



ICAS
MARITIME AFFAIRS
PROGRAM

HANDBILL

Volume 2 - 2023

Q3



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.

ISSN (Print): 2837-3871

ISSN (Online): 2837-3901



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ICAS

Institute for China-America Studies



ICAS MARITIME AFFAIRS HANDBILL

July 25, 2023

Volume 2, Issue 7

Online ISSN 2837-3901
Print ISSN 2837-3871

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 (NORDEFECO) 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

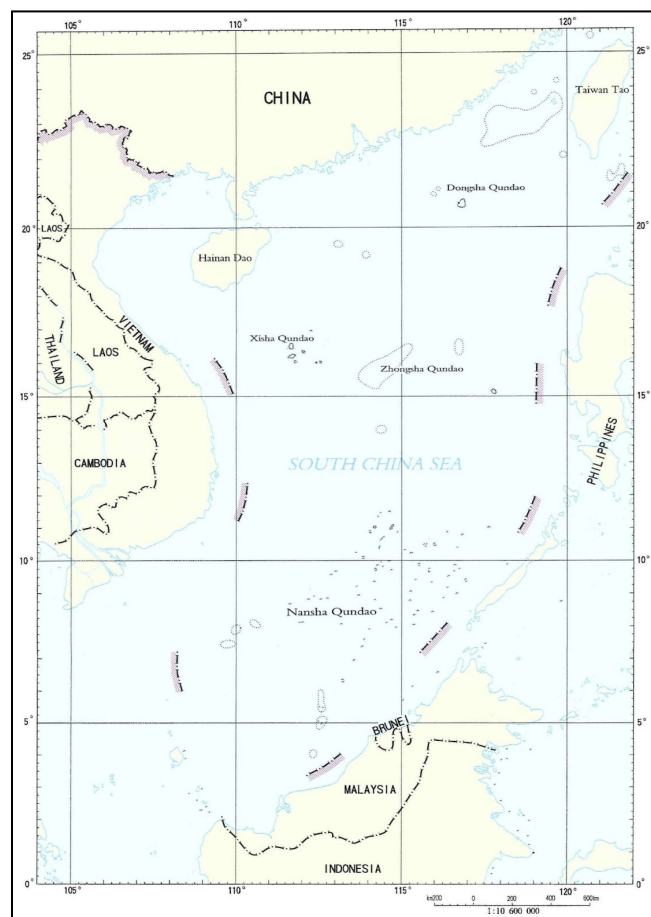
‘Nine-Dash Line’

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.

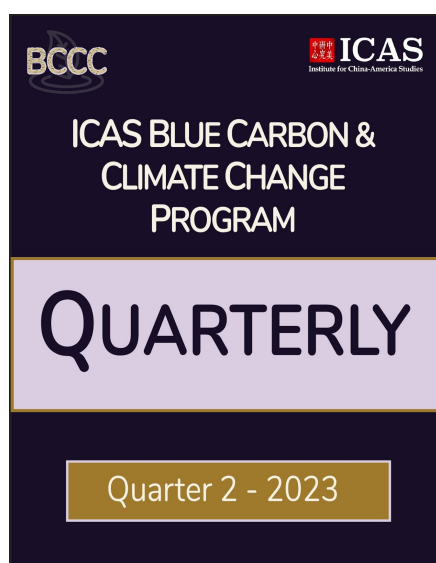
The nine-dash line could continue to present a roadblock to a substantive agreement. While the ASEAN claimant states all publicly back the 2016 arbitration, which rejected the nine-dash line as delineating a zone of Chinese “historic rights,” Beijing continues in its [non-recognition of the ruling](#) 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>

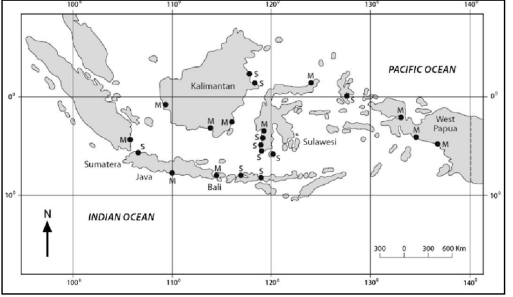
BCCC Quarterly (Q2 2023) - 24

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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BCCC Quarterly (Q2 2023) - 1

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:

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

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/>



ICAS MARITIME AFFAIRS HANDBILL

August 29, 2023

Volume 2, Issue 8

Online ISSN 2837-3901
Print ISSN 2837-3871

Recent News in Global Maritime Affairs

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

[China plans to tighten environmental regulation of deep-sea fish farming](#)

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

[China, East Asia]

On August 28, China's Ministry of Ecology and Environment announced plans to "promote the green development of the mariculture industry," strengthen environmental regulations on deep-sea fish farming, and urge coastal regions to introduce local standards for discharging contaminated water.

[More tests show radiation levels of Fukushima seawater remain below limits](#)

August 27 - *The Japan Times* [Paywall]

[East Asia, Global]

On August 24, Japan began the discharge of more than 1 million metric tons of treated radioactive wastewater from the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear plant into the Pacific Ocean, sparking strong policy responses from neighbors. A day before Japan's planned release of treated wastewater from Fukushima No. 1, China said it "will take necessary measures to firmly safeguard the marine environment, food safety and public health." One day after the start of the release, tritium levels in the ocean where the water is being discharged was recorded at below about 10 Bq per liter—well below TEPCO's operational limit of 700 Bq per liter—and continually dropped in subsequent tests.

[Scientists uncover the secret of the deep-sea 'octopus garden'](#)

August 23 - *The Washington Post* [Paywall]

[United States, Pacific Ocean]

Scientists have discovered new information about the "octopus garden," a location about 80 miles off the coast of central California where thousands of octopuses gather, which will help researchers better understand how coldblooded animals adapt across environments.

[Gulf of Mexico waters are hottest on record as coastal areas cook](#)

August 15 - *The Washington Post* [Paywall]
[Central America, The Caribbean]

In mid-August, water temperatures in the Gulf of Mexico officially reached the highest levels ever observed, forcing local communities across the region to declare state of emergencies and prepare for what is expected to be a particularly busy hurricane season.

[BOEM finalizes wind energy areas in Central Atlantic](#)

August 14 - *Sea Technology*
[Atlantic Ocean]

The U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) has announced three final wind energy areas (WEAs) offshore Delaware, Maryland and Virginia which, if fully developed, could support 4-8 gigawatts (GW) of energy production. The project is part of the Biden-Harris Administration's goal of deploying 30 GW of offshore wind energy capacity by 2030.

[Decaying Tanker in Mideast Is Emptied of Oil, Averting Catastrophic Spill](#)

August 11 - *The New York Times* [Paywall]
[Middle East]

United Nations officials announced that an operation to transfer more than 1 million barrels of oil from the FSO Safer, a decaying oil tanker off the coast of Yemen, has been successfully completed, thus averting a potentially catastrophic spill.

[No quick fix to reverse Antarctic sea ice loss as warming intensifies - scientists](#)

August 9 - *Reuters*
[The Antarctic, Global]

In a newly released journal study, scientists say "[t]here's no quick fix to replacing" the sea ice loss in the Antarctic from global warming, noting it is "going to take decades if not centuries" to recover, if such recovery is even possible.

[Atlantic's Biggest Offshore Wind Turbine to Rise Next Week in US](#)

August 4 - *Bloomberg* [Paywall]
[United States]

Starting in October, the first commercial-scale offshore wind farm, known as Vineyard Wind, is expected to start delivering electricity to nearby homes. The project, still under construction, is located about 15 miles south of Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, in the Atlantic Ocean.

[In Baltic Sea, citizen divers restore seagrass to fight climate change](#)

July 26 - Reuters

[Europe]

In the waters of the Baltic Sea, north of Germany, citizen divers are working to replant seagrass to counter climate change. The process involves moving carefully dug up seagrass shoots from dense meadows and replanting them to barren areas,

[In hot water: South Florida ocean tops 100 degrees](#)

July 26 - The Washington Post [Paywall]

[United States, Caribbean]

On the early evening of July 24, the water temperatures along the South Florida coast topped 100 degrees Fahrenheit, potentially breaching the highest sea surface temperature observed globally.

[Scientists detect sign that a crucial ocean current is near collapse](#)

July 25 - The Washington Post [Paywall]

[Atlantic Ocean]

Scientists are detecting signs that a crucial ocean current, the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC), is nearing irreversible collapse as it becomes slower and less resilient.

[2] Maritime Economy and Shipping [2]

[Some ship traffic in Dardanelles resumes as fire curbed in Turkey](#)

August 24 - Reuters

[Eastern Europe, Global]

On August 23, more than 150 ships were temporarily halted at the north and south entrances to the Dardanelles Strait to allow safety personnel to use water from the Strait to fight a local major wildfire in Canakkale, Turkey.

[Ships Are Backed Up at the Panama Canal Because of Historic Drought](#)

August 22 - Bloomberg [Paywall]

[The Caribbean, Central America]

In August, ships trying to pass through the Panama Canal, one of the world's most vital shipping channels, are now waiting four days on average because of the lack of rain. Two months ago, the average wait was a little more than a day.

[Chinese-backed port project in Peru to be the 'gateway from South America to Asia,' official says](#)

August 22 - AP News

[South America, Asia]

A COSCO Shipping official said that the port of Chancay, a new deep water port in Peru being built as part of the Belt and Road Initiative, will be "the gateway from South America to Asia" and reduce the travel time for ships on this route by 10 days. The new port, still in construction, lies approximately 60 kilometers (37 miles) north of Lima, Peru.

[Ukraine reports new attack on grain silos but cargo ship sets sail](#)

August 16 - Reuters

[Black Sea, Global]

For the first time since Russia abandoned the Black Sea grain deal in July, a Ukrainian container ship left the Port of Odesa in spite of facing attacks to the grain storage facilities the night before.

