



ICAS

Institute for China-America Studies

ICAS
MARITIME AFFAIRS
PROGRAM

HANDBILL

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Q2



ICAS MARITIME AFFAIRS PROGRAM

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

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

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

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

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Recent News in Global Maritime Affairs

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

[Battling climate change. Japan looks to seagrass for carbon capture](#)

April 26 - Reuters

[Japan]

Japan's national goal of reaching carbon neutrality by 2050 is continuing to encourage local-level blue carbon awareness initiatives, such as a volunteer eelgrass planting project held in Yokohama in late April. Projects and submissions like this continue to make Japan a leading global advocate for protecting blue carbon ecosystems and understanding blue carbon capture.

[Biden moves to limit oil drilling and mineral mining in Alaska, in latest win for greens](#)

April 19 - Politico

[United States, The Arctic]

Under the direction of U.S. President Biden, the U.S. Department of the Interior announced on April 19 that more than 13 million acres of Alaskan wilderness would be preserved from oil drilling and critical mineral mining, leading to opposite reactions from the environmentalists and native tribes focused on preservation and the lawmakers concerned about energy insecurity.

[Water extraction and weight of buildings see half of China's cities sink](#)

April 18 - BBC

[China]

Nearly half of China's major cities are experiencing subsidence due to extensive water extraction and the increased weight from rapid urban expansion. Some cities are sinking rapidly, with one in six sinking by more than 10 millimeters per year. Researchers warn that these sinking cities, alongside rising sea levels due to climate change, could expose millions to future flooding risks.

[Greece plans 2 marine protected areas. But rival Turkey and environmental groups aren't impressed](#)

April 16 - AP

[Mediterranean Sea, Europe]

Greece has announced plans to establish two large marine protected areas in the Ionian and Aegean Seas, aiming to expand its marine conservation efforts by 80% and cover 30% of its territorial waters. These plans have faced criticism from Turkey, who accuses Greece of using environmental initiatives for geopolitical purposes. Environmental groups also argue that the measures are insufficient and overlook harmful practices like energy exploration.

[The Widest-Ever Global Coral Crisis Will Hit Within Weeks, Scientists Say](#)

April 15 - *The New York Times* [Paywall]

[Global]

Coral reefs around the globe are still ending up bleached from extraordinarily high ocean temperatures. In mid-April, scientists at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and other international institutes began calling it the fourth global bleaching event on record, making it the second within the last decade.

[PFAS 'Forever Chemicals' Are Pervasive in Water Worldwide, Study Finds](#)

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

[Global]

A study released by the Environmental Protection Agency analyzing more than 45,000 water samples from around the world found dangerously high percentages of man-made “forever chemicals” called per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in water samples not near any obvious source of contamination, setting off “alarm bells” on how these chemicals can spread.

[Climate Change Is Likely Impacting Marine Life More Than Previously Thought, Study Finds](#)

April 11 - *Eco Watch*

[Global]

A scientific study out of The Netherlands, conducted using a new method that more fully incorporates all comprehensive effects, concludes that the consequences of warming oceans and acidification from climate change is harming marine life much more broadly and negatively than previously thought.

[UW studies a drastic way to cool a warming planet – cloud 'brightening'](#)

April 8 - *The Seattle Times*

[United States, Global]

Scientists at the University of Washington are studying “marine cloud brightening” as a potential method to reduce global warming by helping clouds reflect sunlight back towards space better.

[New study tests if common mineral could help reduce the atmosphere's CO2](#)

April 5 - National Oceanography Centre
[Global]

Researchers from the National Oceanography Centre found that depositing olivine sands on the seafloor could help increase the ocean's capability of absorbing carbon dioxide. The study found positive contributions of the olivine sands but scientists concluded that more research will be needed to fully understand its impact.

[Ban on bottom trawling at three Manx fishing sites](#)

April 4 - BBC
[Western Europe]

The United Kingdom's Department for Environment, Food and Agriculture announced a ban on bottom trawling at three Manx fishing sites within the western Irish Sea. The new ban, in effect until December 2026, coincides with new research into blue carbon and seabed habitats for the region.

[2] Maritime Economy and Shipping [2]

[World's largest electric container ship starts service between China's major coastal cities](#)

April 29 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]
[China]

On April 29, the *Greenwater 01*, the world's biggest fully electric container ship, successfully held its maiden voyage. The battery-powered ship, developed and manufactured by the Chinese state-owned China Ocean Shipping Group, can save 3,900 kg (8,600 pounds) of fuel for each 100 nautical miles it sails and will now sail between Shanghai and Nanjing once a week, significantly cutting emissions.

[First container ship arrives at Port of Baltimore since Key Bridge collapse: "Another milestone"](#)

April 29 - CBS News
[United States, Global]

On April 28, for the first time since the Francis Scott Key Bridge collapsed and blocked access to the Chesapeake Bay, a container ship arrived at the Port of Baltimore in "[a]nother milestone." Since the bridge collapsed on March 26, four temporary channels have been opened, with the fourth restoring 15% of the pre-collapse commercial activity and allowing large commercial ships to pass.

[Crisis Pushes Chinese Shippers to Red Sea Alternatives, Hired Guns](#)

April 22 - *Caixin Global*
[Red Sea, China]

As the Yemen-based Houthi rebels continue to launch missiles at and occasionally board passing commercial vessels in the Red Sea in a show of support for Hamas in Gaza, Chinese shippers are increasing their security or choosing to avoid the route entirely.

[China's CNOOC stockpiles Russian oil at new reserve base](#)

April 15 - Reuters

[Russia, China]

Traders and analysts at tanker tracker Vortexa Analytics reportedly discovered that China's National Offshore Oil Corporation, a state-owned company, has established a new reserve base to store more than 10 million barrels of petroleum blends imported over the sea from Russia's Far East.

[IMO discusses alternatives for decarbonization of the maritime transport sector](#)

April 12 - Mayer Brown

[Global]

After the 81st meeting of the Marine Environment Protection Committee, member states of the International Maritime Organization agreed on several provisions to build a net-zero framework for the total reduction of net greenhouse gas emissions from international maritime transport by 2050.

[Cosco Shipping Sees Quick Resolution to Peru Port Question](#)

April 9 - *Marine Link*

[South America, China]

A general manager for China megaport builder Cosco Shipping clarified that its investment in Peru's Chancay deepwater port will continue. The announcement followed a request by Peru's government in March 2024 for a judicial process to annul the exclusivity it had granted to Cosco Shipping in 2021 to operate the port upon its completion after an "administrative error" had been identified.

[Chinese Trawlers and Warming Waters Fuel West African Fishery Crisis](#)

April 9 - *The Maritime Executive*

[Africa, China]

As detailed by a long-term study funded by a Harvard University institute, the average number of fish catches along the West African coast has significantly declined over the past three decades. Initial findings point to climate change, lax regulations of international trawlers, and local overfishing as the primary causes of this rapid decline.

[Port of Hong Kong suffers major connectivity loss](#)

April 3 - *Port Technology International*

[Southeast Asia]

As shown by past statistics and newly published marine shipping port network overviews, the Port of Hong Kong is decreasing in popularity for port visits, indicating a drop in interest in the deepwater port in both recent years and through 2025.

[Alaska fishermen and processing plants are in limbo as a state-backed seafood company teeters](#)

March 30 - *Northern Journal*

[United States, The Arctic]

When Peter Pan Seafoods, an Alaskan state-backed company, did not open as usual for the winter season due to ongoing legal claims reportedly linked to unpaid bills, the local fishing industry—and thus the local economy—came to a virtual standstill as fishermen had nowhere to sell their catch.

[3] Ocean Governance and Maritime Cooperation [3]

[Economy Minister visits Maltese industrial zone, reviews developing Libyan ports](#)

April 29 - *The Libya Observer*

[Africa, Mediterranean Sea]

Trade and maritime ministers from Libya and Malta jointly conducted a field visit to the Malta Free Port and the industrial zone in Malta, which is considered a major center for maritime shipping in the Mediterranean. During the visit, the ministers discussed developing bilateral relations, increasing the volume of trade, and improving the services of some Libyan ports.

[NATO Hails Morocco's Contribution to Global Security](#)

April 29 - *Morocco World News*

[Africa, Europe, Atlantic Ocean]

Speaking during a press conference in Rabat during an official visit, Chairman of NATO's Military Committee Admiral Rob Bauer applauded Morocco's long standing participation in NATO exercises, emphasizing the importance of NATO's partnerships with regional partners and the need for increased collaboration to maintain stability and peace.

[US troops begin construction of Gaza aid pier as questions remain over distribution](#)

April 25 - *The Guardian*

[Middle East, United States]

U.S. military vessels have begun to construct the “initial stages of the temporary [floating] pier and causeway at sea” off the Gaza coast that will be part of an internationally cooperative humanitarian aid initiative. The construction will be supported by approximately 1,000 American troops who have been ordered not to step foot on Gaza shore. Meanwhile, several military experts and observers continue to warn that the entire plan is a major risk for the personnel who must build, operate and defend it.

[Baltimore Sues Dali Ship Owner and Manager Over Key Bridge Collapse](#)

April 23 - *gCaptain*

[United States, Southeast Asia]

The City of Baltimore has sued the owners and managers of the *Dali*, the cargo ship that crashed into the Francis Scott Key Bridge and caused its collapse and six deaths. Among other points, the lawsuit alleges the owners, Singapore-based Grace Ocean Private Limited, were negligent in allowing the *Dali* to leave the Port of Baltimore while being aware of existing power issues and alleges the crew of incompetence and neglect. The *Dali*'s manager, Synergy Marine Group, is also facing allegations. An investigation is still ongoing by the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board and Coast Guard.

[Indian crew member from MSC Aries seized by Iran returns home](#)

April 18 - *Reuters*

[Middle East]

Iran's foreign ministry said its Revolutionary Guards seized a Portuguese-flagged container ship, the *MSC Aries*, on April 13 for "violating maritime laws and not answering calls" in the Strait of Hormuz, also noting that the vessel was linked to Israel. Several days later, India's foreign ministry announced that one of the *MSC Aries*' seventeen Indian crew members has been returned to India.

[China Denounces U.S. Probe Into Shipbuilding Sector](#)

April 17 - *The Wall Street Journal* [Paywall]

[China, United States]

Beijing says it opposes the investigation being opened by the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative into China's "longstanding efforts to [unfairly] dominate the maritime, logistics and shipbuilding sectors," calling the accusations "baseless and against economic common sense."

[Navy Chief: Situation in Red Sea and Gulf of Aden 'fragile': Navy monitoring situation](#)

April 15 - *The Indian Express*

[India, Middle East, Red Sea, Indian Ocean]

India's Chief of Naval Staff Admiral R Hari Kumar said, as of mid-April, the hostile situation in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden remains "fragile" with drone attacks and piracy picking back up. Among other notes, Kumar explained the Indian Navy is "monitoring the situation" with 10 ships being deployed for the last 120 days alongside surveillance aircrafts and drones to ensure safe passage of vessels.

[European states sign pledge to protect North Sea infrastructure](#)

April 9 - Reuters

[North Sea, Europe]

Six European countries who border the North Sea—Belgium, Britain, Denmark, Germany, Norway and the Netherlands—have signed a joint declaration to collaborate to protect underwater infrastructure such as undersea cables and pipelines.

[US-Chinese military talks resume on safety in the air and at sea after a nearly 2-year break](#)

April 5 - ABC News

[United States, China, Indo-Pacific]

For the first time since August 2022, U.S.-Chinese military talks between defense officials on safety in the air and at sea have resumed. The two-day meeting was held April 3-4 in Hawaii during a season of expanding top-tier communications between Washington and Beijing.

[4] Maritime Security and Defense [4]

[Royal Netherlands Navy's HNLMS Tromp engages in Maritime Partnership with Indian Navy](#)

April 29 - Indian Narrative

[Indian Ocean, Europe]

At the end of April, the Royal Netherlands Navy Ship HNLMS *Tromp* and the Indian Navy's guided missile frigate INS *Trishul* conducted a joint maritime partnership exercise in the Indian Ocean. The exercise directly followed an official six day visit by the Deputy Commander of the Royal Netherlands Navy to Mumbai to strengthen bilateral defense ties.

[Navy chief repeats call for submarines purchase](#)

April 29 - Bangkok Post

[Southeast Asia]

Thailand's navy chief is calling on Thailand's Defence Minister Suriname Klungsang to fulfill his promises to "finalise talks [with China] on submarine procurement as soon as possible" instead of accepting a frigate, explaining that the Thai navy "has a very limited fleet."

[PH, US, French navies conduct MSAR in WPS for Balikatan](#)

April 28 - Palawan News

[Southeast Asia, South China Sea, Global]

On April 25, the Philippine's 39th Balikatan Exercise began in the West Philippine Sea region. Thus far, the US Navy and French Navy have participated in several exercises including a joint maritime search and rescue drill, a simulated replenishment at sea exercise, and a cross deck helicopter landing exercise. Additionally, U.S. and Philippine Marines forces have been conducting simulations in air assaults and jungle training.

[Philippines calls claim of South China Sea deal 'Chinese propaganda'](#)

April 28 - *Nikkei Asia* [Paywall]

[South China Sea]

Following reports made public in mid-April of a deal made between Beijing and the former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte regarding a “new model” for addressing conflict in the South China Sea, Philippine Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro said that the current administration was “not aware of, nor is it a party to, any internal agreement with China” and called the claims “Chinese propaganda.”

[Chinese general takes a harsh line on Taiwan and other disputes at an international naval gathering](#)

April 22 - AP

[China, Global]

Speaking at the two-day 19th biennial meeting of the international Western Pacific Naval Symposium in Qingdao, China, Vice Chairman of the Communist Party of China Central Military Commission Zhang Youxia said China’s territorial sovereignty in the East and South China Seas “brooks no infringement” and China “will resolutely defend the reunification and interest of the motherland.”

