



ICAS MARITIME AFFAIRS HANDBILL

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Recent News in Global Maritime Affairs

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

["100% coral mortality" found in coral reef restoration site off Florida as ocean temperatures soar](#)

July 24 - CBS News

[United States, Global]

A research team from the Coral Restoration Foundation, based in the U.S. state of Florida, reported that the impact of the recent, record-breaking spike in extreme heat of the oceans has caused “100% coral mortality” in some reefs, including some that have long been under restoration.

[New study reveals seaweed's hidden climate benefits](#)

July 18 - Conversation International

[Global]

New research shows that seaweed forests can absorb as much carbon as the Amazon rainforest. Seaweed forests from polar regions are more effective at absorbing carbon due to cooler and nutrient-rich waters. Protecting and restoring seaweed forests worldwide could significantly contribute to carbon sequestration and marine conservation efforts.

[From soup stock to supercrop: Japan shows off its seaweed savvy](#)

July 16 - *The Japan Times* [Paywall]

[Japan]

In Japan, research on seaweed is flourishing as groups explore new applications for the plant such as “farming it from an environmental or ecological point of view” instead of just as a food crop. Newfound uses range from fisheries selling “blue carbon” credits to wild seaweed forest restoration and potential uses as organic fertilizer.

[New study shows effect of climate change on ocean colour](#)

July 13 - National Oceanography Centre

[Global]

Climate change is being credited with changing the color of 56% of the ocean over the last 20 years, according to a newly published scientific study by scientists at the National Oceanography Centre.

[Namibia's kelp forests help to curb carbon](#)

July 11 - *The Namibian*

[Africa]

In Namibia, a Dutch start-up company is running a pilot program to grow giant kelp; a variety of seaweed that would capture carbon dioxide emissions while enhancing crop yields and drought resilience. The project also intends to improve biodiversity at large in the area.

[Pilot sea urchin project aims to restore NZ's ocean habitats](#)

July 10 - *The Fish Site*

[South Pacific]

The Kinanomics project in New Zealand aims to transform sea urchins, which have been destroying kelp forests, into a profitable aquaculture opportunity. This effort not only meets the demand for sea urchin roe but also helps restore coastal kelp forests and marine ecosystems affected by the sea urchins' overpopulation.

[Record ocean temperatures lift Atlantic hurricane outlook](#)

July 6 - *Reuters*

[Atlantic Ocean, Global]

Colorado State University forecasters increased their estimate for the number of tropical storms that will form during this year's Atlantic hurricane season due to record warm sea surface temperatures. They now predict 18 named storms; a forecast that is significantly higher than the prediction made by the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

[NGO warns against broad adoption of carbon capture and storage in Germany](#)

July 4 - *Clean Energy Wire*

[Global, Europe]

Germanwatch, a non-governmental organization that promotes sustainable development and climate protection, is warning against Germany's carbon dioxide management policy that plans to open up options for "a permanent extension of fossil fuel business models," including that of carbon capture. The statement was released following a July 5 committee hearing by the Bundestag on carbon capture use and storage (CCUS).

[Meltwater is hydro-fracking Greenland's ice sheet through millions of hairline cracks – destabilizing its internal structure](#)

June 30 - Arctic Today

[The Arctic]

The traditional understandings of what happens inside and under ice sheets are now being challenged as glaciologists witness contradictory case studies and conduct new research.

[2] Maritime Economy and Shipping [2]

[Hong Kong tightens radiation inspection of Japanese seafood imports](#)

July 22 - The Japan Times [Paywall]

[East Asia]

On July 13, Hong Kong's Secretary for Environment and Ecology Tse Chin-wan announced a "precautionary" ban on seafood from 10 Japanese prefectures following the announcement from Japan to release the Fukushima nuclear plant waste water into the Pacific Ocean. Hong Kong is Japan's second-largest market for agricultural and fisheries exports while China is its largest.

[Russia pounds Ukraine's grain, UN warns of hunger from price rises](#)

July 21 - Reuters

[Black Sea, Russia, East Europe]

Russia's Ministry of Defense announced that, "[i]n connection with the cessation of the functioning of the Black Sea Grain Initiative and the closing of the maritime humanitarian corridor" two days prior, "all vessels sailing in the waters of the Black Sea to Ukrainian ports will be regarded as potential carriers of military cargo." The White House announced that Russia also laid sea mines in the Black Sea that could interfere with Ukraine grain exports and "targeted Ukraine's grain export ports in Odesa with missiles and drones." Russia calls the attacks, now lasting at least four straight days, "mass revenge strikes" in retaliation for attacks by Ukraine.

[U.S. Sending Destroyer, F-35s, F-16s to Protect Merchant Ships in Middle East](#)

July 17 - USNI News

[Middle East, United States]

The U.S. Department of Defense announced plans to send air force fighters and a destroyer to protect merchant ships in and out of the Persian Gulf. According to the Pentagon, the department is increasing its presence as Iranian forces continue to threaten the free flow of commerce through the Strait of Hormuz.

[IMB raises concern on resurgence of maritime piracy and armed robbery in Gulf of Guinea in 2023 mid-year report](#)

July 7 - *Hellenic Shipping News*

[Africa]

The ICC International Maritime Bureau, otherwise known as the IMB, released their 2023 mid-year report, which highlights the increased rate of piracy and armed robberies in the Singapore Strait and the Gulf of Guinea.

