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Recent News in Global Maritime Affairs

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

[Biden administration to research ocean carbon removal](#)

February 26 - E&E News

[United States]

The U.S. National Science Foundation has begun establishing a federal research program specifically dedicated to marine carbon dioxide removal. Simultaneously, the U.S. Energy Department is dedicating billions of dollars to several carbon removal methods, such as developing direct air capture hubs to collect carbon from the sky.

[More whales getting stranded in Osaka Bay amid global warming](#)

February 21 - *The Japan Times* [Paywall]

[Japan]

An increasing number of sperm whales—such as one found in February measuring 13-14 meters and weighing 25-30 metric tons—are being found stranded in the notoriously cavernous Osaka Bay in Japan. The increase is credited to global warming attracting marine mammals into the bay waters.

[A new map shows how much carbon dioxide is stored in Oregon's Coos Bay estuary](#)

February 15 - OPB

[United States]

Pew Charitable Trusts and a group of local researchers in the State of Oregon have released a new map “to help people understand” how much carbon dioxide is potentially stored in the soil and vegetation of the Coos Bay estuary, one of the state’s largest ‘blue carbon’ ecosystems.

[Researchers assess Florida Keys coral health following marine heat wave](#)

February 15 - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
[United States]

Researchers at NOAA assessed the impact of the 2023 marine heat wave on coral reefs in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. The study aimed to quantify the effects of record-high marine temperatures on nursery-raised and out-planted corals, providing crucial data to understand the extent of the damage and informing future restoration strategies for increased coral resilience.

[A 'collapse' is looming for Louisiana's coastal wetlands, scientists say](#)

February 15 - *The Washington Post* [Paywall]
[United States]

New research details how a sudden rise in sea levels over the last 13 years along the coast of U.S. state of Louisiana has left three-quarters of the state's coastal wetlands vulnerable to being 'drowned'; referring to a situation where the seas are rising faster than the wetlands can grow.

[Zupt to support install of wind turbine monopiles off France](#)

February 12 - *Sea Technology*
[Europe]

Zupt LLC, known for its surveying services and technologies in the oil and gas industry, has secured its first major offshore wind farm project off the northwest coast of France from a Tier 1 energy contractor. The project will install wind turbine monopiles in a challenging geophysical area, and Zupt will provide instrumentation and survey support during installation.

[Ocean temperatures are reaching new highs](#)

February 8 - National Oceanography Centre
[Global]

As of early February 2024, the Climate Change Institute for the University of Maine is already reporting "record high" sea surface temperatures (SSTs) exceeding 2023's record-breaking numbers, causing them to expect "a high chance of seeing an increase in global SSTs over the next 1-2 months that markedly exceeds the 2023 record."

[Success for world's first offshore hydrogen production pilot](#)

February 7 - *Sea Technology*
[Global, Europe]

After 14 months of testing, European green and renewable energy transition group Lhyfe's Sealhyfe project successfully demonstrated that "producing hydrogen offshore from renewable energy sources is feasible." This project is part of the European Commission's Clean Hydrogen Partnership and HOPE project, which will "be able to produce up to 4 tonnes per day of green hydrogen at sea."

[New paper reveals how and why the North Atlantic absorbs CO2](#)

February 2 - National Oceanography Centre

[North Atlantic]

Gathering data at an observatory in the Northeast Atlantic, researchers at the UK National Oceanography Centre have now published findings showing and explaining the “significant time difference” between the rate of particles sinking to the ocean floor; a concept that is regarded as an “essential foundation” for understanding the ocean’s role in combating climate change.

[2] Maritime Economy and Shipping [2]

[Japan diversifying seafood export destinations after China ban](#)

February 25 - *Kyodo News*

[Japan, East Asia, Global]

Following months of Chinese bans on Japanese marine product imports, driven by the approved release of treated waste water from the Fukushima nuclear plant, Japanese seafood exporters are feeling forced to “seek new horizons” with new buyers and reduce dependency on China’s market.

[Maersk applies new PSS from Far East to East Coast South America](#)

February 22 - *India Shipping News*

[Global, South America, Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean]

Global shipping conglomerate Maersk has announced it will adjust Peak Season Surcharge (PSS) rates for several routes throughout March 2024 to “ensure continued global service provision.” The affected changes involve more than a dozen originating Asian nations whose routes are destined for Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay.

[U.S. to Invest Billions to Replace China-Made Cranes at Nation’s Ports](#)

February 21 - *The Wall Street Journal* [Paywall]

[United States]

The U.S. Biden administration is planning to invest billions in the domestic manufacturing of cargo cranes, seeking to counter fears that the use of China-built cranes poses a national security risk.

[Danish Shipping Says Plan to End International Registry Would be Disastrous](#)

February 20 - *The Maritime Executive*

[Global, Europe]

Danske Rederier, an interest group representing Denmark’s shipping industry, criticized a government proposal that would withdraw considerable support to Danish shipping companies. The proposal would eliminate the Danish International Ship Registry, a program that provides generous tax exemptions for the industry.

