) held their [first-ever](#) joint maritime security [exercise in the Indo-Pacific](#) from March 23–24, as agreed upon in the latest round of the EU-U.S. High-Level Consultations on the Indo-Pacific on December 2, 2022. Last November, the U.S., the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia held the weeklong [Exercise Nautical Defender](#) in the Arabian Gulf. Ahead of the 42nd case of the multinational, Indo-Pacific based [Exercise Cobra Gold](#) being held in February, the U.S. Navy SEALs and Royal Thai Special Warfare Command held the first iteration of a three-week collaboration now titled [Exercise Flash Torch](#). Egypt and Sudan held the first iteration of [Exercise SUD-EGY-T](#) in Sudan in early April while India and Sri Lanka's bilateral [Exercise SLINEX](#) took place April 6–8.

Somewhat similar to the United States' own level of joint naval activities, China's naval forces have been particularly active in an apparent pursuit of showcasing their partnerships, the extent of their reach, and their growing military capabilities. China, Russia and Iran held [Exercise Security Bond](#), a newly-formalized joint exercise [in the Gulf of Oman](#) with other unnamed countries, in mid-March, further building on an apparent strengthening of naval ties that has been [growing](#) for more than a year. [China, Russia and South Africa](#) held the second iteration of joint naval exercises (the first being in 2019) from February 17–27, taking place in the Indian Ocean. Russia and China have been holding bilateral naval exercises in December 2022 off the [southern coast of China](#) and [in the East China Sea](#), advertised as efforts to “further deepen” their partnership. Apart from Russia, China also held its first joint maritime exercise with Cambodia, code-named [Golden Dragon](#), in March, and just announced joint naval [drills with Singapore](#) to be held from late April to early May.

The last few months have also seen joint naval exercises be specific responses to other diplomatic or military activities; an increasingly regular—and increasingly publicized—practice. In mid-April, the U.S., South Korea and Japan [started](#) holding joint naval missile defense exercises “to improve responses to North Korean threats” as part of [new agreements from talks](#) in Washington on April 14. Several of the above-mentioned cases, such as the U.S. and European Union's new exercise [promoting](#) “high seas freedom of navigation,” could partially or fully be direct responses as well.



## Keep In Mind

Again, joint naval exercises are not rare. What is notable is how the last few months have culminated in what appears to not be only increased activities but increased attention by the larger public and diplomatic representatives. Part of this increase could be credited to the reduction in Covid-19 related pauses, new launches of naval vessels, and expanding developments in naval technologies.

Virtually as important as their role in enhancing technical interoperability is the political and social power of joint naval exercises. They are regularly mentioned in high-level speeches as signs of mutual cooperation and in lists of how nations can hope to improve cooperative relations. Regardless of whether these exercises being held these last four months have been their first or their fifteenth, they—and the associated increase in public interest in them—are indicators of a heightened attention to maritime security and, in some cases, unavoidable indicators of where true loyalties lie. Nations understandably limit the amount of information granted to the public regarding a joint naval exercise, but the list of participating nations or parties as well as the length of the exercise is nearly always readily provided. This indicates the importance of the ‘invitation list’ and ‘participation list’ and is typically the largest takeaway from any announcement of a joint naval exercise: Who is involved, and has the participation list changed? The case of [China being ‘disinvited’](#) from participating in the 2018 RIMPAC Exercise, a major, publicly-dealt blow to Beijing received with mixed global responses, is a key example showing the [interplay](#) between joint military exercises and global diplomacy.

Aside from participants, the size, frequency, length and focus of the exercises are important and telling features to note of any exercise. For example, this year’s Balikatan, a word in Tagalog which means ‘shoulder-to-shoulder’, is the [“largest ever”](#) with more than 17,600 sailors, Marines, soldiers and airmen participating and is taking place during a time of significant shift in Philippine policy.

What is dangerous is how these ironically public-yet-secretive events all but invite speculation by observers—and at all levels. For example, there has been a flurry of attention over the numerous trilateral naval exercises between Russia, China and South Africa and what it might mean in the [context of the Ukraine-Russia conflict](#), for [U.S.-China-South Africa relations](#), and for [Indian Ocean](#) and [African geopolitics](#). In the case of U.S.-China relations, which has arguably reached its lowest and most tense point, joint military exercises have become a case study or statistic to point at and use in the ever-popular verbal arguments. Like cases of unilateral military exercises, they have the potential to be unabashedly used as silent diplomatic tools of disapproval and disagreement in reaction to another party’s actions.

That is why, when hearing about a joint naval exercise being held, understanding the active context—both inside and outside of the military realm—is important to most accurately deciphering a nation’s mindset and intent. One of the first questions that should be asked, prior to any speculations being drawn, is regarding the establishment of context. Often shrouded in succinct press releases with minimized public details, joint naval exercises are powerful, public, silent tools that can be used to gauge the strength of two or more nations’ current state of alliance. More important than the number and types of troops and ships used, it is the location, timing, duration and participants that should be more thoroughly examined. Furthermore, it can be dangerous for

non-military experts to be overinterpreting actions, just as it is dangerous for non-legal experts to be independently arguing on behalf of or against a concept with legal implications. When debating over joint naval drills, or any other military-intensive subject for that matter, observers should value the words of military professionals in the field over those of domestic, non-military political leaders.

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

## ICAS Maritime Affairs Program: New and Upcoming

### — Past MAP Event —

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

Thursday, April 13, 2023

9:30 AM – 11:00 AM EST



On April 13, 2023, the ICAS Maritime Affairs Program (MAP) and the China Institute at the University of Alberta (CIUA) co-hosted an online roundtable discussion on the “Roles of Asian Observers in Arctic Governance: Adapting to a Changing Arctic Council.” This event brought together scholars from the five Asian observer states of the Arctic Council—China, Japan, South Korea, India and Singapore—to exchange their views on the modern state of Arctic governance. The session was moderated by **Nong HONG, Executive Director, Institute for China-America Studies.**

**Jia WANG, Interim Director, China Institute, University of Alberta,** opened the discussion by highlighting how climate change is increasing access to potential shipping lanes and resources in the Arctic. However, Arctic governance through the Arctic Council, a forum historically characterized by deep multilateral cooperation, has become mired by unprecedented tensions and concerns resulting from the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Throughout the last decade, the growth of international attention on Arctic environmental, economic and security issues has brought distant countries to the discussion table as observer states on the Arctic Council. Wang invited the audience to carefully consider the gathered scholars’ opinions on how to rehabilitate Arctic cooperation, however distant from the poles these countries may be...

- ZHAO Long: Senior Fellow and Deputy Director, Institute for Global Governance Studies, Shanghai Institutes for International Studies
- Sakiko HATAYA: Research Fellow, Ocean Policy Research Institute of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation
- KIM Wonhee: Senior Researcher, Korea Institute of Ocean Science and Technology
- Anurag BISEN: Research Fellow, Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses
- Christopher LEN: an independent scholar based in Singapore, previously working as the Senior Research Fellow and Head of Publications at the Energy Studies Institute, National University of Singapore

Read the Full Summary:

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

Watch the Full Event: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vwVxCEK65ZQ>

Learn More: <https://www.ualberta.ca/china-institute/events/2023/arctic-council.html>

## — MAP Issue Brief —

### The Maritime Bedrock of the U.S.-Philippines Alliance: Understanding Manila and Washington's Interests in the South China Sea

By Alec Caruana

April 10, 2023

#### Key Takeaways

- Manila's recent deepening of military cooperation with the United States is motivated by a perceived need to enhance the Philippines' maritime security and reinforce its position in disputes with other claimant states—primarily China—in the South China Sea.
- Washington takes no official position on sovereignty disputes in the South China Sea, but its overall strategy to promote international maritime law and deter Chinese transgressions in the region substantively aligns its interests with the renewed resolve of Philippine President Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr., inaugurated last June.
- The Philippines' disputed claims in the South China Sea operate on two levels: disputed jurisdiction over maritime space, and disputed sovereignty over mid-ocean territorial features. Both of these categories trace their legal origins back to the Philippines' time as a U.S. colony between 1898 and 1946.
- Manila's rights to resources and jurisdiction in maritime zones extending from its coastline are disputed with Beijing's overlapping claims to "historic rights" in the South China Sea and jurisdiction over "relevant waters" around its controlled islands. The Arbitral Tribunal established under Annex VII of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) ruled in 2016 that China was violating Philippine rights in its entitled maritime zones, but disputes over fishing and hydrocarbon exploration between the two states persist.

- The Philippines is also engaged in territorial sovereignty disputes with its neighboring states over several islands, reefs, and underwater features in the South China Sea, namely: the Scarborough Shoal, which it disputes with China, and parts of the Spratly archipelago, which it disputes with China, Vietnam, and Malaysia. Both disputes are mired by complicated histories, precarious legal arguments, and ‘might makes right’ attitudes.
- With the recent expansion of U.S.-Philippine security cooperation, Manila has an opportunity to shrewdly pursue constructive diplomacy with other claimant states alongside targeted maritime capacity-building measures with Washington’s assistance. The Biden administration may facilitate both ‘tracks’ if it wishes to positively contribute to regional stability and mitigate the escalation of tensions.

Read Online:

<https://chinaus-icas.org/research/the-maritime-bedrock-of-the-u-s-philippines-alliance/>

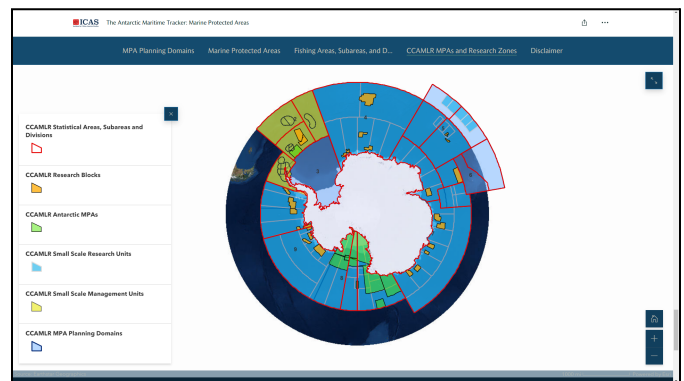
## — MAP Commentary —

Why China is hesitant about endorsing marine protected area proposals in the Antarctic

By Nong Hong

April 7, 2023

The Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR, hereafter referred to as the Commission) convenes meetings on a range of topics each year. This includes gatherings to discuss the establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPA) in the Antarctic. In **the 41st Meeting of the Commission**, held October 24–November 4, 2022, three MPA proposals were brought to the meeting for discussion: Domain 1 MPA (Western Antarctic Peninsula and South Scotia Arc) submitted by Argentina and Chile; East Antarctic MPA submitted by Australia, the European Union and India, New Zealand, Norway, Korea, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States and Uruguay; and the Weddell Sea MPA (WSMPA) submitted by the EU, Norway, Uruguay, Australia, the UK, New Zealand, the U.S., Korea, India and Ukraine. The Commission did not reach consensus on any of the three MPA proposals at this meeting.