[Port of Rotterdam Chief Sees Growing Business Anxiety Over China](#)

July 5 - *Bloomberg* [Paywall]

[Europe, China]

In an interview, the CEO of the Port of Rotterdam—a port regarded as Europe’s busiest gateway for global trade—said there is a “growing anxiety with regards to the dependency on China and the role China has” in global production and supply chains. The CEO, Allard Castelein, clarified that “a dependency on any country...is a non-resilient dependency.”

[U.S. Navy says it foiled Iran’s attempt to seize oil tankers](#)

July 5 - *The Washington Post* [Paywall]

[Middle East, United States]

The U.S. Navy released an official report on their successful prevention of Iranian attempts to seize two large oil tankers off the coast of Oman, which included intensive gunfire from Iranian vessels.

[China urges rejection of emissions levy as it blasts ‘unrealistic’ wealthy nations](#)

July 3 - *TradeWinds*

[China, Global]

Directly following a French-led move by 22 countries to enact a global emissions levy, China warned that “an overly ambitious emission reduction target [which is being pushed by developed countries] will seriously impede the sustainable development of international shipping, significantly increase the cost of the supply chain and will adversely impede the recovery of the global economy.”

[Million dollar investment in Port of Tromsø](#)

June 29 - *Arctic Today*

[Europe]

Norway’s government has awarded the northern Port of Tromsø, regarded as one of the country’s largest fishing and cruise ports, NOK 12.5 million (approximately US\$1.2 million). The Port of Tromsø is one of 24 projects that have applied for similar funding in 2023, the requests which collectively reach NOK 400 million (approximately US\$39.7 million).

[China starts building third icebreaker, which scientists say could send researchers to polar seabeds by 2025](#)

June 27 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]

[The Arctic, China]

On June 25, China officially began construction on its third icebreaker, which could bring experts down toward the polar seabed as early as 2025. This would make China the second country, after Russia, capable of taking people to the Arctic sea floor.

[3] Ocean Governance and Maritime Cooperation [3]

[China's hospital ship "Peace Ark" completes 1st visit to Kiribati](#)

July 24 - *Xinhua*

[South Pacific, China]

For the first time since 2019, the *Peace Ark*, a Chinese hospital ship, sailed to the Pacific Islands with 126 medical personnel on board to provide free medical services in Kiribati, the Solomons, Tonga, Vanuatu and East Timor. The trip was known as Mission Harmony 2023.

[At least 15 killed in ferry sinking in Indonesia](#)

July 24 - *Reuters*

[Southeast Asia]

On July 24, during a 20-minute trip near Indonesia's Sulawesi island, a small ferry capsized, killing at least 15 passengers and leaving 33 survivors. The cause of the capsizing remains unclear.

[Japan seeks experts' dialogue with China on Fukushima water release](#)

July 19 - *Kyodo News*

[East Asia, Global]

In response to China's opposition to Japan's planned release of treated water from its Fukushima plant, Japan has proposed to China to hold a dialogue involving nuclear experts from both countries to discuss the issue and prevent politicization of the water discharge issue.

[Moscow Warns Ukraine Against Shipping Grain Across the Black Sea Without Its Consent](#)

July 18 - *The New York Times* [Paywall]

[Black Sea, Russia, East Europe]

A day after Russia unilaterally terminated a year-old, UN-backed agreement that allowed Ukraine to ship grain through the Black Sea, President Volodymyr Zelensky called for global support as Russia warned Ukraine against shipping grain without consent.

[Marcos hopes Xi's talks with ex-Philippine president included South China Sea](#)

July 17 - *Reuters*

[South China Sea, China, Southeast Asia]

Following former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing on July 17, current Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said he hoped the two discussed “issues” regarding the South China Sea.

[China and ASEAN agree to try to conclude nonaggression pact on sea feud in 3 years](#)

July 13 - *Associated Press*

[Southeast Asia, South China Sea]

During a meeting in Jakarta on July 13, China and the 10 ASEAN nations agreed on guidelines to finalize their nonaggression code of conduct pact “within a 3-year timeline or earlier,” meaning before Fall 2026.

[China blasts US for forcing it to accept South China Sea ruling](#)

July 12 - *Reuters*

[China, South China Sea, United States]

In response to the 7th anniversary of the arbitration award, the Chinese embassy in the Philippines accused the U.S. of “rop[ing] in allies to play up the issue each year on the anniversary of the illegal award to gang up against China and to exert pressure, and force China into accepting the award.”

[DFA launches 'Not One Inch' microsite on PH's arbitral win vs. China](#)

July 12 - *CNN Philippines*

[Southeast Asia, South China Sea]

On July 12, the 7th anniversary of the ruling on the 2016 South China Sea Arbitration Case, the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs launched a website containing “official information” about the 2016 ruling by the Permanent Court of Arbitration. The headline of the website is ‘Not One Inch’.

