



# **MAKING WAVES**

*A maritime news brief covering:*

- **MARITIME SECURITY**
- **MARITIME FORCES**
- **SHIPPING, PORTS AND OCEAN ECONOMY**
- **MARINE ENVIRONMENT**
- **GEOPOLITICS**

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# MARITIME SECURITY

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## UN COUNCIL DEMANDS YEMEN'S HUTHIS RELEASE UAE SHIP AND CREW

- Edith M. Lederer

The UN Security Council on Friday condemned the seizure of a United Arab Emirates ship and demanded that Yemen's Houthi rebels immediately release the vessel and its crew. A press statement from the UN's most powerful body called on all sides "to resolve the issue quickly and underlined the importance of freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aden and Red Sea, in accordance with international law." The seizure of the UAE-flagged Rwabee ship on Jan. 3 by the Iranian-backed Houthis coincided with a massive memorial in Tehran on the second anniversary of the U.S. drone strike that killed a top Iranian general, Qassem Soleimani, in Baghdad. The Houthis said they seized the ship off the coast of Hodeida, Yemen's main port, because it was carrying military equipment.

The Security Council "underscored the necessity of ensuring the crew's safety and well-being until their release." On Thursday, the UN mission monitoring implementation of a cease-fire and the withdrawal of rival forces from Hodeida and the two smaller ports of Salif and Ras Issa tweeted that as part of its routine weekly patrol it visited the port of Salif and neighboring areas where its team "saw the Rwabee vessel from a distance and spoke to its crew members." It gave no details. The taking of the Rwabee marked the latest assault in the Red Sea, a crucial route for international trade and energy shipments. Yemen has been engulfed in civil war since 2014 when the Houthis took the capital, Sanaa, and much of the northern part of the country, forcing the government to flee to the south, then to Saudi Arabia. A Saudi-led coalition that included the UAE and was backed at the time by the United States, entered the war months later, in 2015, seeking to restore the government to power.

The conflict has since become a regional proxy war that has killed tens of thousands of civilians and fighters. The war has also created the world's worst humanitarian crisis, leaving millions suffering from food and medical care shortages and pushing the country to the brink of famine. A statement from the Saudi-led coalition accused the Houthis of committing an act of "armed piracy" involving the Rwabee, and said the ship was carrying medical equipment from a dismantled Saudi field hospital in Yemen's distant island of Socotra, without offering evidence. After the Houthis showed video footage from the Rwabee of military-style inflatable rafts, trucks and other vehicles on the vessel and what appeared to be a collection of rifles inside a container, Saudi state television alleged the Houthis had transferred the weapons onto the ship. In Wednesday's statement, the Security Council reiterated its condemnation of the increasing number of incidents off the coast of Yemen, including attacks on civilian and commercial ships, "which pose a significant risk to the maritime security of vessels

in the Gulf of Aden and Red Sea.” The British-drafted council statement also urged all parties to de-escalate the situation in Yemen and to “engage constructively” with UN special envoy Hans Grundberg who is trying to restart political talks to end the seven-year conflict in the Arab world’s poorest nation.

**Source:** [Egypt Independent](#); 15 January 2022

## **ESTABLISHING MARITIME SECURITY IRAN'S GOAL IN SOUTHERN WATERS**

Speaking in a TV program on Friday, Rear Admiral Shahram Irani said that Iran army enjoys enough maritime capabilities to be present everywhere. Providing security and safety for all vessels in open waters is a priority for Iran Army, he said, adding that demonstrating the authority of Iran as well as conveying the message of peace and friendship to all nations is another reason behind such presence. Today, the maritime presence of the Army reaches about two thousand kilometers from the borders of Islamic Iran, he said, "But we plan to expand our presence to farther areas."

**Source:** [MEHR News Agency](#); 15 January 2022

## **VIETNAM OPPOSES EAST SEA CLAIMS INCONSISTENT WITH INTERNATIONAL LAW: SPOKESPERSON**

- VNA

Vietnam always opposes and does not accept all claims in the East Sea that are inconsistent with international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982 UNCLOS), spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Le Thi Thu Hang said on January 14. Vietnam has repeatedly affirmed its consistent and clear viewpoint on East Sea disputes, both bilaterally and multilaterally, she noted. The spokesperson made the remarks while answering reporters’ question regarding Vietnam’s response to a Limits in the Seas study recently released by the US Department of State.