[Despite problems in the Red Sea and Panama Canal, shipping costs are falling](#)

February 19 - *MarketPlace*

[Global, South America, Middle East]

Despite disruptions and delays caused by attacks in the Red Sea and low water levels in the Panama Canal, the average cost of global container shipping decreased at the start of 2024, largely due to decreased prices in the Asia-to-Europe trade lane.

[Chinese EVs set to make bigger splash in Europe with huge new ships](#)

February 12 - *Nikkei Asia* [Paywall]

[Global, China]

In February 2024, Chinese electric vehicle manufacturer BYD's first roll-on/roll-off (RORO) ship, named *BYD Explorer No.1*, will stop at ports in Singapore and India on its way to Germany and the Netherlands with the purpose of delivering more than 5,000 of its electric cars from China.

[Maersk CEO Says Military Operations Can't Guarantee Safety of Ships in Red Sea](#)

February 8 - *USNI News*

[Red Sea, United States]

Vincent Clerc, CEO of the shipping company Maersk, said that the disruptions in the Red Sea have continued to increase the threat level to commercial shipping in the region. Clerc also noted that the company sees no clear plan from the international community to ensure safe passage for commercial vessels at the present time.

[Red Sea Attacks Force Firms to Test New Land Routes Via UAE, Saudi](#)

February 2 - *Bloomberg* [Paywall]

[Red Sea, Middle East, Global]

Some companies are now opening up commercial land-based trade routes through the heart of the Middle East—namely through Saudi Arabia and Jordan—to bypass the Red Sea following months of ongoing attacks by Yemeni-based Houthi rebels in the area.

[Lukashenko wants access to Russian Arctic seaports](#)

February 2 - *Arctic Business Journal*

[Russia, The Arctic]

During a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in late January, President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko called for access to Russia's seaports of St. Petersburg, Murmansk and Arkhangelsk and for a "quick implementation" of "the program for the Northern Sea Route."

[Russian oil flows through Red Sea still face lower risks](#)

February 1 - Reuters

[Red Sea, Middle East]

According to shipping data, oil tankers carrying Russian oil sailed through the contentious Red Sea largely uninterrupted by Houthi attacks, facing lower risks than their competitors. Still, the number of Russian ships passing through the Red Sea has slightly declined since December 2023.

[3] Ocean Governance and Maritime Cooperation [3]

[Denmark ends probe into 'deliberate' Nord Stream pipeline blasts](#)

February 26 - Reuters

[North Atlantic Ocean, Eurasia]

Denmark has concluded investigations into the September 2022 explosions on the multi-billion dollar Nord Stream 1 and 2 gas pipelines carrying Russian gas to Germany under the Baltic Sea, saying there is “not sufficient grounds to pursue a criminal case.” Sweden also closed its inquiry into the same case in early February 2024, handing the case to Germany who remains “very interested.”

[Satellite images reveal floating barrier at mouth of disputed atoll in South China Sea](#)

February 26 - Reuters

[South China Sea]

Satellite images taken by Maxar Technologies on February 22 show a new floating barrier crossing the entrance of the Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea. The barrier is located in the same spot where Chinese coast guard claimed to have driven off an “illegally intruding” Philippine vessel the week before; a vessel the Philippines says was lawfully transporting fuel to fishermen in the area.

[Annual event held reinforcing Japan's claim on South Korea-held islets](#)

February 22 - *The Japan Times* [Paywall]

[Japan, East Asia]

Japan celebrated Takeshima Day on February 22, an annual event since 2005 commemorating the 1905 Cabinet decision placing Japan's Shimane government under the prefecture's jurisdiction. The 0.2 square kilometer islets, known as Dokdo in South Korea, are currently controlled by Seoul.

[Windward Maritime AI partners with INTERPOL to Help Combat Global Maritime Crime](#)

February 21 - PR Newswire

[Global]

The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) has selected Windward to assist in their goal of securing the maritime environment through Windward's Maritime AI system, which will provide intelligence and insights to help “identify, track, and prevent criminal activities such as illicit trafficking, human smuggling, and illegal fishing.”

[Biden signs executive order to boost cybersecurity at American ports](#)

February 21 - PBS

[United States, Global]

On February 21, U.S. President Joe Biden signed an Executive Order to create a federal rule to better secure U.S. ports from cyberattacks. A cyberattack, deputy national security adviser Anne Neuberger explains, “can cause just as much if not more damage than a storm or another physical threat.”

[China affirms stance on Fukushima nuclear waste water release in rare ministerial meeting with Japan’s new envoy](#)

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

[East Asia]

In a rare meeting with his new Japanese counterpart Kenji Kanasugi, China's environment minister Huang Runqiu reiterated Beijing's position on the Fukushima nuclear waste water release, stating Japan should dispose of the water “in a responsible manner and cooperate fully with stakeholders” “through the establishment of a long-term and effective international monitoring arrangement.”