['Uniquely Singaporean': Singapore navy launches fourth Invincible-class submarine](#)

April 22 - *Channel News Asia*

[Southeast Asia]

On April 22, the Republic of Singapore Navy launched its fourth Invincible-class submarine, the *Inimitable*, at the thyssenkrupp Marine Systems (tkMS) shipyard in Kiel, Germany. The first of Singapore’s Invincible-class submarines, which were developed alongside tkMS and are “specially adapted” for Singapore’s shallow and tropical waters, was launched in 2019.

[U.S. Navy flies aircraft through the Taiwan Strait a day after U.S.-China defense chiefs hold rare talks](#)

April 17 - *NBC News*

[United States, China]

On April 17, U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and China Minister of Defense Dong Jun spoke for the first time, marking the first time Secretary Austin has directly engaged with his Chinese counterpart since 2022. The following day, the US Navy flew a P-8A Poseidon surveillance aircraft through international airspace of the Taiwan Strait, a move which China's Navy called “provocative.”

[Moscow says it will build drone bases along Arctic coast](#)

April 15 - *The Barents Observer*

[Russia, Arctic Ocean]

Russian authorities are reportedly planning to use unmanned aircraft drones to conduct aerial patrols over Russia's Arctic waters. This development was reported days after Norway announced its own plans to develop a base for long-range drones near its Arctic waters.

[Canada's New Billion-Dollar Defense Investment: Strong Arctic Focus](#)

April 15 - *High North News*

[The Arctic, North America]

On April 8, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Minister of National Defense Bill Blair announced an updated defense policy document, titled *Our North, Strong and Free*, which prioritizes asserting Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic and Far North. Involving a \$73 billion investment over the next 20 years, this policy also supports the establishment of a year-round presence by Canadian armed forces in the Arctic region “where the changing physical landscapes have created new threats.”

[South Korea, Japan, US hold naval drills amid N.Korea threats](#)

April 12 - *Reuters*

[East Asia]

On April 12, South Korea, Japan, and the United States conducted joint naval drills in the international water between South Korea and Japan. The specific purpose of these naval exercises, as described by the Republic of Korea Navy, were to improve readiness and capability against North Korea's underwater threat and illegal transport of mass destruction weapons.

[China labels US comments on Taiwan and AUKUS 'dangerous'](#)

April 10 - *Reuters*

[Indo-Pacific, China, United States]

Several top naval officials from the U.S., the United Kingdom and Australia, speaking at a public panel on the 2021 AUKUS submarine agreement, remarked that fulfilling the pact “has been a challenge” but “is a game changer” when securing the Indo-Pacific. Zhu Fenglian, a spokesperson for China's Taiwan Affairs Office, subsequently called Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell's suggestion that the AUKUS submarine project could assist with deterrence in the Taiwan Strait a “dangerous” comment.

[MSDF unveils modified Kaga vessel refurbished for F-35B stealth fighters](#)

April 9 - *The Japan Times*

[East Asia]

The Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) has recently completed its preliminary work for turning its *Kaga* vessel—originally one of Japan's two Izumo-class helicopter carriers—into a flattop for

F-35B stealth fighter jets. Meanwhile, the MSDF intends to purchase 42 F-35Bs that will be deployed to the Air Self-Defense Force Nyutabaru Base by the end of this fiscal year.

[U.S. Set to Expand Naval Base in Papua New Guinea](#)

April 6 - USNI News

[United States, South Pacific]

In early April, the U.S. announced its Navy is looking to complete three renovation projects for Lombrum Naval Base on the Island of Los Negros in Papua New Guinea.

[Danish Defense Chief Removed After Warship Malfunction in Red Sea](#)

April 4 - USNI News

[Red Sea, Middle East, Europe]

The Royal Danish Navy guided-missile frigate *Iver Huitfeldt*'s radar and missile systems malfunctioned for 30 minutes in the Red Sea during a Houthi drone attack. The Danish general who failed to report the malfunctioning was removed from office.

Peer-Reviewed Research on Maritime Issues

Government Releases & Other Press Statements

- Ministry of National Defense of the People's Republic of China - "[Chinese, French militaries establish inter-theater cooperation and dialogue mechanism](#)" [April 26]
- Ministry of Defence of the United Kingdom - "[Royal Navy ship joins international effort to build pier for aid delivery into Gaza by sea](#)" [April 26]
- U.S. Department of Defense - "[U.S. Begins Construction on Temporary Pier to Deliver Humanitarian Aid to Gaza](#)" [April 25]
- Ministry of National Defense of the People's Republic of China - "[The video call between Chinese Defense Minister and US Secretary of Defense bears positive significance in maintaining the overall stability of military-to-military relationship](#)" [April 25]
- U.S. Department of State - "[Partnership for Atlantic Cooperation Forum on Innovative Financing Solutions for Marine Conservation](#)" [April 23]
- Australian Government Ministry of Defence - [2024 National Defence Strategy](#) [April 2024]
- U.S. Department of the Interior - "[Biden-Harris Administration Takes Critical Action to Protect Alaska Native Subsistence, Lands and Wildlife](#)" [April 19]
- U.S. Department of State - "[United States Announces \\$508 Million to Protect Our Ocean](#)" [April 17]
- Office of the U.S. Trade Representative - "[USTR Initiates Section 301 Investigation of China's Targeting of the Maritime, Logistics, and Shipbuilding Sectors for Dominance](#)" [April 17]
- The White House - "[Message to the Congress on the Continuation of the National Emergency and of the Emergency Authority Relating to the Regulation of the Anchorage and Movement of Russian-Affiliated Vessels to United States Ports](#)" [April 16]

- Royal Canadian Navy - [“HMCS Montréal sets sail for the Indo-Pacific under Operation HORIZON”](#) [April 14]
- Ghana Navy - [“Danish Government Supports Ghana Navy to Acquire Bridge Simulator”](#) [April 13]
- World Wildlife Fund - [“WWF and the Blue Carbon Research Centre Launch Partnership to Safeguard Coastal Ecosystems”](#) [April 12]
- U.S. Department of State - [“U.S. Delegation to the Ninth Our Ocean Conference”](#) [April 11]
- Isle of Man Government - [“Additional protection for Isle of Man fishing grounds”](#) [April 3]
- Embraer - [“Brazilian Navy and Embraer sign innovation partnership agreement”](#) [April 2]
- U.S. Department of Defense - [“Readout of Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III's Call With Philippine Secretary of National Defense Gilberto Teodoro Jr.”](#) [March 27]

Analyses & Opinions

- [“Steering into a Tech-Driven Offshore Era”](#) [Sea Technology - April 2024]
- [“NATO's Navies at 75: Five Operational Imperatives to Watch”](#) [U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings - April 2024]
- [“Thinking Laterally in the Indian Ocean”](#) [Australian Institute of International Affairs - April 30]
- [“Evaluating the naval response to the Red Sea crisis”](#) [CIMSEC - April 29]
- [“Understanding Indonesia-Norway Bilateral Relations In 2024”](#) [Eurasia Review - April 29]
- [“China debates the current churn in the South China Sea”](#) [Observer Research Foundation - April 26]
- [“Asymmetric Naval Strategies: Overcoming Power Imbalances to Contest Sea Control”](#) [CIMSEC - April 24]
- [“Funding Deterrence: Breakdown of the Indo-Pacific Supplemental Bill”](#) [Foreign Policy Research Institute - April 23]
- [“Xi's Armada Is Winning the Battle for Energy in the South China Sea”](#) [Bloomberg - April 23] [Paywall]
- [“Russia's Shadow Fleet Could Create Strange Allies”](#) [Foreign Policy - April 22] [Paywall]
- [“Forget About Chips—China Is Coming for Ships”](#) [Foreign Policy - April 19] [Paywall]
- [“First Among Piers: Chinese Ships Settle in at Cambodia's Ream”](#) [Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative - April 18]
- [“Imperilled by ocean acidification: Senegal's shellfish sector”](#) [Dialogue Earth - April 18]
- [“Is China ready to put solar panels out at sea?”](#) [Dialogue Earth - April 18]
- [“US Navy Shipbuilding Has Fallen Dangerously Behind”](#) [Bloomberg - April 17] [Paywall]
- [“The Cloud Under the Sea”](#) [The Verge - April 17]
- [“‘We're a dead ship': Hundreds of cargo ships lost propulsion in U.S. waters in recent years”](#) [The Washington Post - April 16] [Paywall]
- [“Why US and China Compete for Influence With Pacific Island Nations”](#) [Bloomberg - April 16] [Paywall]
- [“2 Years on, Ukraine's Sinking of the Moskva Intrigues China's Naval Strategists”](#) [The Diplomat - April 15] [Paywall]
- [“Why Taiwanese Islands With View of China Aren't Worried About Rising Tensions”](#) [The Wall Street Journal - April 13] [Paywall]
- [“Save our seabed – the bottom of the ocean needs to become a top priority, and the UN agrees”](#) [The Conversation - April 12]
- [“China's fishing fleet is causing havoc off Africa's coasts”](#) [The Economist - April 11] [Paywall]
- [“Fremantle's wartime past serves as AUKUS submarine prologue”](#) [Australian Strategic Policy Institute - April 11]

- [“High Costs, Geopolitical Risks Impede Blue Carbon Removal Projects”](#) [Oil Price Information Service - April 11]
- [“By filling gaps, Britain shows the way for Pacific islands’ second-level supporters”](#) [Australian Strategic Policy Institute - April 10]
- [“Ocean Heat Has Shattered Records for More Than a Year. What’s Happening?”](#) [The New York Times - April 10] [Paywall]
- [“The rusting Philippine ship forcing Joe Biden and his Asia allies to focus on China”](#) [The Financial Times - April 10] [Paywall]
- [“China’s Huge Sea Buildup Dwarfs Philippine Push on Tiny Island”](#) [Bloomberg - April 7] [Paywall]
- [“The weird deep-sea world, and how mining threatens it”](#) [The Japan Times - April 7] [Paywall]
- [“Why Time Is Running Out Across the Maldives’ Lovely Little Islands”](#) [The New York Times - April 6] [Paywall]
- [“The World’s Digital Backbone Needs Defending”](#) [Bloomberg - April 5] [Paywall]
- [“New Era of Arctic Cooperation”](#) [Wilson Center - April 4]
- [“Rethinking Australia’s wartime maritime trade”](#) [Australian Strategic Policy Institute - April 4]
- [“To Contain China, the U.S. Bets on a 40-Year-Old Ship”](#) [The Wall Street Journal - April 4] [Paywall]
- [“NATO in the Arctic: 75 years of Security, Cooperation, and Adaptation”](#) [Wilson Center - April 3]
- [“It’s Time to Uncover the Mysteries of Blue Carbon”](#) [Environmental Defense Fund - April 2]
- [“How small-scale seaweed farmers can have a huge impact”](#) [The Fish Site - April 1]
- [“South China Sea cooperation better for China than conflict”](#) [Nikkei Asia - April 1] [Paywall]
- [“Will China’s fourth aircraft carrier steer towards troubled waters in Asia and challenge the US Navy?”](#) [South China Morning Post - March 31] [Paywall]
- [“Control by Patrol: The China Coast Guard in 2023”](#) [Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative - March 29]
- [“Underwater robots offering practical route to greener shipping”](#) [The Japan Times - March 27] [Paywall]

Other Research

- Podcast: CIMSEC - [“Sea Control 514: Explaining Ethiopia’s port deal with Samir Bhattacharya”](#) [April 27]
- Podcast: CIMSEC - [“Sea Control 509: Sri Lanka’s evolving role in the Indian Ocean with Aditya Gowdara Shivamurthy”](#) [April 12]
- Podcast: CIMSEC - [“Sea Control 507: Islamic maritime law with Emilia Justyna Powell and Michael Atkins”](#) [April 4]
- Video: Wilson Center - [“Smart Take | Baltimore Bridge Collapse: A Wake-Up Call for America to Upgrade its Maritime Strategy”](#) [April 4]
- Report Paper: High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy - [How can a healthy ocean improve human health and enhance wellbeing on a rapidly changing planet?](#) [April 2024]

Events on the Maritime Domain

- On April 1, Center for Strategic & International Studies held [“A Conversation with U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield on U.S. Diplomacy in the Pacific Islands.”](#)
- On April 4, The Washington Post held a live [World Stage discussion with Adm. James Stavridis \(U.S. Navy, Ret.\)](#), NATO’s former top commander, “on the future of the alliance and the war in Ukraine.”

