



ICAS

Institute for China-America Studies

ICAS
MARITIME AFFAIRS
PROGRAM

HANDBILL

Volume 3 - 2024

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ICAS MARITIME AFFAIRS PROGRAM

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

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

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

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

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Recent News in Global Maritime Affairs

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

[Carbon capture focus now on mangroves](#)

January 28 - *Times of India*
[South Asia, Europe]

From January 24-25, the UN Global Ocean Decade Programme for Blue Carbon organized a workshop at Ahmedabad University in India, supported by Gujarat Institute of Desert Ecology (GUIDE) and University of St Andrews, which focused on local blue carbon ecosystem restoration.

[Sea otters may be key drivers of changes in California's kelp forests](#)

January 23 - *Tech Explorist*
[United States]

In a study aimed to create explicit historical reference points and understand drivers of changes in California's kelp forests, scientists found that the growth of kelp forests in central California has nearly offset the loss of mainland coastlines to the north and south. It was also discovered that the presence of sea otters facilitates kelp forest growth by increasing canopy resilience.

[Rejected renewable hub proposal south-east of Melbourne prompts calls for legal overhaul](#)

January 21 - *ABC News*
[South Pacific]

The federal government of Australia has rejected the state of Victoria's proposal to expand the Port of Hastings for an offshore renewable energy terminal there due to environmental concerns. Advocates call for a reconsideration of environmental laws to enable projects aimed at mitigating climate change to be implemented.

[As Japan makes major investments in wind power, some residents are pushing back](#)

January 21 - *The Japan Times* [Paywall]

[East Asia]

Local environmentalists in the northern port city of Ishikari, known for its cultural and environmental preservation, seafood products and tourism, are pushing back against the government's designation of an offshore area for potential wind power generation.

[Carbon catch and release: Study finds bottom trawlers stir up seabed CO2](#)

January 19 - *Mongabay*

[Global]

New research indicates that bottom trawling, a fishing method, releases large amounts of carbon from the seabed, with 55-60% entering the atmosphere within nine years and the remaining contributes to ocean acidification. Critics challenge the study's accuracy and argue that the research potentially overestimates the environmental damages of bottom trawling.

[Japan Plans to Report 360,000 Tons of 'Blue Carbon' to U.N.; First Such Calculation in the World](#)

January 17 - *The Japan News*

[East Asia, Global]

After developing the first calculation method, Japan plans to report to the United Nations that Japan captured about 360,000 tons of blue carbon net emissions in fiscal year 2022, marking the first time the amount of CO2 absorbed by kelp forests and seagrass meadows will be measured.

[De-silting will disturb key blue carbon deposits in Vembanad Lake, warns expert body](#)

January 12 - *The Hindu*

[South Asia]

Experts at the International Research and Training Centre for Below Sea Level Farming in Kuttanad, India, warn against bottom dredging in Vembanad Lake—a significant blue carbon habitat—for flood management as it could potentially harm the blue carbon ecosystem there. Instead, experts propose the use of traditional silt gathering from the upper strata instead of disruptive dredging.

[CCMI partners with bank in blue carbon off-set scheme](#)

January 11 - *Cayman News Service*

[The Caribbean]

The Central Caribbean Marine Institute (CCMI) is partnering with Butterfield Bank to explore the implementation of a blue carbon offset and ecosystem-based restoration scheme in the Cayman Islands. The programme will also determine the potential of tropical marine habitat restoration to

sequester carbon and seeks to create a model for obtaining certified carbon credits through ecosystem-based marine restoration.

[OceanFront to clean Oslo seabed pollution](#)

January 8 - *Sea Technology*

[Europe, North Atlantic]

OceanFront AS has contracted with Oslo Municipality for a three-month seabed cleanup in Oslo harbor and inner Oslofjord using the eSEA eXpiator. The initiative aims to remove marine debris to enhance the environmental condition of the threatened Oslofjord.

[2] Maritime Economy and Shipping [2]

['Opportunistic' Chinese lines send ships to serve Red Sea ports](#)

January 29 - *The Manila Times*

[East Asia, Red Sea, Africa]

Following months of attacks by Yemen-based Houthi rebels on commercial ships sailing through the southern region of the Red Sea en route to the Suez Canal and Europe beyond, several Chinese shipping lines are redeploying their vessels to the area as Chinese vessels appear to not be targeted.

[Mexico aims to compete with Panama Canal by using cargo trains](#)

January 25 - *Freight Waves*

[Central America, Global]

With the Red Sea full of conflict and Panama Canal clogged from drought, Mexican officials are now working to push forward its \$2.8 billion Isthmus of Tehuantepec's Interoceanic Corridor (CIIT) project as an alternative for global supply chains to move towards land-based rails.

[German chemicals sector shows strain of Red Sea supply crisis](#)

January 22 - *Reuters*

[Red Sea, Europe, Global]

Delayed shipments via the Red Sea are starting to impact Europe's largest chemicals sector, which is located in Germany, bringing supply delays and higher freight costs on top of existing demands for energy and materials costs.

[Red Sea attacks already bigger issue for supply chain than pandemic, maritime advisory warns](#)

January 18 - *CNBC*

[Global]

According to new analyses from maritime advisory firm Sea-Intelligence, forced diversions from the Red Sea around Africa are already having a bigger impact on vessel capacity than the pandemic did.

[Ships Advertise Chinese Links to Avoid Houthi Attack in Red Sea](#)

January 11 - *Bloomberg* [Paywall]

[Middle East, Africa]

At least five vessels traveling through the Red Sea have publicly signaled that they have a link to China, such as having Chinese crew aboard, in attempts to avoid attack by Houthi militants. Similarly, at least five other vessels have openly signaled that they hold no links to Israel.

[Myanmar and China's CITIC to resume stalled deepwater port project](#)

December 29 - *Nikkei Asia*

[Southeast Asia, China]

Sources suggest that Myanmar's deepwater port project in Kyaukpyu, backed in part by Chinese state-owned financial conglomerate CITIC Group, is restarting its construction efforts, though the time frame for completion is currently unclear.

[3] Ocean Governance and Maritime Cooperation [3]

[Houthis Attack U.S. Warship as China Urges Iran to Rein In Rebels](#)

January 26 - *The Wall Street Journal* [Paywall]

[China, Middle East]

Chinese officials have asked their Iranian counterparts several times to assist in limiting the Iran-backed Houthi attacks on ships passing through the Red Sea, though Iran says it does not control the Houthis. A Chinese spokesperson said Iran has “actively deescalated the situation, called for an end to the disturbance to civilian ships, and urged relevant parties to avoid fueling the tensions.” According to U.S. officials, over recent months the U.S. has repeatedly asked top Chinese officials to assist on this security issue in the Red Sea.

[China accuses US of ‘abusing’ international law by sailing in Taiwan Strait and South China Sea](#)

January 25 - AP

[East Asia, United States, China]

On January 24, USS *John Finn* conducted the first freedom of navigation transit of 2024 through the international waters of the Taiwan Strait, to which China responded that the U.S. “should stop abusing international law, cease all dangerous and provocative behavior, and strictly restrain the activities of front-line troops.”

[The U.S. just expanded its territory by one million square kilometers](#)

January 23 - *Earth*

[United States]

The U.S. has officially increased its geographical territory by one million square kilometers, primarily due to the redefinition of its continental shelf boundaries. This expansion, spreading across seven

ocean regions with over half in the Arctic, is based on the Extended Continental Shelf concept under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The process, started in 2003 and completed on December 19, 2023, allows the U.S. to manage and access resources in these areas.

[Norway Loses Court Battle With Climate Groups on Oil Fields](#)

January 18 - *Bloomberg* [Paywall]

[North Atlantic, Europe]

Climate activists from Greenpeace Norway and Young Friends of the Earth won a court case in Norway against the state over development plans at a handful of undersea oil and gas fields that were approved by the state in 2021 and 2023.

[China, Philippines seek better communication, management of conflicts in South China Sea](#)

January 17 - *Reuters*

[South China Sea, Southeast Asia, China]

Last week, China Assistant Foreign Minister Nong Rong and Philippines Foreign Ministry undersecretary Theresa Lazaro held a frank and in-depth exchange of views on South China Sea issues, mutually agreeing to improve communication and conflict management. The discussion was held while the two parties co-chaired the eighth meeting of the China-Philippines Bilateral Consultation Mechanism on the South China Sea in Shanghai.

[Iran seizes oil tanker involved in U.S.-Iran dispute in Gulf of Oman](#)

January 15 - *Reuters*

[Middle East]

On January 9, Iran seized the Marshall Islands-flagged *St Nikolas* crude oil tanker “with a judicial order.” The seizure of the tanker, which was carrying Iraqi crude oil originally destined for Turkey, is being linked as a retaliation “after the theft of Iranian oil by the United States last year.”

[Beijing hits out at German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock’s ‘unwarranted’ attack on its actions in South China Sea dispute with Philippines](#)

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

[South China Sea, Southeast Asia, China]

Beijing criticized German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock for her comments made during a recent visit to the Philippines, where she accused China of violating Manila’s rights in the South China Sea. The Chinese embassy in Manila refuted the blame, asserting that China has implemented essential measures to protect its sovereignty and is dedicated to addressing issues through dialogue, also stressing that countries outside the region should not involve themselves in the dispute.

[EU makes muddled response to crisis in the Red Sea](#)

January 12 - *Politico*

[Red Sea, Europe]

European Union member states have been expressing mixed responses over the conflict in the Red Sea, with several remaining relatively quiet on the issue. At least up through mid-January, the only EU states who have assisted the U.S. in the region are the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany.