[Russia Opens Fire to Force Black Sea Cargo Ship Inspection](#)

August 13 - Bloomberg [Paywall]

[Black Sea, Global]

On August 13, the Russian navy opened fire on a cargo vessel in the southwestern part of the Black Sea to force it to stop for checks; the first such confirmed incident since Moscow withdrew from a key grain export deal in July 2023.

[South African Expats Are Flocking to This Tiny Island in the Middle of the Irish Sea](#)

August 11 - Bloomberg [Paywall]

[Africa, Europe]

South Africans are flocking to the Isle of Man, a British crown dependency in the Irish Sea with a population of 85,000 and a unique form of autonomy with loose financial regulations. The island's pull stems from the incentives it's offering to finance, insurance, and technology professionals in an effort to increase the Manx population to 100,000 by 2027.

[100 Marines, Sailors Ready to Ride Commercial Ships in Zone Defense Against Iran](#)

August 11 - USNI News

[Middle East, United States]

Over 100 newly-trained U.S. Marines are assigned to provide armed security on foreign commercial ships transiting the Strait of Hormuz in response to Iranian forces seizing vessels in the region.

[U.S. companies are buying less from China as relations remain tense](#)

August 6 - *The Washington Post* [Paywall]

[United States, China, Global]

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. imports from China dropped 24% through the first five months of the year compared to those of last year; regarded by many as a further indication of efforts by American companies to reduce dependence on Chinese suppliers.

[Danube Ports, a Lifeline for Ukraine, Come Under Russian Threat](#)

August 1 - *The New York Times* [Paywall]

[Europe]

Shipping routes through the Danube River became the only shipping outlet for millions of tons of grain after Russia cut off the Black Sea grain deal in mid-July, making the importance of the route and its small ports "hard to calculate."

[Rishi Sunak to green-light hundreds of new oil and gas licenses in North Sea](#)

July 31 - *POLITICO*

[Europe]

United Kingdom Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced that, starting this fall, the U.K. will be granting over 100 new oil and gas licenses for the North Sea to "bolster" energy security, create jobs and build space for carbon capture usage and storage projects.

[Gulf of Mexico ship channel to undergo enlargement](#)

July 31 - *Sea Technology*

[United States]

Great Lakes, the largest provider of dredging services in the U.S., announced a notice that they would be leading the "NextDecade Rio Grand LNG" project, set to begin later in 2023, to deepen and expand the capacity of the Port of Brownsville, Texas. This project is the largest ever by Great Lakes.

[3] Ocean Governance and Maritime Cooperation [3]

[Gigantic Russian flag unveiled in the Arctic Ocean. "It's a sign of dominance and defiance", geopolitics professor explains.](#)

August 24 - *Arctic Today*

[The Arctic, Russia]

On August 22, Russia's State Flag Day, a group of scientists from the Russian Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute revealed photos of a 1,400 square meter Russia flag on the sea ice near one of their drifting polar stations, causing observers to question the full intent of the symbolic action.

[PCG: No need to explain PH actions 'within our exclusive economic zone'](#)

August 23 - *Inquirer*

[South China Sea]

In response to Chinese allegations and alleged harassment over a supply delivery to a grounded warship in the South China Sea, Philippines Coast Guard Commodore said that the "Ayungin Shoal is within our exclusive economic zone" and they "don't need to explain what are the supplies that we need to bring on board BRP Sierra Madre."

[Chinese research ship Shi Yan 6 requests Sri Lanka port call, raising possible security concerns in India](#)

August 22 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]

[China, South Asia]

Beijing requested permission for the *Shi Yan 6*, a Chinese research vessel, to dock in Sri Lanka, sparking reminders of a visit in 2022 by a spacecraft-tracking vessel that brought up national security concerns for Sri Lanka's neighbor India. The request is still being processed by officials.

[South Korea, India rebuke Beijing over South China Sea claims](#)

August 21 - *Nikkei Asia* [Paywall]

[South China Sea]

At the end of a trilateral summit at Camp David, U.S. President Joe Biden, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol released a jointly published document titled "The Spirit of Camp David" that includes a statement of joint support for the international tribunal ruling in 2016 over excessive maritime claims in the South China Sea.

[Migrant boat capsizes off Cape Verde, over 60 feared dead, Senegal ministry says](#)

August 17 - *Reuters*

[Africa]

On August 15, the Senegalese foreign ministry reported that 38 migrants had been rescued from the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Cape Verde from a capsized boat that had left Senegal on July 10 with 101 passengers.

[China asks Philippines to jointly work on defusing South China Sea tensions](#)

August 12 - *Reuters*

[China, South China Sea]

On a visit to Singapore and Malaysia from August 10-11, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi again urged the Philippines to work with China to seek an effective way to defuse tensions in the South China Sea.

[Potential Philippines-Vietnam maritime deal to stabilize South China Sea concerns – Marcos](#)

August 10 - *Phil Star Global*

[Southeast Asia]

Philippine President Marcos Jr., in a meeting with outgoing Vietnamese Ambassador Hoay Huy Chung, emphasized the importance of enhancing bilateral maritime cooperation. During their engagement, the two signed a bilateral agreement with the goal of stabilizing the region.

[Chinese Foreign Minister's visit likely aimed at shoring up Asean ties ahead of South China Sea talks](#)

August 10 - *The Straits Times* [Paywall]

[Southeast Asia]

On August 10, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi began a four-day visit to Singapore, Malaysia and Cambodia. Beijing describes the visits as an effort to drum up support for the 10-year anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative while others say it is meant to pacify tensions over the South China Sea.

[Philippine leader says no promise made to China to remove grounded warship](#)

August 9 - *Reuters*

[South China Sea, Southeast Asia]

On August 9, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said he was "not aware of any such arrangement or agreement that the Philippines will remove from its own territory its ship," referring to a grounded warship serving as a military outpost in the South China Sea.

[The US is concerned with blacklisted Chinese firm's hand in island-building near its Manila embassy](#)

August 2 - *AP News*

[Southeast Asia, United States]

The U.S. Embassy in the Philippines formally expressed concerns over the ongoing major land reclamation projects in Manila Bay, which are located near the U.S. Embassy and involve a Washington-blacklisted Chinese company.

[In the Race to Mine the Seabed, China Takes a Hard Line](#)

July 31 - *Bloomberg* [Paywall]

[Global, China]

During three weeks of tense meetings at the International Seabed Authority, there were repeated clashes between China and an alliance of countries calling for a moratorium on deep-sea mining for valuable metals.

[4] Maritime Security and Defense [4]

[U.S., Australia, Japan Drill with the Philippines in South China Sea; China Flies Military Drone Near Taiwan](#)

August 27 - USNI News
[South China Sea]

On August 24, the U.S., Japan, Australia and the Philippines held joint naval exercises in the South China Sea, reportedly as a show of strength and solidarity, following a series of other bilateral port calls and shows of cooperation. Simultaneously, Chinese bombers flew near Japan and a Chinese unmanned air vehicle was seen flying off Taiwan's east coast.

[Russian-Chinese Warship Group Pulls into Qingdao](#)

August 22 - USNI News
[China, Russia]

On August 21, a joint Russia-People's Liberation Army navy warship group docked at Qingdao, China, following a joint patrol that began on July 27 as part of an annual cooperative event between the Russian and Chinese militaries.

[South China Sea: Philippines says resupply mission reaches remote outpost, China firmly opposed](#)

August 22 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]
[South China Sea]

After two Philippine coast guard boats escorted two supply vessels to an outpost on the Second Thomas Shoal in the Spratly Islands, which Chinese Coastguard vessels reportedly attempted to "block, harass, and interfere," the Philippines said such routine "Rotation and Resupply missions" "will continue on a regular basis."

[Multinational Exercise Malabar-23 Concludes](#)

August 21 - *Naval News*
[Indo-Pacific, United States]

From August 11-21, naval forces from the U.S., Australia, Japan and India held their MALABAR 23 joint defense exercise out of Sydney, marking the first time Australia has hosted the war games. The exercise included a harbor phase and a sea phase, each lasting five days, and involved ships, submarines and aircraft from all four naval forces.

[US nuclear submarine weak spot in bubble trail: Chinese scientists](#)

August 14 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]

[United States, China]

According to a newly published study in a highly-revered, peer-reviewed Chinese research journal, the extremely low-frequency electromagnetic signals produced by submarines running at high speeds can be detected by certain devices.

[China sends ships and fighter jets toward Taiwan in new show of force](#)

August 9 - *AP News*

[East Asia]

On August 10, Taiwan's defense ministry reported the Chinese People's Liberation Army sending 33 warplanes, including J-10 and J-16 fighter jets, and 6 navy vessels toward Taiwan across a 24-hour period.

[Closer unofficial ties? Taiwanese coastguard ship docks in Japan](#)

August 9 - *South China Morning Post*

[East Asia]

On August 8, the *Hsun Hu No 8*, an armed Taiwanese coast guard vessel, made a rare port call to Tokyo, Japan "for routine maintenance and supply" as it was on a fishery patrol mission. The port call coincides with Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso finishing a three-day visit to Taiwan.

[Russia and China Sent Large Naval Patrol Near Alaska](#)

August 7 - *The Wall Street Journal* [Paywall]

[North Pacific, The Arctic]

The first week of August, four U.S. destroyers were dispatched to monitor 11 Russian and Chinese ships on a naval patrol near Alaska. About a week earlier, Japan's Defense Ministry reported seeing five Chinese and five Russian warships sailing through the Soya Strait between Hokkaido and Sakhalin island to the Sea of Okhotsk.

[Battle at Sea Intensifies as Ukraine Drone Hits 2nd Russian Ship in 2 Days](#)

August 5 - *The New York Times* [Paywall]

[Black Sea]

On August 4, Ukraine announced that any of Russia's six Black Sea ports and their approaches would be considered "war risk" areas until further notice. The next day, a Ukrainian maritime drone exploded into a Russian oil tanker in the Kerch Strait off the eastern coast of Crimea, marking the second strike on a Russian ship at sea in two days.