[Senyo Hosi advocates clear, strategic policy framework for maritime governance in Africa](#)

February 16 - *Ghana Web*

[Africa]

Speaking at a joint training workshop on maritime security governance at the Ghana Armed Forces Command and Staff College in Accra, attended by military staff and students from 17 African countries, finance and economic policy analyst Senyo Hosi stressed again the importance of securing and utilizing marine resources in their holistic development strategies.

[Philippines committed to South China Sea code of conduct: Foreign minister](#)

February 15 - *Channel News Asia*

[Southeast Asia]

While reaffirming that Manila is firmly committed to negotiations for a code of conduct between China and Southeast Asian countries in the South China Sea, the Philippines' Foreign Secretary Enrique Manalo added that tensions were not all about a U.S.-China rivalry but also about the legitimate rights and interests of all regional states. “It obscures good judgment, actions that are clearly illegal in international law and against the UN charter are sometimes rationalized under the pretext of this rivalry,” Manalo elaborated.

[“We should not close those doors and throw the keys away,” says Norway PM on Arctic Council cooperation with Russia](#)

February 15 - *The Barents Observer*

[The Arctic, North Atlantic]

Following Russia's announcement that it had suspended payment of annual contributions to the Arctic Council “for the time being,” Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre said the other Arctic states “should not close those doors and throw the keys away” on Russia in Arctic governance.

[Russia Threatens to Withdraw From the Arctic Council](#)

February 7 - *Arctic Business Journal*

[The Arctic, Russia]

As reported by the Russian Ministry of Defense via state news bureau *Ria Novosti*, Russia's Arctic Ambassador Nikolay Korchunov says Russia “needs to keep all political options open, including a withdrawal from the Arctic Council.” Meanwhile, Norway's Arctic Ambassador said she is in regular contact with Russia who has been “very constructive in Arctic cooperation as it has always been.”

[China-US relations: navy dialogue depends on status of American delegation, military analysts say](#)

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

[China, United States]

In April 2024, China will host the 19th Western Pacific Naval Symposium; seen by some as a recovery of the military dialogue between the U.S. and China from 2022. However, the size and seniority of the U.S. delegation who will attend the event is yet to be announced.

[Lawmakers Call on Biden to Create a New Maritime Policy Czar](#)

January 30 - *USNI News*

[United States]

On January 29, a bipartisan group of U.S. lawmakers sent a letter to U.S. President Joe Biden, calling on him to name a ‘maritime czar’ “to reinvigorate American and allied maritime power on the seas.”

[4] Maritime Security and Defense [4]

[Sea phase of MILAN-2024 commences](#)

February 25 - *The Hindu*

[Indian Ocean, Global]

From February 19-27, India is holding its multinational naval drill Exercise Milan 2024 (MILAN-2024), which this year will host more than 50 participating nations, 35 vessels, 50 aircraft and various delegations. Comparatively, 39 nations participated in the 2022 iteration.

[Iran-Backed Houthis Prepare for Long Red Sea Battle With US](#)

February 22 - *Bloomberg* [Paywall]

[Red Sea, Global]

Sources say that Houthi militants and their Iranian backers are preparing for a lengthy confrontation with the U.S. and their allies in the Red Sea regardless of how the Israel-Hamas war plays out.

[Taiwan and China spar over capsizing, inspections near Kinmen islands](#)

February 22 - *Nikkei Asia* [Paywall]

[East Asia]

After a series of incidents including a China's coast guard boarding a Taiwanese tourist boat and Taiwan's coast guard driving away a Chinese coast guard boat that had entered Taiwan's waters near Kinmen using radio and broadcast, Taiwan's coast guard said it will continue to use similar methods to ensure the "harmony and safety" near the waters of the Taiwan-controlled Kinmen islands.

[EU launches mission to protect ships in Red Sea from Houthis. It won't partake in military strikes](#)

February 19 - AP

[Europe, Middle East]

On February 19, the European Union's Naval Force launched Operation Aspides, to be run out of Larissa, Greece, to help protect cargo ships in the Red Sea as Houthi rebel attacks persist.

[US Navy Set To Deploy 5 Aircraft Carriers To The Western Pacific Region](#)

February 15 - *Marine Insight*

[United States, Indo-Pacific]

Data from the US Naval Institute's Fleet and Marine Tracker indicate that two more U.S. aircraft carriers—USS *Abraham Lincoln* and USS *George Washington*—will be joining the three existing carriers currently operating in the western Pacific. These deployments would be the first time in decades that five of the United States' 11 aircraft carriers would be simultaneously operating in the western Pacific.