[UN Security Council demands Houthi rebels stop Red Sea attacks in vote that implicitly condemns Iran](#)

January 10 - *Associated Press*

[Red Sea, Global]

In a 11-0 vote, with four abstentions, the United Nations Security Council demanded “in the strongest terms” that the Yemeni-based Houthi rebels halt their attacks in the Red Sea on the basis that the attacks are impeding global commerce and undermining navigational freedom.

[The Norwegian government approves deep-sea mining. “It is devastating”, eco-activists protest.](#)

January 10 - *Arctic Today*

[North Atlantic, Arctic Ocean]

On January 9, Norway’s parliament “endorsed the Government’s proposal to open parts of the Norwegian continental shelf for exploration for and production of seabed minerals,” making Norway one of the first nations to open up for commercial seabed mineral mining.

[Blinken Warns Houthis of Consequences for Red Sea Attacks](#)

January 8 - *qCaptain*

[United States, Middle East, Red Sea]

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Houthi militants in Yemen must know they will face “consequences” for continued attacks on ships in the Red Sea while noting that “40 countries [have] come together to make clear what the Houthis are doing has to stop.”

[China Appoints Naval Commander as Defense Minister](#)

December 29 - *The New York Times* [Paywall]

[China]

After the unexplained disappearance and subsequent removal of Chinese General Li Shangfu from his position as defense minister, China appointed former naval commander Admiral Dong Jun as its new defense minister. This appointment marks the first time an officer with a naval background has become the defense minister and fills a significant vacancy in China's military hierarchy.

[4] Maritime Security and Defense [4]

[Denmark Dispatches Frigate Preparing to Join Red Sea Security Efforts](#)

January 29 - *The Maritime Executive*

[Europe, Middle East]

On January 29, Denmark dispatched its frigate *Iver Huitfeldt* in preparation for participating in the U.S.-led Operation Prosperity Guardian in the Red Sea in February. The dispatch occurred ahead of a final vote by the Danish Parliament of whether or not to confirm Danish participation in the mission.

[Seoul dismisses North Korea's claims of undersea nuclear weapons test](#)

January 21 - *The Korea Herald*

[East Asia]

After an analysis, South Korea's presidential office called North Korea's claims of having "successfully tested so-called unmanned, nuclear-capable attack drones" "exaggerated and fabricated."

[Houthis vow to keep attacking ships in Red Sea after U.S., U.K. strikes target their weapons in Yemen](#)

January 12 - *CBS News*

[Red Sea]

Following open strikes against the Houthi rebels by U.S. and British forces in early January, conducted with assistance from four other nations, Iran-backed Houthi rebels vowed to continue attacking Israel-linked ships sailing in the Red Sea. Within days after this announcement, U.S. and British naval forces shot down 21 drones and missiles fired by the Yemen-based Houthi rebel group, marking the largest attack in the area by the group to date at that point.

[China and India race to expand aircraft carrier fleets](#)

January 9 - *Nikkei Asia* [Paywall]

[Indo-Pacific, Global]

Both China and India appear to be focused on augmenting their naval capabilities and modernity. China is preparing the deployment of its third aircraft carrier which has an electromagnetic catapult that provides advanced combat capabilities. India intends to develop its third aircraft carrier and collaborate with the U.S. on developing cutting-edge carrier related technology.

[U.S. Navy chief to prioritize getting more ships ready for action](#)

January 9 - *Defense News*

[United States]

On January 9, the recently-appointed U.S. Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Lisa Frachetii said in a public speech that, in order to address surging international crises, the US Navy should "get more

players on the field.” The focus, Franchetii detailed, is on improving the Navy’s readiness while integrating the service with the joint force and working alongside Congress and industries.

[Indian Navy Retakes Merchant Ship From Armed Hijackers in the Arabian Sea](#)

January 7 - USNI News

[Indian Ocean]

On January 7, the Indian Navy secured the hijacked Liberian-flagged MV *Lila Nortolk* in the Arabian Sea by sending a team from the Indian Navy’s Marine Commandos. Since the Houthi forces started to sabotage the merchant vessels in the Indian Ocean region, India has expanded its deployment of naval fleets in the Arabian Sea.

[North Korea Fires Artillery Near Border With South Korea](#)

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

[East Asia]

On January 5, North Korea fired 200 rounds of artillery, targeting the disputed western sea border with South Korea. North Korea claimed this operation is a countermeasure vis-a-vis the live-shell firing drills conducted by South Korean and U.S. near the inter-Korean border. This was also North Korea’s first artillery firing since it scrapped the agreement of ceasing hostility around the border with South Korea.

[China gives first official look at Fujian aircraft carrier’s advanced catapult launch system](#)

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

[China]

For the first time, China publicly showcased the advanced electromagnetic plane catapults on its latest aircraft carrier, the Fujian. This announcement was featured in a CCTV news program highlighting the military’s response to Chinese President Xi Jinping’s call for national rejuvenation.

[Navy to seek industry help on countering ‘cross-domain’ drone attacks](#)

January 3 - *Breaking Defense*

[United States, Red Sea]

The US Navy is looking to collaborate with the industry to address the challenge of countering cross-domain drone attacks, especially in the Middle East. More specifically, they expect to acquire innovative solutions capable of detecting, identifying, tracking, and mitigating multiple uncrewed systems (USX) across different domains. This effort is part of a proactive approach to strengthen naval defenses against ongoing drone threats targeting its warships.

[China plans to keep ships near Senkakus every day in 2024](#)

December 30 - *The Japan Times* [Paywall]

[East Asia, China, Japan]

In 2024, China reportedly plans to maintain a constant presence of its ships near the Japan-controlled Senkaku Islands, which China refers to as the Diaoyu, in the East China Sea. This decision follows Chinese President Xi Jinping's call to bolster Beijing's claim over the islets during his visit to the command office for the East China Sea area of the China Coast Guard. The plan also includes the possibility of inspecting Japanese fishing boats in the area.

Peer-Reviewed Research on Maritime Issues

- Government Release: U.S. Congressional Research Service - [“China-Philippines Tensions in the South China Sea”](#) [January 23]
- Government Release: U.S. Congressional Research Service - [“Coast Guard Polar Security Cutter \(Polar Icebreaker\) Program: Background and Issues for Congress”](#) [January 17]
- Government Release: The Scottish Parliament, SPICe Spotlight - [“Climate change and Scottish Parliament committees: Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee – sectors”](#) [January 16]
- Government Release: U.S. Congressional Research Service - [“Houthi Attacks in the Red Sea: Issues for Congress”](#) [January 12]
- Government Release: U.S. Naval Institute - [“CNO Franchetti’s Warfighting Priorities”](#) [January 9]
- Government Release: U.S. Department of State - [“Joint Statement on the Trilateral United States-Japan-Republic of Korea Indo-Pacific Dialogue”](#) [January 6]
- Press Release: Republic of the Philippines - [“Resupply mission to Ayungin Shoal deferred due to technical woes”](#) [January 22]
- Press Release: Mastercard - [“Feet in the Mud, Head in the Sky: A Morning Among the Mangroves”](#) [January 22]
- Press Release: World Economic Forum - [“3 ways public-private partnerships can help restore ocean health”](#) [January 16]
- Press Release: Norwegian Offshore Directorate - [“Parts of the Norwegian shelf can be opened for mineral activity”](#) [January 9]
- Press Release: U.S. Department of State - [“Secretary Antony J. Blinken Remarks to the Press”](#) [January 8]
- Podcast: [“Sea Control 390 - Islamic maritime law with Dr. Hassan Khalilieh”](#) [CIMSEC - January 18]
- Podcast: [“The Houthi Threat to Red Sea Shipping, With Katherine Zimmerman”](#) [Council on Foreign Relations - January 16]
- Podcast: [“Sea Control 489 - The strategic importance of NATO’s north flank with Julian Pawlak”](#) [CIMSEC - January 11]
- Opinion: [“Annual Review & Forecast”](#) [Sea Technology - January 2024]
- Opinion: [“The Panama Canal is in dire straits”](#) [The Washington Post - January 26] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“Will 2024 be a turning point for IUU fishing?”](#) [Brookings - January 24]