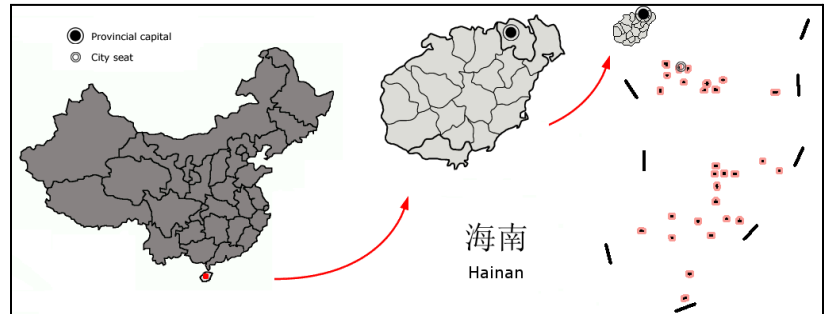
- On April 9, Center for Maritime Strategy held their [annual breakfast](#), convening “leading members of the maritime security community to engage in critical discussions on the future of America’s role as a global sea power.”
- On April 9, Hudson Institute held an event to discuss [“Restoring America’s Commercial Maritime Industrial Base.”](#)
- On April 11, the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy and its partners held an [“Ocean Panel Blue Paper Launch & UN Ocean Decade Conference Satellite Event.”](#) live from Barcelona.
- On April 15, Atlantic Council, in partnership with the Norwegian Ministry of Defense and Royal Norwegian Embassy, held an in-person conference, [“Looking north: Conference on security in the Arctic.”](#) in Washington, DC.
- From April 14-19, the European Geosciences Union (EGU) held its [General Assembly 2024](#) in Vienna, Austria and online, open to scientists of all nations.
- On April 16, Hudson Institute held an in-person event to discuss how [“The Battle for the Black Sea Is Not Over.”](#)
- On April 23, Center for Strategic & International Studies held an online webinar titled [“Navigating the Seas with Admiral Lisa Franchetti, Chief of Naval Operations of the U.S. Navy.”](#)
- On April 23, Stimson Center hosted an online [conversation with U.S. Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro](#) on “Maritime Power for Global Security.”
- On April 24, National Oceanography Centre and the Challenger Society for Marine Science’s joint Upscaling of Autonomy Working Group (UAWG) held an [online roundtable discussion workshop](#).
- On April 25, Institute of Marine Engineering, Science & Technology held the 92nd Andrew Laing Lecture in Newcastle, England to discuss [“Applying Alternative Fuels to Existing Ships.”](#)
- On April 29, the International Institute for Strategic Studies held an online webinar on [“Turmoil in the Red Sea: assessing the Houthis’ strategic agenda.”](#)
- On May 1, Stimson Center is hosting an online discussion titled [“Climate Diplomacy in South Asia: Transboundary Challenges, Collective Solutions.”](#)
- On May 6, Wilson Center and the European Union will hold a webinar on [“EU-US Arctic Cooperation.”](#)
- From May 31-June 2, the International Institute for Strategic Studies will hold its [Shangri-La Dialogue 2024](#), Asia’s premier summit where defense ministers gather to debate the region’s pressing challenges and engage bilaterally to produce fresh solutions. Registration is still open.
- From June 13-14, Banca d’Italia and the International Monetary Fund are holding a hybrid research conference in Venice, Italy on [“Embedding Sustainability in Credit Risk Assessment”](#) to highlight “how sustainability factors, especially climate change and environmental issues, can be integrated in credit risk assessment,” among other topics.
- On June 19, the National Oceanography Centre will host [Marine Measurement Forum 66](#)—a “series of one-day, non-profit making events” for the “informal exchange of ideas, knowledge, techniques and developments across an extensive range of marine scientific measurement activities”—in Southampton, United Kingdom. Registration is still open.

Handbill Spotlight

Hainan

Issue Background ¹

Hainan is an island province directly south of China's mainland. The province administers the island of Hainan, which is the largest island of mainland China, and various smaller islands in the South China Sea. As described by the official website of the People's Government of Hainan Province, Hainan Province has a total [land area](#) of 35,400 square kilometers and a sea area of around 2 million square kilometers, making it China's largest maritime province.



[Tertiary industry](#)—including retail trades, transportation, hotels and catering services, financial services, and real estate—has traditionally been the prime component of Hainan's gross domestic product. This island province is well known for its tropical climate and relatively flat land, which makes it a popular [tourist and vacation destination](#). In some [reports](#) about Hainan, it is commonly referred to as the "[Hawaii of China](#)."

The island province shares other similarities with Hawaii apart from their tropical climate and tourist attractions. As China's southernmost province, Hainan is also the home port for China's [South Sea Fleet](#) and Southern Theater Command Air Force. Facing the South China Sea, Hainan is also the forefront of the U.S.-China engagement in the South China Sea region. The 2001 [EP-3 incident](#), also known as the Hainan Island incident, occurred just 110 kilometers (70 miles) southeast of Hainan island. Following the collision with the Chinese aircraft, the damaged U.S. EP-3 aircraft landed at Hainan's Lingshui airfield without permission from the Chinese authorities, which later led to [diplomatic tensions and Chinese protest](#). Some smaller features in the South China Sea, claimed by China and some neighboring countries, a long standing territorial dispute, have observed [close warship encounters](#) between the Chinese and American navies in recent years, among others.

While being strategically important to China, Hainan is not one of the most developed areas of the world's second largest economy. Among the 31 administrative divisions of Mainland China, the province ranked [28th by GDP](#) in 2023. This is due to both the island province's small population and its unbalanced economic structure. At present, Hainan has a total [population](#) of 10.43 million people, which is predominantly rural. Tertiary industry constitutes over 60% of Hainan's GDP. To address the need for economic growth, Hainan has recently targeted [boosting population](#) and adjusting its tourist-reliant economy to a structurally stable economy by building the world's first [free trade port](#).

¹ Image Source: The location of Sansha, the provincial capital of Hainan Province, in scale and locational reference with Mainland China. (Credit: ASDFGH, CC 3.0 via [Wikimedia](#))

Recent Events

As part of Hainan's aim to boost its economic growth by raising high quality consumption, Hainan has been holding the [China International Consumer Products Expo \(CICPE\)](#) for a consecutive four years, starting in 2021. The [2024 CICPE](#) was held in Haikou on April 18, 2024. The island province's aim with the CICPE is to bring international brands to the duty-free island and use the expo to boost consumption as China is striving to [reinvigorate its consumption](#).

Simultaneously, the island is expecting to complete preparations for its [customs closure operation](#) by the end of 2024 as a critical step in its plan to construct the world's first [free trade port](#). The island is also boosting its connection with the rest of the world as it became the first Chinese province to enact a [visa waiver policy](#) for over 50 countries, a policy that has been active since 2018. It was reported at the beginning of 2024 that the island province received over [90 million tourists](#), domestic and overseas, in 2023.

Keep In Mind

Given Hainan's geographic location and its proximity to the South China Sea, it will become a hub for China's maritime logistics, especially after the free trade port becomes fully operational in 2025. While the province has emphasized consumption over industrial development at this point, Hainan's location, being the gateway of China's tech hub—the Great Bay Area—will make it an important nexus for manufactured goods, high end or low end, coming in and out of China.

It is also worth noting that, while Hainan's economic development is on the relative lower end in China, its huge market potential following the construction of the free trade port will give its economic growth a strong boost. The island province achieved a 9.2% GDP growth in 2023, with an industrial output growth rate at 18.5% and 10.3% growth in the service sector. This rapidly developing island will crave financial services in the near future.

As low value-added manufacturing industries continue to [move out of China](#) to Southeast Asia, Hainan's free port will become an important nexus for manufactured goods shipped from Southeast Asia to China. The island already shows potential for developing high quality logistics industries and financial services, which is what China particularly needs during a time of slow economic growth.

That said, Hainan is still at the beginning stage of development, much like Shanghai in the 1990s, and Shenzhen in the 1980s. How Hainan is going to utilize past successful experiences and incorporate sound policies with international business and investment is the key to its transformation from a rural tourist destination to a modern free port. Senior officials from Hainan have notably [turned to parties in the U.S.](#) for this particular need. The island province is particularly interested in the U.S. [biopharmaceutical industries](#) and [financial sectors](#). During a period of U.S.-China strategic competition, Hainan's 'pivot to the U.S.' could bring a different episode to an overall deteriorating bilateral relationship.

This issue's [Spotlight](#) was written by Yilun Zhang, ICAS Research Associate & Manager, Trade 'n Technology Program.

ICAS Maritime Affairs Program: New and Upcoming

— ICAS MAP Event —

The United States and China's Global Maritime Relations: Inevitable Competition or Feasible Collaboration?

Thursday, April 18, 2024

In-Person (Washington, DC) & Online (Zoom)

On April 18, 2024, the Institute for China-America Studies (ICAS) and The China Institute at the University of Alberta co-hosted a hybrid book talk and panel discussion on Dr. Nong Hong's new book *US-China Global Maritime Relations* (Routledge 2024) which explores the U.S.-China maritime relationship within the global context and investigates six key maritime regions: the South China Sea, the Northeast Asia waters, the Indian Ocean, the South Pacific Ocean, as well as the Arctic and Antarctic regions.



The event was moderated by Mr. Philippe Rheault, Director of The China Institute. The book talk also featured three panelists who shared their respective perspectives on these critical issues: Mr. Gregory Poling, Director of the Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Dr. Dingli Shen, Professor Emeritus and Former Executive Dean at the Institute of International Studies at Fudan University, and Mr. Gilang Kembara, Research Fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies of Nanyang Technological University in Singapore.

Watch the Event: www.youtube.com/watch?v=uD78l4Ksd7k

Learn More:

chinaus-icas.org/event/the-united-states-and-chinas-global-maritime-relations-inevitable-competition-or-feasible-collaboration/

— MAP Commentary —

Rivalries aside, it's vital for US and Chinese navies to keep talking

By Nong Hong

April 30, 2024

...While cooperation in maritime security remains possible, it is overshadowed by overall US-China competition and geopolitical tensions. In the future, both countries are expected to persist in their

strategic competition across various domains, including military capabilities, technology development, shipbuilding capacity, and influence in both regional and global affairs.

This rivalry may lead to an increased military presence as well as exercises and deployments in strategically significant areas. Therefore, effectively managing differences, fostering trust and adhering to international norms and rules are critical challenges when it comes to advancing US-China cooperation in this vital domain...

Continue Reading:

chinaus-icas.org/research/rivalries-aside-its-vital-for-us-and-chinese-navies-to-keep-talking/

This commentary was [originally](#) released by South China Morning Post on April 30, 2024

— MAP Commentary —

Some Observations on the U.S. Announced Extended Continental Shelf Outer Limits

By Nong Hong

April 8, 2024

On December 19, 2023, the United States Department of State announced the outer limits of its continental shelf in areas beyond 200 nautical miles from the territorial sea baselines, or extended continental shelf (ECS), in various coastal regions including the Arctic, Atlantic (east coast), Bering Sea, Pacific (west coast), Mariana Islands, and two areas in the Gulf of Mexico. The ECS Task Force, chaired by the Department of State, oversees the delineation of these outer limits. The US Geological Survey (USGS) is responsible for collecting, processing, and interpreting seismic and geologic data, while the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) handles bathymetric data collection, processing, and analysis. This has sparked debates regarding whether the United States can bypass the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) to proceed with the delineation of its continental shelf limits...

Continue Reading:

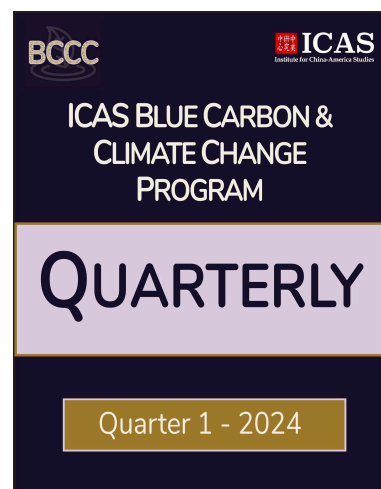
chinaus-icas.org/research/some-observations-on-the-u-s-announced-extended-continental-shelf-outer-limits/

— BCCC Quarterly 2024 Q1 Release —

Blue Carbon & Climate Change 2024 Q1 Has Been Released!

The first week of April, the ICAS Blue Carbon & Climate Change Program released its BCCC Quarterly newsletter for 2024 Q1. This issue features a ‘Theme of the Quarter’ on ‘Renewable Energy Storage’ and a ‘Blue Carbon Country Profile’ on ‘India.’

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.

View & Share the BCCC Quarterly 2024 Q1 Issue: chinaus-icas.org/bccc-quarterly/volume-3-issue-1/

About the BCCC Quarterly & Past Issues:

chinaus-icas.org/icas-blue-carbon-climate-change-program/bccc-quarterly/

Explore the ICAS Blue Carbon & Climate Change Program:

chinaus-icas.org/icas-blue-carbon-climate-change-program/

BCCC Quarterly (Q1 2024) - 20

Blue Carbon Country Profile: India

A. Potential of India in Blue Carbon Affairs

India's vast and diverse marine and coastal ecosystems provide the necessary conditions for the growth of blue carbon ecosystems along the country's coast. Blue carbon is also making significant contributions to India's goals of mitigating climate change and improving coastal resilience through carbon sequestration and ecological protection. At present, India's blue carbon is all found in traditional blue carbon ecosystems, mainly including mangroves, seagrasses, tidal marshes, and salt marshes, and are spread across its lengthy coastline of over 7,500 kilometers. The importance of blue carbon ecosystems also extends beyond their carbon capture capabilities. Blue carbon protects fishery and tourism resources and prevents coastlines from being damaged by natural disasters, playing an important role in supporting the livelihoods of coastal residents along the coastline of India. Moreover, blue carbon has effectively pushed forward India's progress towards achieving its commitment to net-zero emissions in 2070. The total carbon sequestration potential of India's coastal ecosystems is estimated to be around 700 million tonnes of carbon dioxide, accounting for approximately 22% of India's annual carbon emissions, with blue carbon accounting for a major portion of it.

- Amount of seagrass: 517 km² (2023)
- Amount of mangroves: 4991 km² (2023)
- Amount of salt and tidal marshes: 290-1398 km² (due to contradictions in estimates)
- Key Institutions of study on blue carbon: Advanced Centre for Biotechnology and Mangrove Forests of the Institute of Forest Biodiversity
- Key regions of interest: Sundarbans Mangrove Forest, Pichavaram Mangrove Forest, Andaman and Nicobar Islands⁴

⁴ Point and polygon data of blue carbon ecosystems in India. Copyright ICAS/Zhangchen Wang, 2024, made with QGIS. (Source: UN Biodiversity Lab)

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BCCC Quarterly (Q1 2024) - 1

Theme of the Quarter: Renewable Energy Storage

News Stories on Renewable Energy Storage

The Lithium Battery Industry is Facing a Bright but Volatile Future

Development in renewable energy requires the support of advanced energy storage technology, and in this rapidly developing field, batteries—especially lithium batteries—have come to represent the world's most sustainable, cutting-edge energy storage technology. Recent technological achievements, private investments, and policy support all indicate that the battery industry, in its role as an energy storage technology, still has a bright future and will continue to play a critical role in the global transition to renewable energy.