[Ukraine is struggling hard on land, but thrashing Russia repeatedly at sea](#)

February 14 - *Business Insider*

[Eurasia, Red Sea]

Despite ongoing challenges on the ground, Ukraine's naval operations in the Black Sea have reportedly achieved remarkable success, sinking a third of Russia's fleet through innovative tactics such as the use of naval drones. In early February, Ukraine's military intelligence said it used naval drones to sink the Russian landing craft *Caesar Kunikov* near occupied Crimea at night.

[Japan planning maritime security support for 4 Southeast Asian nations](#)

February 12 - *NHK World-Japan*

[East Asia, Southeast Asia]

The Japan International Cooperation Agency is reportedly developing a 10-year plan to support the maritime authorities in the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam. On-site surveys have either already been conducted or are planned while a detailed plan is expected by March 2025.

[Philippines accuses China of dangerous manoeuvres near Scarborough Shoal](#)

February 11 - *Reuters*

[South China Sea, Southeast Asia]

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) accused China of “dangerous and blocking” maneuvers near the highly contested Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea. In the PCG’s report, four Chinese Coast Guard vessels shadowed a PCG vessel more than 40 times over its nine days of patrolling.

[France To Join Balikatan Joint Military Exercise In The Philippines](#)

February 10 - *Naval News*

[Europe, Southeast Asia, Global]

The Philippines’ director of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Joint and Combined Training Center Col. Mike Logico said that France will be joining the 2024 Balikatan Exercise, also suggesting that this year’s joint exercise will exceed last year’s record-breaking size of 17,600 participating troops.

[Germany sends frigate to help secure Red Sea shipping](#)

February 8 - *France24*

[Red Sea, Europe]

On January 8, the German navy frigate Hesse was deployed from the port of Wilhelmshaven to the Red Sea to join a European Union-planned mission of defending and escorting commercial ships in the region. Although the mission reportedly still needs to be confirmed by Germany’s parliament and the EU, one navy chief called the deployment “the most serious engagement of a unit of the German navy in many decades.”

[US military drills in Philippines unaffected by America’s focus on Ukraine and Gaza, US general says](#)

February 8 - *AP*

[Indo-Pacific, Global]

According to U.S. Maj. Gen. Marcus Evans, U.S. military maneuvers with the Philippines will not be affected by the situations in Ukraine and Gaza Strip also requiring attention. Conversely, Evans explains, these situations emphasize the importance of maintaining and further developing these alliances in the Indo-Pacific that have been strengthening over recent decades.

[North Korea Test Fires Cruise-Missile; Kim Jong Un Calls for Naval Buildup](#)

February 2 - USNI News

[East Asia]

On February 2, North Korea conducted its fourth cruise-missile test of 2024, with Kim Jong Un emphasizing the need to strengthen the country's naval forces. Concurrently, the U.S.-Japan bilateral exercise *Keen Edge 24* began as China's People's Liberation Army Navy were seen sailing near Japan.

Peer-Reviewed Research on Maritime Issues

- Government Release: The White House - [“Presidential Action: Notice on the Continuation of the National Emergency with Respect to Cuba and of the Emergency Authority Relating to the Regulation of the Anchorage and Movement of Vessels”](#) [February 21]
- Government Release: The White House - [“FACT SHEET: Biden-Harris Administration Announces Initiative to Bolster Cybersecurity of U.S. Ports”](#) [February 21]
- Government Release: U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Administrator and Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere Rick Spinrad - [“Not Our Parents’ NOAA: Preparing a Climate-Ready Nation”](#) [February 9]
- Government Release: Congressional Research Service - [“U.S.-China Strategic Competition in South and East China Seas: Background and Issues for Congress”](#) [Updated February 5]
- Government Release: U.S. House Select Committee on the CCP - [“Letter to Federal Maritime Commission to Establish Fair Competition in Global Shipping Markets”](#) [February 1]
- Press Release: U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration - [“Biden-Harris Administration invests \\$3.9 million for Ocean-based Climate Resilience Accelerators through Investing in America agenda”](#) [February 20]
- Press Release: Council of the European Union - [“Security and freedom of navigation in the Red Sea: Council launches EUNAVFOR ASPIDES”](#) [February 19]
- Press Release: Council of the European Union - [“Maritime safety: Council and Parliament strike a deal to ensure cleaner shipping in the EU”](#) [February 15]
- Press Release: U.S. Central Command - [“CENTCOM Intercepts Iranian Weapons Shipment Intended for Houthis”](#) [February 15]
- Press Release: U.S. Department of Defense - [“FACT SHEET: Department of Defense Marks Two-Year Anniversary of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy”](#) [February 9]
- Press Release: European Union External Action - [“Boosting EU-Indo-Pacific Partnerships: Chair’s Press Release following the EU Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum”](#) [February 2]
- Press Release: U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration - [“U.S. Department of Commerce allocates over \\$20.6M in fishery disaster funding”](#) [February 1]
- Report: Foreign Policy Research Institute - [“Russia’s Black Sea Fleet in the ‘Special Military Operation’ in Ukraine”](#) [February 7]
- Report: International Institute for Strategic Studies - [“The Military Balance 2024: Critical National Infrastructure in the Euro-Atlantic Maritime Domain”](#) [February 2024]