[Two US Navy sailors arrested on charges of sharing secrets with China](#)

August 4 - Reuters

[United States, China]

On August 3, U.S. officials said two U.S. Navy sailors were arrested because “sensitive military info ended up in the hands of the People’s Republic of China” from their actions. Specifically, one was charged with conspiracy and bribe-taking involving an exchange of photographs and videos of sensitive U.S. military information.

[British Defense Ministry Warns of Potential Naval Blockade in Black Sea](#)

July 26 - USNI News

[Black Sea, Europe]

In late July, a British Ministry of Defense intelligence update warned that Russia could be planning a naval blockade, saying “there is now the potential for the intensity and scope of violence in the area to increase.”

[Cambodian Ream Naval Base Modernized by China Nears Completion: Defense Ministry](#)

July 26 - Voice of America

[South Asia, Africa, China]

Cambodia’s National Defense Ministry has confirmed that the work at the Ream Naval Base will be completed soon, though the inauguration day is unknown. Satellite imagery has tracked “the rapid pace of development of a large Chinese military naval station from August 2021 until July 2023.”

Peer-Reviewed Research on Maritime Issues

- Government Release: U.S. Congressional Research Service - [“China Primer: South China Sea Disputes”](#) [Updated August 21, 2023]
- Government Release: The White House - [“The Spirit of Camp David: Joint Statement of Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the United States”](#) [August 18]
- Government Release: Senate of the Philippines - [“19th Congress, Senate Resolution No. 718 Condemning the Continued Harassment of Filipino Fishermen in the West Philippine Sea”](#) [Adopted August 1]
- Press Release: The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region - [“Transcript of remarks by SEE at media session \(with video\)”](#) [August 22]
- Press Release: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China - [“Wang Yi Talks about the Current Situation in the South China Sea”](#) [August 12] [In Chinese]
- Press Release: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China - [“Foreign Ministry Spokesperson’s Remarks on the Philippine Foreign Ministry’s Statement on the Ren’ai Reef Issue”](#) [August 8] [In Chinese]

- Press Release: Philippine Coast Guard - [“PCG CONDEMNS CCG's DANGEROUS MANEUVERS, ILLEGAL USE OF WATER CANNONS DURING RECENT RESUPPLY MISSION”](#) [August 6]
- Press Release: U.S. Senator for Alaska Lisa Murkowski - [“Murkowski, Sullivan Statements on Chinese and Russian Vessels in U.S. Waters off Coast of Aleutians”](#) [August 5]
- Press Release: U.S. Department of State - [“U.S. Support for the Philippines in the South China Sea”](#) [August 5]
- Press Release: U.S. Department of State - [“Assistant Secretary Daniel J. Kritenbrink and Senior Director Sarah Beran’s Meeting with the People’s Republic of China \(PRC\) Ministry of Foreign Affairs Director General of the North American and Oceanian Affairs Department Yang Tao”](#) [July 31]
- Video: *The Economist* - [“What secret weapon sank Russia’s flagship?”](#) [August 4] [Paywall]
- Video: East-West Center - [“US Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Kritenbrink Speaks on Indo-Pacific Strategy Progress”](#) [July 26]
- Podcast: Center for Strategic & International Studies - [“Pacific Airwaves - Bleu Pacific”](#) [Southeast Asia Radio - August 22]
- Report: UK National Oceanography Centre - [UK Sustained Scientific Observation Priorities \(SSOOP\)](#) [August 2023]
- Opinion: [“America’s convenient territories: How Washington is preparing to duel Beijing in the Pacific”](#) [The China Project - August 25] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“China and the Philippines: Good friends, despite the sea disputes”](#) [The China Project - August 22] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“China hoped Fiji would be a template for the Pacific. Its plan backfired.”](#) [The Washington Post - August 21] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“A new Chinese runway in the Paracels? Probably not”](#) [Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative - August 18]
- Opinion: [“Here’s where water is running out in the world – and why”](#) [The Washington Post - August 16] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“China Is Building A Runway On Its Closest Island Outpost To Vietnam”](#) [The Drive - August 15]
- Opinion: [“The Caspian Sea Is a Sanctions-Busting Paradise”](#) [Foreign Policy - August 14] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“China slams Fukushima water release plans in scorching UN paper. But will Japan be swayed?”](#) [South China Morning Post - August 10] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“We don’t need nuclear cruise missiles at sea”](#) [The Washington Post - August 9] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“Ease Tensions in the South China Sea by Adopting Cooperative Mechanisms”](#) [AsiaGlobal Online - August 9]
- Opinion: [“Why a Stranded WWII Ship Is Inflaming China, Philippine Tensions”](#) [Bloomberg - August 8] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“There Might Be Less Plastic in the Sea Than We Thought. But Read On.”](#) [The New York Times - August 7] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“ASEAN’s first Maritime Outlook highlights region’s blue economy”](#) [The Phnom Penh Post - August 2]
- Opinion: [“Why US national security and its green energy transition depend on mining seabed for rare minerals”](#) [South China Morning Post - August 1] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“Will the Gulf Stream really collapse by 2025?”](#) [BBC - July 26]

- Opinion: [“Western sanctions and distrust draw China, Russia closer in the Arctic”](#) [South China Morning Post - July 25] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Malabar Exercise Brings Quad Navies Together in Australia”](#) [Observer Research Foundation - August 28]
- Analysis: [“The \(Mostly\) Empty \\$100 Billion City Rising from the Sea”](#) [Bloomberg - August 28] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Climate Risks Loom Over Panama Canal, a Vital Global Trade Link”](#) [The New York Times - August 28] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“A closer look at the Fukushima water discharge plan”](#) [The Japan Times - August 24] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“The Science Behind Japan's Plan to Empty Nuclear Wastewater Into Pacific”](#) [Bloomberg - August 21] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“The South China Sea talks between ASEAN and China”](#) [International Institute for Strategic Studies - August 21]
- Analysis: [“Oceans absorb 90% of the heat from climate change – here’s why record ocean temps are so harmful”](#) [CNBC - August 17]
- Analysis: [“Water Cannons and Lasers: South China Sea Standoff Around World War II-Era Ship Heats Up”](#) [The Wall Street Journal - August 17] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Keeping tabs on China’s murky maritime manoeuvres”](#) [The Economist - August 15] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Tokyo and Canberra Orchestrate Efforts to Multilateralize the South China Sea”](#) [Center for Strategic & International Studies - August 14]
- Analysis: [“Turbulent Waters: How the Black Sea Became a Hot Spot in the War”](#) [The New York Times - August 9] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“China’s exports and foreign direct investment plunge”](#) [The China Project - August 8] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Asia has 5 of the world’s top 7 most powerful navies. Singapore ranks No 24”](#) [South China Morning Post - August 7] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“What This Year’s ‘Astonishing’ Ocean Heat Means for the Planet”](#) [The New York Times - August 3] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“In Depth: China Pushes Electric Future for Inland Shipping”](#) [Caixin Global - August 2] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“What is AMOC, the heat-distributing Atlantic current?”](#) [The Economist - August 2] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“The rapid loss of Antarctic sea ice brings grim scenarios into view”](#) [The Economist - August 2] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Sailing Toward Sustainability: Wind-Assisted Ship Propulsion”](#) [Sea Technology - August 2023]
- Analysis: [“A Desperate Push to Save Florida’s Coral: Get It Out of the Sea”](#) [The New York Times - July 31] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Beijing Is Going Places—and Building Naval Bases”](#) [Foreign Policy - July 27] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Illegal fishing threatens Guinea-Bissau’s blue economy”](#) [China Dialogue Ocean - July 27]
- Analysis: [“China’s Cambodian navy base project makes US wary, but fears it will host aircraft carrier are unfounded, analysts say”](#) [South China Morning Post - July 27] [Paywall]

Events on the Maritime Domain



- On July 26, 2023, Brookings held an online event on [“US-China proximate military operations in the maritime, air, and space domains.”](#) A full recording is available.
- From August 3-4, 2023, the Navy League of the United States Honolulu Council and its partners held the [“Indo-Pacific Maritime Security Exchange.”](#) This year’s topic was on “Ensuring Free Access to the Maritime Commons.”
- On August 4, 2023, The Nautical Institute held a virtual seminar titled [“Seamanship Webinar- An Essential Skill or a Dying Art?”](#) A full recording is available.
- On August 7, 2023, Atlantic Council held a discussion on [“Leveraging offshore wind to decarbonize East Asia.”](#) A full recording is available.
- On August 15, 2023, the Heritage Foundation hosted a hybrid discussion on [“Chinese Naval Capabilities”](#) which aired on C-SPAN. A full recording is available.
- From August 15-16, 2023, the [“10th Annual Maritime Security West”](#) conference and exhibition was held in San Francisco, California to discuss and explore maritime security.
- From August 16-17, the UK National Oceanography Centre will be hosting the European Molecular Biology Laboratory’s (EMBL) [Traversing European Coastlines \(TREC\)](#) expedition, which will include an interactive workshop programme and an interactive science talk..
- On August 24, 2023, the Ocean Policy Research Institute of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation held [“The 195th Ocean Forum: Current ocean noise issues and guidance – European, American and Asian cases.”](#) The event was held in a hybrid setting, streamed from Japan.
- 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.
- On September 6, 2023, the Center for Strategic & International Studies Middle East Program will hold a live webcast on [“Cooling Tensions: Environmental Cooperation in the Gulf.”](#)
- From September 18-19, 2023, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Tokyo, will be holding the [“Ocean Nations: 3rd Annual Indo-Pacific Islands Dialogue”](#) in New York City. 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 27-28, 2023, the Wilson Center, the National Science Foundation, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the US Coast Guard, and Battelle will hold the first-ever conference on Antarctic policy in Washington, DC: [“The Rules-Based Order in Antarctica and Global Challenges.”](#)
- 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 1-2, 2023, Chatham House will be holding their hybrid [“Climate change 2023”](#) conference at Chatham House, focusing on “multi-stakeholder collaboration for increased ambition, action and impact.” 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

Ocean Temperature

Issue Background

The ocean covers more than 70% of the Earth’s surface and directly affects the earth’s climate, environment, and various ecosystems. Ocean temperature, a term used to refer to both the temperature of the ocean at any depth as well as the temperature of the ocean deep under the surface, plays an integral role in influencing these effects. Under natural conditions, ocean temperature is determined by the amount of heat it absorbs from solar energy, and it receives much more solar energy at the Equator than at the Poles. This difference in water temperature at various ocean depths generates currents that travel thousands of kilometers, ultimately providing favorable conditions for the reproduction of marine life and the stability of coastal ecology.