The three proposals were supported by most members of the Commission. Russia and China expressed concerns, such as the need for baseline data collection and research and monitoring plans (RMPs) prior to the establishment of a MPA. The United States explicitly stated that it neither currently agrees with all the conclusions nor endorses all the recommendations made by China and Russia regarding MPAs and associated RMPs. The U.S. also called for attention being given to a more constructive dialogue on MPAs and RMPs in the future, starting with a Special Meeting in 2023...

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Read Online:

<https://chinaus-icas.org/research/why-china-is-hesitant-about-endorsing-marine-protected-area-proposals-in-the-antarctic/>



# ICAS MARITIME AFFAIRS HANDBILL

May 30, 2023

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## Recent News in Global Maritime Affairs

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

#### [New system can capture 100 tons of CO2 from Ocean annually](#)

May 30 - *Inceptive Mind*

[Global, United States]

Captura, a U.S.-based carbon removal company, has partnered with AltaSea, a leading and neighboring seaport, to continue developing a new ocean carbon capture system that can capture up to 100 tons of carbon dioxide from the ocean each year. AltaSea will provide a site for testing, research and analysis for Captura's Direct Ocean Capture technology that has already been through several smaller-scale pilot tests.

#### [Montreal Protocol has slowed loss of Arctic sea ice, say scientists](#)

May 22 - *Carbon Brief*

[The Arctic, Global]

Researchers have found that the Montreal Protocol—the landmark international treaty signed by nearly 200 nations in 1987 that aims to protect the ozone layer—has also helped reduce Arctic warming and, thus, slowed the melting of Arctic ice.

#### [Report: Climate change set to breach 1.5 C limit for first time by 2027](#)

May 19 - *Phys.org*

[Global]

According to a recently-released report by the World Meteorological Organization, global temperatures have a 66% chance of exceeding the 1.5 degree Celsius limit agreed in the Paris Agreement by the end of 2027. If the international community does not achieve urgent change, this report explains, this trend could become permanent by 2034.

### [Shell to use new AI technology in deep sea oil exploration](#)

May 17 - Reuters

[United States, Global]

Shell is now set to use SparkCognition's AI algorithms to process and analyze large amounts of seismic data in its deep sea exploration and production. The new AI-based technology is expected to improve operational efficiency and boost offshore oil output.

### [AECOM celebrates launch of new reef resilience strategy for Belize in partnership with Resilient Reefs Initiative](#)

May 15 - WebWire

[South America]

Infrastructure consulting firm AECOM has cooperated with the Belize Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute to release the Strategy for Reef Resilience in Belize, which outlines the threats facing the local Barrier Reef System and offers practical solutions to enhance resilience.

### [Seabed mapping crucial to protect UK's climate and oceans](#)

May 12 - Safety4Sea

[Europe, Global]

Sally-Ann Hart, a member of the United Kingdom's Parliament, noted in her speech during the UK Centre of Seabed Mapping showcase event in London that seabed mapping is crucial in terms of helping protect the UK's climate, ocean, and coastal communities. She also said that collaboration is the key to tackling climate change for maritime industry stakeholders.

### [Taiwan's wind industry braves cross-strait risks in clean energy boom](#)

May 10 - Reuters

[East Asia]

In apparent efforts to stay ahead of the clean energy boom, Taiwan's wind industry is continuing to build wind turbines off its western coast. Danish renewable energy company Orsted has been building a multi-billion dollar offshore wind project involving 111 wind turbines located up to 60 kilometers into the Taiwan Strait.

### [A Greenland glacier's rapid melting may signal faster sea level rise](#)

May 8 - The Washington Post [Paywall]

[North Atlantic, Global]

Scientists studying Greenland's Petermann Glacier said that it is melting far faster than expected in the most vulnerable areas and could lead to a faster sea level rise. Scientists fear the same phenomenon could also happen to other glaciers in both Greenland and Antarctica.

### [Groups to sue federal officials over manatee protection](#)

May 2 - Associated Press

[United States]

Major conservation groups announced their intention to sue the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service over an alleged failure to protect the West Indian manatee who live off of Florida's Gulf Coast. The species, currently classified as 'threatened,' has seen a record number of deaths in recent years due an increase in discharge from septic tanks and fertilizer that is draining their food supply.

### [New report shows potential of more severe storms reaching the UK](#)

May 2 - National Oceanography Centre

[Europe]

A report from scientists of the National Oceanography Centre (NOC) suggests that severe storms are gradually concentrating closer to the earth's poles. This dynamic is affecting the United Kingdom in particular and is likely linked to the depletion of Arctic sea ice.

## [2] Maritime Economy and Shipping [2]

### [GE and Nedstack Collaborate on Marine Fuel Cell Proposal](#)

May 24 - Sea Technology

[Europe, United States]

Nedstack, a Dutch fuel cell manufacturer, and GE Power Conversion, a U.S. power firm, have agreed to continue partnering on GE's electric ship system that "aims to replace diesel engines with fuel cells and oil-derived bunker fuel with hydrogen" in the commercial shipping industry.

### [US-Taiwan trade deal seen speeding up Taiwan's shipping and boosting start-ups; Beijing quiet so far](#)

May 20 - South China Morning Post [Paywall]

[Indo-Pacific, Global]

As Washington and Taiwan concluded negotiations on the "U.S.-Taiwan Initiative on 21st Century Trade," analysts said that the agreement would speed up shipping and the customs clearance process between the two parties. Beijing has not publicly addressed the latest development so far, but could potentially react to follow-up agreements.

### [Asia's internet cable projects delayed by South China Sea tensions](#)

May 19 - Nikkei Asia [Paywall]

[Asia, Indo-Pacific]

Asia's multi-national subsea internet cable projects are being delayed by South China Sea tensions as global cable companies are increasingly attempting to bypass the region despite the increased costs.

### [China's use of Russian port to ship goods domestically is 'symbolic' of closer ties, but hurdles remain](#)

May 19 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]

[China, Russia]

China and Russia have recently reached a mutual agreement for Russia's Port of Vladivostok to soon become a transit hub. This port was under Chinese control for 171 years during the Qing dynasty, moving analysts to call the agreement "symbolic" and a sign of deepening bilateral ties.

### [The \\$120 Million Ghost Ship Antigua Is Desperate to Unload](#)

May 17 - *Bloomberg* [Paywall]

[Europe]

The Russian, 2,500 gross ton superyacht *Alfa Nero* has been docked in Antigua for more than a year after the United Kingdom and U.S. separately announced sanctions on its supposed owner, Andrey Guryev. The Antigua government recently seized the abandoned ship with hopes to sell it at auction.

### [Royal Caribbean will send Anthem of the Seas to Asia for the first time](#)

May 15 - *Royal Caribbean Blog*

[United States, Indo-Pacific]

The Royal Caribbean cruise line is sending its *Anthem of the Seas* ship to Singapore for the first time starting in 2025. Its ship currently based in Singapore, *Spectrum of the Seas*, will shift its home port to Shanghai in 2024 to serve Chinese tourists with destinations across Vietnam, China and Japan.

### [Indian-backed port opens in Myanmar in answer to China's corridor project](#)

May 11 - *Nikkei Asia* [Paywall]

[South Asia, Southeast Asia]

Sittwe Port in Myanmar, a new project backed by New Delhi, has officially opened in Myanmar in an apparent answer to China's corridor project. The new port is part of a \$484 million transport initiative aimed at strengthening economic ties between India and Myanmar.

### [Stalled Sister City Plan Reveals New German Wariness of China](#)

May 10 - *The New York Times* [Paywall]

[Europe, China]

Amid concerns about China's military activities, the port of Kiel in Germany has hesitated to form a sister city partnership with the Chinese port of Qingdao. The cities have historic cooperation and similar features, including military-related assets.



### [Chinese Exports Cool in Latest Warning Sign on Global Trade](#)

May 9 - *The Wall Street Journal* [Paywall]

[China, Global]

Chinese export growth decelerated in April, highlighting the need for domestic consumption to drive China's economy as global trade cools. Facing climbing interest rates and inflation, economists are concerned about the sustainability of a consumer-led recovery.

### [China gets first corn shipment from South Africa, bolstering push to diversify away from US](#)

May 8 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]

[China, Africa]

China's COFCO Group successfully imported its first shipment of feed corn from South Africa, totalling 53,000 metric tonnes. The shipment follows a shipment cancellation at the end of April of 562,800 tons of U.S. corn, suggesting a desire by China to diversify its source of grains.

### [New 5G maritime network: Seafarers can have drones deliver medicine at sea after teleconsultation](#)

April 27 - *The Straits Times*

[Global, Southeast Asia]

Singapore's M1 and Fullerton Health will launch a 5G-powered teleconsultation and drone delivery service for seafarers in July, seeking to reduce logistical burdens and expedite medical care for seafarers, avoiding costly patient ferry trips unless necessary.

## [3] Ocean Governance and Maritime Cooperation [3]

### [Vietnam demands Chinese ship leave its exclusive economic zone](#)

May 25 - *Channel News Asia*

[South China Sea]

Vietnam's foreign ministry formally demanded that the Chinese government "immediately remove the survey ship Xiang Yang Hong 10, Chinese coast guard ships and fishing vessels out of Vietnam's waters." The region of interest is an area where both Vietnam's exclusive economic zone and China's self-claimed maritime territory in the South China Sea overlaps.