[Blackpink, Barbie and Beijing's South China Sea claims collide in Vietnam](#)

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

[South China Sea, Indo-Pacific]

Vietnamese nationalists were aggravated this month by two supposed displays of China's controversial ‘nine-dash line’ claim to the South China Sea in pop culture. First, the blockbuster movie *Barbie* was banned from Vietnamese cinemas after censors determined that a scribbled map of Asia included a dashed line that resembled the Chinese claim. Second, netizens rebuked Korean pop group *Blackpink* after its Chinese concert organizer depicted the u-shaped line on its map of the group's upcoming tour of the country.

[Lithuania slams China in new Indo-Pacific strategy](#)

July 7 - *Nikkei Asia* [Paywall]

[North Atlantic, China]

A week before hosting the NATO summit, Lithuania published its Indo-Pacific strategy, which emphasizes the need to engage with the Indo-Pacific region for security, resilience and prosperity.

[India Revises Stance on China-Philippines Maritime Dispute as New Delhi Looks East](#)

July 5 - *USNI News*

[South Asia, South China Sea]

At a meeting between Indian and Philippine foreign policy officials in Manila, the Indian Government announced a change in its position on the 2016 *Philippines v. China* South China Sea arbitration from neutrally acknowledging the outcome to supporting the ruling against China's claims.

[Fed up with UK and Scotland, Orkney Islands look to Norway](#)

July 3 - *Arctic Today*

[North Atlantic, Europe]

Great Britain's Orkney Islands, located about 10 miles off the north coast of Scotland, announced that they may now be looking at "alternative forms of governance," potentially with Norway.

[US expects more cooperation with India in South China Sea](#)

June 28 - *Reuters*

[South China Sea, United States, South Asia]

During a state visit to Washington by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in late June, the U.S. and India declared themselves "among the closest partners in the world" and emphasized adherence to international law in the maritime realms.

[4] Maritime Security and Defense [4]

[U.S., Allies Hold Record-Setting Military Exercise in Australia in Message Aimed at China](#)

July 23 - *The Wall Street Journal* [Paywall]

[Indo-Pacific, United States]

The United States is one of 13 nations holding joint military drills in Australia that started over the weekend. The two-week long biennial exercise, called Talisman Sabre, is reportedly the most expansive in the exercise's history and partly described by leadership as a "message" to Beijing.

[North Korea fires two missiles after US submarine arrives in South Korea](#)

July 23 - *Channel News Asia*

[East Asia, United States]

On July 18, the USS *Kentucky* (SSBN-737), a ballistic missile submarine, arrived in Busan, South Korea as part of fulfilling the April 2023 Washington Declaration, marking the first visit by a U.S. submarine in four decades. Early the next morning, North Korea launched two ballistic missiles eastward.

[Carrier USS Ronald Reagan Makes Port Call to Bali; Russians, Chinese Start Naval Drills](#)

July 17 - *USNI News*

[Indian Ocean, Sea of Japan, Indo-Pacific]

Following routine operations in the Indian Ocean and a visit by the Armed Forces Chief and Navy Chief of Indonesia on the USS *Ronald Reagan*, the Ronald Reagan Carrier Strike Group (CSG) made a port call to Bali, Indonesia on July 16. Meanwhile, Russian and Chinese forces began joint security drills in the Sea of Japan with a focus on 'Maintaining the Security of Strategic Maritime Channels.'

[US Navy plane flies through Taiwan Strait, China carries out more drills](#)

July 13 - *Reuters*

[United States, East Asia, China]

On July 13, a U.S. Navy P-8A Poseidon patrol plane flew through the Taiwan Strait, prompting a response by 26 Chinese aircraft, including J-16 and Su-30 fighter jets. The U.S. flight, which China's military described as "public hype," occurred as China conducted military exercises south of Taiwan.

[U.S. Joint Chiefs pick pursues more Indo-Pacific outposts](#)

July 13 - *Nikkei Asia*

[United States, Indo-Pacific]

During a confirmation hearing by the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, nominee Gen. Charles Brown said he is "mindful of the security challenges at this consequential time and the need to accelerate to stay ahead of the growing threat" regarding China and the Indo-Pacific region at large.

[India Clears French Submarine Deal as US Allies Court Modi](#)

July 13 - *Bloomberg* [Paywall]

[South Asia, Europe, United States]

France and India are closing in on a deal to build three conventional diesel-electric submarines as India continues diversifying military hardware purchases beyond Russia and positioning itself as a bulwark against China.

[Taiwan drills to involve civilian airports, practice keeping sea lanes open](#)

July 11 - Reuters

[East Asia]

For the first time, Taiwan's annual military drills will include defending Taiwan's main international airport and practicing keeping sea lanes open in the event of a Chinese blockade.

[Philippine military raises 'alarming concern' as China beefs up presence in disputed sea](#)

July 7 - The Straits Times

[South China Sea]

The presence of 47 or more Chinese militia vessels and seven Chinese maritime assets near Iroquois Reef and Sabina Shoal, respectively, caused the Armed Forces of the Philippines to raise "alarming concern about China's intentions and actions within these disputed waters."

[Chinese navy makes rare foray into West Africa with Nigeria visit](#)

July 3 - Reuters

[Africa, China]

On July 2, a People's Liberation Army naval fleet led by the *Nanning* destroyer arrived in Nigeria for a five-day port visit. Nigeria's navy "expressed willingness to work with China" on maintaining security in the Gulf of Guinea.