While stable and balanced ocean temperatures positively contribute to widely concerned issues (i.e., marine life security, global weather patterns and climate dynamics, and climate change), scientific observations and technical data have highlighted a concerning trend: ocean temperature is [rising rapidly year by year](#) with no sign of slowing down. In the short term, ocean temperature has a direct influence on weather phenomena such as hurricanes, cyclones, and El Niño/La Niña events. In the longer term, the rise in ocean temperatures—driven at least in part by human-induced climate change—will lead to coral bleaching, marine habitats destruction, the alteration of ocean currents, and a harsher rise in sea level, with far-reaching consequences for biodiversity, coastal communities, and global climate security.

Natural factors such as volcanic activity and solar variability can also have a short-term influence on ocean temperature. However, the consistent and rapid increase in ocean temperatures observed over the past century is [primarily attributed to human-induced climate change](#) which is mostly caused by greenhouse gas emissions such as carbon dioxide (CO₂) and methane (CH₄). In short, greenhouse gasses trap heat from the sun within the Earth’s atmosphere and lead to an overall warming of the Earth’s surface; more than 70% of which is the ocean. As a critical regulator of the Earth’s temperature, the ocean has absorbed a substantial portion of the excess heat from the increased greenhouse effect.

Recent Events¹

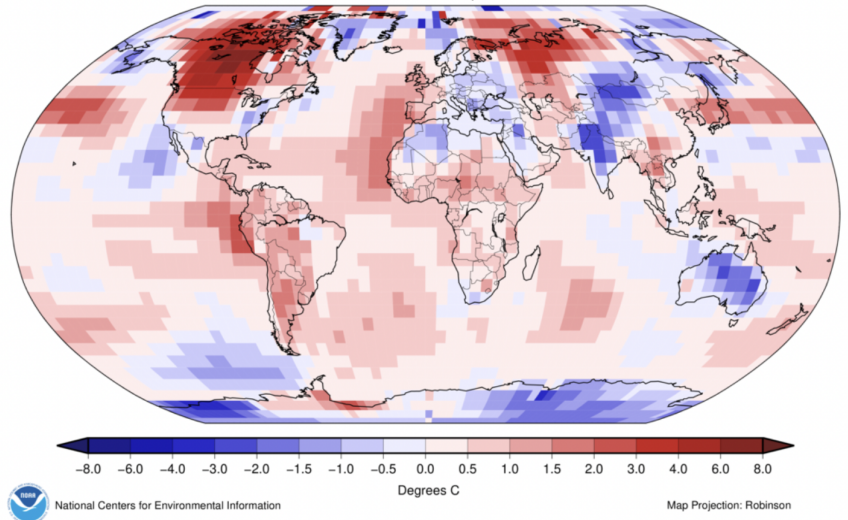
In recent years, there have occasionally been reports of ocean temperatures hitting ‘record highs’, though these reports have become even more commonplace over the last year. Scientists just [announced](#) at the beginning of 2023 that the ocean temperature in 2022 was the highest in history, though this record [was broken](#) again in less than half a year later. The unusually high temperatures started in April and have continued to exceed their normal rates. After breaking the ocean’s [previous high of 21°C \(69.8°F\) set in 2016](#) in April, preliminary data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shows that the average sea surface temperature in August reached [21.1°C \(69.98°F\)](#). Although 21.1°C does not sound very high to the human ear, considering hot summers which have air temperatures that frequently exceed 40°C (104°F) in many countries, this temperature is excessively high for the ocean and all of its inhabitants. It means that, in some waters, the temperature has far exceeded its typical range and reached levels that are dangerously high in many ways.

People are already being forced to live with the consequences of rising ocean temperatures. For example, the average sea temperature of Japan [reached 30°C in July](#), significantly contributing to the occurrence of record rainfall and the ensuing [deadly flooding](#). Moreover, warm water and moist air not only help to generate stronger rains but also [inject more power](#) into severe tropical storms. The formation of hurricanes (known as typhoons in the Northwest Pacific) requires the evaporation of warm seawater, to start, followed by the interaction between warm air and warm seawater to give it strength. In early August, [Typhoon Doksuri](#) brought unprecedented heavy rain in China and the Philippines, causing dozens of casualties, leaving tens of thousands homeless, and destroying countless buildings. Just a few days later, another [typhoon named Khanun](#) hit Japan and the Korean peninsula, also causing casualties and heavy property damage, as [Hurricane Hilary](#) soon after battered Mexico and Southern California, marking the [first](#) time a tropical storm had landed in the region in [84 years](#).

Aside from weather formations, [El Niño](#)—one of two climate patterns of the Pacific Ocean that can affect weather worldwide—[has returned](#) for the first time in four years in early June. Although scientists find no direction between human-caused global warming and the formation of El Niño, [scientists suggest](#) that a warmer ocean probably fueled the arrival of El Niño. Scientists also say that

Land & Ocean Temperature Departure from Average May 2023
(with respect to a 1991–2020 base period)

Data Source: NOAA GlobalTemp v5.1.0–20230608



¹ Image Source: Land and Ocean Temperature Departure from Average May 2023, [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration \(NOAA\)](#)

the El Niño phenomenon will trigger a series of extreme weather events and will create a vicious circle by further exacerbating global warming.

Keep In Mind

According to the World Meteorological Organization, the ocean is storing [more than 90% of the extra heat](#) trapped to the Earth by humanity's carbon emissions and only allows about 2.3% carbon emissions to warm the atmosphere. On the one hand, this shows that the ocean is of great significance for mitigating global warming. On the other hand, it also means that the ocean is already severely damaged by global warming. The extreme weather and El Niño mentioned above are only some of the events that affect people directly. In fact, rising ocean temperatures are also wreaking havoc in areas that normally receive little attention.

Coral reefs are one of the most affected organisms by rising ocean temperature. Vital hubs of biodiversity, underwater coral reefs foster intricate ecosystems that support countless marine species. [Official research](#) has long detailed how rising ocean temperatures in particular will negatively impact coral reefs. Elevated ocean temperatures can lead to coral bleaching; a phenomenon where corals expel the symbiotic algae that provide them with essential nutrients and vibrant colors. Meanwhile, warmer oceans can affect corals' immune systems by "stressing" them, and higher temperatures also increase the reproduction of pathogens such as fungi and bacteria that can cause coral disease. As of mid-August, more than ten Caribbean and Eastern Tropical Pacific countries and regions—including the United States, Puerto Rico, Mexico (both sides of the Yucatan), and Panama—are [reporting](#) severe coral bleaching along their coasts as locals battle to combat sudden spikes in ocean temperature. Australia's Great Barrier Reef, still recovering from massive bleaching in 2022, is also being [carefully monitored](#) due to the emerging El Niño pattern.

Besides coral reefs, there are more species of marine plants and animals that rely on specific temperature ranges to thrive. A healthy ocean temperature will help to ensure the survival of various species and maintain the vitality of the ocean. While this article primarily addresses the ecological impacts of increasing ocean temperatures, stable ocean conditions contribute to bolstering tourism and fisheries as well, with some observers fearing changes in fish populations and [migration patterns](#). Consequently, economic factors also underscore the importance of monitoring and stabilizing ocean temperatures.

Lastly, it is also important to notice that a warming ocean can trigger feedback loops that amplify the process. For example, certain types of phytoplankton will die due to ocean temperature rise, but they play a crucial role in absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Their reduction will contribute to greenhouse gas emissions which, in turn, accelerates ocean warming. This interconnected cycle that builds upon itself suggests that it is necessary to not only slow down the acceleration of rising ocean temperature but also actively work to reverse the current problems.

This issue's Spotlight was written by Zhangchen Wang, ICAS Blue Carbon & Climate Change Program Research Assistant Intern

ICAS Maritime Affairs Program: New and Upcoming

– Upcoming ICAS Annual Conference –

Stay Tuned for Information Regarding the ICAS 2023 Annual Conference!

On October 17, 2023, ICAS will be holding its 2023 Annual Conference out of Washington, DC! This year, our expert panelists and keynote dialogue participants will focus on “Assessing Challenges and Exploring Prospects for U.S.-China Relations in 2024.”

Subscribe to our newsletters and follow us on social media to stay informed about speakers, co-hosts, full agenda and how to reserve your spot for this in-person conference.

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– Expert Voices Initiative Interview –

Wang Sheng on “Blue Carbon Development in China”

August 2023



On August 3, 2023, the Institute for China-America Studies (ICAS) Expert Voices Initiative (EVI) conducted an interview with **Mr. Wang Sheng**, President of the National Institute for South China Sea Studies (NISCS) to discuss “Blue Carbon Development in China.” The interview was recorded in-person at the NISCS Office in Hainan, China, and hosted by **Zhangchen Wang**, ICAS Blue Carbon and Climate Change (BCCC) Program Research Assistant.

During the forty minute interview, the host asked Mr. Wang for his views and opinions about the development of blue carbon in China, China's advantages and challenges in developing blue carbon, the blue carbon ecosystem's "spillover effects," and the international cooperation in blue carbon. Wang expounded his views on these widely concerned issues in detail. Wang's answer helped audiences to gain a deeper understanding of the status quo China's blue carbon protection and China's blue carbon policies. Then the host asked Wang about his views on blue carbon international cooperation. As an advocate of blue carbon international cooperation, Wang emphasized that international cooperation can bring common benefits to China and its Southeast Asian neighbors, and believes that China-US blue carbon cooperation is of great significance. He also emphasized that the establishment of international standards for blue carbon protection will boost international cooperation.