- Opinion: [“Why Australia should work with India on a maritime strategic fleet”](#) [Australian Strategic Policy Institute - January 24]
- Opinion: [“The lack of data from Russia may render Arctic climate forecasting meaningless”](#) [Arctic Today - January 23]
- Opinion: [“Shipping and geopolitical risk: Don’t forget about Korean Peninsula”](#) [Freight Waves - January 23]
- Opinion: [“The Red Sea Crisis Proves China Was Ahead of the Curve”](#) [Foreign Policy - January 20] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“Taiwan or South China Sea: which is the riskier flashpoint for US-China ties?”](#) [South China Morning Post - January 16] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“Why Saudi Arabia Is Staying on the Sidelines in the Red Sea Conflict”](#) [Foreign Policy - January 16] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“Don’t Bomb the Houthis: Careful Diplomacy Can Stop the Attacks in the Red Sea”](#) [Foreign Affairs - January 11] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“How building fake aircraft carriers and destroyers in the desert could be helping China better threaten the US Navy”](#) [Business Insider - January 11]
- Opinion: [“America fights back”](#) [The Economist - January 11] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“Welcome to the new era of global sea power”](#) [The Economist - January 11] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“Taiwan and the South China Sea: Two Views”](#) [China-US Focus - January 9]
- Opinion: [“How Iranian tech empowers Houthi drone, missile attacks in the Red Sea”](#) [Defense News - January 8]
- Opinion: [“Russia, China and the Threat to the North Pole”](#) [The Wall Street Journal - January 5] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“A big Navy is vital. A more lethal one would be even better.”](#) [The Washington Post - January 4] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“Saving the Panama Canal Will Take Years and Cost Billions, If It’s Even Possible”](#) [Bloomberg - January 2] [Paywall]
- Opinion: [“Even more US-Australia submarine collaboration on the horizon”](#) [Defense News - December 30]
- Opinion: [“China Wants to Dominate the New Era of Clean Shipbuilding”](#) [Bloomberg - December 29] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Importance of Naval History Underscored at Future-Warfighting Seminar”](#) [Naval History Magazine - February 2024]
- Analysis: [“Why Conflict In Middle East Is Complicating India’s Maritime Security”](#) [Eurasia Review - January 29]
- Analysis: [“Why is India unnerved about the visit of a Chinese research ship in its backyard?”](#) [South China Morning Post - January 26] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Taking robots and AI to war at sea”](#) [Australian Strategic Policy Institute - January 25]
- Analysis: [“The Red Sea warship decision: a continuation of the continental drift in our strategy”](#) [Australian Strategic Policy Institute - January 23]
- Analysis: [“What does Red Sea disruption mean for Europe's economy?”](#) [Reuters - January 23]
- Analysis: [“Containing the Risk: Disruption to shipping in the Red Sea is having big impact on routes vital to China.”](#) [The Wire China - January 21] [Paywall]

- Analysis: [“Manila gets tough in the South China Sea as a showdown looms”](#) [The Japan Times - January 21] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“How Houthi Attacks Have Upended Global Shipping”](#) [The New York Times - January 21] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“How could Panama Canal restrictions affect supply chains?”](#) [McKinsey & Co. - January 19]
- Analysis: [“Shipping oil through troubled waters”](#) [Australian Strategic Policy Institute - January 18]
- Analysis: [“Blue carbon offset: How the ocean can combat climate change”](#) [Cayman Compass - January 17] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Houthi attacks are starting to reshape shipping flows”](#) [The Washington Post - January 16] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“How drug traffickers made the Galápagos Islands their gas station”](#) [The Washington Post - January 13] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Australia’s Red Sea conundrum: much ado about nothing?”](#) [Australian Strategic Policy Institute - January 11]
- Analysis: [“The Balearic-Strait-Canaries Axis and Spanish Maritime Strategy”](#) [Center for Maritime Strategy - January 11]
- Analysis: [“MILEX 23 and the future of European naval ambitions”](#) [CIMSEC - January 10]
- Analysis: [“Surveying the Seas: China’s Dual-Use Research Operations in the Indian Ocean”](#) [Center for Strategic & International Studies - January 10]
- Analysis: [“Harnessing the ocean-climate nexus after COP28”](#) [The Jakarta Post - January 8] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“Red Sea Shipping Takes Another Blow From Iran”](#) [Foreign Policy - January 8] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“The Electric: The U.S. Races China and Russia to Mine the Ocean for Battery Metals”](#) [The Information - January 8] [Paywall]
- Analysis: [“European navies try to keep up in cat-and-mouse game of seabed warfare”](#) [Defense News - January 4]
- Analysis: [“Top Stories 2023: U.S. Operations in the Western Pacific”](#) [USNI News - January 4]
- Analysis: [“US Makes its Move in the Arctic: How Will Moscow Respond?”](#) [Wilson Center - January 2]

Events on the Maritime Domain



- On January 10, 2024, Exim India Shipping Times and its partners held the [9th East Coast Maritime Forum 2024](#) in Kolkata, India.
- On January 11, 2024, Center for Strategic & International Studies Europe, Russia and Eurasia Program hosted an in-person discussion on [“Navigating Security Challenges in the Black Sea Region.”](#)
- On January 16, 2024, Center for Strategic & International Studies Asia Program hosted a hybrid discussion on [“Indo-Pacific Forecast 2024.”](#)
- On January 16, 2024, Maritime Research Alliance held an event at Copenhagen Business School for [“Maritime Research Alliance PhD Day: Decarbonizing the maritime sector.”](#)
- From January 16-17, 2024, Pacific Forum and their partners held the [Operationalizing Integration in the Indo-Pacific \(OIIP\): 2024](#) dialogue in Honolulu, Hawai‘i, which sought “to facilitate dialogue and solutions between the private and public sectors in the hopes of hastening integration.”

- From January 17-19, 2024, US Climate Variability and Predictability Program (US CLIVAR) and their co-sponsors hosted a hybrid workshop on [“Polar Amplification of Climate Change Across Hemispheres and Seasons: Causes and Constraints.”](#)
- On January 24, 2024, Hudson Institute hosted an event on [“Reinforcing a Free and Open Indo-Pacific.”](#) A recording is available.
- On January 24, 2024, Alaska Sea Grant and Alaska Ocean Observing System co-hosted the [January 2024 Alaska Marine Policy Forum](#); a one-hour meeting held every other month with participants across the state interested in marine policy in Alaska.
- From January 29-31, 2024, SAE Media Group hosted the [9th annual Maritime Reconnaissance and Surveillance Technology](#) conference in London, United Kingdom.
- 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 will host a virtual event titled [“NATO Secretary General on Modern Needs of the Alliance 75 Years After Its Founding.”](#) Registration is still open.
- On February 5, 2024, The Heritage Foundation will host a hybrid event on [“An Agenda for Regaining America’s Maritime Security and Competitiveness.”](#) Registration is still open.
- On February 6, 2024, Economist Impact and The Nippon Foundation will hold 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 will host 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 will host its virtual [“Maritime Energy Transition Summit”](#) to showcase the latest advances in alternative fuels, energy efficiency technologies, and more.
- 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, 2023, 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, Maritime Research Alliance and Danish Shipping will co-host a [Conference on Continuing Professional Development Courses for the Maritime Sector](#).
- 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 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.”](#)

Handbill Spotlight

Deep-Sea Mining

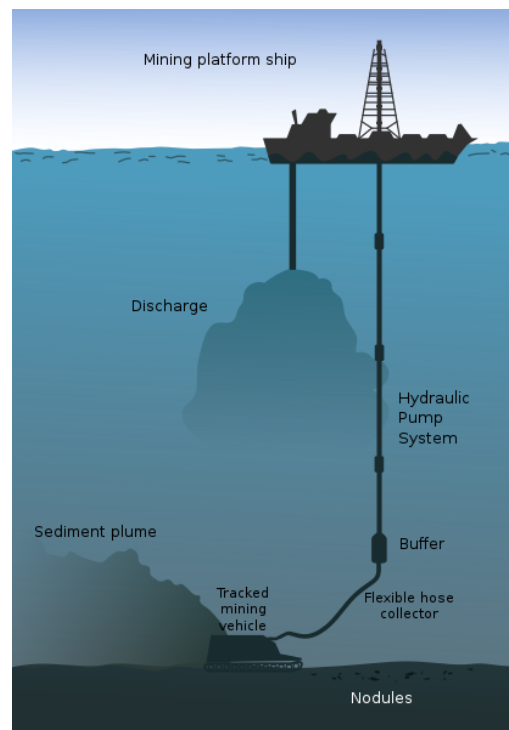
Issue Background ¹

Deep-sea mining commonly refers to the extraction or retrieval of mineral deposits from ocean floor at or below 200 meters (656 feet)—an area believed to contain rich resources of valuable and critical minerals including copper, cobalt, nickel, manganese, platinum, zinc, lead, iron, silver and gold. Although [scientific exploration](#) into the deep sea began as early as the 1870s, [serious discussions](#) about the commercial potentials of deep sea minerals only started to emerge in the 1960s, and the industry remains in an early, experimental stage. As of 2023, no large-scale commercial extraction operations—or “exploitation”—have occurred in the deep sea. Deep-sea mining projects are thus limited to the stage of [“exploration,”](#) where companies and organizations obtain and exercise exclusive rights to test the technical feasibility, commercial viability and environmental impacts of deep-sea mining within a given region.

Currently, deep-sea mining is governed under a dual regime. Under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), a coastal state has sovereign rights to explore and exploit natural resources on its [continental shelf](#)—“seabed and subsoil of the submarine areas that extend beyond its territorial sea,” roughly between 200 to 350 nautical miles beyond its coast. Meanwhile, the seabed and ocean floor beyond national jurisdiction—“the Area”—are specifically designated as [“the common heritage of mankind”](#) and must be managed [“for the benefit of humankind as a whole.”](#) The International Seabed Authority (ISA), an autonomous international organization under the UNCLOS framework, is tasked to administer the mineral resources of the Area, including by considering and adopting [rules, regulations and procedures on deep-sea mining](#) and the “equitable sharing of financial and other economic benefits” derived therefrom.

Recent Events

As global development and the transition to renewable energy both contribute to an increase in long-term demand for valuable and critical minerals, businesses are expressing more interests in the commercial exploitation of deep-sea minerals as an alternative or as an additional option to land-based mining. However, the rising commercial interests are contrasted with gaps in international governance. In June 2021, the Republic of Nauru notified the ISA that it hopes to sponsor an exploitation project in the Area, and thus [officially requested](#) the ISA to complete



¹ Image: Deep sea mining schematic with ship as mining platform. (Credit: [G.Mannaerts/CC BY-SA 4.0](#))

negotiations and adopt regulations on deep-sea minerals exploitation in two years, before June 30, 2023. The ISA adopted [several regulations](#) on the exploration of deep-sea minerals in the 2010s, but was still preparing and revising draft regulations on exploitation at the time. Meanwhile, a number of environmental advocates and researchers have argued that deep-sea mining could cause significant and irreversible damage to [biodiversity and ocean ecosystems](#), and that more studies should be conducted before large-scale commercial activities can be allowed. Accordingly, a number of countries including Canada, Mexico, New Zealand, Switzerland and the United Kingdom have proposed [a moratorium of deep-sea mining](#), while France has called for a complete ban on the practice. The ISA's [28th Assembly session](#), held in July 2023, did not reach a conclusion on either the exploitation regulation or the moratorium, and negotiations are expected to resume during the ISA's next meeting in [March 2024](#).