- Opinion: [“China Is Running Out of Lines to Cross in the Taiwan Strait”](#) [*The New York Times* - February 26] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“Navy chief Mark Hammond: With a well-designed campaign, surface warships can operate in a high intensity conflict”](#) [Australian Strategic Policy Institute - February 22]
- Opinion: [“A modest proposal for improving shipyard production and repair capacity”](#) [CIMSEC - February 21]
- Opinion: [“The Navy gets bigger under the fleet review. But is it enough?”](#) [Australian Strategic Policy Institute - February 20]
- Opinion: [“Egyptian fisheries need urgent action to combat effects of overexploitation and climate change”](#) [*Nature Middle East* - February 20]
- Opinion: [“Why China Won’t Fight the Houthis”](#) [*The Wire China* - February 18] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“No easy answers on the rising tide of maritime threats”](#) [Riviera - February 16]
- Opinion: [“How Pirates Kick-Started India’s Navy Into Action”](#) [*Foreign Policy* - February 14] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“What the Red Sea Crisis Reveals About China’s Middle East Strategy”](#) [*Foreign Policy* - February 14] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“Interview: Rear Admiral Dave Oliver and Anand Toprani on American Defense Reform”](#) [CIMSEC - February 14]
- Opinion: [“China’s Shipyards Are Ready for a Protracted War. America’s Aren’t.”](#) [*The Wall Street Journal* - February 13] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“As US-China tensions mount, the UK will need to work closer with Europe in the Indo-Pacific”](#) [*The Conversation* - February 12]
- Opinion: [“Lessons for the U.S. Navy from the Sinking of Russian Ship by Surface Drones”](#) [*Defense Opinion* - February 12]
- Opinion: [“US will attend naval symposium in China, but who will it send?”](#) [*South China Morning Post* - February 12] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“China is winning the battle for the Red Sea America has retired as world policeman”](#) [*UnHerd* - February 11]
- Opinion: [“U.S.-China Tensions Have a New Front: A Naval Base in Africa”](#) [*The Wall Street Journal* - February 10] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“Australian and US navies must better use their undersea surveillance systems to warn of looming threats”](#) [Australian Strategic Policy Institute - February 9]
- Opinion: [“The Looming Crisis in the South China Sea: To Avoid a Conflict With China, America Needs a Clearer Strategy”](#) [*Foreign Affairs* - February 9] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“Reducing risks, cost and time to acquire our AUKUS attack submarines”](#) [Australian Strategic Policy Institute - February 8]
- Opinion: [“Sweden Is Making the Most of NATO’s Waiting Room”](#) [*Foreign Policy* - February 4] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“Red Sea disruptions could be avoided in future by Arctic shipping, which may trouble ecosystems”](#) [*Arctic Business Journal* - February 1]
- Opinion: [“Why BYD is breaking into shipping”](#) [*MIT Technology Review* - January 31]
- Analysis: [“Breaking the Ice”](#) [*The Wire China* - February 25] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“KSAT – keeping an eye on the Arctic from space”](#) [*Arctic Business Journal* - February 21]
- Analysis: [“Simultaneous Obstructions to the Suez and Panama Canals Threaten the Global Supply Chain”](#) [*The National Law Review* - February 21]

- Analysis: [“Aboard a U.S. Aircraft Carrier, a Front-Row Seat to China Tensions”](#) [The Wall Street Journal - February 19] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“The Red Sea crisis three months on – no end in sight”](#) [Seatrade Maritime - February 19]
- Analysis: [“What are the long-term effects of marine heatwaves?”](#) [Euro News - February 19]
- Analysis: [“The vibrant military \(and criminal\) activities across the Caribbean Sea”](#) [CIMSEC - February 15]
- Analysis: [“How Ukraine sank the Caesar Kunikov—and is beating Russia at sea”](#) [The Economist - February 14] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“The East Coast Is Sinking”](#) [The New York Times - February 13] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“360° View of Policies Needed to Secure Shipping Chokepoints”](#) [Wilson Center - February 13]
- Analysis: [“China Sees an Opportunity in the Red Sea Crisis with the Houthis”](#) [Stimson Center - February 12]
- Analysis: [“Automakers at Sea”](#) [The Wire China - February 11] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Is China seeking a submarine presence in the Sea of Japan?”](#) [Nikkei Asia - February 9] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Australians know about ‘Fibre to the Premises,’ but what about ‘Fibre to the Pacific?’”](#) [Australian Strategic Policy Institute - February 5]
- Analysis: [“Red Sea attacks: How Houthi militants in Yemen are attacking ships in one of the world’s busiest maritime trade routes”](#) [Reuters - February 2]
- Analysis: [“Tailored Water Sampling: Filtering Water In Situ to Measure Industry’s Environmental Impact”](#) [Sea Technology - February 2024]
- Analysis: [“Global Alliances: Tankers and Yachts”](#) [The Wilson Quarterly - Winter 2024]