### [China says NATO's plan for Japan office not welcomed in Asia-Pacific](#)

May 24 - *Reuters*

[Indo-Pacific, China, East Asia]

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is preparing to open a liaison office in Japan as early as 2024, which will be the first NATO liaison office in Asia. NATO looks to utilize the new liaison office to increase cooperation between NATO and Japan on cyberattacks, misinformation campaigns, and disruptive technologies. China says the liaison office is "not welcome."

### [U.S. Navy Steps Up Efforts to Curb Iran's Ship Seizures in Strait of Hormuz](#)

May 23 - *The New York Times* [Paywall]

[Middle East, Europe]

After Iranian forces seized the Marshall Islands' oil tanker *Advantage Sweet*, which Iran stated was seized due to a collision with an Iranian vessel, just six days after the Panama-flagged oil tanker, *Niovi*, due to what the Iranian military calls a private complaint, the U.S. Navy decided to increase their patrols through the Strait of Hormuz to deter Iran's "unacceptable" actions.

### [No Survivors in Chinese Fishing Vessel Capsizing, Initial Report Says](#)

May 23 - *Voice of America News*

[Indian Ocean, China]

After a Chinese fishing boat capsized in the Indian Ocean early on May 16, leaving 39 Chinese, Indonesian and Filipino nationals unreachable, Chinese president Xi Jinping ordered an all-out rescue. On May 22, Chinese state media reported that seven bodies had been found by the multinational search-and-rescue team, though there were likely no survivors.

### [A quarter of the ocean floor is now mapped](#)

May 19 - National Oceanography Centre

[Global]

During the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) Assembly, HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco announced that there was an additional 5.4 million square kilometers of new data added to the ongoing seabed mapping project, which now has 24.9% of the ocean seabed officially mapped.

### [Việt Nam, Philippines talk maritime, ocean concerns in 10th meeting](#)

May 18 - *Việt Nam News*

[Southeast Asia, South China Sea]

From May 15-16, the 10th meeting of the Vietnam-Philippines Joint Permanent Working Group on Maritime and Ocean Concerns (JPWG-MOC) was held in Ha Long City, during which both sides agreed to further deepen bilateral maritime cooperation.

### [Ukraine Black Sea grain deal extended for two months](#)

May 17 - *Reuters*

[Europe, Mediterranean Sea]

Russia and Ukraine have extended the Ukrainian Black Sea grain deal, which was set to expire on May 18. The United Nations secretary general Antonio Guterres called the extension of the deal "good news for the world." The extension was initially announced by Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan in a televised speech and later confirmed by Russia, Ukraine and the United Nations.

### [Escape from Sudan: Chinese navy helps Pakistani and Brazilian nationals flee war-torn African nation alongside its own](#)

May 1 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]

[Africa, China, Global]

As conflict broke out in Sudan, the Chinese military helped Pakistanis and Brazilians, alongside Chinese nationals, escape from war torn Sudan. The total evacuation count from the Chinese People's Liberation Army was 940 Chinese nationals, 215 Pakistani citizens, and 6 Brazilian citizens.

### [In updated ocean policy, Japan slams Chinese and Russian military presence](#)

April 29 - *The Japan Times* [Paywall]

[East Asia, Pacific Ocean]

The Japanese government has officially raised concerns about increasing military drills from China and Russia within regional waters. In Japan's new five-year ocean policy, the government laid out that Japanese "national interests are under greater threat than ever before" from these drills.

## [4] Maritime Security and Defense [4]

### [IDF successfully tests naval Iron Dome defense system against multiple attacks](#)

May 29 - *The Jerusalem Post*

[Middle East]

On May 29, the Israel Defense Force (IDF) Navy successfully completed several "multi-system and multi-tier interception tests" using 'C-Dome'; a joint project of the IDF Navy, Israel Missile Defense Organization and Rafael Advanced Defense Systems that aims to intercept advanced threats.

### [China deploys three 'navigation' beacons in the South China Sea](#)

May 24 - *Reuters*

[South China Sea, China]

China's Transportation Ministry deployed three navigation beacons around Irving Reef, Whitson Reef, and Gaven Reef of the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea. Earlier in May, similar beacons were placed in the area by the Philippines.

### [US and Papua New Guinea Sign New Defense and Maritime Agreements](#)

May 22 - *Mirage News*

[South Pacific, United States]

On May 22, the U.S. and Papua New Guinea signed a defense cooperation agreement (DCA) and an Agreement Concerning Counter Illicit Transnational Maritime Activity Operations. The DCA, which replaces two other "outdated" agreements, includes U.S. access to local naval bases and airports as well as the facilitation of military exercises to help "increase stability and security in the region."

### [Chinese warships return to West Pacific for live-fire drills](#)

May 16 - Reuters

[Indo-Pacific, China]

In mid-May, as two aircraft carriers returned from their own patrols, the Chinese military sent two of its warships—the destroyer *Dalian* and guided-missile frigate *Huangshan*—to an unidentified area of the West Pacific to conduct live-fire exercises and drills. Observers predict that there “will be more and more of these distant sea travels in future.”

### [China completes warship deliveries to Pakistan as military alliance grows](#)

May 11 - Reuters

[China, Middle East]

China has reported the successful delivery of two Type 054A frigates to Pakistan's navy as their military alliance grows. The vessels, the last part of a four-warship deal from 2018, are expected to be used to safeguard the seas of the China-Pakistan economic corridor (CPEC).

### [China says PLA Rocket Force joined Shandong carrier group in drills near US base in western Pacific](#)

May 10 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]

[China, United States, Pacific Ocean]

Chinese state media says China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) Rocket Force joined the Shandong carrier group in drills near the U.S. naval base of Guam in the western Pacific. The Shandong carrier group had just finished a 30-day military exercise 400 nautical miles (741 km) northwest of Guam.

### [Joint Philippines-US patrols in South China Sea may begin by third quarter: Envoy](#)

May 8 - *The Straits Times*

[United States, Southeast Asia]

The Philippine Ambassador to the U.S. noted in an interview that joint U.S.-Philippine patrols in the South China Sea are estimated to begin “no later than the third quarter of this year.”

### [German Navy Announces New Pacific Deployments as Global Navy Chiefs Call for More Pacific Cooperation](#)

May 4 - USNI News

[Europe, Pacific Ocean]

Speaking at the International Maritime Security Conference 2023 on May 4, German Navy Chief Jan Christian Kaack announced that Germany will deploy a frigate and a combat support ship to the Indo-Pacific beginning in 2024 with a mission that includes “freedom of navigation operations with partner navies in the South China Sea.”

## [US issues guidelines on defending Philippines from South China Sea attack](#)

May 4 - Channel News Asia

[United States, South China Sea]

During a visit by President Marcos Jr. in Washington, the U.S. and the Philippines agreed upon and issued a six-page "bilateral defence guidelines" including direct references to defending the Philippines from a potential South China Sea attack.

## [Aircraft Carrier USS Gerald R. Ford Departs Norfolk for Worldwide Deployment](#)

May 2 - USNI News

[United States, Global]

The USS Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group (CSG-12) left its home port in Newport, Virginia at the beginning of May for its first global deployment. Defense officials say that its initial focus will be in the Mediterranean Sea.

## Peer-Reviewed Research on Maritime Issues

- Government Release: The White House - ["U.S.-Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Dialogue in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea"](#) [May 22]
- Government Release: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan - ["G7 Hiroshima Leaders' Communiqué"](#) [May 20]
- Government Release: The White House - ["Quad Leaders' Vision Statement – Enduring Partners for the Indo-Pacific"](#) [May 20]
- Government Release: U.S. Congressional Research Service - ["China Naval Modernization: Implications for U.S. Navy Capabilities—Background and Issues for Congress"](#) [Updated May 15]
- Government Release: U.S. Department of Defense - ["The United States and the Republic of the Philippines Bilateral Defense Guidelines"](#) [May 3]
- Government Release: U.S. Department of Defense - ["Department of Defense Report to Congress: Annual Freedom of Navigation Report, Fiscal Year 2022"](#) [April 2023]
- Government Release: Government of Japan - ["海洋基本計画\(案\) \[Basic Act on Ocean Policy \(Draft\)\]"](#) [2023] [In Japanese]
- Podcast: CIMSEC - ["Sea Control 429 - 'A New Black Sea Reality' with Luke Coffey and Dr. Can Kaspoglu"](#) [May 4]
- Video: The Wall Street Journal - ["How the U.S. Wants to Counter China in the Pacific"](#) [May 18] [Paywall]
- Opinion: ["The Stand-In Force Needs Sea Legs"](#) [Real Clear Defense - May 30]
- Opinion: ["With firm allies like Japan and Australia, the US can afford to take its eye off the Indo-Pacific when it needs to"](#) [South China Morning Post - May 26] [Paywall]
- Opinion: ["No. 20 | Marine Protected Areas in Antarctica: Has China's hand been revealed?"](#) [Wilson Center - May 19]