At the same time, movements towards deep-sea mining and corresponding controversies are also observed within national jurisdictions. On January 9, 2024, the government of Norway [decided to open up](#) 280,000 square km (108,000 square miles) of its national waters for deep-sea minerals exploration operations. While some experts [have criticized](#) the development as a step towards Norway's opening up to commercial exploitation, others defended the move either as a necessary prerequisite to [learn more](#) about the environmental impacts of deep-sea mining, or as a way to [fulfill the world's needs](#) for critical minerals. In the same vein, Cook Islands said in July 2023 that the country would ["proceed with caution"](#) to assess the feasibility of deep-sea mining in its national waters, while Japan [announced plans](#) to start extracting critical minerals from its seabed as early as 2024.

Keep In Mind

When UNCLOS was signed in 1982, deep-sea mining was only a concept—an idea for the future given the relatively abundant access to metals and minerals at the time. Today, 22 contractors sponsored by more than 20 countries have applied for and obtained exclusive rights to [examine the feasibility](#) of deep-sea mining in international waters. As demands for critical minerals continue to be on the rise given their significance in renewable energy, electric vehicles and critical technologies, and as accessible land-based resources simultaneously start to deplete, business and political interests in deep-sea mining will only increase.

National and international governance of deep-sea mining will face different challenges. As an increasing number of countries express interests to open up their waters to deep-sea mining, both businesses and environmentalists will need to familiarize themselves with a variety of jurisdictions to balance economic interests and environmental concerns. At the international front, much attention will be drawn to the ISA and to its ability to make rules on deep-sea minerals exploitation. At the same time, it should be cautioned that, although the United States [recognizes UNCLOS](#) as customary international law, the U.S. is not a party to the Convention and, thus, has not been a member of the ISA since its establishment in 1994. This may become an issue of concern as the international community proceeds to govern and make rules about deep-sea mining through the UNCLOS and the ISA framework.

This issue's [Spotlight](#) was written by Amanda Jin, ICAS Long-Term Research Assistant

ICAS Maritime Affairs Program: New and Upcoming

— Annual Publication —

ICAS 2023 Annual Report

Now approaching the 10-year anniversary of its founding, ICAS has established itself as a fresh voice in the Washington, D.C. think tank community. The team at ICAS is delighted to provide you with a concise overview of our achievements throughout 2023, produced while committedly observing the intricate and dynamic bilateral relationship between the United States and China.

ICAS is committed to maintaining our ongoing engagement with the global community, dedicated to conducting timely and relevant analyses of the U.S.-China relationship. We are excited about the potential achievements that lie ahead and sincerely appreciate your continued support.

Explore & Share the ICAS 2023 Annual Report:

<https://chinaus-icas.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/ICAS-2023-Annual-Report-Final.pdf>



— MAP Commentary —

Navigating U.S.-China Maritime Relations

By Nong Hong

January 22, 2024

At the start of 2024, the outlook for U.S.-China maritime relations continues to be marked by complex dynamics and ongoing tensions, particularly within the Indo-Pacific region. Several key factors are shaping the relationship...

Read Online: <https://chinaus-icas.org/research/navigating-u-s-china-maritime-relations/>

— BCCC Commentary —

Emission Control Areas in the Mediterranean and their implications for the South China Sea

By Nong Hong

January 11, 2024

Globally, the implementation of Emission Control Areas (ECAs) has become widespread as a means to regulate and mitigate air pollution resulting from maritime activities. ECAs are specifically

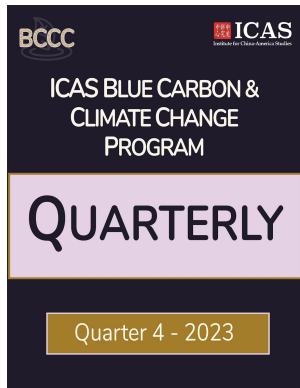
designated maritime zones where stringent regulations are in place to control sulfur oxide (SOx), nitrogen oxide (NOx), and particulate matter emissions from ships...

Read Online:

<https://chinaus-icas.org/research/emission-control-areas-in-the-mediterranean-and-their-implications-for-the-south-china-sea/>

— BCCC Quarterly Publication —

Blue Carbon & Climate Change Quarterly: 2023 Q4



The first week of 2024, the ICAS Blue Carbon & Climate Change Program released its BCCC Quarterly newsletter for 2023 Q4. This issue features a 'Theme of the Quarter' on "Multinational Climate Engagements" and a 'Blue Carbon Country Profile' on 'The United Kingdom.'

Released each quarter, the BCCC Quarterly records the most important trends and developments regarding blue carbon policies and regulations in China, the U.S., and other regions, as well as international regimes, such as under the United Nations framework. It also includes two special sections—the 'Theme of the Quarter' and the 'Blue Carbon Country Profile'—that aim to bring a fresh and applicable element to each issue. A condensed, Chinese-language is also regularly released soon after the full issue.

[Explore & Share the BCCC Quarterly 2023 Q4 Issue \[In Chinese\]](#)

[About the BCCC Quarterly](#)

[Explore the ICAS Blue Carbon & Climate Change Program](#)

BCCC Quarterly (Q4 2023) - 1


Theme of the Quarter: Multinational Climate Engagements

News on Multinational Climate Engagements
COP28 Reached Several Key Agreements to Combat Climate Change

On December 13, the 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference—also known as 2023 Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC or simply as COP28—concluded in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, reaching the milestone "UAE Consensus." Following days of discussions and negotiations, the conference achieved agreements on several critical issues demanding immediate action. These include confirming the urgent need to transition away from fossil fuels, the establishment and implementation of a "loss and damage" fund, and the reaffirmation of the commitment to meet the objectives of the Paris Agreement.

The most noteworthy achievement was when delegations of different countries reached an agreement on plans for transitioning away from fossil fuels, which is unprecedented in the history of the United Nations Climate Change Conferences. More countries are beginning to recognize that in order to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement, specifically to keep the global temperature increase below 1.5°C, it is necessary to gradually phase out all fossil fuels. Previously, for various reasons including energy security and economic development, many countries refused to seriously discuss the issue of fossil fuels at all. COP28 is the first time that fossil fuel is specifically marked as a primary cause of climate change in the Conference's outcome document. Indeed, the consensus still falls short of some countries' expectations because transitions cannot happen overnight for those countries originally opposed to phasing out fossil fuels. It took a longer time for countries to reach an agreement on this issue because some countries, especially the developing countries, considered the term "phase down" or "phase out" of fossil fuels to be too radical. Delegations eventually agreed that the phrase "transition away from fossil fuels" best aligns with the collective interests of countries worldwide. Generally speaking, even though the details of this agreement are somewhat ambiguous, adoption of the first deal on fossil fuels is a victory for humanity.¹

Additionally, COP28 successfully—and fairly easily—approved the climate disaster "loss and damage fund" that was first tabled at COP27. Developed countries aim to contribute to the fund in order to support developing nations vulnerable to climate change. During the conference alone, not only did the fund receive over US\$700 million in donation pledges from various countries, it was also confirmed that the fund will be managed by the World Bank. Later, it also mobilized another US\$57 billion from different global solidarity groups, governments, businesses, investors and philanthropies. Overall, COP28 raised



¹Image: Delegates during the Closing Plenary at the UN Climate Change Conference COP28 at Expo City Dubai on December 13, 2023, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. (Source: COP28 / Anthony Ffrench via Flickr)

BCCC Quarterly (Q4 2023) - 22

Blue Carbon Country Profile: The United Kingdom

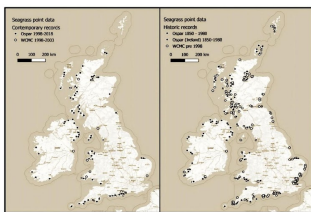
A. Potential of the United Kingdom in Blue Carbon Affairs

The United Kingdom, with its extensive marine and coastal environments, plays a significant role in global blue carbon affairs. Notably, the United Kingdom's definition of what counts as a blue carbon resource slightly differs from that of many other countries. Saltmarsh, seagrass, and mangroves that are generally considered as the three types of blue carbon resources all can be found in the British Isles and UK Overseas Territories. In addition, the UK also includes macroalgae, seafloor sediments, and kelp forests in the defined list of blue carbon resources, and they are widely distributed along the UK's coastal areas as well. Still, the UK has relatively few blue carbon resources in total reserves compared to countries with rich blue carbon resources, and some blue carbon ecosystems cannot even survive in some parts of its water. Nevertheless, since the UK has committed to a legally binding target to reach Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, blue carbon ecosystems still make a significant contribution in terms of carbon capture and coastal ecosystem conservation. The most recent data shows that these ecosystems sequester and store around 2% of UK emissions per year.²

- Amount of mapped seagrass: 84.39 km² (2021)
- Amount of mapped saltmarsh: 350 km² (2022)
- Amount of mangroves: 316km² (2021)

◦ Note: Mangroves can only be found in UK Overseas Territories because they cannot survive in the British Isles due to its geographical location and climate.