Chinese scientists have recently made major breakthroughs in battery technology. By developing a more powerful winter-proof lithium battery that can charge and operate at temperatures as low as minus 80 degrees Celsius, they have paved the way for high-capacity batteries capable of operating in extreme conditions. Such technological advances offer the opportunity to significantly increase the potential and reliability of batteries for electric vehicles and aviation, and also represent a leap in the ability to store and utilize energy more efficiently under extreme environmental conditions. Investors in other countries have also increased their investment in lithium battery materials in new ways, such as Massachusetts-based Ascend Elements that decided to invest an additional US\$162 million to build a new battery factory in the United States. The factory aims to fundamentally change the production of battery materials, aiming to make lithium batteries more environmentally sustainable through the use of new engineering materials. It hopes to significantly reduce the recycling costs and carbon emissions of lithium batteries. In addition, some scholars predict that U.S. battery storage capacity will nearly double by the end of 2024. This expansion is mainly to cope with the excess power generated by the growing installed capacity of renewable energy sources such as wind and solar energy. The simultaneous growth of battery storage capacity provides a guarantee for the expansion of renewable energy, further boosting the development of renewable energy while ensuring a stable and reliable relationship between energy suppliers and energy consumers.¹

¹ Employees working on a lithium batteries production line at a workshop in Nantong, China on February 29, 2024. (Source: Photo by STRIAFF via Getty Images, Royalty-Free)

ICAS
Institute for China-America Studies

– BCCC Commentary –

The dynamic transition to clean hydrogen requires temporary compromises

By Zhangchen Wang

March 29, 2024

As the lightest and most abundant element in the universe, hydrogen plays a crucial role across a wide range of applications. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), hydrogen serves various industrial purposes, including in the production of fertilizers, serving as a fuel in metal smelting and electricity generation, and functioning as a reactant or catalyst in the manufacture of various chemicals. For sustainable development purposes, the biggest significance and advantages of hydrogen include its roles as a clean energy source and an efficient energy storage carrier...

Continue Reading:

chinaus-icas.org/research/the-dynamic-transition-to-clean-hydrogen-requires-temporary-compromises



ICAS MARITIME AFFAIRS HANDBILL

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Recent News in Global Maritime Affairs

[1] Ocean Governance and Maritime Cooperation [1]

[China, US agree to manage maritime risks through continued dialogue](#)

May 28 - Reuters

[China, United States]

On May 24, representatives from the U.S. and China successfully held consultations on maritime affairs during which they exchanged views—especially on Taiwan and the South China Sea—and agreed to maintain communication in order to avoid misunderstandings and miscalculations.

[Brazil, United States partner to combat illegal fishing](#)

May 24 - Sea Power

[South America, United States]

The Brazilian navy and U.S. Coast Guard have agreed to work together to enhance bilateral relations and address illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, port security, and the facilitation of “safe and lawful maritime commerce and travel.”

[More aid getting from US pier to people in Gaza, officials say, after troubled launch](#)

May 23 - AP News

[Middle East, United States]

After two months of logistical, weather and security challenges, the U.S. finished installing a floating pier off the Gaza Strip to help successfully deliver humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip. This pier effort, also supported by personnel from the United Nations, Israel and World Central Kitchen, is expected to cost \$320 million and help deliver as much as 500 tons of food, though officials continue to report several delivery challenges.

[States have legal duty to cut greenhouse emissions, says top maritime court](#)

May 21 - *The Guardian*

[Global]

The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea ruled that countries are legally obligated to take all necessary actions to prevent marine pollution connected to greenhouse gas emissions. This case, first brought before the court by the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law in December 2022, is led by the nations of Tuvalu and Antigua and Barbuda.

[West, Russia manage limited cooperation in Arctic despite chill in ties](#)

May 14 - *Reuters*

[Arctic Ocean]

Amidst the ongoing pause in relations between Russia and Western Arctic nations following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, current Arctic Council chair Norway successfully paved the way for a simulated virtual oil spill exercise in March that all eight Arctic Council nations took part in.

[Beijing rejects 'groundless' Philippine claims it is trying to build artificial island in South China Sea](#)

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

[South China Sea, Southeast Asia, China]

Continuing the current string of heated verbal exchanges between Beijing and Manila on the South China Sea, China's foreign ministry dismissed claims made by the Philippines that China is attempting to build an artificial island at the disputed Sabina Shoal, calling the claims "groundless and pure fabrication" designed to "mislead the international community."

[Charity warns Italy's ban on migrant rescue planes risks lives](#)

May 9 - *The Local*

[Mediterranean Sea, Europe]

German-based migrant rescue charity Sea Watch pushed back against a new order issued by Italy's civil aviation authority Enac saying charity plans would be seized if they carry out "search and rescue" activities from Sicilian airports, as it is up to the Coast Guard to carry out such missions.

[Jordan, UAE Sign Maritime Cooperation Agreement](#)

May 8 - *Jordan News*

[Middle East]

Jordan's Ministry of Transport, the Jordan Maritime Commission, and the United Arab Emirates' Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure signed a memorandum of understanding to mutually recognize, foster, and enhance bilateral cooperation and exchanges in the maritime sector.

[China, France issue joint statement on deepening marine cooperation](#)

May 7 - CGTN

[China, Europe]

During a rare state visit to France, Chinese President Xi Jinping and French President Emmanuel Macron issued a joint statement to strengthen and finance maritime cooperation on the protection and restoration of marine ecosystems and coastal biodiversity.

[Partners, Allies mark conclusion of first AMFS/NILS-A combined event in Accra, Ghana](#)

May 2 - DVIDS

[Africa, United States]

African Maritime Forces Summit (AMFS) and Naval Infantry Leaders Symposium-Africa (NILS-A) held their first combined event in Ghana, gathering military and government leaders from 41 nations to discuss an array of challenges and opportunities in the maritime domain.

[2] Maritime Security and Defense [2]

[Japan spots Chinese ships near Senkaku Islands for record 158 days](#)

May 27 - *The Japan Times* [Paywall]

[East Asia]

A top government spokesman announced on May 27 that the Japanese coast guard had seen Chinese ships sailing near the disputed Senkaku Islands—known as the Diaoyu Island in China—in the East China Sea for 158 consecutive days, thus breaking a 2021 record of continuous navigations.

[US, EU and other democracies slam mainland China for military drills around Taiwan, urge 'restraint'](#)

May 24 - *South China Morning Post* [Paywall]

Three days after Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te's inaugural speech, China's naval forces launched two-day "punishment" drills around Taiwan, "Joint Sword- 2024A," calling it a response to "separatist acts." The drills included heavily armed warplanes and staged mock attacks around the circumference of the island of Taiwan. The European Union, the U.S. and other democracies openly criticized Beijing's extensive military exercises as an "affront to peace in the region."

[Russian Navy shows off how frigate aims weapons against NATO aircraft](#)

May 23 - *The Barents Observer*

[North Atlantic Ocean, Russia]

During training in the North Atlantic Ocean, the Russian frigate *Admiral Gorshkov* aimed at an approaching P-8 NATO patrol aircraft; one of three 'enemy aircraft' that were approaching, as

described by the Russian military. Only Norway, the United Kingdom and the U.S. operate P-8 patrol aircraft in that area.

[Philippine Commander Denies 'Deal' Over South China Sea Shoal](#)

May 23 - *The Diplomat*

[South China Sea, Indo-Pacific]

The Philippine Navy commander who made a “casual and informal” phone call on January 3 with a Chinese military attaché, which Beijing claims they recorded and contains evidence of an agreement over disputed territory in the South China Sea, testified before a Philippine Senate committee that no such agreement over a “new model” was discussed on the short call.

[Philippines to buy five patrol boats from Japan amid South China Sea tensions](#)

May 18 - *The Japan Times*

[East Asia, Southeast Asia, South China Sea]

The Philippines will be purchasing five patrol vessels from Japan; a purchase that will be financed by a Japanese loan worth US\$415 million. Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo said this cooperation will “deepen” their relationship and “enhance” Philippine’s maritime safety capabilities.

[China and Cambodia begin 15-day military exercises as questions grow about Beijing’s influence](#)

May 16 - AP

[Southeast Asia, China]

On May 16, the Cambodian and Chinese militaries began their regular 15-day 'Golden Dragon' ground and sea military exercises, starting in Cambodia. Three Chinese ships, 11 Cambodian ships, and over 2,000 personnel are involved in this year’s exercises.

[Philippines and US conclude Balikatan exercises, shoulder-to-shoulder](#)

May 16 - U.S. Marines

[South China Sea, United States, Southeast Asia]

The U.S.-Philippines annual Exercise Balikatan 2024 concluded on May 13 after three weeks of training in the Philippines to “increase proficiency in maritime security, amphibious operations, combined arms, aviation operations, and information and cyberspace operations.” This year, Australian and French service members also participated and 14 countries observed.

[Exclusive: U.S. and Taiwan navies quietly held Pacific drills in April](#)

May 14 - Reuters

[Pacific Ocean, United States, East Asia]

According to four anonymous people briefed on the issue, in April, the U.S. and Taiwan navies held joint drills in the Western Pacific that were not officially publicized. Taiwan's navy told Reuters they act "in concert with the U.S.-promoted Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea."

[German Navy Wraps Red Sea Mission, Begins Indo-Pacific Deployment](#)

May 10 - Naval News

[Red Sea, Pacific Ocean]

After spending two months on maritime escort missions in the Red Sea, Germany's anti air frigate FGS Hessen returned to its home port of Wilhelmshaven on May 5 just as two other ships—125-frigate *Baden-Wuerttemberg* and combat support ship *Frankfurt am Main*—departed Germany on May 7 to begin Berlin's long-planned Indo-Pacific Deployment 2024.

[Northern hubs to be pillar of Canada's new defence policy, Blair says](#)

May 6 - Nunatsiaq News

[Canada, Arctic Ocean]

Canada's Defence Minister Bill Blair announced the introduction of northern operational support hubs for the Canadian Armed Forces to better support Arctic sovereignty and security.

[China's newest aircraft carrier begins first sea trials](#)

May 1 - *The Japan Times* [Paywall]

[China, Pacific Ocean]

China's newest Fujian aircraft carrier, its third and most advanced so far, began its first sea trials on May 1, departing from Shanghai Jiangnan Shipyard. With technical requirements and mooring trials already completed, these sea trials will "primarily test the reliability and stability of the aircraft carrier's propulsion and electrical systems."

[Houthis Resume Near Daily Red Sea Activity, Claim to Hit Israel-Linked Ship in Indian Ocean](#)

April 30 - USNI News

[Red Sea, Indian Ocean]

Following a nine-day pause from April 16-24, drone and missile attacks by Houthi rebels in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden against commercial and military vessels recommenced at almost a daily pace.

[3] Maritime Economy and Shipping [3]

[First cruise ship sets sail from Port of Baltimore since Key Bridge collapse: 'It's a good day'](#)

May 25 - *The Baltimore Sun*

[United States, Global]

After two months of clean up, recovery and legal investigations following the sudden collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore, Maryland, a cruise ship has departed from the Port of Baltimore for the first time; a positive sign for the popular port's resumption of normal operations.

[Congress to Fund U.S. Deep-Sea Mining Project](#)

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

[United States]

The House Armed Services Committee told the U.S. Department of Defense to commit US\$2 million towards a new deep-sea mining project with a partner "experienced in refining critical minerals and producing battery-grade" metals. This project would only begin with the confirmation of the defense budget, which still needs to pass through both Congress and the White House.

[Houthi missile strikes tanker in the Red Sea](#)

May 20 - *Seatrade Maritime News*

[Indian Ocean]

U.S. Central Command said a Panama-flagged tanker the *Wind*, reportedly traveling from Russia to China, experienced flooding after an early-morning attack on May 18 by the Yemen-based Houthi rebels. In early May, the Houthis extended the range of their attacks in the Western Indian Ocean and threatened to strike vessels in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea that are calling Israeli ports.

[U.S. Fears Undersea Cables Are Vulnerable to Espionage From Chinese Repair Ships](#)

May 19 - *The Wall Street Journal* [Paywall]

[China, United States]

Technology companies like Google and Meta Platforms partially own many undersea fiber optic internet cables, but they rely on specialists for maintenance. U.S. State Department officials have reportedly begun warning companies against tampering by Chinese repair ships. Simultaneously, the number of subsea telecommunication cables projects connected with China is decreasing.

[Flooding Slows Cargo Movement at Brazil's Rio Grande Port](#)

May 17 - *qCaptain*

[South America, Atlantic Ocean]

Deadly flooding from excess rains continues to limit food production and cargo movement at Rio Grande port in Brazil. Although all port terminals are still operating, port authorities expect the disruptions to persist through at least the end of May.

[US East Coast Ports Are Spending Billions to Profit From Asia's Shifting Exports](#)

May 14 - *Bloomberg* [Paywall]

[United States, Atlantic Ocean]

Strategic planners at several U.S. East Coast ports are upgrading and expanding their port infrastructure to better compete with their West Coast, Pacific Ocean counterparts and prepare for the “reglobalization” that has industries shifting their supply chains away from China.

[Shipping sector will use three times as much blue ammonia as green in 2050, says EU-funded study](#)

May 13 - *Hydrogen Insight*

[Global, Europe]

According to a new European Union-funded whitepaper, entitled "Availability of Green and Blue Ammonia in 2030 to 2050," the global demand for clean ammonia as a shipping fuel will rapidly increase between 2030 and 2050, with blue hydrogen taking the lead.