[Ambitious Vision for Nordic Defence Cooperation in the Works](#)

June 28 - Arctic Today

[North Atlantic]

In late June, the defense policy ministers and leaders of the five Nordic states met in Reykjavik for a Nordic Defense Cooperation (NORDEF) meeting resulting in plans to "further deepen the defense policy cooperation with a new vision" based on "shared values and security interests."

Peer-Reviewed Research on Maritime Issues

- Government Release: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation - "[Foreign Ministry statement on the Istanbul agreements](#)" [July 17] [[In Russian](#)]
- Government Release: U.S. Congressional Research Service - "[Coast Guard Polar Security Cutter \(Polar Icebreaker\) Program: Background and Issues for Congress](#)" [Updated July 10]
- Government Release: U.S. Congressional Research Service - "[Changes in the Arctic: Background and Issues for Congress](#)" [Updated July 5]
- Government Release: United Kingdom Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs - "[Highly Protected Marine Areas: Allonby Bay](#)" [July 5]

- Press Release: U.S. Department of Defense - [“U.S. Navy to Commission Littoral Combat Ship Canberra in Australia”](#) [July 20]
- Press Release: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China - [“王毅就南海问题阐明中方原则立场 \[Wang Yi Clarifies China’s Principled Position on the South China Sea Issue\]”](#) [July 15] [In Chinese]
- Press Release: U.S. White House - [“President Biden and His Majesty King Charles III Meet with Leading Philanthropists and Financiers to Catalyze Climate Finance”](#) [July 10]
- Press Release: Australian Government Defence - [“Australia supports Vietnam in peacekeeping mission to South Sudan”](#) [July 8]
- Press Release: Australian Government Defence - [“Indo-Pacific Endeavour 2023 to strengthen regional partnerships”](#) [July 5]
- Press Release: Government of the United Kingdom - [“First three marine areas receive highest levels of protection”](#) [July 5]
- Podcast: Seatrade Maritime News - [“Shipping markets outlook for H2 2023”](#) [July 13]
- Podcast: CIMSEC - [“Sea Control 443 - Asymmetric Black Sea warfare with Charles Rahr”](#) [July 9]
- Journal Article: [“Deglaciation of northwestern Greenland during Marine Isotope Stage 11”](#) [SCIENCE Vol 381, Issue 6655 - July 20]
- Journal Article: [“Carbon sequestration and climate change mitigation using macroalgae: a state of knowledge review”](#) [Biological Reviews - July 12]
- Opinion: [“Black Sea Grain Deal Must Resume, Even if it Means Concessions”](#) [The Maritime Executive - July 23]
- Opinion: [“Russia’s Threats to Shipping Bring Risk of War to Black Sea”](#) [The Wall Street Journal - July 22] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“The Code of Conduct for the South China Sea: Movement in lieu of Progress”](#) [Fulcrum - July 20]
- Opinion: [“Why sinking seaweed would be a titanic mistake”](#) [The Fish Site - July 19]
- Opinion: [“China’s blanket radiation testing could spell trouble for Japanese seafood imports”](#) [The Japan Times - July 19] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“Some of Japan’s neighbors are freaking out over the release of Fukushima water. Should they be?”](#) [NBC News - July 15]
- Opinion: [“Is China’s Fujian aircraft carrier counting down to a catapult take-off test?”](#) [South China Morning Post - July 10] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“A guide to adopting clean maritime technology”](#) [Ship Technology - July 10]
- Opinion: [“The world needs more battery metals. Time to mine the seabed”](#) [The Economist - July 6] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“Blue carbon deserves a green light for the climate fight”](#) [Mongabay - July 3]
- Opinion: [“Deep-sea mining may soon ease the world’s battery-metal shortage”](#) [The Economist - July 2] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“Why China is so keen to salvage shipwrecks in the South China Sea”](#) [The Economist - June 29] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“Best Place for the Navy to Test Secret Drones? Lake Michigan”](#) [Bloomberg - June 28] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“The melting Arctic is a crime scene. The microbes I study have long warned us of this catastrophe – but they are also driving it”](#) [Arctic Today - June 27]

- Analysis: [“How many aircraft carriers does China need? One analyst says at least 6”](#) [South China Morning Post - July 24] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“China a growing port of call for African naval expansion”](#) [International Institute for Strategic Studies - July 21]
- Analysis: [“Mangroves and seagrasses: Mitigating climate change through blue carbon”](#) [Manila Bulletin - July 21]
- Analysis: [“Thinking Through Britain’s Forward-Based Submarine Commitment to AUKUS”](#) [July 19]
- Analysis: [“Arbitration Support Tracker”](#) [Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative - July 18]
- Analysis: [“Combating Fisheries Related Crime in the South China Sea: Leveraging Maritime Information Sharing Centers.”](#) [Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative - July 13]
- Analysis: [“How Hot Is the Sea Off Florida Right Now? Think 90s Fahrenheit.”](#) [The New York Times - July 12] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Buoy Battle in the Spratly Islands”](#) [Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative - July 11]
- Analysis: [“AUKUS Pillar Two: Advancing the Capabilities of the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia”](#) [Center for Strategic & International Studies - July 10]
- Analysis: [“What would net-zero shipping look like?”](#) [BBC - July 8]
- Analysis: [“How Do ‘Barbie’ and Blackpink Figure in a Dangerous Territorial Dispute?”](#) [The New York Times - July 7] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“What does the Barbie movie have to do with the South China Sea dispute?”](#) [The Washington Post - July 5] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Can China’s deep-sea fishing feed the people, or will it just bring back expensive fish?”](#) [South China Morning Post - July 4] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“How low-sulphur shipping rules are affecting global warming”](#) [CarbonBrief - July 3]
- Analysis: [“The recent insurrection in Russia may challenge the vision of the Arctic as a region of low tension”](#) [Arctic Today - June 29]
- Analysis: [“Video: Strengthening Competitiveness by Investing in Maritime Transportation”](#) [Wilson Center - June 29]