- Key Institutions of Study on Blue Carbon: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
- Key Regions of Interest: Scottish Special Areas of Conservation, Nature Conservation Marine Protected Areas



²Seagrass point data from the DEFRA and UNEP-WORLD Conservation Monitoring Centre datasets (showing contemporary records [C1] and historic records [H1]). (Source: Green AE, Unsworth RW, Choudhry MA and Jones PS (2021) Historical Analysis Expanses Continental Seagrass Loss for the United Kingdom. Front. Plant Sci. 12:629962. doi: 10.3389/fpls.2021.629962)



ICAS MARITIME AFFAIRS HANDBILL

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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

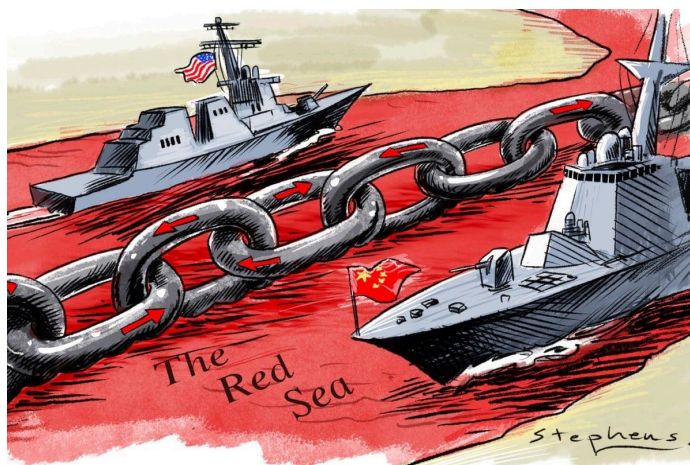
— MAP Commentary —

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...

Read Online:

chinaus-icas.org/research/2024-the-south-china-sea-at-a-crossroads-more-unilateral-actions-ahead-9dashline-in-forum/

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



ICAS MARITIME AFFAIRS HANDBILL

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Recent News in Global Maritime Affairs

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

[Rising temperatures from climate change depleting oxygen in coastal waters, threatening marine life](#)

March 25 - *Oregon Capital Chronicle*
[North America, Pacific Ocean]

Measurements taken from across 2,100 square miles of Pacific Ocean off the continental shelf of the northwest United States in the summer of 2021 depict how warmer ocean temperatures have decreased oxygen levels in coastal waters more than previously expected, with about half or the levels being deemed “hypoxic,” or not high enough in oxygen to support many organisms for long.

[Thai scientists breed coral in labs to restore degraded reefs](#)

March 22 - *Reuters*
[Southeast Asia]

In a once-a-year opportunity to help restore degraded coral reefs around Thailand, scientists from Thailand's Department of Marine and Coastal Resources were able to gather rare samples released from coral off the southern Man Nai Island, which houses over 98 species of coral. The coral only spawn once a year and can take up to five years to grow in a lab before being returned to the sea.

[Scientists Quantify Blue Carbon in Bahamas Seagrass](#)

March 14 - *Eos*
[Caribbean Sea]

A team of scientists have quantified the blue carbon stored within seagrass ecosystems in The Bahamas, revealing significant carbon reserves and their criticality in climate change mitigation. Their study highlights that the conservation efforts for these seagrass meadows are crucial for preserving their carbon storage potential and safeguarding marine ecosystems.

[100 New Deep-Sea Species, Including Mystery Creature, Found In New Zealand](#)

March 12 - NDTV

[South Pacific]

During a three-week research investigation of the waters off of the submerged Bounty Trough near the coast of New Zealand's South Island, researchers found 100 new deep-sea species, with expectations to discover even more in the future.

[Researchers discover a coral superhighway in the Indian Ocean](#)

March 12 - University of Oxford

[Africa, Indian Ocean]

Researchers led by the University of Oxford and the Seychelles Islands Foundation conducted a genetic analysis of coral samples from 19 reef sites in the Seychelles region. Simultaneously, another Oxford researcher led the oceanographic modeling efforts, which simulated larval dispersal pathways across the region. This discovery highlights the critical role of larval supply in coral reef recovery and has implications for reef management and conservation strategies in the Western Indian Ocean.

[Arctic rivers face big changes with warming climate, permafrost thaw and accelerating water cycle](#)

March 11 - Arctic Today

[Arctic Ocean]

Rivers in the Arctic are undergoing significant changes including increased river discharge, alterations in water chemistry, and shifts in the timing of spring flooding due to climate change, permafrost thaw, and an accelerating water cycle. These changes are predicted to bring notably negative implications for Arctic ecosystems, indigenous communities, and regional hydrology.

[Nigerian Oil-Producing Region Eyes Carbon Deals From Mangroves](#)

March 8 - Bloomberg [Paywall]

[Africa, Global]

Delta State, Nigeria's oil-rich region, has granted Serendib Capital, a United Kingdom-based company, rights to develop projects on 9% of its land for carbon credit generation through mangrove restoration. The project aims to sequester 5.32 million tons of carbon annually, prevent deforestation of 250,000 hectares, and replant 20,000 hectares of mangroves.

[World on brink of fourth mass coral reef bleaching event, NOAA says](#)

March 5 - Reuters

[Global, United States]

As the record-breaking ocean heat continues to threaten tropical reefs, the world is facing a potential fourth mass coral bleaching event. Marine biologists warn that the ocean ecosystems, fisheries, and

tourism economies reliant on vibrant coral reefs will all face negative consequences if the widespread bleaching happens.

[Brazil's mangrove forests represent untapped blue carbon banks, says new study from National Geographic Explorers](#)

March 4 - National Geographic Society Newsroom
[South America]

A recent study completed by National Geographic Explorers describes Brazil's mangrove forests as untapped blue carbon banks storing vast amounts of carbon and offering significant potential for climate change mitigation. The findings show that it is necessary to conserve mangroves to sequester carbon and protect coastal ecosystems.

[Cornwall researchers discover huge ancient seaweed bed](#)

March 2 - BBC
[Western Europe, Atlantic Ocean]

During a research commissioned by the Cornwall Council to study blue carbon in the local region, researchers found significant presence of maerl, a rare and ancient seaweed. Researchers said that the maerl bed could play an important role in the local blue carbon ecosystem.

[2] Maritime Economy and Shipping [2]

[Houthi Missile Strike Leads To Fire Onboard Chinese Oil Tanker In the Red Sea](#)

March 25 - *Marine Insight*
[Red Sea, China]

On March 23—days after diplomatic talks were held in Oman with one of the Houthi's top political figures Mohammed Abdel Salam in which the Yemen-based Houthis told China and Russia their ships can sail through the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden without being attacked—a Chinese-owned, Panamanian-flagged oil tanker was hit by one of the five ballistic missiles fired from Yemen.

[India Stops Accepting Russian Oil Delivered By US-Sanctioned Tankers, Reports Say](#)

March 22 - *Forbes*
[South Asia, Russia, Global]

All of India's oil refiners, both private and state-run processors, are now refusing to take Russian crude oil carried on PJSC Sovcomflot tankers due to U.S. sanctions on the state-controlled Sovcomflot and 14 related tankers. Following the onset of the Russia-Ukraine war, India became one of the largest importers of Russia's fossil fuels.

[Africa Internet Outage Risks Leaving Millions Offline for Weeks](#)

March 15 - *Bloomberg* [Paywall]

[Africa]

After undersea cables off of Africa's west coast were damaged from an unknown cause, disruption to internet services for millions of users in eight West African countries could reportedly take weeks or even months to fix.

[Houthis Threaten to Target Merchant Ships in Indian Ocean](#)

March 14 - *USNI News*

[Indian Ocean, Middle East]

In mid-March, two Houthi spokesmen posted on social media that the Houthis would now also target ships linked to Israel traveling in the Indian Ocean on the way to South Africa's Cape of Good Hope, significantly expanding their threats beyond the Red Sea. Pentagon officials say they are "putting at risk 12 to 15 percent of the world's commerce" which "affects the entire world" including Yemen.

[Cargill Shares Outcome of the World's First Wind-Powered Ocean Vessel's Maiden Voyage](#)

March 13 - *Business Wire*

[North Atlantic Ocean, Europe, Global]

Ocean transportation company Cargill's six-month trial of the *Pyxis Ocean*, equipped with WindWings made by BAR Technologies, showcased promising results in fuel savings, averaging 3 tonnes per day or 11.2t/day CO₂e well-to-wake emissions reductions. This wind-assisted propulsion aligns with the International Maritime Organization's decarbonization goals, and Cargill plans to continue testing to inform future implementations.

[U.S. Lawmakers Push for Deep-Sea Mining Funding in New Bill](#)

March 12 - *The Wall Street Journal* [Paywall]

[United States]

U.S. lawmakers introduced the Responsible Use of Seafloor Resource Act of 2024, sponsored by Reps. Carol Miller (R-WV) and John Joyce (R-PA), aiming to bolster American interests in deep-sea mining, specifically pushing for financial, diplomatic and infrastructure support for the industry and reducing reliance on China for critical minerals.

[U.S. unions ask Biden administration to probe Chinese shipbuilding](#)

March 13 - *Nikkei Asia* [Paywall]

[United States, China, Global]

On March 12, five U.S. labor unions filed a petition with the office of the U.S. Trade Representative requesting a probe to address "China's drive to dominate the global shipbuilding, maritime, and logistics sector" which they say is "built on non-market policies that are far more aggressive and

interventionist than any other country.” The petition also calls on the White House to impose port fees on Chinese-built vessels and revitalize U.S. shipbuilding.