Watch the Discussion: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Geb5zyLT9sw>

About the ICAS Expert Voices Initiative: <https://chinaus-icas.org/media/expert-voices-initiatives/>

More About Wang Sheng: <http://en.nanhai.org.cn/index/survey/leadership/id/9597/j/4.html>

— MAP Academic Engagement —

Dr. Nong Hong speaks at the Bai Xian Asia Institute
Summer Program 2023
Friday, August 4, 2023

On August 4, 2023, ICAS Executive Director Dr. Nong Hong participated in the Bai Xian Asia Institute Summer Program 2023, which was co-hosted with Waseda University. Dr. Hong spoke on "Pressing issues related to maritime security in East Asia" and "Recent Sino-US relation and its impact on East Asia."

About the BXA Summer Program 2023

From August 4-18, approximately 70 Bai Xian Scholars and Alumni from universities across East Asia gathered together and explored the theme "Transformation of Globalization," examining how globalization has shifted and evolved over the past few years against a backdrop of an ever-changing global landscape.

Learn more about the event and the other speakers:

<https://chinaus-icas.org/event/dr-nong-hong-speaks-at-the-bai-xian-asia-institute-summer-program-2023/>

Key Issues/ Hot Topics

PANEL ON EAST ASIA Building 3 - 801 **Aug. 4 (Fri)**

Examining the Present and Future State of East Asia's Social Issues

As East Asia enters the post-COVID era, countries and territories find themselves in an ever-evolving landscape that looks markedly different from the one they left in 2019. Unavoidable effects of the pandemic, combined with existing social conditions such as low fertility, aging populations, and changing family structures and formation patterns, are expected to present a series of imminent, multifaceted challenges to East Asian nations. The panel discussion aims to examine these challenges against the current landscape; compare prevailing geo-political, economic, social issues in China, Japan, and South Korea; and consider the impact these issues may have on the future of East Asia.

Moderator

Panelists

Prof. Yoshiko NAKANO
Professor, International Digital Design and Management
Tokyo University of Science

Prof. KOO Min Gyo
Professor, Public Administration,
Seoul National University

Dr. HONG Nong
Executive Director & Senior Fellow
Institute for China-America Studies

Prof. Tomonori ITO
Professor, Institute for Business and Finance
Waseda University



ICAS MARITIME AFFAIRS HANDBILL

September 26, 2023

Volume 2, Issue 9

Online ISSN 2837-3901
Print ISSN 2837-3871

Recent News in Global Maritime Affairs

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

[Kelp connection: Maine studies seaweed's power to slow climate change](#)

September 22 - *Portland Press Herald*

[United States]

After considering the storage capacity of forests in the U.S. state of Maine, which covers 89% of the state, leaders have started to consider the carbon storage potential of seaweed in its carbon budget to ultimately help offset more locally-produced greenhouse gas emissions.

[HC appointed panel takes concrete steps for mangrove protection](#)

September 18 - *Hindustan Times*

[India]

India's Konkan Divisional Commissioner Kalyankar has ordered immediate action to counter mangrove destruction. The committee agreed to install CCTV cameras to monitor mangroves for protection, and the feasibility of methods like transferring mangroves areas to the forest department was also discussed.

[Most Brits have never heard of "blue carbon" despite huge future impact, study finds](#)

September 17 - *The Mirror*

[Europe]

According to a new study in Britain of 1,000 parents with primary school children, 69% of them had never heard of the term "blue carbon," 55% did not know what "seagrass" is, and 58% wanted to see sustainability as part of the national curriculum.

[Racing Sailors Pick Up Parasite eDNA in Warm Water Samples](#)

September 14 - *Bloomberg* [Paywall]
[Global]

A racing sailboat that won this year's The Ocean Race scooped up eDNA samples that may help scientists build a greater understanding of marine plastic pollution and the dangers of overheating seas.

[Seychelles Aims to Fully Protect Seagrass to Curb Climate Change](#)

September 13 - *Bloomberg* [Paywall]
[Indian Ocean]

Seychelles aims to protect its seagrass by 100% by 2030 from 87% this year to safeguard its natural blue carbon sinks. Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust Chief Executive Officer Marie-May Jeremie said that protection measures include preventing erosion of the coastline and preserving marine habitats.

[Blue Carbon Market Expected to Witness the Highest Revenue Growth Over Forecast Period From 2023 to 2031](#)

September 11 - *Benzinga*
[Global]

Market Research Inc. recently released a comprehensive report on the global Blue Carbon Market, and the report includes insights into key players, market shares, business revenue, and growth analysis. The report presents current market trends, investment opportunities, and strategies to address challenges to generate market-growing factors of blue carbon.

[Fastest underwater flow on Earth created by the most explosive volcanic eruption ever recorded](#)

September 7 - National Oceanography Center
[Pacific Ocean, Global]

An international research team, led by scientists from the UK National Oceanography Centre, uncovered the unprecedented speeds of underwater flows triggered by the collapse of the submerged Hunga Volcano in January 2022. The flows created by the eruption caused extensive damage to critical seafloor cables vital for global telecommunications.

[Ocean Warrior begins Arctic science expedition](#)

September 6 - *Sea Technology*
[The Arctic, Europe]

Ocean Warrior, Europe's largest wooden schooner, launched its first 10-day leg of Arctic expedition from Svalbard on September 1, aiming to install and test scientific and technological equipment and

collect vital data on Arctic changes. The entire project plans to cover 10,000 nautical miles annually over ten years to better understand the Arctic.

[South Korea turns to blue carbon to help mitigate climate crisis](#)

September 4 - *Forest News*

[East Asia]

South Korea is shifting its focus to blue carbon such as mangroves and wetlands to store carbon as their forested areas reach capacity in carbon storage due to aging trees. Scientists from various countries and organizations are exploring the potential of growing Indonesian mangrove species on Jeju Island to enhance carbon absorption capabilities and biodiversity preservation in critical ecosystems.

[2] Maritime Economy and Shipping [2]

[Amid Black Sea Threats, Ukraine Steps Up Use of New Shipping Route](#)

September 24 - *The New York Times* [Paywall]

[Europe, Global]

In September, Ukraine began using a new shipping route, allowing it to restart grain exports. According to officials, at least two ships have successfully used this new route, with more to follow. Russia had sent a drone strike to a Ukraine grain port and is currently blockading the preexisting three Black Sea ports in Ukraine, which has forced Ukraine to create an alternative.

[Strong maritime defense, security key to flourishing blue economy](#)

September 20 - *The Manila Times*

[Southeast Asia, Global]

At the Blue Economy Annual Trade and Conference (Beacon) 2023, the Philippines emphasized the need to protect their archipelago for a successful blue economy. The Department of National Defense's undersecretary for strategic assessment and planning, Ignacio Madriaga, stressed the importance of addressing internal and external threats for economic activities related to oceans and coasts.

[A Luxury Cruise Ship, Stuck Off Greenland's Coast for 3 Days, Is Pulled Free](#)

September 14 - *The New York Times* [Paywall]

[North Atlantic]

The Ocean Explorer, an Australian luxury cruise ship that ran aground off the coast of Greenland, was rescued on the morning of September 14. The ship had been carrying 206 passengers and crew members and was heading towards a remote corner of Greenland named Alpefjord.

[Chinese firm launches satellite from mobile sea platform, testing potential tech for national space programme](#)

September 6 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]

[China, Pacific Ocean]

On September 5, Beijing-based commercial space company Galactic Energy successfully launched a satellite rocket from a transport erector launcher fixed to a mobile barge off the coast of Shandong, marking the first such launch using such technologies.

[China's exports, imports likely contracted more slowly in August, Reuters poll shows](#)

September 6 - *Reuters*

[China]

A new *Reuters* report showed that the contraction of China's exports slowed down in August. According to the median forecast of the 33 economists who took place in the poll, exports in August are projected to show a 9.2% decrease from last year.

[Alaska watches, nervously, as Ukraine war pushes more Russian oil through Bering Strait](#)

September 4 - *ArcticToday*

[Arctic]

Many in the U.S. state of Alaska are growing concerned over the increase in the number of shipments of oil from Russia to China through the Bering Strait. According to Ben Pungowiyi, the president of a tribal government, the main worry for those living in the Arctic is an oil spill since the Bering Sea is the "main source of food security" for those living in the region.

[China's food security: Xinjiang develops seawater aquafarming in desert region amid agriculture focus](#)

August 31 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]

[China]

An aquaculture firm in Xinjiang says it has developed a process to create simulated seawater for fisheries in the desert region. According to the project team lead, the salt content in water in the region is "close to the level in seawater," which allows the firm to create fisheries environmentally similar to natural saltwater habitats.

[NOAA commissions two unmanned underwater vehicles](#)

August 29 - *Sea Technology*

[United States]

The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has ordered two customized REMUS 620 unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs) to be finished by 2024. The REMUS 620 is capable of mine countermeasures, hydrographic surveys, intelligence collection, surveillance, and electronic warfare.

[3] Ocean Governance and Maritime Cooperation [3]

[PCG removes floating barrier from Bajo De Masinloc](#)

September 25 - *CNN Philippines*

[South China Sea, Southeast Asia]

On September 20, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) discovered the Chinese Coast Guard had installed a 'floating barrier' just 124 nautical miles off the Philippine coast in the Southeast area of the Scarborough Shoal; a move that the PCG and Philippines' fishery agency "strongly condemn" as it is preventing Filipino fishing vessels from entering the contested shoal. Since it falls within the Philippines' 200 nautical mile exclusive economic zone, the PCG removed the floating barrier five days later.

[Nations Link First-Ever Treaty Protecting International High Seas](#)

September 24 - *Voice of America Africa*

[Global]

On the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly meeting in New York City, 67 countries signed the groundbreaking High Seas Treaty, also known as the agreement on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction or 'BBNJ.' The first-ever treaty designed to protect the world's international oceans, the High Seas Treaty was formally adopted by the UN in June of this year and is being seen by many as a sign of hope and cooperative achievement.