Vietnam acknowledges the US Department of State’s announcement of the study, the 150th in the Limits in the Seas series, Hang said. On this occasion, Vietnam once again calls on parties concerned to respect its sovereignty, sovereign right and jurisdiction in the East Sea, as well as diplomatic and legal processes, and make active and substantive contributions to maintaining peace and stability, and safeguarding security, safety and freedom of navigation and aviation, the integrity of the UNCLOS, and the rules-based order, she said.

**Source:** [vietnamnet.vn](#); 15 January 2022

## **BANGLADESH DESPERATELY NEEDS A COMPREHENSIVE MARITIME LAW**

- TBS News

Despite being quite a small country, in terms of landmass, Bangladesh has an extremely large population. In fact, it is the world's tenth most densely populated country. Consequently, sustaining such a large population with little arable land and natural resources has been a concern for policymakers for a very long time. But our nation has been blessed with a wealth of marine resources, the proper utilisation of which, can be a crucial factor for sustainable and continued development. Bangladesh is bestowed with a coastal area of 2.30 million hectares and a coastline of 720 km along the Bay of Bengal. Unsurprisingly, one-fourth of its total population, around 35 million, lives along the coast line, relying both directly and indirectly on the sea for their livelihoods. After resolving the maritime border disputes with India and Myanmar, Bangladesh now owns 2,07,000 square kilometers of sea, which is 1.4 times bigger than our total land area. An exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of 166,000 square kilometers is also included within this boundary, where Bangladesh can exploit natural resources at its will. The Bangladesh government has repeatedly professed its ambition to establish a “blue economy”, expanding the nation's economic potential. A crucial part of this new horizon is going to be marine fishing and aquaculture. Bangladesh is also blessed in this regard, with a considerable extent of marine biodiversity. Around 1,093 marine species can be found in the Bay of Bengal, including finfishes, shellfishes, seaweeds and shrimps. Almost 457 fish species are available in our EEZ alone. Compared to the 250 fresh-water fish species found in our country, the Bay of Bengal can provide us with a hugely varied and abundant array of fish.

For a developing nation such as ours, proper utilisation of this resource can fulfill our protein requirements and stimulate the economy. Besides, byproducts of these resources can be used for research and development as well as industrial raw material. Unfortunately, there is not an adequate legal framework to protect these resources. The ocean is continuously being polluted with agricultural runoffs, urban waste, industrial effluents, sewage and unregulated vessels. Port activities and the ship breaking industry are also major sources for oceanic pollution. Even though Bangladesh has ratified many international conventions and laws regarding the ocean, no comprehensive national legal framework exists to conserve marine environments in our country. As per Article 192 of UNCLOS, states have an obligation to protect and preserve the marine environment. But Bangladesh, as of yet, has failed to comply with this obligation.

The Environmental Conservation Act (ECA) 1995 (amended in 2010) has provided a framework for minimising pollution and conserving the environment. But the act does not contain any provision targeted at marine pollution. It also does not contain any mechanism for implementing the international laws and conventions Bangladesh has ratified. Though there are a number of sectoral laws, these are not free from loopholes and lacunas. For example, under The Territorial Water and Maritime Zones Act, the government can take action against marine pollution. But there is no such provision

in the act specifying the acts which constitute marine pollution. Another drawback of the law can be found in the fisheries sector. As we know, implementation of fishery policy depends on an effective monitoring and assessment procedure. But the existing fishery policies lack proper clauses for adequate monitoring and impact assessment. The Coast Guard Act 2016 is the most praiseworthy initiative by the Bangladesh government. But there is no focus on capacity building of the coast guard and advancement of technological equipment. As a result the huge and resourceful maritime boundary of the country has not been utilised properly till date.

Unsurprisingly, there has been no exclusive maritime court established in Bangladesh despite its large maritime boundary. Laws relating to the foreign investments in this sector are weak and obsolete. There has been no remarkable effort to encourage investment in this sector, even though there is a lot of potential. In order to protect the marine ecosystem, preserve marine biodiversity and prevent endangerment of the marine environment, we need to adopt a comprehensive marine law in conformity with the international marine rules and regulations as soon as possible. If not, we will see our crucial marine resources gone to waste.