[A major Chinese crane maker says it's no security risk to U.S. ports](#)

March 11 - Quartz

[United States, China]

After a security probe by the U.S. Congress, Shanghai Zhenhua Heavy Industries said their “cranes will not pose a network security risk to any port” as they are “designed, manufactured, transported, installed, debugged, accepted and delivered in strict accordance with international standards.”

[CNOOC announces oil discovery in South China Sea](#)

March 8 - Offshore Technology

[South China Sea, China, Global]

China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) has announced a notable discovery at the Kaiping oilfield in the South China Sea. Production testing yielded approximately 7,680 barrels of crude oil and 0.52 million cubic feet of natural gas per day at the site, also said to be China’s first deep-water and deep-play oilfield with proved in-place volume exceeding 100 million tonnes of oil equivalent.

[U.S. seeks to revive idled shipyards with help of Japan, South Korea](#)

March 4 - Nikkei Asia [Paywall]

[United States, East Asia]

At the end of February, U.S. Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro visited two shipyards in South Korea and one in Japan as part of efforts to bring Asian funds and expertise to the U.S. to reopen closed or inactive American shipyards.

[3] Ocean Governance and Maritime Cooperation [3]

[Geopolitical showdown: US, China and Russia clash over seabed resources](#)

March 25 - Voice of Europe

[United States, Global]

The International Seabed Authority has resumed meetings to discuss global rules and regulatory standards on deep-sea mining on the ocean floor beyond national jurisdictions. At one of these meetings in Jamaica, Chinese and Russian diplomats expressed opposition to recent U.S. attempts to extend its jurisdiction over resource-rich seabed areas along various parts of its national borders because the U.S. has not ratified the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) which governs resources in international waters.

[Russia is considering withdrawal from the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea in the Arctic](#)

March 20 - *Arctic Today*

[The Arctic, Russia]

On March 18, Chairman of the Russian Parliament Committee for the Development of the Far East and Arctic Nikolai Kharitonov told Russian media outlet *Izvestia* that the "issue of the possible denunciation of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea in the Arctic is under study" on the grounds that Russia will not allow it to "continue to be part of...[Russia's] detriment."

[Aid supply ship from Cyprus reaches Gaza coast but weather slows delivery](#)

March 16 - *Reuters*

[Middle East, Mediterranean Sea, Global]

On March 15, the charity ship *Open Arms* successfully arrived in Gaza from Cyprus to deliver nearly 200 tonnes of aid in the form of flour, rice and protein to the Gaza region. It was mostly funded by the United Arab Emirates and organized by U.S.-based charity World Central Kitchen. A second ship is expected to sail the same route soon now that the sea route was proven successful.

[Maritime corridor for aid to Gaza will take two months to build and 1,000 U.S. forces, Pentagon says](#)

March 8 - *CBS News*

[Middle East, United States, Global]

U.S. President Joe Biden is directing the U.S. military to establish a temporary port on the Gaza coast to ramp up the delivery of aid and ease the humanitarian crisis in the territory sparked by the Israel-Hamas war.

[US Spends Big to Highlight Beijing's Tactics in South China Sea](#)

March 6 - *Bloomberg* [Paywall]

[United States, Southeast Asia, China]

Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Daniel Kritenbrink says the U.S. is spending hundreds of millions of dollars to develop maritime capabilities in Southeast Asia with growing pressure over Beijing in the South China Sea. "The more countries are able to understand what is happening in their maritime domains and defend their own interests," the more stability there will be, Kritenbrink explained.

[Colombia to Retrieve Treasure Worth \\$ 20 Billion from Ship that Sank in 1708](#)

March 5 - *Marine Insight*

[Caribbean Sea, South America]

In 2015, the Spanish galleon *San Jose*, which sank in 1708, was discovered in the Caribbean at a depth of 2,000 feet. Now, the Colombian government will invest about \$4.5 million in 2024 to explore the *San Jose* shipwreck and recover the \$20 billion worth of treasure still believed to be on board.

[Fatal coastguard chase: Taiwan blames Beijing's lack of enforcement on illegal fishing boats](#)

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

[South China Sea, Southeast Asia]

In investigating the deadly capsizing of a high-powered, unlicensed fishing boat from Mainland China during a pursuit by Taiwanese coast guard around the waters of the Kinmen/Quemoy islands in mid-February, Taipei has accused Beijing of inaction on 'three-no' (unnamed, uncertified and unregistered) vessels from Mainland China.

[Philippines to push back against China if maritime interests ignored, Marcos says](#)

March 4 - *Reuters*

[Southeast Asia, South China Sea, China]

Speaking at a Lowy Institute forum in Australia, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said that the efforts to work with China and Southeast Asian nations to establish a code of conduct in the South China Sea "are not pursued in a vacuum" and relies on a "conducive environment where tensions are effectively managed."

[The Arctic Council with new decisive step forward](#)

February 29 - *Arctic Today*

[Arctic Ocean, Global]

Members of the Arctic Council agreed that the Arctic Council's working groups meetings will gradually resume in virtual formats. According to Morten Høglund, Chair of the Arctic Council's Senior Arctic Officials, such a move will help reaffirm the members commitment to safeguard and strengthen the Arctic Council and to address "issues of emerging concern" in the region.

[Việt Nam reasserts sovereignty over Vanguard Bank: Foreign ministry](#)

February 29 - *Viet Nam News*

[South China Sea, Southeast Asia]

In response to questions on the deployment of a Chinese coast guard ship into the waters near Vanguard Bank/Bãi Tư Chính, Vietnam reasserted its opposition to all violations of its sovereignty, reaffirming it "will continue to assist in the protection of its lawful and legitimate rights and interests in the sea via peaceful means in accordance with international law."

[4] Maritime Security and Defense [4]

[Pirates demand \\$5mn ransom for release of Bangladeshi crew of MV Abdullah](#)

March 25 - WION

[Africa, Indian Ocean, Global]

Amidst the ongoing threats of Houthi strikes in the Red Sea, there has been a resurgence of Somali pirate raids around the Horn of Africa, including the successful hijacking of the bulk carrier the MV *Abdullah* nearly 700 miles (1,100 kilometers) east of Somalia's capital. After being closely watched and followed by the Indian Navy, the *Abdullah* is now docked in Somalia's territorial waters with the pirates demanding \$5 million (₹420 million) for the release of the 23 Bangladeshi crew members.

[North Korea fires ballistic missiles as Blinken visits Seoul](#)

March 18 - Reuters

[East Asia, Global]

Early in the morning on March 18, North Korea fired several short-range ballistic missiles into the sea off its eastern coast for the first time in two months. The launches coincided with a visit from U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken to Seoul, South Korea for the third Summit for Democracy.

[Maldives signed military deal with Beijing but may remain swing state in China-India tug of war](#)

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

[South Pacific, China, South Asia]

The Maldivian defense ministry stated that the military assistance agreement signed with China in Male on March 4 aimed at fostering strong bilateral ties. In response to the Maldives' pact with China, India began withdrawing 89 Indian military personnel and announced the establishment of a new naval base on Lakshadweep islands, which is strategically located near the Maldives.

[Russia, Iran, And China Conduct Joint Maritime Security Drills In Arabian Sea](#)

March 13 - *Marine Insight*

[Arabian Sea, Middle East, Eurasia]

The navies of Russia, Iran and China will be conducting joint exercises—known as Maritime Security Belt 2024—in the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea involving war vessels and aviation.

[France Is Fitting Paseo XLR EO/IR System On All Its FREMM And Air Defense Destroyers](#)

March 12 - *Naval News*

[Europe]

The French Navy issued an “urgent operational requirement” to fit Safran Electronics and Defense's PASEO XLR extra long-range naval optronic identification and fire control system on all its first rank

vessels. This decision was made as a direct response to the repeated Houthi rebels threats posed by kamikaze unmanned surface vehicles (USV) and unmanned air vehicles (UAV) in the Red Sea.

[Pentagon to release Arctic strategy that outlines tech, presence needs](#)

March 12 - *Defense News*

[United States, Arctic Ocean]

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Arctic and Global Resilience Iris Ferguson said the Pentagon will release an updated Department of Defense Arctic Strategy in Spring 2024. The new strategy will reportedly highlight how the Arctic has changed in the last five years and emphasize the need for advancements in technology and presence.

[Sweden joins NATO as war in Ukraine prompts security rethink](#)

March 7 - *Reuters*

[North Atlantic, Europe, Global]

On March 7, Sweden officially joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and will benefit from NATO's common defense commitment. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken attributed Russia as the reason that prompted Sweden's efforts to join.

[Ukraine war: Kyiv says seven dead as drone attack sinks Russian ship](#)

March 5 - *BBC*

[Europe, Black Sea]

Ukraine says its Magura V5 maritime drones successfully hit and sank the *Sergey Kotov*, a Russian Black Sea Fleet patrol ship, in an overnight attack near the Kerch Strait off occupied Crimea.