[Philippines weighs legal options against China over coral reef 'destruction'](#)

September 21 - *Reuters*

[Southeast Asia, Global]

The Philippines is exploring plans to file a second legal case with the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) against China for the destruction of coral reefs within its exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the South China Sea. Beijing responded that this planned filing is an attempt to "create political drama."

[Japan should take China to WTO over seafood ban, ex-U.N. official says](#)

September 18 - *The Japan Times* [Paywall]

[East Asia, Global]

Former United Nations official Kiyotaka Akasaka says it would be a "tactical move" if Japan filed a complaint with the World Trade Organization over Beijing's decision to ban imports of Japanese fishery products following the scheduled release of treated radioactive water from the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant. Akasaka also said Japanese diplomats should directly address the safety issue at upcoming UN General Assembly meetings being held this month in New York.

[US, Vietnam jointly reject ‘threat or use of force’ to settle disputes](#)

September 11 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]

[South China Sea]

On September 11, both U.S. President Joe Biden and Vietnam’s Communist Party chief Nguyen Phu Trong warned against the use of force in the South China Sea, defending that the competing claims in the region must be resolved through the use of international norms.

[China rejected call to join Fukushima water framework](#)

September 6 - *The Japan Times* [Paywall]

[East Asia]

Sources say that China has rejected a proposal by Japan to join an international verification framework for radiation level monitoring of the treated water from the Fukushima nuclear power plant now being released into the sea. Also, Japanese officials say Beijing has so far ignored repeated offers for a science-based dialogue on the issue.

[U.S. Seized Iranian Oil Over Smuggling Incident That Escalated Tensions in Gulf](#)

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

[Persian Gulf, Middle East]

In the first week of September, Washington said it had seized the M/T *Suez Rajan* and its almost 1 million barrels of Iranian crude oil that was reportedly being smuggled to China in violation of U.S. sanctions against Iran. An anonymous high-ranking Israeli defense official said the seizure raised new fears that Iran could hijack more tankers in an effort to deter further U.S. seizures.

[Yoon urges ASEAN to align with 3-way bloc of S. Korea, US, Japan](#)

September 6 - *The Korea Times*

[Southeast Asia, Indo-Pacific]

During a South Korea-ASEAN summit in Jakarta, South Korean President Yoon Suk-Yeol urged members of the Association of Southeast Asian States to align with the U.S. and Japan on Indo-Pacific maritime issues. Directly following a historic trilateral declaration between the U.S., South Korea, and Japan, Yoon likely hopes that more regional states will ease away from conciliation with China in favor of balancing against Beijing through new initiatives born of the trilateral.

[Philippines joins Malaysia, India in rejecting new Chinese map over disputed territories](#)

August 31 - *The Straits Times*

[South China Sea, Indo-Pacific]

The Philippines, in tandem with Malaysia and India, is disputing a map featuring a 10-dash line in the South China Sea issued by the Ministry of Natural Resources in Beijing. The Philippines claims that this new 10-dash line map, like Beijing’s 9-dash line, has no legitimacy in international law.

[U.S. Seeks to Block Recovery of Titanic Artifacts](#)

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

[United States, North Atlantic]

The U.S. government is now taking legal action to limit control over the ability to recover artifacts from the wreck of the *Titanic*, located in the North Atlantic, after the June 18 *Titan* submersible disaster brought attention to the legal rights to such artifacts.

[4] Maritime Security and Defense [4]

[Taiwan expects to deploy two new submarines by 2027, security adviser says](#)

September 24 - *Reuters*

[East Asia]

Taiwan's national submarine task force—a modernization program initiated by President Tsai Ing-wen in 2016 when she took office—announced plans to launch at least two Taiwan-made submarines by 2027 as part of Taipei's plan to protect key supply lines and strengthen deterrence against the Chinese navy. President Tsai is expected to launch the first of eight new submarines on September 28 and have it enter sea trials in October before delivery to the navy by the end of 2024.

[ASEAN nations hold first joint navy drills near disputed South China Sea](#)

September 20 - *Taipei Times*

[Southeast Asia]

Members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) held their first non-combat drill, the ASEAN Solidarity Exercise, in Indonesia's Natuna waters. The five-day exercise included joint maritime patrol operations, search-and-rescue operations and humanitarian and disaster relief.

[PLA holds drills in Yellow Sea days after US and allies flex muscles near northeast China coast](#)

September 18 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]

[East Asia]

China's People's Liberation Army Navy announced it would be holding two military drills in the Yellow Sea and Bohai Strait, directly following joint drills being held in the same area by American, South Korean and Canadian vessels.

[Philippines says Japan and Australia keen on joint naval patrols](#)

September 17 - *The Japan Times* [Paywall]

[Indo-Pacific]

The Philippine military said that their Japanese and Australian counterparts had "expressed willingness" to participate in joint maritime patrols with the Philippines and the U.S. in the disputed West Philippine Sea. The announcement follows another between the Philippines and Australia

earlier this month on an upgrade of their military ties to the level of 'strategic partnership' and committed to joint maritime patrols to deter Chinese expansionism in the South China Sea. The Philippines noted that "other countries who are open to the idea will be identified later."

[Taiwan seeks U.S., Japan, Philippine support to deter Chinese navy](#)

September 14 - *Nikkei Asia*

[East Asia, Indo-Pacific]

Amidst an uptick in the presence of Chinese vessels around the island of Taiwan, Adm. Huang Shu-kuang, a Taiwanese security official in charge of Taiwan's submarine program, openly urged the U.S., Japan and the Philippines to set up a 'joint report mechanism' with Taiwan to counter China's naval threats, saying Taiwan could be "doomed" if encircled.

[China unveils Taiwan economic 'integration' plan as warships conduct maneuvers off coast](#)

September 13 - *The Guardian*

[East Asia]

On September 12, the Chinese Communist Party's Central Committee and State Council released new measures detailing a "new path towards integrated development" with Taiwan. Simultaneously, Beijing sent the largest number of warships to gather in years to waters off the east coast of Taiwan.

[Ukraine Claims to Have Retaken Oil and Gas Platforms in the Black Sea](#)

September 13 - *The New York Times* [Paywall]

[Black Sea]

Oil and gas platforms are emerging as a new strategic target in the contested Black Sea for both Ukraine and Russia, highlighted by a skirmish on August 22 around a rig near Snake Island.

[Ukraine Strikes the Headquarters of Russia's Black Sea Fleet in Crimea](#)

September 12 - *The New York Times* [Paywall]

[Black Sea]

On the morning of September 13, Ukraine launched 10 cruise missiles at a shipyard in Sevastopol, Crimea, the headquarters of Russia's Black Sea fleet, seven of which Russia's Ministry of Defense reported as successfully shot down by Russia.

[Philippines keeps eye on Chinese workers over potential 'covert activities' amid South China Sea tensions](#)

September 14 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]

[South China Sea, Southeast Asia]

Philippine Defence Secretary Gilberto Teodoro said his department is closely watching Chinese employees for signs of "covert economic activities and information activities that are not overtly happening" such as misinformation campaigns about the territoriality of the South China Sea.

Japanese, U.S., the Philippines Drill in the South China Sea; China Contests U.S. Position on Territorial Disputes

September 5 - USNI News

[South China Sea]

On September 4, the South China Sea was rife with military activity following an uptick in Sino-Philippine tensions. Japanese naval units carried out anti-submarine drills while U.S. and Philippine ships sailed together in a show of solidarity over the disputed Second Thomas Shoal. Meanwhile, the Chinese Ministry of Defense blasted “meddling” by extra-regional powers in South China Sea disputes and directed the People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) to participate in joint naval exercises with Thailand.

Russia proposes joint naval drill with China, North Korea

September 4 - Radio Free Asia

[Eurasia, East Asia]

According to an assessment by South Korea, during a visit to North Korea in July, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu formally proposed to China and North Korea that they hold a trilateral naval drill.

Australia and Singapore partner up on maritime AI and robotics

August 30 - Naval Technology

[Australia, Southeast Asia]

During Australia’s annual engagement event with neighboring partners, the Indo-Pacific Endeavour, representatives from both the Royal Australian Navy and Defence Science Technology Group met with Singaporean counterparts in order to discuss maritime AI and robotics technologies.

U.S military in talks to develop port in Philippines facing Taiwan

August 30 - Reuters

[Southeast Asia, United States]

According to a local Philippine governor, the U.S. military is discussing a plan to create a civilian port in a remote northern island of The Philippines. If this comes to pass, this move would give the United States greater access to certain islands facing Taiwan.