[Chinese Shipping Costs Spike on Red Sea Crisis, Robust Demand](#)

May 13 - *Caixin Global*

[China, Red Sea, Global]

The Shanghai Containerized Freight Index has increased by nearly 19% since April and is at its highest since late September 2022 as freight rates for Chinese container exports spiked over the first two weeks of May amidst an uptick in Red Sea attacks.

[Norwegian oilmen prepare for far northern drilling at disputed Wisting field](#)

May 8 - *The Barents Observer*

[Arctic Ocean, Barents Sea, Northern Europe]

Four oil drilling partners are set to launch operations in Wisting field, located in the central regions of the Barents Sea off the northern coast of Norway, starting in May 2024. Discovered in 2013 and long protested to be drilled by environmental organizations, Wisting field is believed to hold more than 500 million barrels of oil equivalent.

[Maersk says Red Sea disruption could cut Asia-Europe capacity by 20%](#)

May 6 - Reuters

[Red Sea, Global, Europe, Asia]

Danish shipping and logistics company Maersk forecasts that disruptions along the Red Sea route due to Houthi rebels attacks will cut the shipping industry's capacity between Asia and Europe by up to 20% in the second quarter of 2024.

[4] Climate Change and Blue Carbon Economy [4]

[Hatch Blue and Idemitsu launch unique blue carbon initiative](#)

May 22 - The Fish Site

[East Asia]

Hatch Blue, an investment fund for aquaculture and seafood innovation based in Hawaii, and Idemitsu, a Japanese energy company, have joint plans to launch a blue carbon initiative to attract and incentivize startups and innovators to better decarbonize the ocean.

[Sea law tribunal advises countries are legally required to reduce greenhouse gas emissions](#)

May 21 - JURISTNews

[Global]

On May 21, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) issued a groundbreaking advisory opinion, holding that parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) have the obligation to prevent, reduce and control greenhouse gas emissions that could deleteriously affect the marine environment through climate change.

[More than 60% of world's coral reefs may have bleached in past year, NOAA says](#)

May 16 - Reuters

[Atlantic Ocean, Global]

NOAA's Coral Reef Watch coordinator Derek Manzello said he is "very worried about the state of the world's coral reefs," noting that the "Atlantic Ocean has been off the charts." NOAA now reports that about 60.5% of the world's reef area has been affected by rising ocean temperatures, resulting in coral bleaching.

[WWF researchers surprised at where climate-driven fish migration will cause issues](#)

May 10 - Seafood Source

[Australia, Global]

The World Wildlife Fund's Ocean Futures Project released its first set of results, with the 'hotspots' being driven by problems including ice melts, regional unrest, and overfishing.

[Acoustic Recordings Reveal Possible Comeback for Critically Endangered Antarctic Blue Whales](#)

May 7 - EcoWatch

[Southern Ocean, South Pacific]

Data from acoustic surveys in the Antarctic region suggested that the population of Antarctic blue whales have likely increased. However, experts say more work is needed to address knowledge gaps about these endangered Antarctic blue whales and conclusively understand change in their population.

[Indian Ocean's Massive CO2 Storage Potential to Propel India's Decarbonization Goals](#)

May 7 - Carbon Credits

[Indian Ocean]

The Indian Ocean is being looked at as a promising site for permanently storing major amounts of carbon dioxide. The CO2 would be stored in liquid pools or solid hydrates at specific depths that researchers believe are not harmful to the marine ecosystems.

[Warming seas killing clownfish, marine expert says](#)

May 6 - The Nation Thailand

[Southeast Asia, Global]

A Thai scientist warned of the indirect consequences from global warming as high temperatures interrupt the symbiotic cycles in nature, such as the one between sea anemones and clownfish.

Handbill Spotlight

Baltic Sea

Issue Background

The Baltic Sea is a large, shallow, brackish inland sea of the North Atlantic Ocean found in the northeastern part of the European continent. Bordered by Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Germany, Poland, Russia, and the three Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), it is thinly connected to the North Sea through a series of Danish straits flowing around the Jutland peninsula and is home to four gulfs and an array of archipelagos. Due to its unique and centralized geography, the Baltic Sea has long played a critical role in seaborne trade, regional diplomacy and scientific research.

The Baltic Sea's [geography](#) is not only expansive but unique. With an area of around 377,000 km², it is the second largest inland sea in the world, only coming in second to the Mediterranean Sea. Due to its large inflow of freshwater from its massive catchment area—the area from which the sea gets its water, which in this case is four times the size of the sea itself—and its [lethargic](#) exchange of

water with the North Sea and the Atlantic Ocean beyond due to differing densities, its salinity remains considerably low, making the Baltic Sea arguably the largest body of brackish water in the world. Furthermore, though its deepest point is about 460 meters, its average depth is only 54 meters; a depth that is considered extremely shallow compared to its peers. It also contains several largest hypoxic (low-oxygen) areas, both natural and human-made. This variety makes it a keen body of interest and importance for environmentalists and [scientists](#) alike who work to [study](#)—or protect—the sea’s wide array of sea life.¹

Its breadth and central location also made it a [historically](#) vital trade route, dating back to the medieval period and it remains one of the busiest seas today. The man-made Kiel Canal—finished in 1895 but supposedly [theorized](#) since the 7th century—that cuts across the now-German state of Schleswig-Holstein now allows ships to avoid encircling Denmark’s Jutland to reach the North Sea, further easing trade with the inland sea.

Today, the Baltic Sea remains a core of European trade and institutional importance, especially with the extensive installation of [submarine cables](#) now fuelling communication and power in the region. As naval power and regional instabilities are surging, regional parties are increasingly [concerned](#) about Baltic Sea security and looking to prevent conflict before it arises, breeding an uptick in maritime naval exercises and legal protections. In 1992, the Council of the Baltic Sea States and its rotating presidency was [established](#) to help regulate and address governance of the Baltic Sea.



¹ Image Source: A political map of the Baltic Sea identifying major cities and features of the region. (Source: [Nations Online Project](#))

Recent Events

The Baltic Sea is witness to a myriad of events and intrigue, especially as of late. In April, archeologists identified what they believe may be Europe's [oldest human-made megastructure](#), from the Palaeolithic era, located 21 meters below the surface of the Bay of Mecklenburg, Germany. Similarly, researchers are again contemplating how [coins from the Roman Empire](#) landed on a remote island in the Baltic Sea, analyzing how [sacrificial horses](#) crossed the Baltic Sea during the Late Viking Age, and finally announcing after 13 years of study that a [mysterious, oddly-shaped structure](#) lying 90 meters underwater is likely a natural phenomenon.

Simultaneously, scientists and observers have been paying heavy attention to the Baltic Sea's toxic thallium levels, which a new [study](#) finds is [dominantly](#) human-wrought and have “fundamentally changed the chemistry of the Baltic Sea.” These findings of increased thallium—a metal toxic to mammals and marine ecosystems—has already brought [reprimand](#) upon regional industrial and wartime activities from the 1940s to the present and can be [expected](#) to continue. Other environmental battles have been brought to light in the last month: debates on the [economically](#) sound [scrubber](#) systems on ships that large volumes of pollutant; the slow [extinction](#) of Baltic herring and its link to Norwegian salmon; new [examinations](#) of the interplay between groundwater emissions and Baltic Sea pollution; and the [recovery](#) of tens of thousands of tonnes of chemical weapons, munitions and unexploded bombs dumped into the Black Sea. Positive battles towards sustainability are also highlighted, such as the installation of the Baltic Sea's largest [wind farm](#) and a fresh effort by two ports in Sweden and Finland to [cut port waiting times](#), which thus reduces fuel consumption and carbon emissions.

Even more pressing to most is the Baltic Sea's role in regional security as it pertains to Russia. In mid-May, the Russian Defense Ministry released a draft government decree unilaterally proposing a [change to Russia's maritime borders](#) with Lithuania and Finland in the Baltic Sea; a release that was deleted from the official document portal on May 22 and has since been [denied](#) by authorities. Not long before, Lithuanian intelligence [released](#) a report describing Russian military plans of a standoff with NATO nations in the Baltic Sea region lasting “at least several years.” Estonia's defense commander [proposed](#) blockading the Baltic Sea to reduce options for aggressors as broader [concerns](#) of an escalation into direct NATO country involvement in the Ukraine conflict still hover. Russia is also being linked to several cases of electronic warfare over the Baltic Sea, applying [mass GPS jamming](#) across northern Europe and impacting both commercial and [military](#) aircraft.

Keep In Mind

The Baltic Sea will inevitably remain relevant in global maritime affairs, especially when it comes to the geopolitics of NATO states and the West's relations with Russia. While there is much recent talk centered around sustainability and climate preservation—perhaps linked to the European Union's [commemoration](#) of the 50 year anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Convention, which was primarily established by Baltic Sea coastal states to defend the region's marine environment—the security narrative should be expected to take precedence at the multinational level. Regardless,

climate activists, scientists and even treasure hunters will continue to value this body of water's unique properties and historic significance.

Most notably, with Sweden's ascension to NATO member country status in March 2024, all coastal states of the Baltic Sea—excluding Russia—are now NATO member countries. Increased NATO security talks, [workshops](#) and naval exercises in the Baltic Sea are inevitable for the future, with the newly revived, annual Estonian Navy-led operation [Open Spirit 2024](#) and the Iceland-based, multinational anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare exercise [Dynamic Mongoose 24](#) being two examples. Russia's Baltic Sea coastline is admittedly short, but that does not detract from its threat level, especially with St. Petersburg—Russia's second-largest city—sitting on that coast and talks of nuclear weapons hovering over every conversation. So long as the Ukraine-Russia conflict continues and fears of Russia's [nuclear](#)—or other destabilizing—activities persist, the Baltic Sea will need to remain a place of vigilant defense.

This issue's [Spotlight](#) was written by Jessica Martin, ICAS Research Associate & Chief Editor, ICAS Newsletters.

Peer-Reviewed Research on Maritime Issues

Government Releases & Other Press Statements

- Government of the Philippines: [“PH, Brunei sign deals on tourism, food security, maritime, agriculture, seafaring”](#) [May 28]
- United Nations Institute for Training and Research: [“The Atlantic Centre and UNITAR sign MOU: Collaboration on maritime security, port governance training and capacity development”](#) [May 27]
- U.S. Navy: [“U.S. Pacific Fleet Announces 29th RIMPAC Exercise”](#) [May 22]
- International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea: [“Request for an Advisory Opinion Submitted by the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law”](#) [May 21]
- The White House: [“National Security Memorandum on United States Policy on the Antarctic Region”](#) [May 17]
- U.S. Marine Corps: [“Philippines and U.S. Conclude Balikatan Exercises, Shoulder-to-Shoulder”](#) [May 10]
- German Bundeswehr: [“German Navy Begins Indo-Pacific Deployment 2024”](#) [May 8] [[In German](#)]
- U.S. Attorney's Office: [“Honduran cartel boat captain sentenced for trafficking tons of cocaine to the United States”](#) [May 8]
- ASEAN: [“31st ASEAN-EU Joint Cooperation Committee \(JCC\) Meeting”](#) [May 8]
- Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of India: [“MA Xinmin's Keynote Speech at the Symposium on “South China Sea Arbitration Awards and International Law: Analyzing the illegality and invalidity of the South China Sea Arbitration Awards via six ‘whys’”](#) [May 8]
- Economic Community of West African States: [“Government experts meeting on the draft Supplementary Act relating to cooperation in suppressing illicit maritime activities in the ECOWAS region.”](#) [May 8]
- World Wildlife Fund: [“The EU is not on track for a sustainable blue future”](#) [May 7]
- U.S. Department of State: [“Actions Against Executives of Colombian Maritime Transportation Companies that Facilitate Irregular Migration”](#) [May 6]
- Government of France: [“De Kunming-Montréal à Nice : Déclaration conjointe pour une coopération renforcée entre la France et la Chine sur la Biodiversité et l’Océan. \[From Kunming-Montreal to Nice: Joint](#)

[declaration for strengthened cooperation between France and China on Biodiversity and the Ocean.](#)] [May 6] [[PRC Release, in Chinese](#)]

- Consulate-General of the People's Republic of China in Cebu: [“Remarks of the Spokesperson of the Chinese Embassy in the Philippines”](#) [May 4] [[In Chinese](#)]
- Shipping Lab: [“The Danish Innovation Fund invests in new, groundbreaking ShippingLab project”](#) [May 1]
- Delegation of the European Union to Kenya: [“BlueInvest Africa 2024: An Ocean of Sustainable and Innovative Opportunities in Africa”](#) [April 30]