- Opinion: [“Winning High-End War at Sea: Insights into the PLA Navy’s New Strategic Concept”](#) [CIMSEC - May 18]
- Opinion: [“Asia’s Coastal Areas Are More Than Just Carbon Credits”](#) [Asian Development Bank Blog - May 16]
- Opinion: [“An Oil Tanker Ablaze in the South China Sea Is a Global Problem”](#) [Bloomberg - May 6] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“China’s aircraft carriers play ‘theatrical’ role but pose little threat yet”](#) [The Japan Times - May 5] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“Russia’s Next Standoff With the West Lies In the Resource-Rich Arctic”](#) [Bloomberg Green - May 5] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“China and the Philippines must ensure the US and South China Sea issues don’t come between them”](#) [South China Morning Post - May 3] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“On board a Philippine patrol in contested South China Sea”](#) [Associated Press - May 2]
- Opinion: [“Island Nations Key to U.S. Maintaining Position as Pacific Power”](#) [USNI News - May 1]
- Opinion: [“Polar Perspectives No. 13 | The Intelligence Community Must Evolve to Meet the Reality of Arctic Change”](#) [Wilson Center - May 2023]
- Opinion: [“What an ominous surge in ocean temperatures means for the planet”](#) [The Washington Post - April 28] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Data Sharing for Ports: Data Management Platform Yields Efficiency Gains in Shipping”](#) [Sea Technology, May 2023]
- Analysis: [“IUU fishing destroys marine habitats”](#) [Modern Ghana - May 28]
- Analysis: [“Study Shows 14,000 Unplugged Oil and Gas Wells in Gulf of Mexico”](#) [Natural Resources Defense Council - May 23]
- Analysis: [“China’s fishing fleet embroiled in rising tensions with US”](#) [Financial Times - May 22] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“China’s Port Power: The Maritime Network Sustaining Beijing’s Global Military Reach”](#) [Foreign Affairs - May 22] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Changxing Island: The Epicenter of China’s Naval Modernization”](#) [China Power - May 18]
- Analysis: [“The Philippines’ policy on the South China Sea under the Marcos administration: Recalibrating its distance from the United States and China”](#) [Sasakawa Peace Foundation - May 16]
- Analysis: [“Arctic Harmony Is Falling Apart”](#) [Foreign Policy - May 15] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“For US to counter China in Indo-Pacific, it must prioritise Indian Ocean island nations: analysts”](#) [South China Morning Post - May 14] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“How the U.S. Is Trying to Block China’s Control of Ports Around the Globe”](#) [Video] [The Wall Street Journal - May 11] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“To Counter China, the U.S. Is Expanding Its Footprint in the Pacific”](#) [Video] [The Wall Street Journal - May 10] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Drones becoming indispensable for Indo-Pacific navies”](#) [The Japan Times - May 4] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“As Philippines moves closer to US, will region change tack on China?”](#) [South China Morning Post - May 2] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Tracking China’s April 2023 Military Exercises around Taiwan”](#) [Center for Security and International Studies, China Power - May 2023]

- Analysis: [“Grounding of U.S. Marine Unit Spotlights Lack of Ships in Asia-Pacific”](#) [The Wall Street Journal - April 30] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“China’s Arctic ambitions and Russian ties stoke NATO fears”](#) [The China Project - April 25]

## Events on the Maritime Domain



- On April 27, 2023, the Wilson Center Polar Institute along with the Fulbright Arctic Initiative and the U.S. Department of State held a symposium on [Science Diplomacy in the Arctic](#) to share and highlight the key findings by 19 Fulbright Arctic-based research scholars from eight different Arctic nations. A recording is now available.
- On May 4, 2023, the Center for Strategic & International Studies Southeast Asia Program held [A Conversation with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. of the Philippines](#). This hybrid event was part of the CSIS ASEAN Leadership Forum. A recording and transcript is now available.
- On May 11, 2023, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace held a virtual conversation to discuss [“Who Makes the Rules? China and the Law of the Sea.”](#) A full recording is available.
- From May 11-12, 2023, Spinnaker held its annual [Maritime People & Culture Conference 2023](#) in London, United Kingdom.
- On May 12, 2023, the Center for Strategic & International Studies Korea Chair held a hybrid event on [“U.S.-China Competition and Indo-Pacific Security.”](#) A full recording is available.
- From May 16-17, 2023, the Philippines through the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), the Danish Maritime Authority of Denmark, and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) co-organized a regional conference on [“Seizing opportunities for green shipping in Asia and the Pacific”](#) in Manila, Philippines.
- From May 23-25, 2023, the U.S. Naval War College held [The 5th Annual Alexander C. Cushing International Law Conference: “International Law and Conflict at Sea.”](#)
- From May 24-25, 2023, the European Commission celebrated its annual [European Maritime Day 2023](#) during which Europe’s maritime community met in Brest, France “to network, discuss and outline joint action on maritime affairs and sustainable blue economy.
- On May 25, 2023, the Center for Strategic & International Studies will hold a hybrid [conversation with Ely Ratner and Siddharth Mohandas on “The U.S. Role in Indo-Pacific Security.”](#)
- On May 29, 2023, the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Wilson Center’s Polar Institute, along with several co-sponsors, held an online event at Helsinki’s City Hall on [“Antarctica Today: Shared Challenges for Science and Environmental Protection in the Final Frontier.”](#) The event included a session in English and a session in Finnish.
- On May 30, 2023, the International Maritime Organization and the Republic of Korea will jointly host the [Symposium on “Making headway on the IMO MASS Code”](#) at the IMO Headquarters in London, United Kingdom.
- On June 5, 2023, Center for Strategic & International Studies will hold a [conversation with Admiral Lisa Franchetti, Vice Chief of Naval Operations of the U.S. Navy on “Navigating the Maritime Domain.”](#) Note: This event has been postponed until further notice.
- 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.

- On June 8, 2023 the [Ocean Awards Gala](#) will be held in Washington, D.C. on the evening of World Ocean Day. The gala, also a part of [Capitol Hill Ocean Week](#), annually recognizes champions of marine and Great Lakes stewardship.
- From June 20-22, 2023, the World Maritime University and its partners will hold its [“Conference on Maritime & Ocean Sustainability”](#) in alignment with its 40th anniversary, in Sweden.
- From June 29-30, 2023, [The Nautical Institute's Developing Maritime Professionals Conference and AGM](#) will be held in Hamburg, Germany. The conference will be conducted on board the historic cargo ship MS Bleichen.

## Handbill Spotlight

### U.S. Shipping Reforms

#### Issue Background<sup>1</sup>

Maritime shipping is an important cornerstone of U.S. trade and economy and the leading mode of transportation for both U.S. imports and exports. In 2020, maritime vessels carried [40% of U.S. international trade value](#) and nearly 70% of trade weight, covering a wide range of strategically important products such as grains and petroleum as well as commodities such as cars, construction vehicles, steel and paper. Globally, shipping is considered [the most efficient and cost-effective method](#) of transportation for most internationally traded goods, and [the OECD estimated](#) that around 90% of traded goods are transported through ocean shipping.



Given the importance of ocean shipping, U.S. policymakers are naturally concerned when global and U.S. shipping were threatened, most recently by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. As the pandemic disrupted the regular flow of cargo shipments and port operations in the United States, significant congestions were observed in [a number of major U.S. ports](#). When the cost of long waits at U.S. ports added up, many ocean carriers [started to ship empty containers](#) back to Asia, creating serious issues for U.S. exporters; especially agricultural exporters. With the wide-ranging and long-lasting impacts of the ocean shipping disruptions, U.S. policymakers are giving renewed attention to ocean shipping, eyeing for reforms and better governance.

<sup>1</sup> Image Source: U.S. President Joe Biden signed the “Ocean Shipping Reform Act of 2022” on June 16, 2022 ([Official White House Photo by Adam Schultz](#)/U.S. government work).



## Recent Events

Given [the especially high volume of trade](#) between the U.S. and China and Washington's growing concerns about U.S. competitiveness against China, China became a key focus in the policy discussions on ocean shipping reform. On June 16, 2022, U.S. President Joe Biden signed into law the Ocean Shipping Reform Act, a bill that will, among others, "prohibit ocean carriers from unreasonably refusing cargo space accommodations for U.S. exports" and "promote transparency" by demanding ocean common carriers to report a number of shipping-related statistics. While originally a response to the problem of port congestion and unfavorable ocean carrier practices, the Ocean Shipping Reform Act quickly turned into a bill to counter China's "unfair practices." In August 2021, U.S. Representatives Dusty Johnson and John Garamendi, the two original sponsors of the Ocean Shipping Reform Act, [said that the bill would](#) "help reduce the United States' longstanding trade imbalance with China and other countries." According to [an earlier statement](#) by Johnson in March 2021, "once again, China is participating in unfair trade practices, prioritizing empty shipping containers over U.S. agriculture products."

Following the passage of the Ocean Shipping Reform Act, Washington's attention on ocean shipping reform has continued, especially where China is a factor. On September 20, 2022, the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission released an issue brief on [China's transportation and logistics management platform LOGINK](#), arguing that the Chinese government could "potentially gain access to and control massive amounts of sensitive business and foreign government data through LOGINK" as well as gaining advantages in the standard making of global logistics data management. On October 3, 2022, warning that China has become "a global maritime powerhouse" of shipping and shipbuilding, former shipping industry executive and association leader Michael Roberts proposed that the United States [should enact a "U.S. Ships Act"](#) in the likes of the CHIPS and Science Act to channel investment and "help American shipbuilders and shipping companies reclaim lost ground in international markets." The policy discussions have since led to new legislative actions. On March 28, 2023, U.S. Representatives Dusty Johnson and John Garamendi, the same sponsors of the previous Ocean Shipping Reform Act, introduced [the Ocean Shipping Reform Implementation Act](#). This Act, which would prohibit U.S. ports from using China's LOGINK, authorizes investigation of foreign shipping exchanges like the Shanghai Shipping Exchange and streamline data standards for maritime freight logistics in the United States.

## Keep In Mind

As the COVID-19 pandemic heightened the grave consequences of ocean shipping disruptions, the issues of ocean shipping and ocean shipping reform will continue to attract policy attention as the United States aims to improve its supply chain resilience and enhance American competitiveness. With the passage of the Ocean Shipping Reform Act and the introduction of the Ocean Shipping Reform Implementation Act, it is foreseeable that U.S. government and agencies—in particular, the Federal Maritime Commission—will play an increasingly larger role in collecting and analyzing shipping data, investigating and identifying systematic problems as well as implementing new standards and regulations at U.S. ports and beyond. This could translate to further regulatory

changes and compliance needs for the shipping industry as well as trading companies around the world.

At the same time, as [China's central role in maritime shipping](#) became increasingly salient amidst the rising U.S.-China competition, an increasing number of U.S. [lawmakers](#), [policymakers](#) and [commentators](#) have made China the focal point of U.S. ocean shipping reform. As the United States has come to see China as a “[near-peer competitor](#)” that challenges U.S. leadership economically, militarily and technologically, China-related discussions have tended to take priority over other policies and concerns, even if the latter could also impact long-term U.S. competitiveness and leadership. Policymakers should beware to not let their valid China concerns overshadow equally necessary reforms of U.S. ports and shipping, especially when the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent port congestion have already revealed systematic issues that are not necessarily related to China.