Peer-Reviewed Research on Maritime Issues

Government Releases & Other Press Statements

- Japan International Cooperation Agency - [“Signing of Grant Agreement with Indonesia: Contributing to the improvement of maritime safety and security in the territorial waters of Indonesia through the deployment of a patrol vessel”](#) [March 25]
- U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration - [“Early Adopters of NASA’s PACE Data to Study Air Quality, Ocean Health”](#) [March 25]
- U.S. Department of State - [“U.S. Support for the Philippines in the South China Sea”](#) [March 23]
- Australian Government Department of Defence - [“ADF helps deter illegal fishing in collaboration with Vanuatu”](#) [March 18]
- Republic of Korea Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries - [“2024 Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries Major Policy Implementation Plan”](#) [March 18]

- Republic of Cyprus Ministry of Foreign Affairs - [“Joint Statement by Cyprus, USA, UAE, UK, the European Commission & Qatar on Ministerial Consultations to Advance a Maritime Corridor to Deliver Humanitarian Assistance to Gaza”](#) [March 13]
- Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force - [“Japan-Kingdom of Bahrain Goodwill Exercise”](#) [March 12]
- U.S. Southern Command - [“Statement of General Laura J. Richardson Commander, United States Southern Command Before the 118th Congress House Armed Services Committee”](#) [March 12]
- U.S. Department of Defense - [“TRANSCRIPT: Navy Officials Hold a Press Briefing on President Biden's Fiscal 2025 Navy Budget”](#) [March 11]
- Republic of Korea Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries - [“Strengthening Ecosystem Surveys for the Designation of Large Marine Protected Areas”](#) [March 8]
- Republic of Korea Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries - [“Revitalizing Investment in the Seafood Sector by Establishing the First-ever Secondary Fund and Blue Food Tech Fund”](#) [March 7]
- U.S. Department of State - [“Digital Press Briefing with Daniel J. Kritenbrink, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs”](#) [March 7]
- Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water - [“Declaration of Southern Ocean offshore wind zone”](#) [March 6]
- U.S. Department of State - [“U.S. Support for the Philippines in the South China Sea”](#) [March 5]
- U.S. Department of Navy - [“7th Fleet Destroyer transits Taiwan Strait”](#) [March 5]
- Arctic Council - [“Arctic Council advances resumption of project-level work”](#) [February 28]
- Equatic - [“Equatic Unveils Plans for the World's Largest Ocean-Based Carbon Removal Plant”](#) [February 27]

Analyses & Opinions

- [“China's Water Cannons Test US-Philippines Pact in Sea Feud”](#) [Bloomberg - March 25] [Paywall]
- [“The project integrating renewable energy and seaweed farming”](#) [The Fish Site - March 25]
- [“Polymeric Solutions Contributing to Maritime Decarbonization”](#) [The Maritime Executive - March 25]
- [“China's Dispute With Taiwan Is Playing Out Near This Frontline Island”](#) [The New York Times - March 24] [Paywall]
- [“National security leaders worry about U.S. failure to ratify Law of the Sea treaty”](#) [60 Minutes Overtime - March 24] [Paywall]
- [“Great-Power Competition Comes to Antarctica: China's Scientific Push Tests the Continent's Stability”](#) [Foreign Affairs - March 18] [Paywall]
- [“Searching for lost submarines: An overview of forensic underwater methodologies”](#) [CIMSEC - March 18]
- [“Ships, Not Chips, Could Offer China an Edge”](#) [Bloomberg - March 18] [Paywall]
- [“In the busy waters between China and Taiwan, the de facto border is being tested”](#) [The Guardian - March 18]
- [“From the Deep Sea to D.C.—How China Fears Have Put Ocean-Floor Mining on Washington's Radar”](#) [The Wall Street Journal - March 15] [Paywall]
- [“The Red Sea crisis, food insecurity and conflict”](#) [Australian Strategic Policy Institute - March 14]
- [“One year along Australia's optimal pathway to nuclear-powered submarines”](#) [Australian Strategic Policy Institute - March 13]
- [“Red Sea inaction proves China is not a 'responsible stakeholder’”](#) [Nikkei Asia - March 13]

- [“Shipbuilding: the new battleground in the US-China trade war”](#) [The Financial Times - March 12] [Paywall]
- [“Current Status and Challenges for Japan’s Strategic Communications based on the National Defense Strategy: Indo-Pacific Deployment 2023 and a Free and Open Indo-Pacific”](#) [The Sasakawa Peace Foundation - March 12]
- [“Why Russia Has Been So Resilient to Western Export Controls”](#) [Carnegie Endowment for International Peace - March 11]
- [“A Bridge Over Troubled Waters”](#) [Center for Maritime Strategy - March 11]
- [“How the U.S. military will use a floating pier to deliver Gaza aid”](#) [The Washington Post - March 8] [Paywall]
- [“The Oceans We Knew Are Already Gone”](#) [The Atlantic - March 7] [Paywall]
- [“Sea Drone Swarms – Can NATO’s Navies Avoid Russia’s Fate?”](#) [Center for European Policy Analysis - March 6]
- [“Poland’s navy steps up a weight class”](#) [International Institute for Strategic Studies - March 6]
- [“How China’s Aggressive Sea Tactics Look From the Deck of an Opposing Ship”](#) [The Wall Street Journal - March 6] [Paywall]
- [“A Russian lake: Has the West ceded the Black Sea to Russia?”](#) [CIMSEC - March 6]
- [“The Maldives Is a Tiny Paradise. Why Are China and India Fighting Over It?”](#) [The New York Times - March 5] [Paywall]
- [“NATO Should Not Accept Ukraine—for Ukraine’s Sake”](#) [Foreign Policy - March 5] [Paywall]
- [“The South China Sea Is the Next Test of US Resolve”](#) [Bloomberg - March 3] [Paywall]
- [“The Sea Services Must Support Infrastructure Investment”](#) [U.S. Naval Institute - March 2024]
- [“How to Overcome China’s Maritime Industrial Overmatch”](#) [U.S. Naval Institute - March 2024]
- [“Why the European Union and United States are leading ‘parallel’ security operations in the Red Sea”](#) [Breaking Defense - February 28]
- [“Wherever they may roam: China’s militia in 2023”](#) [Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative - February 28]

Other Research

- Podcast: CIMSEC - [“Sea Control 504: Chinese Maritime interests in the Indian Ocean with Commodore Venugopal Vengalil”](#) [March 24]
- Podcast: CIMSEC - [“Sea Control 500: The UK’s Indo-Pacific engagement with Dr. Peter Chalk”](#) [March 7]
- Report: Center for Strategic & International Studies - [Antarctic Monitoring Tools in Action](#) [March 19]
- Report: United States Studies Centre - [Networked deterrence in a multipolar Indo-Pacific](#) [February 29]

Events on the Maritime Domain

- On February 29, 2024, German Marshall Fund of the United States hosted an online event to discuss [“Black Sea Security: Bulgaria’s Role and the Need for a Regional Strategy.”](#)
- On February 29, 2024, Center for Strategic & International Studies hosted a webinar titled [“Navigating the Seas with Admiral Lisa Franchetti, Chief of Naval Operations of the U.S. Navy.”](#)

- On February 29, 2024, Sasakawa Peace Foundation, The Maldives National University (MNU), Global Infrastructure Fund Research Foundation Japan (GIF Japan), and Hosei University hosted a hybrid seminar titled [“Climate Change Adaptation Strategies for Small Island Developing States: Lessons from Artificial Island Development in the Maldives.”](#)
- On March 5, 2024, Wilson Center held a hybrid event on [“Water and Energy in MENA After COP28.”](#)
- On March 7, 2024, the Ocean Policy Research Institute of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation (OPRI-SPF) organized 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.
- From March 11-13, 2024, The Economist Group hosted [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.”
- On March 20, 2024, Wilson Center Asia Program hosted an online webinar titled [“Completing the US Strategic Rebalance: The Launch of the Wilson Center’s Indo-Pacific Program.”](#)
- On March 20, 2024, International Institute for Strategic Studies hosted a webinar on [“Critical infrastructure: the maritime challenge.”](#)
- On March 26, 2024, Wilson Center Kissinger Institute and AidData will hold an in-person event in Washington, D.C. to present [“BRI, Ports, and Debt: Getting the China Facts Straight.”](#)
- On March 26, 2024, Center for a New American Security will hold a virtual launch event for their new report titled [Autonomy and International Stability: Confidence-Building Measures for Uncrewed Systems in the Indo-Pacific.](#)
- On March 28, 2024, Wilson Center will host an online event to discuss [“Competition at Sea: Building Resilience in a Maritime Enterprise in Crisis.”](#) Registration is still open.
- On April 1, 2024, Center for Strategic & International Studies will hold [“A Conversation with U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield on U.S. Diplomacy in the Pacific Islands.”](#)
- 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.”](#)
- From April 22-24, 2024, Wilson Center, Battelle and several U.S. National Laboratories will co-host the [Innovations in Climate Resilience Conference 2024 \(ICR24\)](#) in Washington, D.C. “to share and inspire science and technology solutions for addressing climate change.” Registration is still open.
- 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.
- On April 25, 2024, Institute of Marine Engineering, Science & Technology will hold the 92nd Andrew Laing Lecture in Newcastle, England to discuss [“Applying Alternative Fuels to Existing Ships.”](#)

Handbill Spotlight

Unmanned Underwater Vehicles

Issue Background ¹

Unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs), also known as underwater drones, are submersible vehicles that can operate underwater without a human occupant. There are two main categories of UUVs: remotely operated underwater vehicles (ROVs) and autonomous underwater vehicles (AUVs). ROVs are controlled in real-time by an operator from a surface vessel or platforms similar to the pilot for unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), whereas AUVs operate independently, following pre-programmed instructions or utilizing advanced algorithms.

Since the 1950s, UUVs have been a pivotal technology for the navies in executing maritime search missions. In the 1970s, the UUVs played a crucial role in assisting the rescue mission for crews of wrecked submarines. Then the commercial industry began exploring this technology in the 1980s. For instance, around 1985, ROVs enabled scientists to discover the [shipwrecks of the RMS Titanic](#) and WWII-era [German battleship the Bismarck](#) in the North Atlantic Ocean.