Analyses & Opinions

- [“Escalating emissions: How disruption from Houthi attacks in the Red Sea is challenging companies by driving up carbon emissions”](#) [Reuters - May 28]
- [“America Needs More Predator Submarines to Stop China”](#) [Bloomberg - May 28] [Paywall]
- [“In the South China Sea, Beijing can ill afford to be seen as a bully”](#) [South China Morning Post - May 28] [Paywall]
- [“How the Collins submarine fleet went from zero to hero”](#) [Aus Marine - May 28]
- [“Buried kelp: seaweed carried to the deep sea stores more carbon than we thought”](#) [The Conversation - May 27]
- [“NASA Langley researchers are heading to the Arctic. Here's why that matters.”](#) [The Virginian-Pilot - May 27]
- [“This nascent trilateral relationship is the best possible answer to China”](#) [The Washington Post - May 27] [Paywall]
- [“National Security Memorandum on United States Policy on the Antarctic Region: Reactions and Analyses”](#) [Wilson Center Polar Institute - May 24]
- [“Scaling ocean-based CDR: a necessity for climate mitigation”](#) [DigiTimes Asia - May 23]
- [“China's Sea Power Leaves U.S. Adrift”](#) [The Wall Street Journal - May 22] [Paywall]
- [“Undersea chokepoints: The Red Sea cable disruptions”](#) [Observer Research Foundation - May 21]
- [“France, New Caledonia and the Indo-Pacific”](#) [Australian Strategic Policy Institute - May 20]
- [“How the Shipping Industry Is Trying to Cut Its Billion Tons of CO2 Emissions”](#) [Bloomberg - May 20] [Paywall]
- [“China Needed Funds to Complete an Aircraft Carrier; U.S. Investors May Have Helped”](#) [Defense Opinion - May 20]
- [“Now is no time for the US to lose its focus on Pacific islands”](#) [Australian Strategic Policy Institute - May 20]
- [“The U.S. Navy Can't Build Ships”](#) [Foreign Policy - May 17] [Paywall]
- [“Chinese aircraft carrier's voyage hints at plan for 'post-U.S.' navy”](#) [Nikkei Asia - May 17] [Paywall]
- [“PLA remains focused on the Asia-Pacific and building resilience”](#) [International Institute for Strategic Studies - May 16]
- [“Gulf of Guinea Maritime Security: Lessons, Latency, and Law Enforcement”](#) [War on the Rocks] [May 15]
- [“Ukraine Conflict Likely to Intrude on Antarctic Diplomacy”](#) [Wilson Center - May 14]
- [“CHIPS and Ships: Time to Stop Gambling with U.S. Seapower”](#) [Defense Opinion - May 14]
- [“Peru Learns to Read the Fine Print in China Deals”](#) [Foreign Policy - May 13] [Paywall]
- [“U.S. builds web of arms, ships and bases in the Pacific to deter China”](#) [The Japan Times - May 11] [Paywall]
- [“Wanted in the South China Sea: more marine peace parks”](#) [South China Morning Post - May 11] [Paywall]
- [“Malaysia's appetite for oil and gas puts it on collision course with China”](#) [The Washington Post - May 11] [Paywall]
- [“The Tiny Nation at the Vanguard of Mining the Ocean Floor”](#) [The New York Times - May 10] [Paywall]
- [“The crucial role of public/private partnerships in the Red Sea crisis”](#) [Center for International Maritime Security - May 10]

- [“Don’t overestimate China’s ambitions in the Arctic”](#) [Australian Strategic Policy Institute - May 9]
- [“The fight over fish attractors in the Indian Ocean”](#) [Dialogue Earth - May 9]
- [“China’s Long March Toward Aircraft Carrier Capability”](#) [Defense Opinion - May 8]
- [“Escalation beneath the waves: The looming threat of Houthi UUVs in the Red Sea”](#) [Center for International Maritime Security - May 8]
- [“Submarine modernisation plans and new sub-surface dynamics”](#) [International Institute for Strategic Studies - May 7]
- [“China’s calculated inaction in the Red Sea crisis”](#) [Center for International Maritime Security - May 6]
- [“U.S. Widens China Trade Fight to Shipbuilding Which It Lost Decades Ago”](#) [Caixin Global - May 6]
- [“Insight: Sea drone warfare has arrived. The U.S. is floundering.”](#) [Reuters - May 6]
- [“How Western Sanctions Are Strangling Putin’s Arctic Gas Ambitions”](#) [Bloomberg - May 4] [Paywall]
- [“U.K. leverages logistics support agreement to expand maritime cooperation with India”](#) [The Hindu - May 4]
- [“Between them, Australia, France and India can watch the Indian Ocean”](#) [Australian Strategic Policy Institute - May 3]
- [“Countering China’s Red Dragon over the South China Sea”](#) [Center for a New American Security - May 3]
- [“Developing the Blue Carbon Economy in Greece”](#) [Touvima - May 3]
- [“Beijing Is Playing a Dangerous Game in the South China Sea”](#) [Bloomberg - May 2] [Paywall]
- [“China Has 350 Warships. The US Has 290. That’s a Problem.”](#) [Bloomberg - May 1] [Paywall]
- [“How the US can set standards on international deep-sea mineral mining”](#) [South China Morning Post - May 1] [Paywall]
- [“Assuring Deterrence in the Mediterranean”](#) [The Jerusalem Strategic Tribune - May 2024]
- [“Restoring China’s vanishing oyster reefs”](#) [Dialogue Earth - April 30] [[In Chinese](#)]

Other Research

- Podcast: Just Security: [“A Landmark Court Opinion on the Ocean and Climate Change”](#) [May 28]
- Podcast: Center for Maritime Strategy - Maritime Nation: [“Securing the Commercial Maritime Industry”](#) [May 22]
- Magazine: U.S. Naval Institute - [Proceedings Vol. 150/5/1455 “International Navies Issue”](#) [May]
- Publication: Maritime New Zealand - [Sea Change Issue 108](#) [April]
- Report: Economic Impact - [“How to increase the impact of marine protected areas \(MPAs\)”](#) [May 12]
- Report: Urban Ocean Lab - [Climate-Driven Relocation for Coastal Cities: Principles and Recommendations](#) [April]
- Report: U.S. Congress - [Congressional Guidance for a National Maritime Strategy: Reversing the Decline of America’s Maritime Power](#) [April 30]
- Scientific Article: nature - [“Carbon export from seaweed forests to deep ocean sinks”](#) [May 22]
- Scientific Article: Global Change Biology - [“It’s time to broaden what we consider a ‘blue carbon ecosystem’”](#) [May 7]

Events on the Maritime Domain

- On May 1, Stimson Center hosted an online discussion titled [“Climate Diplomacy in South Asia: Transboundary Challenges, Collective Solutions.”](#)
- On May 6, Wilson Center and the European Union held a webinar on [“EU-US Arctic Cooperation.”](#)
- On May 6, the Delegation of the European Union to India organized a Road to Schuman event titled [“The security environment in the Indo-Pacific region and the EU’s role as security actor in partnership/cooperation with India”](#) to gather experts in academia, defense, diplomacy and security.
- On May 9, East-West Center held a virtual seminar titled [“Wedging and Binding: Beijing and Russia in China’s Disputes with India and Vietnam.”](#)
- On May 13, Council on Foreign Relations hosted a [“Robert B. McKeon Endowed Series on Military Strategy and Leadership.”](#) gathering six top leaders from across each of the armed forces of the U.S. to discuss U.S. defense priorities around the world and the state of the American armed forces.
- On May 22, Center for Maritime Security held a webinar [“Securing the Commercial Maritime Industry.”](#)
- On May 28, Wilson Center and the Natural Resources Defense Council co-sponsored an online event titled [“The High Seas Treaty and Latin America’s Role in Marine Conservation.”](#)
- On May 28, Columbia University’s Sabin Center for Climate Change Law co-hosted an online event titled [“Expanding Horizons: The ITLOS Advisory Opinion on Climate Change.”](#)
- From May 30–31, the European Commission will co-organize [European Maritime Day](#) in Svendborg, Denmark to provide a space for Europe’s maritime community to “discuss and outline joint action on maritime affairs and sustainable blue economy.”
- From May 31–June 2, the International Institute for Strategic Studies will hold its [Shangri-La Dialogue 2024](#), Asia’s premier summit where defense ministers gather to debate the region’s pressing challenges and engage bilaterally to produce fresh solutions.
- From June 3–5, John Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory and the National Museum of Natural History will host the biennial [3rd National Workshop on Marine eDNA](#).
- From June 4–6, the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation and its sponsors are celebrating its [Capitol Hill Ocean Week 2024](#) in Washington, D.C. involving an extensive agenda of speakers and events.
- On June 12, the Environmental Peacebuilding Association will hold an online session during its 3rd International Conference to discuss how [“Blue Parks Offer a Promising Model for Peacebuilding in Transboundary Water Issues.”](#)
- On June 12, Center for Strategic & International Studies will hold a [Fireside Conversation with Bob Wilt, CEO of Ma’aden on “International Minerals Diplomacy.”](#)
- From June 13–14, Banca d’Italia and the International Monetary Fund are holding a hybrid research conference in Venice, Italy on [“Embedding Sustainability in Credit Risk Assessment”](#) to highlight “how sustainability factors, especially climate change and environmental issues, can be integrated in credit risk assessment,” among other topics.
- On June 19, the National Oceanography Centre will host [Marine Measurement Forum 66](#)—a “series of one-day, non-profit making events” for the “informal exchange of ideas, knowledge, techniques and developments across an extensive range of marine scientific measurement activities”—in Southampton, United Kingdom. Registration is still open.

ICAS Maritime Affairs Program: New and Upcoming

— Maritime Issue Brief —

Big Wave and Undercurrent: Washington's Duo-Track Efforts to Compete with China in the Global Maritime Influence

By Yilun Zhang & Amanda Jin

May 23, 2024

Key Takeaways

- Washington's efforts to strengthen U.S. shipbuilding and the U.S. shipping industry derived not only from economic and trade concerns, but also from essential needs under the strategic competition. The industrial capacity of shipbuilding and influence in the global maritime logistics industry represent two cornerstones of leadership in the international maritime domain as the United States seeks to secure its control of the sea against a rapidly rising China.
- Although the U.S. commercial shipbuilding industry has been in general decline since the Second World War, the impact of the shipbuilding capability decline on U.S. naval power was not felt until recently, when the U.S. Navy struggled to keep up with China's pace in terms of producing more capable warships. Under the strategic competition, it is imminent for the U.S. to strengthen its shipbuilding capacity even if it is against economic common sense.
- After realizing that the gravity of global shipping and supply chains moved to Asia and mainland China, U.S. policymakers made a multitude of efforts to strengthen the U.S. shipping industry to secure U.S. export interests and ensure U.S. influence over global shipping, maritime connectivity and trade. Nevertheless, the U.S. shipping industry still lagged behind significantly in key industrial upgrades and could need exceptional policy support.
- Among the Biden administration's effort to enhance U.S. shipping competitiveness, U.S. agencies made several efforts to enhance its grasp over global shipping regulation, especially by eliminating barriers between law enforcement teams and civil regulators. This criminal-civil fusion has enabled criminal law enforcement to benefit from the monitoring power, industrial expertise and investigative capability of civil regulators.



Read Online:

chinaus-icas.org/research/big-wave-and-undercurrent-washingtons-duo-track-efforts-to-compete-with-china-in-the-global-maritime-influence/

– MAP Commentary –

A Landmark Advisory Opinion: ITLOS Strengthens Legal Framework for Climate Action

By Nong Hong

May 28, 2024

On May 21, 2024, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) issued a groundbreaking Advisory Opinion on climate change, which marks a historic first - an international legal body directly addressing state obligations for mitigating climate change, a critical step forward in holding nations accountable for their actions...



The ITLOS Advisory Opinion on Climate Change is a pivotal moment, offering a stronger legal foundation for international climate action. However, its long-term impact depends on how effectively states translate this legal framework into concrete policy changes and actions. This decision serves as a powerful call to action for states to step up their efforts to combat climate change and protect our oceans.

Continue Reading:

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ICAS MARITIME AFFAIRS HANDBILL

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Recent News in Global Maritime Affairs

[1] Ocean Governance and Maritime Cooperation [1]

[US resumes aid delivery into Gaza using floating pier but distribution has not resumed](#)

June 21 - CNN

[Middle East, United States]

U.S. Central Command resumed aid deliveries into the Gaza Strip from its temporary pier starting June 20, though aid distribution has been paused. A week earlier, the pier had been temporarily dismantled to avoid damages from heavy seas, marking the second time it had been dismantled.

[S. Korea to host global ocean conference next year](#)

June 18 - Yonhap News Agency

[East Asia, Global]

South Korea's Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries announced that it will host the international 10th Our Ocean Conference, which will run for three days under the slogan "Our Ocean, Our Action."

[Armada Technologies and Qatar Shipyard Technology Solutions Sign an MoU](#)

June 17 - *The Maritime Executive*

[Middle East, Europe]

UK-based Armada Technologies and Qatar Shipyard Technology Solutions have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to collaborate on installing Passive Air Lubrication Systems on vessels owned by the latter, which will reduce operating costs and improve energy efficiency.

[China Coast Guard's new 60-day detention rules take effect](#)

June 15 - *The Japan Times*

[East Asia]

The Chinese Coast Guard's updated regulations, which were announced in May and allow it to detain foreign nationals suspected of trespassing within "waters under China's jurisdiction" for up to 60 days, took effect on June 15.

[Philippines files UN claim to extended continental shelf in South China Sea](#)

June 15 - *Reuters*

[South China Sea, Global]

On June 15, the Philippines filed a claim with the United Nations for an extended continental shelf in the South China Sea. Manila stated the claim was submitted to enact its entitlement to its "exclusive right to explore and exploit natural resources" in the contested area.

[Greece to Cap Number of Cruise Ships to Cope With Over-tourism](#)

June 14 - *Greek Reporter*

[Mediterranean Sea]

In an interview with *Bloomberg*, Greece Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said that he plans to restrict the number of cruise ship visits to some of Greece's islands next year in an attempt to curb the impacts of over-tourism.

[Vietnam tells China they must respect each other's maritime rights and interests](#)

June 12 - *South China Morning Post*

[East Asia]

In his meeting with Chinese Ambassador Xiong Bo, Vietnam's President To Lam said that while managing bilateral relations with China is a foreign policy priority, "both sides need to...respect each other's legitimate [maritime] rights and interests." President Lam further indicated Hanoi's willingness to strengthen bilateral exchanges and deepen China-Vietnam relations.

[China maintains stance on disputed Gulf islands despite Iran's anger](#)

June 3 - *Reuters*

[Middle East, China]

In the last week of May, China expressed support for efforts by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to reach a "peaceful solution" over three disputed islands in the Gulf—the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa—that have been held by Iran but claimed by both Iran and the UAE since 1971. Iran became angry over the "baseless claims" and summoned the Chinese ambassador in protest.