Peer-Reviewed Research on Maritime Issues

- Intergovernmental Release: United Nations - [10. Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction](#) [Updated September 22]
- Government Release: U.S. Congressional Research Service - [“U.S.-China Strategic Competition in South and East China Seas: Background and Issues for Congress”](#) [Updated September 14]
- Government Release: Government of Jersey - [Bailiwick of Jersey Strategy for the International Maritime Organization Instruments Implementation Code](#) [September 2023]
- Press Release: European Commission - [“A win for the ocean: High Seas Treaty signed at United Nations”](#) [September 20]
- Press Release: United States Department of State - [“Signing of the High Seas Treaty”](#) [September 21]
- Government Interview: Republic of Korea - [“Yoon Suk Yeol: ASEAN-Republic of Korea, Partners That Are Mutually Beneficial”](#) [Kompas - September 5]
- Report: Climateworks Centre - [Sea of opportunity: Ocean-based mitigation to support Indonesia’s climate ambition](#) [September 13]
- Podcast: U.K. National Oceanography Centre - [“What Corals Tell Us About the Health of the Ocean and Scuba Diving Stories”](#) [Into the Blue - August 30]
- Opinion: [“Riddle Of Varying Warm Water Inflow In The Arctic Now Solved”](#) [Eurasia Review - September 24]
- Opinion: [“Global shipping has a new climate strategy – it’s vague, obscure and almost noncommittal, but it may be pointing the industry in the right direction”](#) [Big Rapids News - September 23]
- Opinion: [“Roadblock to Strategy and Fleet Design: Platform-Centric Thinking”](#) [Center for Maritime Strategy - September 19]
- Opinion: [“Sinking or Soaring: The Digital Dilemma of India’s Maritime Future”](#) [Indian Defence Review - September 19]
- Opinion: [“To Build Ships That Break Ice, U.S. Must Relearn to Cut Steel”](#) [The Wall Street Journal - September 17] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“America Prepares for a Pacific War With China It Doesn’t Want”](#) [Foreign Policy - September 16] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“No time to lose on ocean treaty as threats to high seas rise – Greenpeace”](#) [Arab News - September 14]
- Opinion: [“Ukraine and Russia in High-Stakes Battle for the Black Sea”](#) [The Messenger - September 13]
- Opinion: [“Tending to a Distributed Maritime Operation: The Ongoing Need for More Navy Tenders”](#) [Center for Maritime Strategy - September 12]
- Opinion: [“The US Navy should build a robot armada to fight the battle of Taiwan”](#) [The Telegraph - September 12] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“Up for Debate: Do Navy Readiness Woes require Drastic Action?”](#) [Center for Maritime Strategy - September 7]

- Opinion: [“Mother Nature Is Staging a Climate Intervention”](#) [Bloomberg - September 5] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“U.S. Deterrence Against China Is Not Working”](#) [Foreign Policy - September 5] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“The Importance of Seabed Critical Minerals for Great Power Competition”](#) [Center for Maritime Strategy - September 5]
- Opinion: [“Fukushima waste water release: how mainland China and Hong Kong got it wrong”](#) [South China Morning Post - August 30] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“US can’t rely on military prowess to counter China in Asia, despite partnership with Japan, South Korea”](#) [South China Morning Post - August 29] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Blasting Bullhorns and Water Cannons, Chinese Ships Wall Off the Sea”](#) [The New York Times - September 23] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“The Grand Voyage of the Amerigo Vespucci and Italy’s Lost Opportunities”](#) [Center for Maritime Security - September 21]
- Analysis: [“Revamping fleet design and maritime strategy: An integrated naval campaign for advantage”](#) [Center for International Maritime Security - September 18]
- Analysis: [“How a Squiggly Line on a Map Got ‘Barbie’ Banned in Vietnam”](#) [The Wall Street Journal - September 17] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Navy, Marine Corps test warfighting concepts”](#) [NavyTimes - September 15]
- Analysis: [“Aligning Ambitions: State Strategies for Offshore Wind”](#) [Center for Strategic & International Studies - September 14]
- Analysis: [“China’s newest aircraft carrier prepares to take to the seas”](#) [Financial Times - September 12] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“ASEAN Remains Divided Over China’s Assertiveness in South China Sea”](#) [Voice of America - September 12]
- Analysis: [“North Korea Launches New Ballistic Missile Submarine”](#) [Beyond Parallel: CSIS Korea Chair - September 11]
- Analysis: [“Navies get their feet wet with UUVs”](#) [International Institute for Strategic Studies - September 11]
- Analysis: [“In U.S.-China AI contest, the race is on to deploy killer robots”](#) [Reuters - September 8]
- Analysis: [“Sushi restaurants in China left scrambling after Fukushima-linked seafood ban”](#) [The China Project - September 7]
- Analysis: [“In Depth: Low-Carbon Transition Has China’s Shipbuilders Seeing Green”](#) [Caixin Global - September 6] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Faced With Evolving Threats, U.S. Navy Struggles to Change”](#) [The New York Times - September 4] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“In China’s shadow, U.S. rushes back to neglected Indian Ocean island”](#) [The Washington Post - September 3] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“The day an underwater volcano almost wiped out a nation”](#) [The Washington Post - September 1] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“China’s new map draws outrage from its neighbors”](#) [The China Project - August 31] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Achieving More with Less: The U.S. Navy’s 5th Fleet Bets on Unmanned Vehicles and AI Systems to Bolster Maritime Domain Awareness”](#) [Center for Maritime Strategy - August 31]

Events on the Maritime Domain

- On September 4, 2023, the *Japan Maritime Daily* newspaper held its first global seminar in Singapore, titled [“Future of Shipping towards Net Zero.”](#) with the theme of ‘Decarbonization for the Future of Shipping’.
- On September 6, 2023, the Center for Strategic & International Studies Middle East Program held a live webcast on [“Cooling Tensions: Environmental Cooperation in the Gulf.”](#)
- From September 7-8, 2023, Ridge China and their partners held their 12th annual [Green Shiptech China Congress 2023](#) in Shanghai, China.
- On September 12, 2023, China Dialogue Ocean held a webinar on [“Ocean acidification: Exploring the ripple effects on local fisheries and livelihoods.”](#)
- On September 14, 2023, Stimson Center held an online event on [“Charting a Blue Future for Cooperation between West Africa and China on Sustainable Fisheries.”](#)
- On September 15, 2023, Center for Strategic & International Studies held a webcast event on [“Seafood Alliance for Legality and Traceability Forum- Taking Stock and Next Steps.”](#)
- From September 18-19, 2023, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Tokyo, held the [“Ocean Nations: 3rd Annual Indo-Pacific Islands Dialogue”](#) in New York.
- From September 20-21, 2023, The Nautical Institute held its third [Global Dynamic Positioning and Offshore Energy Event](#) in Egypt.
- On September 21, 2023, The Nautical Institute held a webinar technical seminar on [“Maritime Security: 20 Years into the ISPS Code.”](#)
- 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 27-28, 2023, the Wilson Center, the National Science Foundation, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the US Coast Guard, and Battelle will hold the first-ever conference on Antarctic policy in Washington, DC: [“The Rules-Based Order in Antarctica and Global Challenges.”](#)
- 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.
- On October 2, 2023, the International Institute for Strategic Studies will hold a talk on [“Cooperative Maritime Security in the CENTCOM Area of Operations”](#) in-person in Bahrain.
- On October 3, 2023, Beookings will hold a hybrid event on [“De-risking the economic relationship with China: Views from the Indo-Pacific.”](#) Registration is still open.
- On October 5, 2023, the Sasakawa Peace Foundation will be holding a seminar on [“Like-Minded Allies? Indo-Pacific Partners’ Views on Possible Changes in the U.S. Relationship with Taiwan.”](#)
- On October 17, 2023, the Center for Strategic & International Studies International Security Program and the U.S. Naval Institute will be holding a Maritime Security Dialogue event featuring ADM Linda L. Fagan, Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard to discuss [“The U.S. Coast Guard in an Era of Great Power Competition.”](#) Registration is still open.

- From November 1-2, 2023, Chatham House will be holding their hybrid [“Climate change 2023”](#) conference at Chatham House, focusing on “multi-stakeholder collaboration for increased ambition, action and impact.” 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.
- From November 17-19, the Sasakawa Peace Foundation Ocean Policy Research Institute and their partners will hold [“The International Eelgrass and Blue Carbon Workshop.”](#) Both in-person and online registration is still open.
- From November 29-30, 2023, Active Communications International and their partners will be holding their [Arctic Shipping Summit](#) in Montreal, Canada for the first time in three years. Registration is still open.

Handbill Spotlight

The Panama Canal

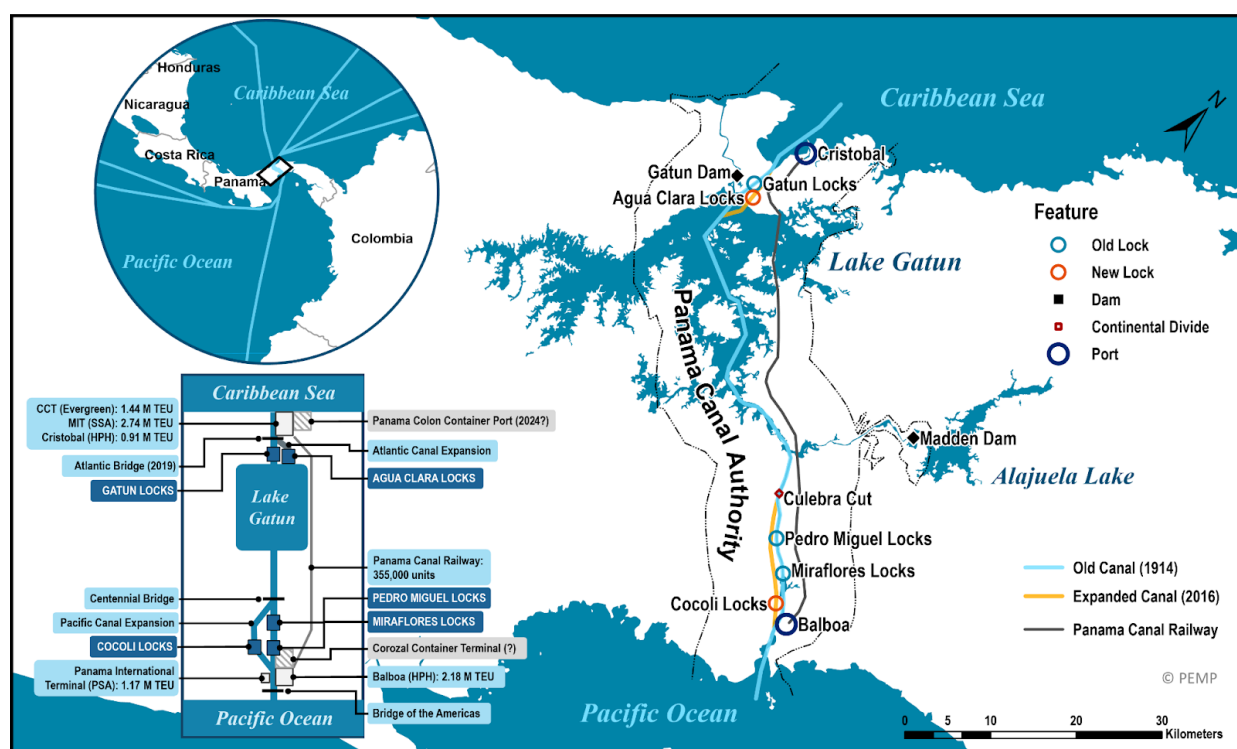
Issue Background

The Panama Canal is a 77 km man-made waterway, completed in 1914, that cuts through the Isthmus of Panama and allows ships from around the world to drastically reduce travel time between the Pacific Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean. Functionally, the Panama Canal operates through a [system](#) of locks with two lanes that function as ‘water elevators’ to raise ships from sea level to the level of Gatun Lake (26 meters above sea level) to allow the crossing through the Continental Divide, at which point ships are lowered through another set of locks to sea level on the other side of the Isthmus. The water used in the ‘elevator’ is [transported](#) through gravity from Gatun Lake “through a main culvert system that extends under the locks chamber from the sidewalls and the center wall.” Often called one of the [Wonders of the Modern World](#) due to being “one of the biggest and most difficult engineering projects of the modern times,” the Panama Canal has seen [more than a million ships](#) pass through since 1914—with the millionth ship passing in September 2010—and has become an invaluable feature in the global maritime shipping industry.