Events on the Maritime Domain



- From January 29–February 1, 2024, the hybrid [Arctic Frontiers 2024: Actions and Reactions](#) conference took place in Tromsø, Norway with the aim to “connect different expertise and perspectives from areas such as policy, science and business.”
- On January 31, 2024, The Heritage Foundation hosted a virtual event titled [“NATO Secretary General on Modern Needs of the Alliance 75 Years After Its Founding.”](#) A full recording is available.
- On February 5, 2024, The Heritage Foundation hosted a hybrid event on [“An Agenda for Regaining America’s Maritime Security and Competitiveness.”](#)
- On February 6, 2024, Economist Impact and The Nippon Foundation held a [Back to Blue in Japan](#) event on “Eliminating marine chemical pollution: a roadmap for Japan and beyond.”
- From February 6–7, 2024, Pacific Forum International hosted the virtual [“Cross-Border Cooperation on WPS & Maritime Environmental Crimes Workshop Series”](#) to “explore common environmental crimes in the region and their gendered impacts” in the Coral Triangle region.
- On February 8, 2024, DNV hosted its virtual [“Maritime Energy Transition Summit”](#) to showcase the latest advances in alternative fuels, energy efficiency technologies, and more.

- On February 9, 2024, Wilson Center and several co-sponsors held an online event titled [“Our Ocean Countdown, Greece 2024: An Ocean of Potential.”](#)
- On February 16, 2024, the Ocean Policy Research Institute of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation (OPRI-SPF) organized the 197th Ocean Forum which focused on the question: [“The Arctic Sea and Asia – What are the challenges for CJK cooperation?”](#)
- On February 21, 2024, Wilson Center and the Royal Norwegian Embassy hosted an online event titled [“Beneath the Ice: Navigating Legal Frameworks and Collaborative Solutions for Subsea Infrastructure Protection in the Arctic.”](#)
- On February 21, 2024, East-West Center will be holding a hybrid Research Speaker Series event on [“The Sea is Rising: Risk Perceptions and Policy Preferences Among Hawaii’s Elected Officials.”](#)
- From February 22-23, 2024, Florida International University held their annual [FIU Environment Forum](#), with this year’s focus on “Climate Tech and Coastal Resilience.”
- On February 27, 2024, East-West Center will be holding a virtual event to discuss [“The Future of the Pacific Regional Order.”](#)
- From February 27-28, 2024, the IGGS Group will be hosting the [World Maritime Forum](#) in Copenhagen, Denmark, with one of the key focus areas of this year’s forum being sustainability.
- On February 29, 2024, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore will hold a workshop on [“Navigating Global Challenges: ASEAN’s Responses to the Changing Strategic and Economic Landscape.”](#)
- On February 29, 2024, Center for Strategic & International Studies will host a hybrid discussion on the U.S. [“DoD’s Warfighting Concept with the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.”](#)
- On February 29, 2024, Center for Strategic & International Studies will host a webinar titled [“Navigating the Seas with Admiral Lisa Franchetti, Chief of Naval Operations of the U.S. Navy.”](#)
- On February 29, 2024, Maritime Research Alliance and Danish Shipping will co-host a [Conference on Continuing Professional Development Courses for the Maritime Sector](#).
- On February 29, 2024, Sasakawa Peace Foundation, The Maldives National University (MNU), Global Infrastructure Fund Research Foundation Japan (GIF Japan), and Hosei University will host a hybrid seminar titled [“Climate Change Adaptation Strategies for Small Island Developing States: Lessons from Artificial Island Development in the Maldives.”](#)
- On March 7, 2024, the Ocean Policy Research Institute of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation (OPRI-SPF) will be organizing the hybrid [UN Ocean Decade ECOP Japan Symposium](#) to discuss the UN’s international framework for the sustainable use and management of the oceans using ocean science to achieve the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals. Registration is still open.
- From March 11-13, 2024, The Economist Group will host [The 11th Annual World Ocean Summit & Expo in Lisbon, Portugal](#), which “convenes the widest cross-section of the ocean community from business and finance to government, national and international policy-makers, civil society, and academia. The summit is designed to instigate action to develop a sustainable ocean economy; to encourage new partnerships across industries, with NGOs, scientists, technology developers and investors.”
- From March 12-14, 2024, [Oceanology International](#) will host their 2024 Expo in London, Excel.
- On March 30, 2024, U.S. Naval Institute and Center for Strategic & International Studies will hold a maritime security dialogue event on [“The Future of AUKUS”](#) with Admiral Harry Harris Jr, USN (Ret.).