*This issue's Spotlight was written by Amanda Jin, ICAS Part-Time Research Assistant.*

## ICAS Maritime Affairs Program: New and Upcoming

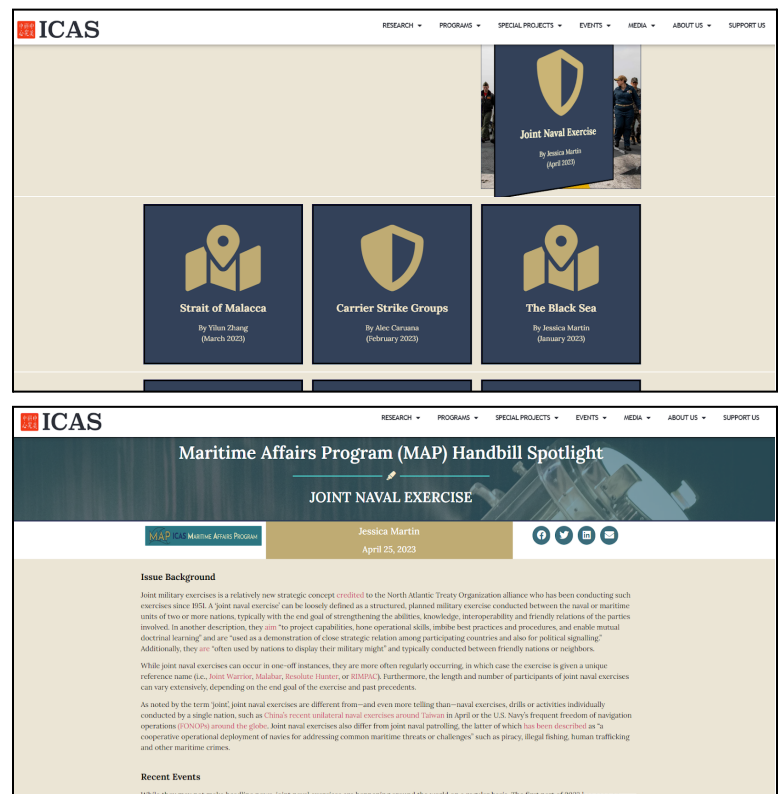
### – MAP Program Announcement –

The ICAS MAP Handbill Spotlight Archive is Live!

After a successful full year of production, the ICAS Maritime Affairs Program has now developed and released an archive for its Maritime Affairs Program Spotlight analyses in order to provide easier access and encourage sharing.

Maritime Affairs Program Spotlights are a short-form written background and analysis of a specific issue related to maritime affairs, which changes with each issue. The goal of the Spotlight is to help our readers quickly and accurately understand the basic background of a vital topic in maritime affairs and how that topic relates to ongoing developments today.

There is a new Spotlight released with each issue of the ICAS Maritime Affairs Program (MAP) Handbill – a regular newsletter released the last Tuesday of every month that



highlights the major news stories, research products, analyses, and events occurring in or with regard to the global maritime domain during the past month.

### 2023 Spotlights So Far

- [May 2023](#): U.S. Shipping Reform Act (by Amanda Jin)
- [April 2023](#): Joint Naval Exercises (by Jessica Martin)
- [March 2023](#): Strait of Malacca (by Yilun Zhang)
- [February 2023](#): Carrier Strike Group (by Alec Caruana)
- [January 2023](#): The Black Sea (by Jessica Martin)

Explore & Share the Archive:

<https://chinaus-icas.org/icas-maritime-affairs-program/map-publications/map-spotlights/>

Learn About All MAP Publications and Projects:

<https://chinaus-icas.org/icas-maritime-affairs-program/map-publications/>

### — ICAS Announcement —

All ICAS Newsletters Now Have Official ISSNs!

As part of efforts by ICAS to increase access to and awareness of regular content, all four newsletters produced by ICAS now have official International Standard Serial Numbers (ISSNs) assigned by the U.S. Library of Congress. Each newsletter has two ISSNs, one assigned to its printed volumes and the other assigned to its online issues, though the contents of the two are equivalent.

- |   |                    |                   |
|---|--------------------|-------------------|
| • <b>ICAS Bulletin</b>                              | 2836-3418 (Online) | 2836-340X (Print) |
| • <b>Maritime Affairs Program Handbill</b>          | 2837-3901 (Online) | 2837-3871 (Print) |
| • <b>Trade 'n Technology Program Dispatch</b>       | 2837-3863 (Online) | 2837-3855 (Print) |
| • <b>Blue Carbon &amp; Climate Change Quarterly</b> | 2837-3979 (Online) | 2837-3952 (Print) |

Explore All ICAS Newsletters:

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

### — BCCC Expert Voices Initiative Interview —

Expert Voices Initiative Interview - André Aquino

May 2023

Blue carbon, as a significant carbon sink and a natural defense line of coastal communities, plays an important role in mitigating climate change and preventing climate-related damages. However, many developing countries with rich blue carbon natural resources lack matching funds and technologies. Meanwhile, many countries with more advanced technologies and



**Mr. André Aquino**  
Lead Environmental Specialist and Sustainable Development  
Program Leader for Indonesia and Timor-Leste  
*The World Bank*

Submit Questions



About ICAS EVI



This Expert Voices Initiative (EVI) interview, conducted virtually from the ICAS Office in Washington, D.C. on May 25, 2023 by Zhangchen Wang, will be released the first week of June 2023 on the ICAS YouTube page and website.

sufficient funds are inherently insufficient in the stock of blue carbon natural resources.

Thus, inspired by the "loss and damage" fund of COP27, the Institute for China-America Studies BCCC Program is holding an Expert Voice Initiative (EVI) interview to explore the possibilities for cooperation between developing and developed countries on blue carbon to protect, restore, develop, and utilize blue carbon resources.

This Expert Voices Initiative (EVI) interview, conducted virtually from the ICAS Office in Washington, D.C. on May 25, 2023 by Zhangchen Wang, will be released the first week of June 2023 on the ICAS YouTube page and EVI webpage.

About the ICAS Expert Voices Initiative: <https://chinaus-icas.org/media/expert-voices-initiatives/>  
Explore the Full EVI Archives: <https://chinaus-icas.org/media/expert-voices-initiative-archive/>

### — MAP Academic Engagement —

Executive Director Nong Hong Speaks at a Virtual Discussion on 'China-US Dialogue on Maritime Policy' by Tsinghua University (CISS)  
Thursday, April 27 - Friday, April 28, 2023

From April 27-28, 2023, Dr. Nong Hong, spoke in a virtual discussion on 'China-US Dialogue on Maritime Policy'. The discussion was hosted by the Center for International Security and Strategy (CISS) at Tsinghua University.

### — MAP Academic Engagement —

Executive Director Nong Hong participates in the 8th International Maritime Security Conference in Singapore  
Thursday, May 4 - Friday, May 5, 2023

From May 4-5, 2023, Dr. Nong Hong participated in the 8th International Maritime Security Conference in Singapore in an academic capacity. The conference was hosted by the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)

About the Conference:

<https://www.rsis.edu.sg/research/idss/research-programmes/maritime-security-programme/imsc/>



# ICAS MARITIME AFFAIRS HANDBILL

June 27, 2023

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## Recent News in Global Maritime Affairs

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

#### [Researchers Lock Up Carbon By Turning Seaweed Into Biocoal](#)

June 25 - *The Maritime Executive*  
[North Atlantic]

Researchers in Norway are currently testing a new method for carbon capture and storage involving the conversion of cultivated, dried coastal seaweeds into biocoal using pyrolysis; a process involving heating the seaweeds to about 600 degrees in an oxygen-free atmosphere. The biocoal, which is “resistant to degradation by fungi and microorganisms,” can improve soil quality and porosity.

#### [‘Beyond extreme’ ocean heat wave in North Atlantic is worst in 170 years](#)

June 23 - *The Washington Post* [Paywall]  
[Atlantic Ocean]

In the waters of the North Atlantic Ocean around Europe, sea surface temperatures are hitting as high as 9 degrees Fahrenheit (5 degrees Celsius) above normal, marking the warmest temperatures for the region in more than 170 years. These waters do not typically hit these temperatures until August and September, when the waters are typically the warmest.

#### [Scientists made a frightening discovery when they measured sharks worldwide](#)

June 15 - *The Washington Post* [Paywall]  
[Global]

After a comprehensive survey of nearly 400 coral reefs worldwide, researchers found that five common reef shark species have experienced dramatic decreases of between 60 to 73 percent over the past 50 years. The decline is mainly accredited to rampant overfishing, which not only directly threatens the sharks but also the marine ecosystems that they rely on.

### [Norway Aims to Open Arctic Waters to Deep-Sea Mining](#)

June 13 - *Arctic Today*

[Arctic]

In response to the growing demand for important minerals, Norway is planning to open a large area in the Arctic and sub-Arctic to deep-sea mining. The proposed mining area is rich in valuable metals—including copper and nickel—that are crucial to the global energy transition towards batteries and electric vehicles.

### [Scientists hold US nuclear tests responsible for South China Sea radioactivity](#)

June 13 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]

[South China Sea]

A group of Chinese scientists has accredited the U.S. Cold War-era nuclear tests in the Marshall Islands for contemporary radioactivity in the South China Sea. A study suggests that plutonium samples from the waters must have drifted into the sea from the Western Pacific along the North Equatorial Current.

### [New tanker to feature CO2 capture technology](#)

June 7 - *Sea Technology*

[Europe]

Spanish engineering and technology company Sener said it has completed the design of a new biofuel tanker to balance costs, energy efficiency and emission reduction goals. The new type of tanker will feature a carbon dioxide capture and storage system to manage greenhouse gas release.

### [New EU project launched to evaluate mechanisms for using the ocean to remove atmospheric CO2](#)

June 6 - National Oceanography Centre

[Europe]

The four-year SEA02-CDR project, funded by Horizon Europe, aims to assess the feasibility and benefits of ocean-based carbon dioxide removal (OCDR) as a method to combat climate change. With the urgency to limit global warming, this project will address critical gaps in our technical understanding regarding the use of the ocean in carbon removal.

### [Arctic Summer Could Be Practically Sea-Ice-Free by the 2030s](#)

June 6 - *The New York Times* [Paywall]

[Arctic]

A peer-reviewed research study predicts that the first summer that melts “practically all” of the Arctic’s floating sea ice could happen in the 2030s—a decade sooner than previously had been predicted—even if nations curb greenhouse gas emissions more efficiently than they already are.