Debates about creating an artificial canal through the Isthmus of Panama have [existed](#) since the 16th century, with global maritime powers like Spain, the United Kingdom and France each pursuing construction of the strategically placed waterway. However, the route was not completed and made passable in full until the early 20th Century, spurred on by the Second Industrial Revolution, the simultaneous global expansion in maritime shipping and the Republic of Panama’s need to solidify its fragile independence.

On November 18, 1903, 15 years after France abandoned their construction efforts and barely two weeks after Panama declared its independence from Columbia, Panama’s ambassador to the U.S. Philippe Bunau-Varilla signed the Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty with then-U.S. Secretary of State John

M. Hay. This Treaty, signed during the midst of regional turmoil and change, [granted](#) the U.S. with a 10-mile wide strip of land for the canal in return for a one-time \$10 million payment to Panama, an annual annuity of \$250,000 and continued guarantee of Panama's independence. Although initially [celebrated](#) as a diplomatic and engineering success, the signing of this treaty and the subsequent construction of the canal later saw much [controversy](#) over both the context of its signing and legal interpretations. In short, these controversies led to riots and legal modifications of the agreement in 1936, 1955, and 1977 when a new, [two-part treaty](#) was [signed](#) by U.S. President Jimmy Carter and Panamanian leader Brig. Gen. Omar Torrijos Herrera: the Permanent Neutrality Treaty, which declared the canal neutral and open to vessels of all nations, and the Panama Canal Treaty, which detailed the joint U.S.-Panama control of the canal until December 31, 1999 when the [U.S.](#) would [fully transfer](#) control of the Panama Canal to the Panama Canal Authority (Autoridad del Canal de Panamá or ACP), an government agency of the Republic of Panama.¹



Met with the undeniable, growing demand in maritime trade, the Panama Canal Authority (ACP) [submitted a plan](#) in April 2006 to [expand](#) the Panama Canal with a third set of locks; a program that began in 2007 and took nine years to complete. The ‘Third Set of Locks Project’ [also](#) raised the maximum operating water level of Gatun Lake [and](#) widened and deepened the existing channels to not only accommodate the expanding size of many cargo ships but also, in some cases, accommodate multiple ships at once. To date, with few-to-no nearby alternatives linking the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, the Panama Canal remains a heavily depended-upon maritime route for commercial vessels.

¹ Image Source: A map detailing the main components of the Panama Canal as of 2023. (Credit: Port Economics, Management and Policy (PEMP), 2023/Permission for single-use of image granted to ICAS by PEMP)

Recent Events

In spite of how important of a route the Panama Canal may be to the world, its operations have steadily been deteriorating in regularity due to increases in global shipping traffic and climactic [droughts](#) simultaneously pressuring the Canal's locks system. Since July 30, the Panama Canal Authority was forced again to act to conserve the region's water, thus [reducing](#) the number of vessels that could travel through the canal each day to 32 and leading to a backup of dozens of ships on both sides of the waterway. The average wait time for August 2023 was almost [four times what it was in June 2023](#) and, while this average wait time reduced slightly in September, it has situated itself to levels well above historic average and is expected to remain so for a while.

What this means is that ships are competing for spots in line—a line that has peaked at 160 spots at one point in August rather than the typical 36—amidst congestion that some estimate could last until 2024. One ship in the Panama Canal recently [paid](#) \$2.4 million at an auction to skip past the logjam of vessels; a price that did not include the [normal](#) canal-crossing fee which can range between \$150,000 to over \$1 million by itself.

Local authorities and regulators [continue](#) to actively monitor and report on the situation, subsequently making adjustments to its reservation system and allowances as necessary. Aside from restricting the number of daily passages, another such limitation is changing the maximum vessel draft allowance to 44 feet—a reduction of 6 feet from the typical allowance—which inevitably changes the size and the tonnage, potentially, of passable vessels. The Panama Canal has experienced [low levels](#) before (in 2016 and 2019) but neither observers nor authorities are now [expecting](#) to be able to lift restrictions on vessel traffic in 2023. During the first week of September, the Panama Canal Authority officially [confirmed](#) prior estimates on the issue, saying that the limits on daily transit and vessel draft will remain unchanged for the rest of 2023 and throughout 2024 due to insufficient rainfall. Some observers are now [wondering](#) if the Panama Canal Authority is preparing to advance yet another new round of restrictions. These unexpected limitations to Panama Canal passage—driven at their roots by [soaring](#) worldwide temperatures—are leaving global supply chains, already trying to recover from more than three years of pandemic and [preparing](#) for a major holiday season, under stress yet again.

Keep In Mind

There are several select warnings that these events bring to mind. First, there is the oncoming wariness of corporate monopolization. If gone unchecked, such a situation could lead to market monopolization by or favoritism for the largest companies who are more easily able and willing to pay higher crossing fees; as evidenced by the successfully played \$2.4 million auction payment to skip the cuing line of the Canal. Second, there is the stark realization of the value of diversification in global maritime shipping routes—and how this lack of diversification is a vulnerability. For the first time in over a century, the world may need to actively look for [alternative](#) shortcuts to connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, even if such a search comes up empty. Third, there is the reminder of global supply chains functionality and its [fragility](#). One major change in the system is leading to [global](#) implications across a [variety](#) of industries, all of which depend on successfully delivering

goods to customers in a timely manner. The world was already [reminded](#) of this fragility during the Covid-19 pandemic and is now facing compounding problems.

However, of all of these reminders, the most marked is the inevitable connection between global warming and the stability of not only maritime shipping but the global maritime economy at large. Lake Gatun, the primary source of water that allows vessels to cross the Continental Divide, has been experiencing a drought for the last 20 years, and the Canal Authority themselves [identify](#) the root cause of the issue to be the ongoing drought: "To ensure the canal remains open to the world of commerce, the Panama Canal Authority has implemented strategic measures over the past several months...to mitigate the impacts from climate change and a subsequent dry season." Furthermore, with more ships lining up at the gate, the more fuel is being burned and released into the atmosphere, thus further contributing to global warming. It is understandable why many [observers](#) are frustrated and calling for systematic [change](#) across several parts of the shipping industry.

Pulling back for a moment from addressing technical supply chain concerns, it is important to note that the Panama Canal itself remains a successful symbol of diplomacy and human determination. On September 7, 2023, Panama Ambassador Francisco O. Mora [gave remarks](#) celebrating the 46th anniversary of the signing of the 1977 Carter-Torrijos Treaty: "In closing, the Panama Canal stands as a symbol of human achievement and strong bilateral cooperation between the United States and Panama. It beckons us to recognize the power of diverse contributions, the urgency of environmental protection, and the strength of Inter-American collaboration." As today's world is forced to operate in the midst of modern troubles, it is not only proper but essential to appreciate and learn from our past—especially when that past, which the world did successfully navigate through, was itself once riddled with dissent and signs of inevitable failure. To simply 'copy and paste' from the past would not be effective, as the 'battles' are different, but there is also no need to start from scratch in favor of looking for already-proven insight—that would be a detrimental waste of emotions and resources in navigating through our own modern contentions.

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

ICAS Maritime Affairs Program: New and Upcoming

— ICAS 2023 Annual Conference —



Stopping “Gray Rhinos”, Handling “Black Swans” and Removing “Tigers Blocking the Way”:
Assessing Challenges and Exploring Prospects for U.S.-China Relations in 2024

We are excited to hold this year’s ICAS Annual Conference in-person at the Georgetown Marriott Hotel in Washington, D.C. on October 17, 2023, which will feature the following:

- Keynote Dialogue
- Panel I: Cooperation, Competition and Rivalry in U.S.-China Relations
- Panel II: Taking Stock of Selective Decoupling in U.S.-China Economic Relations
- Luncheon Speech (Lunch provided for registered guests)

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— MAP Academic Engagement —

Executive Director Dr. Nong Hong speaks at Stimson Center event on "Charting a Blue Future for Cooperation between West Africa and China on Sustainable Fisheries"

Thursday, September 14, 2023

On September 14, 2023, ICAS Executive Director and Senior Fellow Dr. Nong Hong spoke on a Stimson Center event panel among other maritime scholars.

Learn More & Watch:

<https://www.stimson.org/event/charting-a-blue-future-for-cooperation-between-west-africa-and-china-on-sustainable-fisheries/#elementor-action%3Aaction%3Dpopup%3Aopen%26settings%3DeyJpZCI6IjY4MjI1IiwidG9nZ2xlljpmYWxzZX0%3D>

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

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ISSN (Print): 2837-3871

ISSN (Online): 2837-3901



ICAS

Institute for China-America Studies

1919 M St. NW Suite 310
Washington, DC 20036
202 968-0595 | www.chinaus-icas.org