[Philippines, Brunei sign deal on closer maritime cooperation, with eye on Beijing in South China Sea](#)

May 29 - *South China Morning Post*
[Southeast Asia, South China Sea]

During his first official visit to Brunei, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. signed a deal with Brunei's Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah to boost "stability." The deal, one of several, also includes a joint commitment to develop maritime capabilities through training, research and information sharing.

[2] Maritime Security and Defense [2]

[Maritime Security Committee is back again](#)

June 23 - *Fiji Times*
[Pacific Ocean]

Fiji's Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration re-established the Maritime Security Committee to prepare to address both traditional and non-traditional threats in the maritime space from a legislative view. Its inaugural three-day session was held in mid-June at a resort in Pacific Harbour.

[Houthis Release Video Footage of Blowing Up MV Tutor Ship in the Red Sea](#)

June 22 - *Marine Insight*
[Red Sea, Europe]

After more than 60 launched attacks targeting ships in the Red Sea since November 2023 and months of defensive measures by regional and global navies, Houthi rebels have sunk a second ship in the Red Sea region, the Liberian-flagged and Greek-owned bulk carrier the *Tutor*.

[Philippines won't invoke mutual defense treaty with US after Chinese confrontation at disputed shoal](#)

June 21 - AP
[South China Sea, United States, Indo-Pacific]

Amidst a lengthy string of reports of physical and verbal exchanges between Chinese and Philippine navies and vessels over the disputed Second Thomas Shoal in the South China Sea, Manila announced that it has no plans to invoke its mutual defense treaty with the United States.

[Ukraine unveils new versatile sea drone](#)

June 18 - *TVP World*
[Black Sea, Global]

Ukraine has revealed its new unmanned surface vessel "Stalker 5.0", which is capable of reaching speeds of up to 40 knots and operating across a 600 kilometer range. The new drone was

introduced during the Black Sea Security Forum held in Odesa, Ukraine from June 14-16, which focused on addressing regional security issues related to the war in Ukraine.

[Russian warships leave Havana's port after a 5-day visit to Cuba](#)

June 17 - AP

[Caribbean Sea, Russia]

In mid-June, a fleet of Russian warships successfully paid a five-day port visit to Cuba's port of Havana as part of planned military drills in the Atlantic Ocean. U.S. officials said the port visit—which included a nuclear-powered submarine, a frigate, an oil tanker and a rescue tug—was carefully monitored by the United States and not deemed to be a threat to the region.

[China warns against Dutch naval 'intrusion', disputes East China Sea encounter](#)

June 11 - *South China Morning Post*

[East China Sea, Europe]

Two Chinese fighter jets and a PLA helicopter approached a Dutch maritime combat helicopter, accompanied by a Dutch navy frigate while in international airspace. The Dutch frigate was patrolling part of the East China Sea in support of the multinational UN coalition Pacific Archer 24.

[Brazil Lays Keel Of Second Tamandaré-Class Frigate](#)

June 8 - *Naval News*

[South America, Europe]

On June 6, the Brazilian Navy, Germany-based engineering company thyssenkrupp, and their partners celebrated the keel laying of Brazil's most modern frigate, the *Jerônimo de Albuquerque*, which is the second of Brazil's four planned Tamandaré-class stealth guided-missile frigates.

[EU forces committed to keeping sealanes open against security threats](#)

May 31 - *Seatrade Maritime News*

[Red Sea, Europe, Global]

European Union naval leaders from EUNAVFOR ASPIDES, the Combined Maritime Forces and Operation AGENOR, gathered at the 15th Industrial Strategic Meeting in Madrid, reiterated their commitment to keeping sealanes open against security threats in the Indian Ocean and Red Sea.

[Lebanon launches first maritime strategy, including focus on maritime border security](#)

May 31 - *Breaking Defense*

[Africa]

On May 28, the Lebanese government approved the first formalized maritime strategy plan that involves the use of US\$7.6 million in aid from the European Union. The strategy specifically notes

maritime security challenges involving the protection of communication cables, border control, and search and rescue missions.

[Sea-based launch startup scores \\$2.5 million Pentagon contract](#)

May 29 - *Space News*
[United States]

The Pentagon's Defense Innovation Unit has awarded a US\$2.5 million contract to The Spaceport Company for developing sea-based launch platforms for rockets. This technology hopes to reduce vulnerability and increase flexibility for spaceport launches.

[3] Maritime Economy and Shipping [3]

[AI Image Tools May Help Autonomous Ships Drive Safely in the Arctic](#)

June 23 - *The Maritime Executive*
[Arctic Ocean]

To enable autonomous navigation in dangerous Arctic waters, PhD candidate Nabil Panchi has developed an algorithm that could remove weather's influence on image clarity and enhance algorithm accuracy for autonomous navigation in poor Arctic weather conditions.

[Russia Transshipping Fish Through Norway to Avoid Dutch Shipping Ban](#)

June 21 - *The Maritime Executive*
[Barents Sea]

A Norwegian public broadcaster reported a case of Russia operating ship-to-ship transfers of frozen fish, likely from the Barents Sea, in an attempt to avoid EU sanctions against Russia. Russia has previously used ship-to-ship transference in secluded regions to transport oil, reports say.

[Using China as a Foil, Peru Pitches New Port to American Investors](#)

June 13 - *Bloomberg*
[South America, United States, China]

Having noticed the United States' growing concern of Chinese investments in Latin America, Peru's Ambassador to the U.S. Alfredo Ferrero pitched a new Corio port project to U.S. private investors by calling it a potential "counterweight to China's chancay project" in Peru.

[DP World upgrades terminals in Latin America](#)

June 12 - *Seatrade Maritime News*

[South America, Pacific Ocean]

DP World, a UAE-based multinational logistics company, has announced a US\$400 million and a US\$140 million expansion in its ports located in Peru and Ecuador, respectively. This investment is expected to greatly boost the capacity and equipment efficiency at these South American ports.

[Red Sea ships attacks push 47% more crude oil, fuels around Africa](#)

June 11 - *Reuters*

[Africa, Red Sea, Global]

The U.S. Energy Information Administration reported that global crude oil and oil product shipments going through the longer route around the Cape of Good Hope has increased by 47% after Houthi's began attacking vessels in the Red Sea region. As the Red Sea accounts for 12% of the world's shipping traffic, this change in route has greatly pushed up shipping costs.

[Baltimore shipping channel fully reopens after fatal bridge collapse](#)

June 11 - *Axios*

[United States, Global]

Traffic has officially been fully restored to the Port of Baltimore, one of the United States' busiest ports. The Port had been fully or partially closed since the sudden collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge on March 26, which killed six and launched a massive cleanup effort.

[MSC launches new Asia - South America East Coast service](#)

June 10 - *Seatrade Maritime News*

[Global, South America, Asia]

Starting July 19, Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) will expand its Brazil port coverage via a new weekly Carioca service that will regularly connect ports in South Korea, China, Singapore and Sri Lanka to several Brazilian ports.

[Russia and China to cooperate on Arctic shipping route](#)

June 7 - *Ship Technology*

[Arctic Ocean, Russia, China]

Russia and Chinese company Hainan Yangpu NewNew Shipping have signed a joint deal to operate a year-round shipping route through the Arctic Circle as well as develop a new ice-class container ship for the region. The deal, signed at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, plans to increase the number of NewNew voyages to 12 in 2024, up from seven voyages the year prior.

[Shipping container rates from China jump to 2-year high as panic sets in amid US tariff threat, Red Sea disruptions](#)

June 4 - *South China Morning Post*
[Global, Red Sea]

Shipping container rates from China to Europe jumped to a two-year high after spiking 12.6% at the end of May, with prices expected to continue amidst U.S. tariff announcements and ongoing security threats to all vessels operating in or near the Red Sea.

[4] Climate Change and Blue Carbon Economy [4]

[MAWANI and REVIVA establish recycling and industrial waste complex at Jeddah Islamic Port](#)

June 23 - *Arab News*
[Middle East]

On June 23, the Saudi Ports Authority signed a US\$8 million contract with Global Environmental Management Services to build a marine and industrial waste recycling complex at Jeddah Islamic Port. The Saudi Press Agency said that this move is part of Saudi Arabia's effort of promoting environmental sustainability and will strengthen its position as a global logistics center.

[Equatic to Build North America's First Large-Scale Ocean-Based Carbon Capture Plant](#)

June 21 - *Environment Energy Leader*
[Canada, North Atlantic Ocean]

Equatic, a carbon-removal company, has announced plans to build North America's first and the world's largest ocean-based commercial-scale carbon dioxide removal facility in Quebec, Canada. The facility is estimated to capture 109,500 tonnes of carbon dioxide and release 3,600 tonnes of green hydrogen annually.

[More beaches closed after oil spill; MPA working with insurer to set up contact for third-party claims](#)

June 17 - *Channel News Asia*
[Southeast Asia]

Singapore is working to clean up an oil spill that spread for 30 kilometers along its beaches at the start of a long holiday weekend after the Netherlands-flagged dredger *Vox Maxima* hit and ruptured the bunker-fuel vessel *Marine Honour* up the coast.

[Warming springtime waters will mean more salmon in the Arctic, research shows](#)

June 10 - CBC News

[Arctic Ocean]

Warming waters in the Chukchi Sea have enabled Pacific salmon to swim further north, reaching Arctic regions that were previously uninhabitable for the species. Observing this trend, Scientists have expressed concerns about its potential disruptions to the Arctic ecosystem.

[Hundreds of Indigenous families complete relocation off Gardi Sugdub due to rising sea levels](#)

June 8 - NBC News

[South America, Caribbean Sea]

Panama's ministry of housing announced that the majority of the population of its Gardi Sugdub Island has been successfully relocated to a housing development on the mainland. Prolonged concerns from rising sea levels have made the long-inhabited island no longer inhabitable.

[Scientists map one of Earth's top hazards in the Pacific Northwest](#)

June 7 - *The Washington Post*

[North Pacific]

Scientists have mapped a 600-mile geological boundary in the Pacific Northwest that has the capacity to produce a 9.0-magnitude earthquake that could form a 40-foot tall tsunami, threatening areas stretching from Northern California to Vancouver Island, Canada.

[Sea urchin pandemic spreads beyond Red Sea, endangering coral reefs](#)

June 7 - *Reuters*

[Red Sea, Global]

Israeli scientists have identified a sea-borne pandemic that rapidly killed off sea urchin populations in the Red Sea and is now spreading globally. The increasing elimination of this particular species of sea urchins may pose serious threats to the coral reef ecosystem.

[Japan completes 6th round of Fukushima treated water discharge](#)

June 4 - *Mainichi*

[Pacific Ocean, Northeast Asia]

On June 4, Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) completed the sixth round of its release of treated radioactive water from Fukushima into the sea. TEPCO plans to release one more round of processed radioactive water within the 2024 fiscal year.

[Citizen science program launched to protect, manage PH's mangrove cover](#)

June 4 - Manila Bulletin

[Southeast Asia]

The Philippines' Department of Environment and Natural Resources has launched a citizen science program, called "BakaJuan," to protect and manage the nation's critical yet declining mangrove forests.

Handbill Spotlight

ITLOS

Issue Background

The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) is an independent, international judicial body established by the 1982 [United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea \(UNCLOS\)](#). [Article 287](#) of UNCLOS defined the four mechanisms for dispute settlement regarding matters of the sea—the International Court of Justice, ITLOS, Arbitral Tribunal, and the Special Arbitral Tribunal. ITLOS, or the Tribunal, is unique in that it is a standing judicial body that provides guidance regarding the application and interpretation of UNCLOS. Given the predominant international acceptance of and respect for UNCLOS as the international maritime legal framework, ITLOS serves a crucial role in reaffirming international legal norms surrounding matters of the seas. Operating out of Hamburg, Germany, it is composed of 21 members who are nominated and selected by the parties that have ratified UNCLOS. ITLOS' [main purpose](#) is twofold: 1) to settle disputes related to UNCLOS and other maritime activities and 2) to clarify and interpret the content of UNCLOS through advisory opinions.

In the case of dispute settlement, ITLOS provides a judicial mechanism for states, organizations, and persons to reach an agreement through peaceful means. According to Article 33 of its [statute](#), its decision is “final and shall be complied with by all the parties to the dispute.” However, the Tribunal also [recognizes](#) that it “has no means of enforcing its decisions.” Its decisions merely incentivize compliance by stigmatizing behaviors as violating international law.

The body's advisory opinions, on the other hand, provide clarifications regarding the applicability and application of UNCLOS. Though advisory opinions [“have no binding force.”](#) these opinions shape states' understandings of the laws of the sea. They allow UNCLOS to adapt and account for recent practices, developments, or technological innovations that UNCLOS could not have anticipated. Examples include global warming, ocean acidification, and technological developments in fishery or seabed mining. As of June 2024, ITLOS has accepted [33 case requests](#); thirty of them have been contentious proceedings, or dispute settlements, while the other three have been requests for advisory opinions.

Beyond these two types of proceedings, one crucial function of ITLOS is its ability to issue provisional measures to temporarily protect the parties' interest as they wait for a Tribunal decision. This is important as requests often take years to process. For instance, ITLOS issued a series of provisional measures in the 1999 [Southern Bluefin Tuna](#) case involving Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. These prescribed measures required the three States to not only cease experimental fishing, but also to resume negotiations while the Tribunal deliberated for a final order.¹



The novelty of ITLOS lies in its jurisdiction over the prompt release of vessels and crews. Under its rules, ITLOS [“must give priority to...applications for release of vessels and crews.”](#) and would [“deal only with the question of release.”](#) A decision would be given—at the latest—14 days after the last hearing. Contrary to other proceedings, requests for prompt release could be submitted unilaterally by the state of the detained vessels and crews. Recognizing the urgency of these requests, this procedure is purported to protect the financial interests of the vessels' owners and the human interests of the crew from prolonged periods of detainment. The ITLOS, thus, provides an exclusive legal means for states to seek an expedited and prompt release.