### [Ocean microplastics found to be rife by teams sailing around the world](#)

June 2 - National Oceanography Centre

[Global]

The National Oceanography Centre identified microplastics with concentrations of nearly up to 1,900 per cubic meter. The study began in Mindelo, Cabo Verde and ended in Cape Town, South Africa. The total data of the microplastics ranged from 92-1,884 particles per cubic meter.

### [A Plan to Avert a Vast Oil Spill Off Yemen Finally Moves Ahead](#)

May 30 - *The New York Times* [Paywall]

[Red Sea, Africa, Middle East]

The FSO *Safer*, a long-decaying supertanker situated off the coast of Yemen in the Red Sea, has been holding more than 1 million barrels of oil since its near-abandonment after war broke out in 2015. The United Nations-led plan to avert a vast oil spill is finally moving ahead, with inspections of the rusting tanker now underway in preparation of safely transferring the oil to a seaworthy tanker.

## [2] Maritime Economy and Shipping [2]

### [Shipping emissions could be halved without damaging trade, research finds](#)

June 26 - *The Guardian*

[Global]

New research published by consultancy firm CE Delft defends that the amount of carbon dioxide emissions from shipping could be cut between one-third and one-half this decade, simply by using already available techniques like optimizing speeds and applying innovative technologies like biofuel.

### [Countries Push for CO2 Shipping Levy as Crunch Talks Loom](#)

June 26 - *Reuters*

[Global]

Maritime trade nations including Denmark and the Marshall Islands have begun to advocate for new global carbon dioxide emissions levies on shipping in preparation for the upcoming International Maritime Organization meeting in July 2023.

### [Low water hampers Rhine river shipping in Germany](#)

June 19 - *Reuters*

[Europe]

Low water levels have severely hampered the German shipping industry's usage of the Rhine river, which is a commonly used thoroughfare for regional freight transportation. In response, companies have begun to increase their surcharges on usual freight rates, according to commodity traders.

### [Russian officials say Black Sea grain deal can't be extended](#)

June 16 - Reuters

[Black Sea]

Senior Russian officials announced that the Black Sea Grain Initiative previously brokered by the United Nations and Turkey in July 2022, which allowed Ukraine to continue sea-borne exports of grain to support the global food crisis, "is impossible to update, and...also impossible to extend" due to the exhaustion of Russia's "patience and desire to implement it."

### [U.S. floats 30-nation Arctic drill as melting ice opens trade routes](#)

June 12 - Nikkei Asia [Paywall]

[Arctic, Global]

A top U.S. Navy official proposed that the U.S. hosted a joint Arctic maritime exercise with allies and partners in the like of the Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC). According to the official, the Arctic has become "an area of competition" to "think more deeply about" as the erosion of the polar ice cap opens up possibilities of trade routes in the region.

### [OneWeb Launches Connectivity for Maritime Sector](#)

June 7 - Hellenic Shipping News

[Global]

OneWeb, a global low Earth orbit (LEO) communications firm, recently launched a 'Try Before You Buy' Service, enabling maritime industry stakeholders to use the OneWeb satellite network with a low barrier-to-entry for any geolocation and communication needs at sea.

### [China's first home-grown large cruise liner undocks in Shanghai in breakthrough for shipbuilding, high-end manufacturing](#)

June 6 - South China Morning Post [Paywall]

[China]

*Adora Magic City*, a 135,500-tonne cruise ship, has left its dock in Shanghai as the cruise liner's construction came closer to completion, with delivery planned by the end of the year. According to the shipbuilder, the cruise liner is the first large cruise ship built in China and indicates a breakthrough of the country's shipbuilding capabilities.

### [Exxon to supply biofuel for Hapag-Lloyd Containerships](#)

June 5 - Sea Technology

[United States, Europe]

U.S. oil and gas company Exxon has finalized a deal with German shipping company Hapag-Lloyd to provide Hapag-Lloyd ships with fuel blends that contain 30% biofuel. Exxon said the biofuel



arrangement will support the reduction of greenhouse gas in line with the International Maritime Organization's stated commitments.

### [Container Shipping Rate Collapse Continues](#)

May 31 - *Marine Link*

[Global]

In May, the contracted cost of shipping containers fell drastically by 27.5%, marking the ninth consecutive month of drops and the largest ever monthly fall recorded by Xeneta's Shipping Index. "Monthly declines have become the 'new normal' at present, but this is a collapse," said Xeneta CEO.

## [3] Ocean Governance and Maritime Cooperation [3]

### [Crucial two weeks underway at IMO](#)

June 26 - *Seatrade Maritime News*

[Global]

Starting on June 26, the International Maritime Organization will have two back-to-back meetings to discuss the framework for decarbonization of the shipping industry. The 15th session of the Intersessional Working Group on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships (ISWG GHG) will be followed directly by the 80th meeting of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 80).

### [Titanic sub suffered 'catastrophic implosion,' all five aboard dead](#)

June 22 - *Reuters*

[Pacific Ocean]

After a five-day, international search of more than 10,000 square miles in the North Atlantic Ocean for the deep-sea submersible the *Titan*, debris was found from a "catastrophic implosion" that killed all five people onboard.

### [Philippines' Marcos Jnr hails 'progress' on South China Sea fishing ban talks with Beijing](#)

June 21 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]

[South China Sea]

Philippine President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. said that the government is making "progress" in negotiations with China about a fishery ban that Beijing imposed in the South China Sea. China has said the fishery restrictions are meant to promote sustainable fishing, whereas the Philippines argued that the ban covers areas that should fall into the Philippine's exclusive economic zone.

### [UN adopts first treaty governing the high seas](#)

July 19 - *The Hill*

[Global]

On June 19, the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres announced that the UN had adopted the first global treaty to protect the high seas and preserve marine biodiversity in international waters. The legally-binding agreement will take effect after it is ratified by 60 countries and will be open for signature in New York for two years beginning September 20.

### [Russia says one of its warships rescued 68 passengers from boat in Mediterranean](#)

July 19 - *Reuters*

[Mediterranean Sea, Russia]

Russia's Defence Ministry announced that one of its warships and a cargo ship worked to rescue 68 people overnight from the *Avalon*, a "yacht-type vessel" flying the Greek and German flags, after the vessel sent a distress call from the Mediterranean Sea.

### [U.N. human rights chief urges clamp-down on people smugglers after shipwreck](#)

June 16 - *Reuters*

[Mediterranean Sea]

After a fishing boat carrying 400-750 people capsized about 50 miles off the southern coast of Greece, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights called for countries to clamp down on human smuggling. He specifically reiterated a call to "open up more regular migration channels and enhance responsibility sharing, ensure arrangements for the safe and timely disembarkation of all people rescued at sea, and the establishment of independent monitoring and oversight of migration related policies and practices."

### [Palau leader calls on U.S. for help over Chinese ships in its waters](#)

June 15 - *Nikkei Asia* [Paywall]

[Pacific Ocean]

On June 15, President Surangel Whipps Jr. of Palau called upon Japan, the U.S. and other allies to help with "uninvited" Chinese vessels entering its waters. His call follows a research vessel being spotted in Palau's exclusive economic zone near the place where undersea fiber-optic cables are laid, causing Palau to have "concerns about what their intent is."

### [Malaysia PM Anwar defends maritime border agreements with Indonesia](#)

June 13 - *Channel News Asia*

[Southeast Asia]

On June 13, Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said in a parliamentary session that the two treaties he had signed with Indonesian President Joko Widodo on June 8, which demarcated parts of

the two nations' maritime borders, were "based on...international law , especially the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982." Mr. Anwar also emphasized that nothing was signed before consultations were held with several government agencies and ministries.

### **Government seeks fishing industry's understanding over nuclear plant water release**

June 11 - *The Japan Times* [Paywall]

[Japan]

Japan's Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Nishimura Yasutoshi spoke with representatives from the Ibaraki Prefecture's fisheries industry to discuss the planned release into the sea of treated water from the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant. A local representative said they are "absolutely opposed to the release" over concerns about fishing operations while Nishimura ensured the government would "make all-out efforts to prevent reputational damage."

### **US, Japanese, Philippine coast guard ships stage law enforcement drills near South China Sea**

June 6 - AP

[South China Sea]

In the South China Sea, the U.S., Japanese and Philippine coast guards conducted joint law enforcement drills in the West Philippine Sea, including one that staged the boarding of a vessel suspected of carrying weapons of mass destruction.

## **[4] Maritime Security and Defense [4]**

### **U.S To transform India Into Naval Logistics Hub For Indo-Pacific Region**

June 24 - *Marine Insight*

[United States, India, Indo-Pacific]

During Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's state visit to Washington, the U.S. announced plans to help develop India's maritime infrastructure through a new India-U.S. Defense Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X). The goal of this initiative is to develop India as a hub of naval repair and maintenance which could be used by the U.S. and its allies in the Indo-Pacific.

### **Indonesia moves site of ASEAN military drills away from South China Sea**

June 22 - *Reuters*

[South China Sea, Southeast Asia]

As Indonesia plans for the first Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) joint military exercise, the country decided to move the drill away from the contested waters of the South China Sea and into Indonesian waters instead.

### [Taiwan reports Chinese aircraft carrier sailed through strait](#)

June 21 - Reuters

[East Asia]

On June 21, Taiwan's Ministry of Defense said that a Chinese aircraft carrier group led by the *Shandong* sailed through the western section of the Taiwan Strait in a southerly direction. Taiwan's ministry said it had dispatched “appropriate forces” to monitor the activities.

### [India to Give Vietnam Warship as the Two Countries Tighten Defense Ties](#)

June 20 - Voice of America

[India, Southeast Asia]

Following a meeting between Indian Defense Minister Rajnath Singh and his Vietnamese counterpart, General Phan Van Gang, India announced that it will be delivering the INS *Kirpan*, a corvette, to the Vietnamese navy.

### [U.S. nuclear sub arrives in South Korea after North sends missiles into Japan EEZ](#)

June 16 - *The Japan Times* [Paywall]

[East Asia, United States]

On June 16, a U.S. nuclear-powered guided-missile submarine docked at a naval base in South Korea for the first time in almost six years. The USS *Michigan* arrived at a naval base in Busan a day after North Korea sent two ballistic missiles into Japan's exclusive economic zone off the coast of Ishikawa Prefecture.