Events on the Maritime Domain



- From June 29-30, 2023, [The Nautical Institute's Developing Maritime Professionals Conference and AGM](#) was held in Hamburg, Germany, conducted on board the historic cargo ship MS Bleichen.
- On July 4, 2023, the Ocean Policy Research Institute of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation (OPRI-SPF) held its hybrid [“194th Ocean Forum: Game-changing technology for fisheries resource surveys - Ocean acoustic waveguide remote sensing”](#) out of Japan.
- From July 4-6, 2023, the National Oceanography Centre of the United Kingdom hosted its [“United Kingdom Coastal Research Conference”](#) to “showcase and celebrate the coastal research being undertaken within the UK.
- 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 held a two-day online dialogue titled [“Critical Minerals in the Arctic: Forging the Path Forward.”](#) A full recording is available.

- On July 13, 2023, the Wilson Center held an online webinar titled [“No Water, No Food – Glacier Loss Threats to US and Chinese Agriculture”](#) as part of the China Environment Forum’s Cool Agriculture project investigating common food and climate challenges in the US and China.
- From July 17-18, 2023, the NATO Allied Maritime Command held its [“Sea Power Conference”](#) in London, United Kingdom.
- From July 18-20, 2023, the Ningbo Municipal Government, Informa Markets and their partners held the [“Ocean Expo Ningbo”](#) in Shanghai, China to share, display, and celebrate achievements in maritime technologies and shipping industries.
- On July 19, 2023, Center for Strategic & International Studies International Security Program held a webinar [“Lessons in Leadership and Risk with Admiral Sandy Winnefeld.”](#) A recording is available.
- On July 26, 2023, Brookings will hold a hybrid webinar on [“US-China proximate military operations in the maritime, air, and space domains.”](#)
- From August 3-4, 2023, the Navy League of the United States Honolulu Council and its partners will hold the [“Indo-Pacific Maritime Security Exchange.”](#) This year’s topic is on “Ensuring Free Access to the Maritime Commons.” Registration is still open.
- From August 15-16, 2023, the [“10th Annual Maritime Security West”](#) conference and exhibition will be held in San Francisco, California to discuss and explore maritime security. Registration is still open.
- On September 4, 2023, the *Japan Maritime Daily* newspaper will hold its first global seminar in Singapore, titled [“Future of Shipping towards Net Zero.”](#) with the theme of 'Decarbonization for the Future of Shipping'. The seminar will feature several keynote speeches by and a panel discussion among top leaders in the global maritime shipping industry. Registration is still open.
- From September 25-28, 2023, the IEEE Oceanic Engineering Society and its patrons will hold the [“OCEANS 2023 Gulf Coast”](#) conference “for global maritime professionals to learn, innovate and lead in the protection and utilization of the world’s largest natural resource.”
- From September 27-29, 2023, SNAME and its partners will hold the [“SNAME Maritime Convention 2023”](#) in San Diego, California with a focus on “Utilizing New Technologies to Solve Complex Maritime Problems.” Registration is still open.
- From November 15-16, 2023, DefenceIQ and its partners will hold a forum combining the [“Warships & OPV Latin America Conference”](#) and the [“Caribbean Basin Maritime Security and Coastal Surveillance” \(CABSEC\)](#), both of which focus on addressing regional security challenges such as technological advancements and information sharing. Registration is still open.