- On April 9, 2024, Center for Maritime Strategy will hold their [annual breakfast](#), convening “leading members of the maritime security community to engage in critical discussions on the future of America’s role as a global sea power.”
- On April 11, 2024, the International Maritime Organization will be holding an [“IMO Seminar on implications, challenges and opportunities of Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships \(MASS\) for ports and public authorities.”](#)
- On April 24, 2024, National Oceanography Centre and the Challenger Society for Marine Science’s joint Upscaling of Autonomy Working Group (UAWG) will be holding an [online roundtable discussion workshop](#). Registration is still open.

Handbill Spotlight

Offshore Drilling

Issue Background

Offshore drilling refers to the process of extracting oil and gas reserves that lie underneath the Earth’s seabed. In short, it involves building an offshore oil rig structure from which a well is then drilled into the ocean floor to facilitate extraction. Typically, modern offshore drilling rigs are capable of conducting drilling operations up to [250 miles](#) from the coastline, and can reach depths of 2 miles (10,560 feet) below the ocean’s surface. Once they reach the bottom of the ocean, they are capable of drilling down to [28,000 feet](#) beneath the seabed.

Offshore drilling plays a crucial role in meeting the global demand for oil and gas. In the face of the rise in energy prices and demand, it is very likely that offshore drilling production will continue to grow. One [market projection](#) expects that the offshore drilling market will reach \$160 billion by 2036 with a 7% annual growth rate. Currently, approximately [30%](#) of the world’s crude oil production is derived from offshore resources, with the United States being the largest producer among all offshore oil producers. For instance, offshore oil drilling contributed around [\\$21 billion](#) to the U.S. economy in 2019. Additionally, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, Norway, and China are also major producers of offshore oil and gas.¹

Despite its economic and energy importance, offshore drilling still raises environmental and economic concerns in various



¹ Image Source: Platform Holly at Sunset. (Credit: [Glenn Beltz via Flickr, CC BY 2.0 DEED](#))

ways. One of the major environmental risks associated with offshore drilling is the potential for oil spills and gas leaks, which could contaminate marine ecosystems, harm marine life, and damage coastal habitats for years on end. In the Gulf of Mexico alone, where the majority of the United States' offshore oil and gas is extracted, [multiple significant oil spills](#) have occurred in recent decades and proven the severity of this danger. These include the infamous [Deepwater Horizon oil spill](#) in 2010 which, in addition to severely impacting the local living conditions, killed thousands of birds, sea mammals, and turtles and caused hundreds of thousands more to get sick. There are also many other less severe incidents that have taken place yet remain unnoticed. Offshore oil spills have substantial economic repercussions as well, with the cost to recover natural ecosystems, human habitats, and tourist sites to original levels being [formidable](#) and often underestimated. The Deepwater Horizon oil spill alone resulted in [\\$17.2 billions-worth](#) of environmental damage and is still impacting local tourism, trade, and habitats. Moreover, as calls for energy transition and carbon neutrality grow stronger, an increasing number of [voices](#) are beginning to advocate for countries to gradually reduce offshore drilling production and replace the energy demand with other renewable energy sources, including offshore wind power that is deployed in the same location.

Recent Events

Normally speaking, offshore drilling issues do not attract general attention. However, [two recent legal challenges](#) against the Biden administration of the United States have brought the issue of offshore drilling to widespread discussion. On February 12, the U.S. oil and gas industry and environmental groups—two groups of organizations with notably opposing views—filed two separate lawsuits against the Biden administration almost simultaneously over the same issue: the Biden administration's controversial plan to offer [three new](#) oil and gas drilling lease sales in federal waters over the next five years in the Gulf of Mexico. The three sales are currently scheduled for 2025, 2027 and 2029, and the decision also rules out the possibility of lease sales off of the State of Alaska's Cook Inlet. In comparison, former President Trump originally proposed to offer [47](#) new drilling lease sales over the same period of time.

According to the [Submerged Lands Act \(SLA\) of 1953](#) of the U.S., state jurisdiction over territorial sea extends from the coastline to no more than 3 nautical miles (5.6 km) beyond the coastline, except for a few places where state jurisdiction can reach 3 marine leagues (16.2 km). Otherwise, the majority of spaces of the United States' exclusive economic zone (EEZ), which extends up to 200 nautical miles from the national coastline, are regulated by the federal government. For offshore drilling, this means that oil and gas companies need to lease the sea areas from the government before drilling oil and gas resources, and offshore oil and gas production is directly related to the number of new drilling lease sales approved by the federal government. The American Petroleum Institute (API), the oil and gas trade group that filed a [lawsuit](#) on behalf of the industry in February, argues that the Biden administration's policy restricts the country's access to affordable and reliable energy and would leave Americans at risk of relying on foreign energy sources.