### [Carrier USS Gerald R. Ford Enters Mediterranean Sea](#)

June 15 - USNI News

[United States, Mediterranean Sea]

On June 15, the USS *Gerald R. Ford* (CVN-78) passed through the Strait of Gibraltar and began operating in the Mediterranean Sea, marking the third time that a U.S. carrier has entered the Mediterranean since Russia invaded Ukraine, following the USS *Bush* and USS *Harry S. Truman*.

### [Indian, U.S. and Japanese Big Decks Drill in the Indo-Pacific](#)

June 14 - USNI News

[Indo-Pacific, United States, Global]

The United States, Japan, Canada and France conducted maritime exercises in the Philippine Sea as part of the Indo-Pacific Command's Large Scale Global Exercise (LSGE) 2023. Two U.S. carriers and one Japanese helicopter destroyer participated in the exercise.

## [US Submarine Damaged in South China Sea Won't Return Until 2026 as Shipyards Are Clogged](#)

June 14 - Bloomberg [Paywall]  
[United States, South China Sea]

The U.S. Navy announced that the USS *Connecticut* submarine, which struck an underwater seamount in the South China Sea in October 2021, will not return to service until at least early 2026 amidst a backlog of maintenance overhauls. The announcement raised questions about U.S. naval readiness amidst a growing Chinese fleet.

## [Chinese navy ship pays port call to Philippines in goodwill tour of region](#)

June 14 - AP  
[Asia-Pacific, China]

On June 14 in Manila, the Philippines, a Chinese training ship carrying 476 naval cadets and officers made its fourth and last stop on a 40-day goodwill tour. The *Qi Jiguang*, China's largest training ship, previously made port calls in Vietnam, Thailand and Brunei before briefly docking in the Philippines.

## [China is building the most powerful warship radar on record: scientists](#)

June 7 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]  
[China]

A recent peer-reviewed study in China has revealed proof of concept for the most powerful radar system in the world. The radar being developed could account for the earth's curve and detect incoming missiles from up to 4,500km (2,800 miles) away.

## [Russian, Chinese Bombers Fly Joint Mission Near Japan, Korea as Russian Fleet Holds Major Drills in the Pacific](#)

June 6 - *USNI News*  
[Russia, China, East Asia]

On June 6, two Chinese H-6 bombers and two Russian Tu-95 bombers flew a joint mission over the Sea of Japan and the East China Sea; their first such flight since November. Japan's Air Self-Defense Force scrambled to intercept the formation after two more Chinese fighters joined the flight, as South Korea also scrambled fighters in response to eight total Chinese and Russian military aircraft.

## [China to join Indonesia's multilateral naval drills despite rising tension](#)

May 31 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]  
[South China Sea]

China has accepted Indonesia's invitation to its multilateral exercise and will send its *Zhangjiang* destroyer and *Xuchang* frigate. Indonesia invited the navies of 47 different nations.

## Peer-Reviewed Research on Maritime Issues

- Government Release: U.S. Department of State - [“World Ocean Day”](#) [June 8]
- Government Release: India’s Minister of Earth Sciences via *The Economic Times* - [“India’s Blue Economy Sets Sail to Unlock a Sea of Opportunities!”](#) [June 8]
- Government Release: U.S. Congressional Research Service - [“U.S. Defense Infrastructure in the Indo-Pacific: Background and Issues for Congress”](#) [June 6]
- Government Release: Ministry of National Defense of the People’s Republic of China - [“Li Shangfu calls for vigilance against ‘hegemony of navigation’”](#) [June 4]
- Government Release: Ministry of National Defense of the People’s Republic of China - [“China slams US, Canadian warships’ transit through Taiwan Strait”](#) [June 3]
- Government Release: U.S. Department of State - [“U.S. Relationship with the Indian Ocean Rim Association and Commitment to the Indian Ocean Region”](#) [May 30]
- Report: Arup International Projects Limited - [“Canadian Green Shipping Corridors Preliminary Assessment Final Report”](#) [June 19]
- Report: International Institute for Strategic Studies - [“New Ambitions at Sea: Naval Modernisation in the Gulf States”](#) [June 5]
- Podcast: CIMSEC - [“Sea Control 438 - Small states and the law of the sea with Dr. Douglas Guilfoyle”](#) [June 22]
- Podcast: *The Economist* - [“Babbage - Why the future of fish farming lies on dry land”](#) [June 14]
- Podcast: CIMSEC - [“Sea Control 435 - The High Seas Treaty with Gabrielle Carmine”](#) [June 11]
- Podcast: CIMSEC - [“Sea Control 433 - Climate Change and Military Operations in the Arctic with Marisol Maddox”](#) [June 1]
- Opinion: [“ASEAN finds itself stuck between the U.S. and China”](#) [*The Japan Times* - June 23] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“China has its eyes on Okinawa”](#) [*The Economist* - June 22] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“A Key Moment to Advance Green Shipping”](#) [*Hellenic Shipping News* - June 20]
- Opinion: [“ASEAN Between the U.S. and China”](#) [*The Wire China* - June 18] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“What It Will Take to Deter China in the Taiwan Strait: Washington Must Take Difficult Steps to Prevent Catastrophe”](#) [*Foreign Affairs* - June 15] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“The Pacific Is Becoming a Testing Ground for Green Geopolitics”](#) [*Foreign Policy* - June 15] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“Cyclone Biparjoy underscores climate threats facing India and Pakistan – and why they must work together”](#) [*The Third Pole* - June 15] [*In Urdu*] [*In Hindi*]
- Opinion: [“Taiwan’s Navy Caught Between Two Strategies to Counter Chinese Threat”](#) [*USNI News* - June 14]
- Opinion: [“Sunk Costs: The Difficulty of Using Sanctions to Deter China in a Taiwan Crisis”](#) [Center for Strategic & International Studies - June 12]
- Opinion: [“China Is Rewriting the Law of the Sea”](#) [*Foreign Policy* - June 10] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“China’s cruise liner breakthrough marks crowning glory, but ambition to climb high-value chain faces challenges”](#) [*South China Morning Post* - June 11] [Paywall]

- Opinion: [“Why Hong Kong’s taste for an endangered reef fish is a problem, and how to eat seafood sustainably”](#) [South China Morning Post - June 8] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Can ocean-based carbon dioxide removal be used to turn the tide on climate change?”](#) [Innovation News Network - June 26]
- Analysis: [“China targets sea change in global diplomacy race with West”](#) [Nikkei Asia - June 20] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Australia’s 2023 Defence Strategic Review: mobilizing all elements of national power to meet the challenges of the Indo-Pacific era”](#) [The Sasakawa Peace Foundation - June 19]
- Analysis: [“How the Pentagon thinks about America’s strategy in the Pacific”](#) [The Economist - June 15] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“How a Shady Chinese Firm’s Encryption Chips Got Inside the US Navy, NATO, and NASA”](#) [WIRED - June 15]
- Analysis: [“Strategic Upgrades in the Pacific”](#) [Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative - June 15]
- Analysis: [“China Creates a Coast Guard Like No Other, Seeking Supremacy in Asian Seas”](#) [The New York Times - June 13] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Cable Cutters”](#) [The Wire China - June 11] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Chinese general signals new strategy with Senkaku remarks”](#) [Nikkei Asia - June 8] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“The race to map the world’s seagrass — before it disappears”](#) [The Washington Post - June 8] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Analysis of the Air and Maritime Blockade Operations Against Taiwan by the People’s Liberation Army — What Can Be Inferred from Military Exercises, etc. —”](#) [The Sasakawa Peace Foundation - June 7]
- Analysis: [“China’s new Great Wall”](#) [The Economist - June 5] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“U.S. Vows to Continue Patrols Near China and Urges Nuclear Talks”](#) [The New York Times - June 3] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Visual Investigations - Fake Signals and American Insurance: How a Dark Fleet Moves Russian Oil”](#) [The New York Times - May 30] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Land around the U.S. is sinking. Here are some of the fastest areas.”](#) [The Washington Post - May 30] [Paywall]

## Events on the Maritime Domain

- On May 25, 2023, the Center for Strategic & International Studies held a hybrid [conversation with Ely Ratner and Siddharth Mohandas on “The U.S. Role in Indo-Pacific Security.”](#) A full recording is available.
- On May 29, 2023, the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Wilson Center’s Polar Institute, along with several co-sponsors, held an online event at Helsinki’s City Hall on [“Antarctica Today: Shared Challenges for Science and Environmental Protection in the Final Frontier.”](#) The event included a session in English and a session in Finnish.

- On May 30, 2023, the International Maritime Organization and the Republic of Korea jointly hosted the [Symposium on "Making headway on the IMO MASS Code"](#) at the IMO Headquarters in London, United Kingdom.
- From June 2-4, 2023, the International Institute for Strategic Studies hosted its [20th Shangri-La Dialogue](#) in Singapore, bringing together defense ministers to “debate the region’s most pressing security challenges, engage in important bilateral talks and come up with fresh approaches together.” The full speaker agenda, transcripts, videos, and plenary discussions of public access are available on their website to explore. [[U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin’s As Delivered Speech Transcript](#)] [[Chinese Minister of National Defense Li Shangfu Provisional Speech Transcript](#)]
- From June 5-8, 2023, the IEEE Oceanic Engineering Society and Marine Technology Society hosted 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.”
- On June 6, 2023, the Wilson Center held a hybrid event discussing [“Ocean Policy to Strengthen the Resilience of Marine Ecosystems.”](#) A full recording is available.
- On June 7, 2023, the Center for Strategic & International Studies Asia Program held a hybrid [“CSDS-CSIS Transatlantic Dialogue on the Indo-Pacific.”](#) A full recording is available.
- On June 8, 2023, the [Ocean Awards Gala](#) was held in Washington, D.C. on the evening of World Ocean Day. The gala, also a part of [Capitol Hill Ocean Week](#), annually recognizes champions of marine and Great Lakes stewardship.
- From June 13-14, 2023, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) conducted its third [Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue](#), this time in Bonn, Germany. The two chosen topics for this Dialogue were 1) Coastal ecosystem restoration including blue carbon and 2) Fisheries and food security. Portions of the dialogue were [webcast](#).
- From June 15-16, 2023, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia and the Institute for Strategic Studies of Mongolia held the [8th International Conference on Northeast Asian Security “Ulaanbaatar Dialogue”](#) in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.
- From June 20-22, 2023, the World Maritime University and its partners held its [“Conference on Maritime & Ocean Sustainability”](#) in alignment with its 40th anniversary, in Sweden.
- On June 21, 2023, *Foreign Policy* held a virtual dialogue on [“Tensions Beyond the Strait: How Taiwan’s security is impacting the transatlantic alliance”](#) in partnership with Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies. A full recording is available.
- On June 26, 2023, the Center for Strategic & International Studies Australia Chair held [“A Conversation with Dr. Kurt Campbell and Admiral Michael Gilday on the Strategic and Military Implications of AUKUS.”](#) A full recording is available.
- From June 29-30, 2023, [The Nautical Institute’s Developing Maritime Professionals Conference and AGM](#) will be held in Hamburg, Germany. The conference will be conducted on board the historic cargo ship MS Bleichen.
- On July 4, the Ocean Policy Research Institute of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation (OPRI-SPF) will hold its hybrid [“194th Ocean Forum: Game-changing technology for fisheries resource surveys - Ocean acoustic waveguide remote sensing”](#) out of Japan.
- From July 12-13, 2023, the Wilson Center, in partnership with the University of Alaska, the U.S. Department of Energy’s Arctic Energy Office, and Rand Corporation will hold a two-day online dialogue titled [“Critical Minerals in the Arctic: Forging the Path Forward.”](#)