In the last five years, several major and middle powers have dedicated themselves to developing their own UUVs for naval operation. In 2019, during the parade celebrating the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Chinese military demonstrated its first large AUVs, [the HSU-001](#). In the same year, the Russian government [announced](#) the sea trial of its “Poseidon” UUV which would be deployed on its Project 09852 nuclear-submarine. In 2023, Boeing delivered the first [autonomous Extra Large Unmanned Underwater Vehicle](#) (XLUUV) named as *Orca* for the U.S. Navy. Since 2019, the U.S. Navy and Department of Defense have been updating its fleet architecture which aims to include [extra-large unmanned Undersea vehicles](#). On December 28, 2023, the French Defense Procurement Agency (DGA) also [awarded](#) Naval Group an agreement for the design, production and testing of an Unmanned Combat Underwater Vehicle (UCUV).



However, the naval concept of operations (CONOPS) for UUVs varies between each country. According to the congress research services' report, the United States' Navy wants to develop UUVs for its “distributed fleet” naval framework. The aim of this naval initiative is to [distribute](#) the Navy's capabilities across a broader range of platforms including UUVs, preventing the concentration of the fleet's total capacity within a limited number of high-value vessels. Similar to the U.S. Navy's CONOPS, the Chinese Navy wants to [broaden](#) its options for naval operations by integrating unmanned warfare like UUVs. For the middle naval power, the CONOPS for UUV is to consolidate the offensive capability

¹ Image: A Remus 130 Uncrewed Underwater Vehicle portable UUV which can be used for Mine Countermeasures and Search and Rescue) is displayed during the Oceanology International 2024 on March 12, 2024 in London, England. (Photo by John Keeble/Getty Images)

of the current naval fleet. For instance, the latest South Korean naval concept “Navy Sea GHOST” [envisions](#) a lean and mobile force that includes close cooperation between manned and unmanned vessels. In the case of Russia, the latest “Poseidon” UUV was [designed](#) to carry the nuclear warhead for targeting ports or aircraft carriers.

Recent Events

Traditionally, navies have deployed UUVs primarily for reconnaissance and surveillance (R&S) and mine detection, rather than carrying out combat operations. However, recent developments indicate a growing interest in the offensive capabilities of UUVs, especially for countries that seek to boost their forces capacity and offense variety in a short time period. Since the onset of the Ukraine-Russia War in 2022, Ukraine has been dedicated to developing its [“Army of Drones.”](#) In 2023, Ukraine's “Brave1 initiative” [revealed](#) its defense project involving Toloka TLK-150 UUVs which are particularly challenging to detect due to their relatively small size (2.5 meters).

Another instance showcasing the offensive potential of UUVs was the recent Red Sea crisis. On February 18, 2024, U.S. Navy forces neutralized a UUV in Houthi-controlled waters around Yemen. [Public images](#) captured the characteristics of those UUV which are similar to the torpedo or one-way attack underwater drone. [Former Pentagon officials](#) have highlighted the difficulty of detecting or destroying these UUVs and their threat to a ship's defense.

Furthermore, the rising importance of maritime security also prompted countries to boost their UUV development. On February 23, 2024, Japan and Australia announced their joint research on the future innovation of underwater drones. The Australian Defense Minister [described](#) this joint defense project as a key foundation for “maintaining a technological edge in our rapidly changing strategic environment.”

Keep In Mind

In both cases of Ukraine and Houthi, UUV is an important tactical equipment to reinforce their warfare against more advanced naval powers. Unlike the conventional anti-cruise torpedo or missiles that require well-trained sophisticated operators and platforms, these one-way attack undersea drones are designed to operate in asymmetric conditions to offset the deficiencies of their naval capability vis-a-vis the advanced naval adversaries. Moreover, due to their wider operational range, these one-way attack drones can threaten naval vessels that exceed the range of conventional anti-cruise torpedoes. The adoption of UUV will revolutionize the future naval warfare as it has been proven to be effective for the weaker naval states against the more advanced conventional naval fleets.

Also, advanced UUVs will flourish future naval combat options. The U.S. congress [inquiries](#) about the Navy's acquisition of UUVs has implied that there are many potential developments for UUV. For instance, there are two available CONOPS for UUVs. On one hand, the U.S. Navy can choose to prioritize the quality over quantity of UUVs. Those kinds of UUVs will have precision offensive capabilities and self-defense measures. On the other hand, the Navy prioritizes the quantity. An abundant quantity of UUVs can organize the [“Swarm Warfare.”](#) which employs “blanketing” tactics and strikes the target from all directions. Both kinds of CONOPS can require the infrastructure, retrieving, refueling, and repairing those UUVs. In other words, the future UUV warfare might require the navy to develop the similar UUV task groups fleets with escorted vessels like those in a carrier strike groups

Despite the relatively technical competences and promising future development of UUVs, there are still concerns and challenges. Their dual-use capability for civil and military operations can easily

lead to disputes. In 2016, the Chinese Navy Dalang-III class submarine rescue vessel [retrieved](#) a UUV in the South China Sea. Although the U.S. government [claimed](#) that this UUV was U.S. property and was used as the oceanographic survey device, its potential capability of military intelligence gathering was perceived as a threat to China's national security. As the U.S.-China competition in the South China Sea remained, the adoption of UUVs for anonymous intelligence collection and surveillance might become a regular point of concern for both countries. The potential for military intelligence collection by such devices poses national security threats, underscoring the need for transparency in UUV operations, especially in contested maritime areas.

Another key issue related to UUVs that observers need to monitor is the supply chain for UUVs. The latest U.S. XLUUV, the *Orca*, produced by Boeing for the U.S. Navy, experienced a delayed production of three years. As a response to this overtime production, the U.S. Navy Sea System command [said](#) that Boeing is now improving its industry base for UUV production in titanium composites, pressure vessel manufacture, and also battery. The U.S. does not have a competitive downstream supplier for two of those supply chains, titanium and battery. Instead, China, which was labeled by the U.S. as the main competitor, is the biggest supplier of both these two products. In 2022, China [produced](#) 1.20 TWh relative to U.S.'s 0.11 TWh; in 2023, China manufactured the most titanium and [held](#) 30% of world's titanium reserves. The escalating sophistication and strategic deployment of UUVs not only redefine the parameters of underwater warfare and maritime security but also prompt a reevaluation of global naval capabilities in the face of burgeoning technological and geopolitical challenges, signaling a pivotal shift in the future conduct of maritime operations and international relations.

This issue's [Spotlight](#) was written by Ao Gu, ICAS Part-Time Research Assistant Intern.

ICAS Maritime Affairs Program: New and Upcoming

— Upcoming ICAS MAP Event —



The handbill features a background image of a globe. On the left, the ICAS logo is displayed with the Chinese characters '中研中心' and '中美研究' above the acronym 'ICAS' and the full name 'Institute for China-America Studies' below it. On the right, the text reads 'Thursday, April 18, 2024', '10:00am - 11:30am EST', and 'In-Person (Washington, DC) & Online (Zoom)'. A dark blue box on the right contains the text 'MAP ICAS MARITIME AFFAIRS PROGRAM'. The central text, in a white box, reads: 'The United States and China's Global Maritime Relations: Inevitable Competition or Feasible Collaboration?' followed by '~Hybrid Book Talk & Panel Discussion~'.

On Thursday, April 18, the ICAS Maritime Affairs Program, in collaboration with The China Institute, University of Alberta, will host a hybrid book talk and panel discussion on U.S.-China global maritime relations. This event will feature Dr. Nong Hong, the author of *US-China Global Maritime Relations* (Routledge, 2024), who will discuss the evolution and execution of maritime strategies pursued by both

the United States and China. Moreover, three panelists will provide their insights on this subject, representing perspectives from the United States, China, and a third-party viewpoint.

Stay Tuned for More Information: chinaus-icas.org/subscribe/
About the Book: chinaus-icas.org/research/us-china-global-maritime-relations/

– MAP Commentary –

Taking Down “Made-in-China” Cranes Cannot Address U.S. Weakness in The Shipping Industry

By Yilun Zhang

March 19, 2024

...The spy crane probe has brought momentum to raise public awareness and rally public support for the U.S. shipping industry. But instead of following economic common sense and building back a better U.S. shipping industry, current policies are only leading to taxpayer dollar waste and disruption in the global shipping supply chain. The fear of China posing a national security threat only produces paranoid and abrupt reactions, while the industry, which is in desperate need of long term strategic support, continues to wander by in limbo.

Read Online:

chinaus-icas.org/research/taking-down-made-in-china-cranes-cannot-address-u-s-weakness-in-the-shipping-industry/

This article was [originally](#) published on The Carter Center’s U.S.-China Perception Monitor on March 19, 2024

– MAP Commentary –

How Ukraine war and sanctions on Russia put Arctic cooperation on ice

By Nong Hong

March 17, 2024

Last month, the Arctic Council broke the ice by agreeing to reconvene its working group meetings virtually, nearly two years after seven of its eight members, including the US, halted participation in protest against the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, which held the council chairmanship then.

The working groups had been relying on “written procedures” for the last six months, after Norway took over the chairmanship and found ways to resume project work. The latest development will hopefully pave the way for increased interaction and engagement between council members, which also include Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Sweden...

Read Online:

chinaus-icas.org/research/how-ukraine-war-and-sanctions-on-russia-put-arctic-cooperation-on-ice/

This commentary was [originally](#) released by South China Morning Post on March 17, 2024

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

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

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