Meanwhile, despite the significant reduction in the number of new drilling lease sales approved, Earthjustice, an environmental law organization, filed a separate [petition](#) on behalf of eight Gulf-based environmental organizations to “hold the Interior Department accountable” considering the climate, public health, and environmental concerns of offshore drilling. In addition, they believe

that the Biden administration has broken its [campaign promise](#) to stop all new offshore drilling and say the government should instead support the development of offshore renewable energy such as offshore wind power.

Keep In Mind

Traditionally, climate and energy-related topics would make one party displeased while making another group satisfied. It is extremely rare that both environmental organizations and energy companies are aligned in being upset by a governmental policy. The seemingly contradictory “double lawsuit” reflects the uncertain future of energy development: as energy-related issues begin to increasingly touch upon the core interests of different stakeholders, disputes and confrontations among them could very well become more frequent.

From the government’s perspective, balancing the interests of all parties is very important. The recent situation in February is the result of the fact that neither party was satisfied with the Biden administration’s decision on offshore drilling and now hope to negotiate for better terms through the lawsuits. However, the Biden administration’s reluctance to approve new offshore drilling has, in fact, already demonstrated a determination to gradually reduce the country’s reliance on offshore oil and gas through offshore wind. In other words, it means that environmental groups have less reason to react aggressively about green transition as the Biden administration appears to already be supporting this transition while still abiding by U.S. laws. According to [section 50265 of the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 \(IRA\)](#), “Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) may not issue a lease for offshore wind development unless the agency has offered at least 60 million acres for oil and gas leasing on the outer continental shelf (OCS) in the previous year.” Thus, the Biden administration’s approval of new offshore drilling lease sales is essentially to pave the way for more offshore wind development.

The relevant sections of the IRA include trade-offs between the different sides in Congress, understandably aiming to protect energy security and traditional energy industry stakeholders in the process of green development and energy transition. Indeed, reducing fossil fuel use and reliance on offshore drilling is inevitable in the long run for the U.S. to achieve its net-zero objective by 2050. However, one essential element of green development is actually ensuring a ‘[just transition](#)’—the idea that no one’s interests should be severely impacted or no one should be left behind during said transition. In this case, the interests of people like workers of offshore drilling rigs and low-income communities who rely on cheaper energy should all be seriously considered because no one should be left behind in combating climate change—a cause that aims to protect human civilization.

This issue’s [Spotlight](#) was written by Zhangchen Wang, ICAS BCCC Part-time Research Assistant Intern.

ICAS Maritime Affairs Program: New and Upcoming

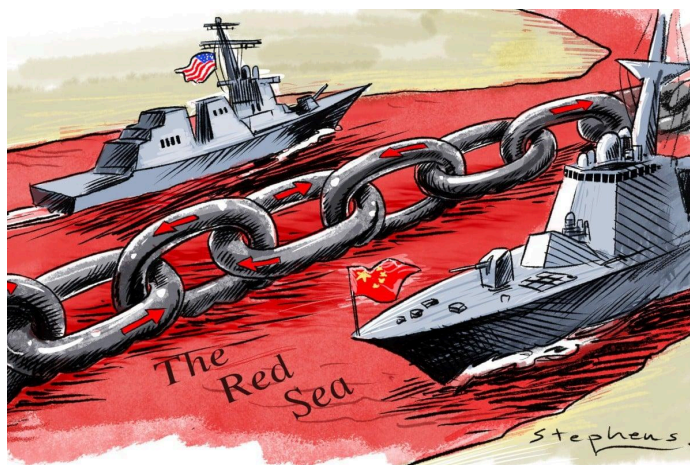
— MAP Commentary —

As Red Sea shipping attacks continue, pressure grows for China to act

By Nong Hong

February 13, 2024

The disruptive consequences of the attacks on Red Sea shipping by Yemen's Houthi rebels were underscored recently by Jan Hoffmann, the logistics chief at Unctad, the UN trade body. These incidents, he noted, were exacerbating the vulnerabilities of global trade and supply chains, adding to the challenges arising from the Ukraine conflict and from reduced shipping in the Panama Canal, where water levels have been dropping due to climate change.



Read Online:

<https://chinaus-icas.org/research/as-red-sea-shipping-attacks-continue-pressure-grows-for-china-to-act/>

This commentary was [originally](#) released in South China Morning Post on February 13, 2024

— MAP Commentary —

2024-The South China Sea at a Crossroads, More Unilateral Actions Ahead (9DASHLINE In Forum)

By Nong Hong

February 2, 2024

Reflecting on the events of 2023, the South China Sea experienced a period of relative stability and manageability, but unforeseen incidents hinted at a pivotal juncture, signalling the onset of significant changes. In 2024, the South China Sea is set to persist as a prominent focal point of contention, amplifying the geopolitical rivalry between the United States and China, as well as among the coastal states in the region...

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This piece is an excerpt from 9DASHLINE's "In Forum: 2024 - The South China Sea at a Crossroads," [released](#) on February 2, 2024