Handbill Spotlight

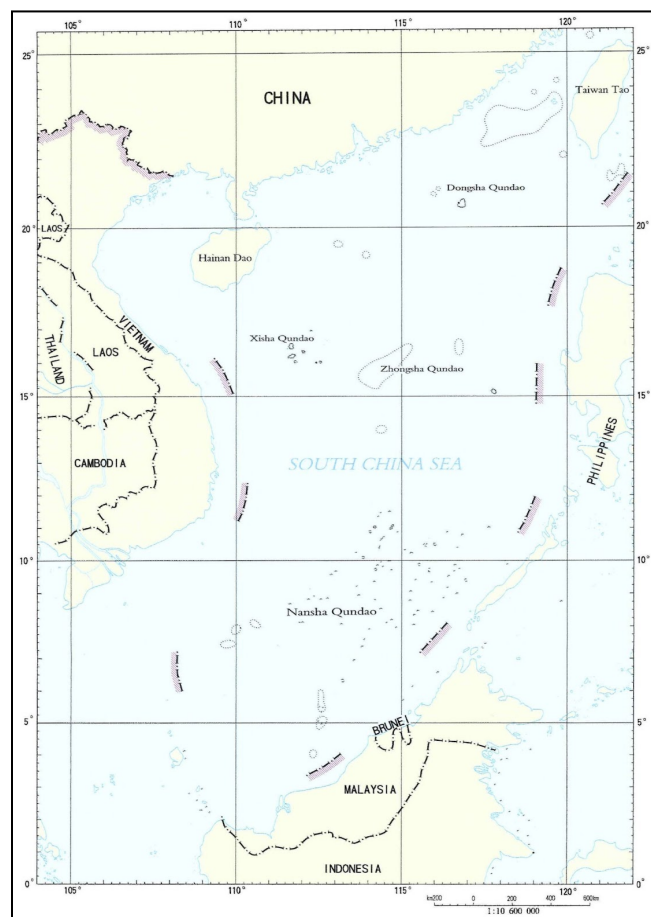
‘Nine-Dash Line’

Issue Background

The ‘nine-dash line’ is one of many names for a controversial Chinese maritime claim in the South China Sea. Though the claim is a matter of consistent discussion in the law of the sea community, it is often hard to make heads or tails of it in the national conversation due to the sensational headlines and veil of technical esotericism which surround it. That being said, with a bit of nuance and background information, this issue can hopefully become more accessible as important

discussions over South China Sea claims and their associated rights and obligations continue in the coming years.¹

Broadly speaking, the nine-dash line (also known as the eleven-dash line, the U-shaped line, and the dotted line) is a visual representation of China's claims that appears on some Chinese official maps and comparative maps of disputed claims in the South China Sea. While it is often understood that the line signals the limits of Chinese territory writ large, this interpretation is an oversimplification that enjoys [little support among Chinese scholars](#). Rather, [Beijing today employs the dashed line](#) to outline (a) the islands and rocks in the South China Sea over which China asserts territorial sovereignty, (b) the maritime zones governed by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (i.e. territorial sea, contiguous zone, exclusive economic zone, continental shelf), and (c) the waters over which it asserts some degree of non-exclusive "historic rights." While parts of this formula are intentionally ambiguous, it is clear at least that [Beijing conceives of its territorial and maritime claims within the nine-dash line as separate](#)—the former constituting an expression of unbounded sovereignty and, the latter, a claim to rights and jurisdiction premised on UNCLOS and pre-UNCLOS custom.



While China asserts that its sovereignty and rights in the South China Sea date back to [“ancient times,”](#) the first linear representation of this claim appeared [in the 1930s](#) in response to the unilateral annexation of the Spratly Islands by French Indochina. This was crystallized in 1947 when the then-Republican government of China published [an official map](#) of its South China Sea claims featuring a U-shaped line with eleven dashes. The number of dashes was reduced to nine in 1952 by the People's Republic of China following a negotiation with Vietnam over the Gulf of Tonkin. Since then, Beijing has maintained the nine-dash line as the visual perimeter of its varied claims in the South China Sea. While the line has been often-criticized by other South China Sea claimant states (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam) and international bodies like the Arbitral Tribunal in the 2016 *Philippines v. China* case, it remains a symbol and hallmark of China's enduring interests in the region.

¹ Map of the South China Sea featuring the 'nine-dash line' attached to a May 7, 2009 *note verbale* from the People's Republic of China to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in protest of an extended continental shelf declaration by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (Source: [Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf](#)).

Recent Events

Given its imposing nature and the ambiguity of its implications, the nine-dash line has a habit of generating controversy when used in international contexts. The line is standard as an [inset on official maps for Chinese consumption](#) as a way of marking out the South China Sea issue in the national consciousness, but it rarely appears in non-Chinese maps of the sea outside of comparative or educational contexts. This is done so as to avoid siding with China politically in the myriad and multifaceted disputes throughout the region. Exceptions to this can be found in pop culture where stipulations to access the Chinese market often take precedence over political neutrality.

A typical example of this was found in last year's globe-trotting adventure movie *Uncharted* which was banned in Vietnam and the Philippines for briefly showing [a map of Southeast Asia which lent credence to China's claims](#) by including the nine-dash line. More recently, the newly-released blockbuster *Barbie* was also [banned by Vietnamese censors](#) for allegedly displaying the nine-dash line. The Philippines has allowed the movie to be screened, albeit [with the problematic map blurred](#). The Warner Brothers studio, however, [hit back](#) at its zealous detractors saying that the dotted-line in question was a "child-like crayon drawing...that was not intended to make any type of statement."

An upcoming concert tour in Hanoi by the Korean pop group *Blackpink* has also [provoked the ire of nationalist Vietnamese netizens](#) after the group's Chinese concert promoter iMe depicted the nine-dash line on its website. Given that the disputes in question have significant symbolic and nationalist dimensions to them, it is not surprising when they play out most saliently in the public square where emotions run rampant rather than behind closed doors in well-informed discussions.