Recent Events

On May 21, 2024, ITLOS made global headlines after issuing an unanimous landmark [advisory opinion](#) on climate change. The request was submitted in 2022 by the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law led by Tuvalu and Antigua and Barbuda. In the advisory opinion, the Tribunal concluded that atmospheric greenhouse gas emission is considered as “pollution” to the marine environment under the definition of UNCLOS. More importantly, the Tribunal concluded that States bound by UNCLOS have the specific obligation to take all necessary measures to “prevent, reduce, and control...pollution...caused by anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions.”

This opinion marks the first legal opinion issued by an international judicial body that directly addresses climate change. It is also the first time an international judicial body has outlined the specific legal obligations of states to address greenhouse gas emissions related to climate change. Though this advisory opinion is not legally binding, it provides a clearer legal framework for holding states accountable for greenhouse gas pollution and sets an unofficial legal precedent for future climate-related legal decisions. This advisory opinion carries a significant signaling effect that could strengthen existing advocacy for climate legislation and increase states' willingness to adopt climate policies.

¹ Image: The emblem of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) outside their premises in Hamburg, northern Germany. (Source: Getty Images)

Keep In Mind

As notable and unique as ITLOS is, it does face several barriers in efficacy. As mentioned above, ITLOS, like many international judicial bodies, is constrained by its enforcement and limited in its ability to induce compliance. It does not have the power to unilaterally decide to adjudicate on disputes, nor the power to summon the involved parties. This means that a party's non-appearance often poses difficulties in the tribunal's functioning. One example was [The Arctic Sunrise Case](#), where Russia simply chose not to participate in the ITLOS proceedings regarding its dispute with the Netherlands.

Despite these caveats, ITLOS still holds significant weight in settling disputes. In the [Case concerning the detention of three Ukrainian naval vessels](#) in 2019, ITLOS' provisional measures added legal pressure on Russia and eventually led to the release of the detained Ukrainian vessels and Ukrainian servicemen. As it derives its authority from UNCLOS, ITLOS' movements represent international law and what is expected to be the consensus of the international community. [168 States](#) have ratified UNCLOS, and the influence of this international consensus is robust. ITLOS' orders may, therefore, severely stigmatize state actions and result in self-enforcing compliance. Even if it does not, it creates additional incentives for de-escalation and party-to-party negotiations.

It is also important not to underestimate the impact of ITLOS' advisory opinions. In ITLOS' recent opinion on climate change, the Tribunal provided a much clearer legal language on states' obligations in preventing greenhouse emission. Climate advocates now have a clearer legal basis to hold states accountable for climate change and to push for climate legislation. The opinion also established unofficial precedent for other international judicial bodies to adjudicate on climate-related matters, thereby increasingly strengthening current legal frameworks on climate change. Sovereign states, in reaction, would grow increasingly aware of its climate impacts and potentially change their polluting behaviors to comply with the UNCLOS. The obligations explicitly outlined in the advisory opinions make it difficult for States—especially those who have ratified UNCLOS, like China and India—to blatantly ignore climate change's impact. Therefore, while the ITLOS remains limited in its capacity to enforce international law, its significance in shaping international norms and guiding state behaviors cannot be overlooked.

This issue's [Spotlight](#) was written by Wyatt Huang, ICAS Full-Time Research Assistant Intern.

Peer-Reviewed Research on Maritime Issues

Government Releases & Other Press Statements

- NATO - [“Operation Sea Guardian: NATO's Vigilance in the Central Mediterranean”](#) [June 20]
- International Chamber of Shipping - [“Shipping industry calls for action following the attack on the MV Tutor and cargo ship Verbena”](#) [June 19]

- Northrop Grumman - [“How Northrop Grumman Supports Maritime Security for the US and its Allies”](#) [June 18]
- Government of Brazil - [“Why federal government should continue to manage marine lands for the Brazilian people”](#) [June 17]
- Chinese Ministry of Natural Resources - [“2023 China Marine Ecological Early Warning Monitoring Bulletin \[In Chinese\]”](#) [June 13]
- U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency - [“Yemen: Houthi Attacks Placing Pressure on International Trade”](#) [June 13]
- Republic of Namibia - [“Statement by His Excellency Dr. Nangolo Mbumba, President of the Republic of Namibia on the Occasion of the World Ocean Day Celebration”](#) [June 7]
- UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission - [“2024 Ocean Decade Conference - The Barcelona Statement”](#) [June 6]
- International Institute for Strategic Studies - [The IISS Shangri-La Dialogue: Recordings & Transcripts](#)
- The White House - [“A Proclamation on National Ocean Month, 2024”](#) [May 31]
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China - [“China and the United States Hold the Second Round of Consultations on Maritime Affairs”](#) [May 28]
- NATO - [“NATO officially launches new Maritime Centre for Security of Critical Undersea Infrastructure”](#) [May 28]

Analyses & Opinions

- [“Nigerian Navy at 68: Reinforcing Its Sea Power Capabilities”](#) [This Day - June 24]
- [“‘They miscalculated’: Gaza’s floating aid pier failing to deliver in rough seas”](#) [The Guardian - June 23]
- [“China is alone against US allies in the West Pacific – or is it?”](#) [South China Morning Post - June 21]
- [“Naval Industry in Brazil: everything you need to know about it”](#) [Wilson, Sons - June 20]
- [“How underwater drones could shape a potential Taiwan-China conflict”](#) [MIT Technology Review - June 20]
- [“Between a rock and a hard place in the South China Sea”](#) [The Atlantic - June 16]
- [“Recent Ballistic Missile Submarine Movements at Sinpo”](#) [Beyond Parallel CSIS - June 13]
- [“A New Chinese Megaport in South America Is Rattling the U.S.”](#) [The Wall Street Journal - June 13]
- [“Africa’s freeports should boost trade and foreign exchange earnings – but evidence is thin”](#) [The Conversation - June 11]
- [“China and Russia Test the Global Maritime Governance”](#) [Italian Institute for International Political Studies - June 11]
- [“From Farm to Ship to Fork: The Role of Maritime Insurance in Facilitating Global Food Trade”](#) [Center for Strategic & International Studies - June 10]
- [“Seychelles’ calibrated approach towards maritime dependency”](#) [Observer Research Foundation - June 7]
- [“The US quietly exerts Arctic influence with Ted Stevens Center”](#) [Arctic Business Journal - June 6]
- [“A battle royal over deep-sea archaeology in the Caribbean”](#) [The Economist - June 6]
- [“China’s South Sea Aggression Is Backfiring”](#) [Foreign Policy - June 6]
- [“The Brazilian Navy’s Participation in Combined Maritime Forces”](#) [Dialogo Americas - June 5]
- [“ANZUS and the fabric of peace in the Pacific”](#) [Australian Strategic Policy Institute - June 4]
- [“The 50-year dilemma in aircraft carrier design and the future of American naval aviation”](#) [Center for International Maritime Security - June 4]
- [“Freedom of the Seas Requires US Leadership”](#) [The Diplomat - June 4]
- [“Strategic Competition and the Case for UNCLOS”](#) [Wilson Center - June 4]
- [“Arctic Maritime Safety and the Pressing Need for a new Coast Guard Technology Pact”](#) [Open Canada - June 3]
- [“The Possibility of a China-Philippines Conflict in the South China Sea”](#) [Carnegie Endowment - June 3]
- [“Space-based monitoring of electronic signals is now a commercial battleground”](#) [Space News - June 3]
- [“Why Diego Garcia Matters”](#) [Foreign Policy - May 30]

- [“The facts about Australia’s nuclear submarine program”](#) [Australian Strategic Policy Institute - May 30]
- [“How to Respond to China’s Tactics in the South China Sea”](#) [Foreign Policy - May 29]

Other Research

- Magazine: Sea Technology - [Sea Technology](#) [June 2024]
- Magazine: U.S. Naval Institute - [Proceedings Vol. 150/6/1,456](#) [June 2024]
- Report: American Bureau of Shipping - [Beyond the Horizon: Carbon Neutral Fuel Pathways and Transformational Technologies](#) [June 2024]
- Scientific Article: [“A large-scale transcontinental river system crossed West Antarctica during the Eocene”](#) [Science Advances Vol. 10, No. 23]
- Scientific Article: [“Antarctic Blue Ice Areas are hydrologically active, nutrient rich and contain microbially diverse cryoconite holes”](#) [Communications Earth & Environment Vol. 5, No. 345]

Events on the Maritime Domain

- From May 30-31, the European Commission co-organized [European Maritime Day](#) in Svendborg, Denmark to provide a space for Europe’s maritime community to “discuss and outline joint action on maritime affairs and sustainable blue economy.”
- From May 31-June 2, International Institute for Strategic Studies held its [Shangri-La Dialogue 2024](#), Asia’s premier summit where defense ministers gather to debate the region’s pressing challenges and engage bilaterally to produce fresh solutions. Maritime-specific portions include: [Special Session 4: “Maritime Law Enforcement and Confidence Building”](#) and [Plenary Session 6: “Connecting Indian Ocean and Pacific Security”](#).
- From June 3-5, the John Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory and the National Museum of Natural History hosted the biennial [3rd National Workshop on Marine eDNA](#).
- From June 4-6, National Marine Sanctuary Foundation and its sponsors celebrated its [Capitol Hill Ocean Week 2024](#) in Washington, D.C. involving an extensive agenda of speakers and events.
- From June 7-8, UNESCO and the Government of Costa Rica held a High Level Event on Ocean Action titled [“Immersed in Change”](#) in Costa Rica.
- From June 11-13, Naval Postgraduate School hosted its [Maritime Risk Symposium 2024](#).
- On June 12, Environmental Peacebuilding Association held an online session during its 3rd International Conference to discuss how [“Blue Parks Offer a Promising Model for Peacebuilding in Transboundary Water Issues.”](#)
- On June 12, Center for Strategic & International Studies held a [Fireside Conversation with Bob Wilt, CEO of Ma’aden on “International Minerals Diplomacy.”](#)
- From June 13-14, Banca d’Italia and the International Monetary Fund held a hybrid research conference in Venice, Italy on [“Embedding Sustainability in Credit Risk Assessment”](#) to highlight “how sustainability factors, especially climate change and environmental issues, can be integrated in credit risk assessment,” among other topics.
- On June 19, National Oceanography Centre hosted [Marine Measurement Forum 66](#)—a “series of one-day, non-profit making events” for the “informal exchange of ideas, knowledge, techniques and

developments across an extensive range of marine scientific measurement activities”—in Southampton, United Kingdom.

- On June 21, Center for a New American Security held a virtual event titled [“AUKUS: Taking Stock and Looking Forward.”](#)
- On June 24, East-West Center held a hybrid speaker event on [“Innovative and Creative Approaches to Addressing Water Security in the Pacific.”](#)
- On June 25, US-Asia Institute will host a briefing in Washington, D.C. titled [“Deep Sea Mining: Policy Considerations and Implications for the United States.”](#)
- From June 25-28, UNESCO’S Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission will hold their [57th session of the Executive Council](#) at UNESCO Headquarters. Its provisional [agenda](#) is available.
- On June 26, Wilson Center will hold an online event titled [“Sailing to the Edge of the Carbon World: Decarbonizing Shipping from American, Chinese, and European Perspectives.”](#)
- On June 27, Center for a New America Security will hold a virtual event titled [“Swarms over the Strait: Drone Warfare in a Future Fight to Defend Taiwan.”](#)
- From June 27-28, Maritime Security Centre of Excellence will host its [4th Maritime Security Conference](#) out of Istanbul, focused on the protection of maritime critical infrastructures and seabed.
- On July 1, Atlantic Council will host a report launch event on [“Executing distributed operations in a contested maritime environment.”](#)
- On July 9, Institute of Marine Engineering, Science & Technology will hold its international [Future of Ships, Shipping and Environmental Sustainability Conference](#) in Southampton, England, to feature plenary keynotes and panels under the headings of Technology, Human Contribution and Environment.
- On August 7, Center for Strategic & International Studies will host a hybrid conversation titled [“Preserving the Free Flow of Commerce in the Red Sea and Beyond: An Update from FIFTH Fleet Commander VADM George Wikoff, USN.”](#)
- From August 12-14, Maritime Security West will host its [11th annual conference](#) in San Diego, California, gathering global maritime security personnel from both the private and public sectors to take part in roundtable discussions, sessions, and keynote addresses on a wide array of current maritime issues.
- From November 6-7, Active Communications International will host its [18th Arctic Shipping Summit](#) in Montreal, Canada to gather regional stakeholders and experts to address a variety of shipping issues.

ICAS Maritime Affairs Program: New and Upcoming



— MAP Commentary —

A Landmark Advisory Opinion: ITLOS Strengthens Legal Framework for Climate Action

By Nong Hong

May 28, 2024

On May 21, 2024, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) issued a groundbreaking Advisory Opinion on climate change, which marks a historic first – an international legal body directly addressing

state obligations for mitigating climate change, a critical step forward in holding nations accountable for their actions.

The request made to ITLOS in December 2022 by the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law seeks clarification on states' obligations under UNCLOS regarding the prevention, reduction, and control of marine pollution, as well as the protection and preservation of the marine environment in relation to climate change impacts. This is the first time an advisory opinion has been sought on issues specifically related to sea-level rise and climate change more broadly...



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chinaus-icas.org/research/a-landmark-advisory-opinion-itlos-strengthens-legal-framework-for-climate-action/

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

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