# Handbill Spotlight

## Maritime Search and Rescue

### Issue Background

While several multinational organizations ([European Union](#), [IMO](#), [ASEAN](#), etc.) and individual states have specialized definitions of “search and rescue” and its related operations, in general, maritime search and rescue (SAR) is a maritime safety operation referring to the highly coordinated efforts to provide assistance to persons or vessels in distress at sea, which is usually given regardless of their status or nationality. One of the most common forms of search and rescue is “air-sea rescue” (ASR or A/SR), referred to as aeronautical and maritime search and rescue ([AMSAR](#)) by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), which is conducted over water.

Formalized maritime search and rescue considerations date back to more than a century ago. Sparked by the sinking of the Titanic, the [1914 Safety of Life at Sea \(SOLAS\) Convention](#) (amended in 1929, 1948, 1960, and 1974) is [regarded](#) as “the most important of all international treaties concerning the safety of merchant ships.” Still, while air-sea rescue coordination was [developed](#) during World War II and some states [continued](#) post-war developments themselves, the formalized concept of maritime search and rescue truly began to take shape at the international level in the 1970s. The [SAR Convention—adopted](#) at a Conference in Hamburg, Germany on April 27, 1979 and entered into force on June 22, 1985—is another leading international convention on coordinated search and rescue efforts and obligations. Notably, the SAR Convention was successfully [amended](#) two decades later after many substantial concerns on government responsibilities were addressed, making it more broadly acceptable and further emphasizing coordination.

As the end of the 20th century approached, several supplemental actions related to SAR were taken at the international level. From 1979-1998, the IMO's Maritime Safety Committee successfully divided the world's oceans into [13 search and rescue areas](#), “in each of which the countries concerned have delimited search and rescue regions for which they are responsible.” The IMO's [Global SAR Plan](#), as a “necessary and practical tool for SAR operations,” was developed with the intention of “defining detailed responsibilities for each member nation” [as part](#) of the global community. Additionally, several region-specific and charity organizations ([International Maritime Rescue Federation](#), [Association for Rescue at Sea](#), [Search and Rescue Charitable Foundation](#), [International Ice Patrol](#), etc.) were created to support SAR operations. Several other formal international agreements include elements of or direct references to search and rescue. The most notable of these are the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) ([Article 98 - Duty to render assistance](#)) and the 1949 Geneva Convention ([Article 27 - Protection of coastal rescue craft and fixed coastal installations](#)). The International Maritime Organization still maintains a “[minimum list](#)” of the “essential” publications and documents online specifically related to maritime search and rescue.

Individual states also usually have domestic regulations, laws, as well as bilateral and multilateral agreements at the domestic level that include mention of maritime search and rescue, the operations of which typically fall under the purview of their coast guard or air force.

## Recent Events<sup>1</sup>

While SAR operations regularly take place around the world in varying scale and for a variety of reasons, in June 2023, there were two particular cases that received ongoing global attention: the capsizing of a migrant boat in the Mediterranean Sea and the disappearance of a tourist submersible near the wreckage of the Titanic shipwreck in the northern Atlantic Ocean.’

On June 13, a [fishing trawler](#) carrying an [estimated](#) 750-800 (more than 300 of whom were Pakistani, [according](#) to Pakistan) migrant people capsized about 50 miles off the southern coast of Greece after its engine broke down, marking the [deadliest](#) sinking off Greece since 2015. Greek authorities say that 104 survivors and 78 bodies have been brought ashore so far through SAR efforts. Meanwhile, [questions have since been raised](#) about the Greek Coast Guard’s [potential](#) accidental role in the capsizing as they had arrived on scene but had “no connection” to the sinking itself. “[A] shift in weight probably caused by panic and the boat capsized. As soon as we got there, we started our rescue operation to collect those who were in the water,” explained a Greek Coast Guard spokesman.



Five days later, the deep-sea submersible the *Titan* carrying five people went missing around the site of the Titanic shipwreck in the North Atlantic Ocean, launching a five-day, multinational search and rescue operation. A [Unified Command was established](#) out of the *Polar Prince* research vessel which launched the *Titan*. [Search teams](#) from the U.S., Canada, France, and Britain jointly scanned thousands of miles with planes and [ships](#) for a sign of the vessel, sharing information and deploying “[all assets](#)” of search and rescue mission [technologies](#), [specialty crafts](#), and [trained tactics](#). The operation ended once a debris field including the hull of the *Titan*, likely caused by a “catastrophic implosion,” was found by a [robotic diving vehicle](#) deployed from a Canadian ship, [leading](#) SAR operators to declare all five people dead and observers to raise their own questions and observations.

## Keep In Mind

Since the 1979 SAR Convention, search and rescue has become an increasingly regular point of discussion, with many states having since developed their own definitions, declarations and training systems; both domestically and multilaterally. Search and rescue—similar to ecological sustainability

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<sup>1</sup> Image: An undated handout photo provided by the Hellenic Coast Guard shows migrants onboard a boat during a rescue operation, before their boat capsized on the open sea, off Greece, June 14, 2023. (Source: Hellenic Coast Guard/Handout)

and scientific research—is a reliable point of intersection for establishing and maintaining cooperation, even amidst dueling states. As SAR requires formal training, many states take these opportunities to conduct maritime search and rescue-related drills and exercises between their armed forces, such as those [held between the U.S., Japan and the Philippines](#) in the South China Sea in early June. Even in highly tense regions like the South China Sea, search and rescue is finding its value, with ASEAN publishing a milestone [ASEAN Agreement on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue Cooperation](#) in January 2023. The U.S. Coast Guard and Chinese Maritime Safety Administration [held bilateral SAR training](#) exercises in 2012, though such operations now seem nonexistent as the relationship has become strained.

As much as SAR can be a gathering force, as it is a regulated practice, it can also become divisive. For instance, the issue of unregulated maritime migration in the Mediterranean Sea has [long](#) been an [increasing issue](#) for regional states. Notably, this capsizing in June occurred soon after the European Commission released a [“Draft Roadmap towards a ‘European Framework for Operational Cooperation on Search and Rescue in the Mediterranean Sea.’”](#) written by the Search and Rescue Contact Group who have been holding meetings since January 2023 to develop this framework. This draft’s context, such as its inclusion of vessel “registration and certification,” has received [mixed](#) response from states including Germany who gave a [full paper response](#) to each of the nine deliverables. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights also spoke up in response, [calling](#) for regional countries to clamp down on human smuggling and maritime safety. Meanwhile, having another jarringly different SAR operation being conducted around the same time in the North Atlantic caused some observers to [directly](#) criticize the [equality](#) of [reception](#) regarding these two situations.

Despite these understandable cases, which are often sprinkled with historical context and political agendas, it remains true that maritime search and rescue offers a practical point of mutually beneficial connection between states. Rather than relying solely on domestic, regional and international regulations—which can easily become too narrowly focused or overly generalized—neighboring coastal states should discuss maritime search and rescue operations with one another in a bilateral capacity to build the most reasonable and mutually beneficial solution between them. Especially for major maritime states—as well as states simply in need of a positive point of connection—SAR should not be continually hidden within a simple list of cooperative efforts, but be given its own platform for improvement.

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

## ICAS Maritime Affairs Program: New and Upcoming

### — Journal Article —

China and the United States in the South Pacific Ocean: Will Strategic Competition or Practical Cooperation Drive the Future Development

By Nong Hong

June 16, 2023

#### **Abstract:**

The South Pacific Ocean is emerging as an arena of U.S.-China strategic competition while the practices of the two countries in some areas suggest that the model of cooperation could benefit the regional States. It is hard to foresee whether competition or cooperation will drive the future development of the South Pacific or whether the two phenomena may co-exist. It is determined not only by policies taken by the two States themselves and their respective engagements with both external stakeholders and regional States. Also, it is critical to understand how the regional states view the United States and China and how they are responding to U.S.-China competition.

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### — ICAS Blog Post —

Event Summary: Building a Networked Security Architecture in the Indo-Pacific

By Alec Caruana

June 26, 2023

On June 8, 2023, Dr. Ely Ratner, Assistant Secretary of Defense (ASD) for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs in the Biden administration, sat down with Lisa Curtis of the Center for a New American Security (CNAS) for a discussion on [‘Building a Networked Security Architecture in the Indo-Pacific.’](#) On the heels of [a tour throughout Asia](#) alongside Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, ASD Ratner returned stateside to this event with palpable optimism about the geopolitical situation in the Indo-Pacific region. “This is a moment of unprecedented alignment in our alliances and partnerships in the region,” he said, echoing Secretary Austin’s remarks given at the 20th Shangri-La Dialogue of a “shared vision” across the Pacific...

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