Keep In Mind

In spite of recent flare-ups, there are some glimmers of hope on the horizon that discourse over the nine-dash line could be moving in a positive, practical direction. On July 13, officials from China and the Association of Southeast Asian States (ASEAN) [agreed to try and finalize negotiations on a Code of Conduct \(COC\)](#) for the South China Sea by fall of 2026. Since a non-binding declaration in 2002, stakeholders among the various South China Sea claimant states have hoped for a COC to prevent provocation, mitigate escalation, and clear the ground for compromise and cooperation. However, negotiations between Beijing and the ten-nation bloc have been mired over the years by episodes of tension (such as the 2012 Scarborough Shoal standoff and the 2016 ruling in the *Philippines v. China* case) as well as practical matters like the COVID-19 pandemic and ASEAN's mercurial rotating chairmanship.

Momentum shifted this year in the wake of China's 20th Party Congress and Indonesia's assumption of the rotating chairmanship. A China-ASEAN working group on the COC was [announced this February](#) and swiftly held an [inaugural meeting in March](#). Now, six months later, China and ASEAN have committed to a three-year timeline on concluding the COC negotiations and have reportedly [drafted an unpublished set of negotiating guidelines](#). Some concrete proposals have also been mentioned such as the [establishment of a hotline](#) to deescalate tensions in the event of accidental collisions, military exercises, and standoffs in the South China Sea.

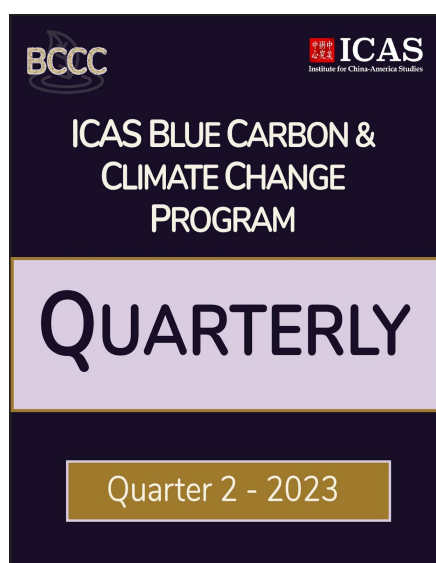
The nine-dash line could continue to present a roadblock to a substantive agreement. While the ASEAN claimant states all publicly back the 2016 arbitration, which rejected the nine-dash line as delineating a zone of Chinese “historic rights,” Beijing continues in its [non-recognition of the ruling](#) seven years on. Baked into the preliminary text is also a stipulation from Beijing that claimant states must [eschew cooperation with foreign energy companies in “disputed waters”](#) which, given the expansiveness of the nine-dash line, includes significant portions of other claimant states’ entitled exclusive economic zones under UNCLOS.

Given Beijing’s enthusiasm in promoting the nine-dash line in public, it is questionable whether it would make concessions behind closed doors for the sake of reaching a legally-binding COC. However, the negotiators have ample time to pore over the line’s implications before the 2026 deadline. As is clear from even this cursory discussion, China’s claims to island features, maritime zones, and historic rights which lie within the nine-dash line are all distinct, and the specific extent of the latter two categories have yet to be completely determined. Over the course of the COC negotiations, it is possible that these claims will be clarified in private by China in order to reach an agreement on proper conduct in disputed zones. Onlookers ought to pay close attention to news stemming from these talks as it could shed greater light on the implications of the nine-dash line and the vying prospects of cooperation and confrontation in the South China Sea moving forward.

This issue’s Spotlight was written by Alec Caruana, ICAS Part-Time Research Assistant.

ICAS Maritime Affairs Program: New and Upcoming

— Blue Carbon & Climate Change Program Quarterly Release —



Released the first week of every new quarter, the BCCC Quarterly is a magazine-style newsletter that records the most important trends and developments regarding blue carbon and climate change policies and regulations in China, the U.S., and other regions, as well as international regimes such as the United Nations. It also includes two special sections — the ‘Theme of the Quarter’ and the ‘Blue Carbon Country Profile’ — that aim to bring a fresh element to each issue.

The Theme of the Quarter was written by ICAS Research Assistant Intern Skyler Standridge and was written on Electric Vehicle Popularization.

The Blue Carbon Country Profile of Quarter 2 (2023), on Indonesia, was written by ICAS BCCC Research Assistant Zhangchen Wang.

View the Full 2023 Q2 BCCC Quarterly:

<https://chinaus-icas.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/BCCC-Quarterly-2023-Q2.pdf>

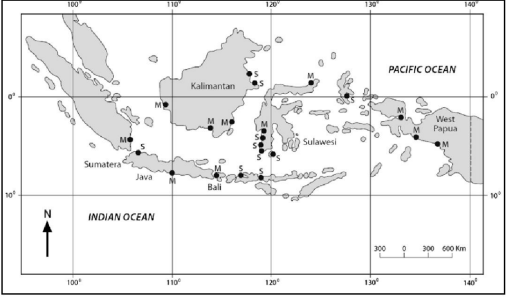
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Blue Carbon Country Profile: Indonesia

A. Potential of Indonesia in Blue Carbon Affairs

Indonesia, the largest archipelagic country, is home to approximately 17% of the world's blue carbon stocks, making it a crucial member in the realm of blue carbon. Different kinds of blue carbon ecosystems—mangroves, seagrasses, and tidal marshes—can all be naturally found in Indonesia, and in large amounts. In fact, Indonesia has the largest mangrove forest area in the world. Although these ecosystems face significant threats of degradation due to climate change and human activities in recent years, efforts from different levels of the countries are now working together to protect, restore, and develop Indonesia's blue carbon ecosystems. Safeguarding these valuable blue carbon ecosystems is essential for mitigating climate change and enhancing coastal resilience in Indonesia.¹

- Amount of seagrass: 30,000 km² (2016)
- Amount of mangroves: 33,640 km² (2021)
- Key Institutions of Study on Blue Carbon: the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries
- Key Regions of Interest: Indonesia does not have specific key regions of interest for blue carbon in the traditional sense, because every island (such as Sumatra, Sulawesi, and Nusa Tenggara) in this archipelago is essentially surrounded by blue carbon ecosystems, and all of these blue carbon ecosystems are worthy of attention and protection in their own right.



¹Image: Distribution map of Indonesia's mangrove forests and seagrass meadows. The locations of the references are highlighted as "M" for mangrove and "S" for seagrass. (Source: Alongi, Daniel & Mirdiyanto, Daniel & Fourqurean, James & Kautzman, John & A. Hutahaean & Crooks, Stephen & Lovelock, Catherine & J. Howard & Herr, Dorothy & Fortes, Miguel & E. Pidgeon & T. Wagay. (2015). Indonesia's blue carbon: a globally significant and vulnerable sink for seagrass and mangrove carbon. Wetlands Ecology and Management. 24. 10.1007/s11273-015-9446-y.)

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Theme of the Quarter: Electric Vehicle Popularization

News on Electric Vehicle Popularization
Increases in Global Private and Governmental Financial Support for Electric Vehicles

The electrification of the global vehicle supply chain drastically took effect during 2023's second quarter. Dozens of car manufacturers from around the world have increased their total allotment of funds towards electric car production, and some governments have even begun allocating significant funding to support domestic electric car production. For instance, Japanese-based Toyota announced US\$7 billion in electric vehicle investments which will bring their total investment for 2023 to US\$37 billion. Alongside Toyota, South Korea's Hyundai raised their total annual electric vehicle investment to US\$28 billion; an increase of over 60% from that of 2022. The Ford Motor Co. received nearly US\$9.2 billion from the U.S. government to boost American manufacturing of electric vehicles. Such allocations are crossing borders as well, with Chinese electric car manufacturer Nio now scheduled to receive US\$738.5 million in new investment funding from the Abu Dhabi government.

Additionally, new deals between electric vehicle companies themselves are also underway to streamline the consumer experience. U.S. based General Motors Co., Ford Motor Co., and Rivian, as well as German-based Volvo, will have access to Tesla Inc.'s "North American Charging Standard" network for their electric cars. This cooperation initiative is the first of its kind to incorporate the three largest U.S. electric vehicle companies into one unified charging system. The move from Tesla to allow entrance from other car companies into their charging network will undoubtedly streamline charging infrastructure development and sales. Perhaps this streamlined charging infrastructure and increased funding could help alleviate what the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago identified as serious challenges that the average electric vehicle consumer in the U.S. would encounter: the lack of charging options.¹



Electric cars, however, are not the only electric vehicles receiving large amounts of funding this quarter. In May, Virginia-based aeronautics and defense corporation General Dynamics received US\$1 billion in funding from the U.S. government to support their production of electric submarines. New, non-traditional electric vehicles are also starting production in Vietnam, including a five-seat electric vehicle which is only 3.1 meters long, compared to the average of 4 meters long for compact cars. VinFast, the creator of the vehicle, hopes that it can infiltrate the highly competitive domestic motorcycle market. Another non-traditional electric vehicle development during this quarter has been the announcement from Hurtigruten Norway, a cruise ship developer, which has planned for a zero-emissions electric cruise ship with retractable solar panel sails to set sail in 2030. The increase in both smaller and larger non-traditional electric vehicles provides more options for consumers and niche markets to become more climate friendly.

International increases in electric vehicle investment were preceded by multiple factors, including the widespread increases in global demand; demand that appears will only grow. The International Atomic

¹Image: A string of Tesla charging stations on the side of the road in Arlington, Virginia. (Source: Unsplash)

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Learn More About the 2023 Quarter 2 Publication:

<https://chinaus-icas.org/bccc-quarterly/volume-2-issue-2/>

Explore the ICAS Blue Carbon & Climate Change Program:

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View the Condensed, Chinese-Language Version:

<https://chinaus-icas.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/ICAS-BCCC-Quarterly-2023-Q2-CHN.pdf>

— MAP Academic Engagement —

Executive Director Dr. Nong Hong speaks at the 'South China Sea Hotspot Identification and Evaluation Dialogue (SHIELD)'

Thursday, July 6, 2023

On Thursday, July 6, 2023, Executive Director Dr. Nong Hong spoke at the virtual, closed-door roundtable 'South China Sea Hotspot Identification and Evaluation Dialogue (SHIELD)'.

Learn More:

<https://chinaus-icas.org/event/executive-director-dr-nong-hong-speaks-at-the-south-china-sea-hotspot-identification-and-evaluation-dialogue-shield/>