**Source:** [Hellenic Shipping News](#); 11 January 2022

## **PAKISTAN MARITIME SECURITY AGENCY ORGANIZES EXERCISE BARRACUDA-XI**

Pakistan Maritime Security Agency is organizing exercise barracuda-XI from 11-13 January 2022. Flag Hoisting, Wreath laying and opening ceremonies of the exercise were held on 11 Jan 22 at HQs Pakistan Maritime Security Agency. The proceedings of the day began with Flag Hoisting followed by wreath laying on Shuhadas monument at HQ PMSA. A total of 16 foreign observers from 13 countries including Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bahrain, France, Japan, Korea, Maldives, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Turkey and United States of America are participating in the exercise.

Later, opening ceremony of ex barracuda XI was held at Beach Luxury Hotel. Minister of State for Climate Change Ms Zartaj Gul Wazir graced the occasion as Chief Guest. Director General Pakistan Maritime Security Agency, Rear Admiral Mirza Foad Amin Baig HI (M) welcomed the participants and explained that barracuda is a series of international exercises which is conducted on regular basis under overall coordination of Pakistan Maritime Security Agency. He added that the aim of barracuda XI is to exercise Marine Oil Spill response and Search & Rescue procedures as per Pakistan's National Marine Disaster Contingency Plan (NMDCP) while sharing experiences with friendly countries. Participation of all national stakeholders and international observers will be instrumental in refining our coordinated response against oil spill as well as Search & Rescue requirements at regional level.

The Chief Guest Ms Zartaj Gul Wazir interacted with all foreign observers, media and appreciated the efforts of PN and PMSA in conducting the exercise. She especially thanked all the foreign delegates for their eagerness in participating in the event. She

further said that events like this surely provide an ideal platform to benefit from professional experiences of nations across the globe in a near realistic environment.

**Source:** [Pakistan Observer](#); 12 January 2022

# MARITIME FORCES

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## INDIA-JAPAN MARITIME EXERCISE IN BAY OF BENGAL

The navies of India and Japan carried out maritime exercises in the Bay of Bengal to enhance defence cooperation between the two countries. Indian Naval Ships Shivalik and Kadmatt undertook a Maritime Partnership Exercise with Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF) Ships Uraga and Hirado in the Bay of Bengal on Thursday (January 13). Both JMSDF ships are part of Minesweeper Division One and are on deployment to the Indian Ocean Region with Captain Noguchi Yasushi, Commander Minesweeper Division One embarked onboard JS Uraga. The exercise was aimed at strengthening bilateral relations, promoting defence cooperation, enhancing mutual understanding and interoperability between the two navies and sharing best practices. The maritime partnership exercise included a wide range of maritime operations, flying operations, replenishment approaches and tactical manoeuvres. "The entire exercise was planned and conducted in a non contact mode, thereby adhering to Covid safety norms," Indian Navy said. Last year India and Japan Maritime Bilateral Exercise, JIMEX, between the Indian Navy (IN) and the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF) was held in Arabian Sea from October 6 to October 8.

JIMEX series of exercises commenced in January 2012 with special focus on maritime security cooperation. The last edition of JIMEX was conducted in September 2020. JIMEX-21 was aimed to develop common understanding of operational procedures and enhance interoperability through conduct of a multitude of advanced exercises, across the entire spectrum of maritime operations. Multi-faceted tactical exercises involving weapon firings, cross-deck helicopter operations and complex surface, anti-submarine and air warfare drills will consolidate coordination developed by the two navies. Naval cooperation between India and Japan has increased in scope and complexity over years.

**Source:** [5 Dariya News](#); 14 January 2022

## FIRST TWO NEW LEBANESE NAUTICAL CHARTS LAUNCHED

Last month, the presentation ceremony of the first two nautical charts co-produced by the Hydrographic Service of the Lebanese Navy and the Italian Hydrographic Institute took place at Jounieh Naval Base. The two nautical charts represent the Port of Beirut and the adjacent waters, and adhere to stringent and rigorous international standards. This historical moment is the result of an intense collaborative work. The charts launch the last phase of the Italian initiative to support Lebanon in the creation of an autonomous and independent national hydrographic service, in order to ensure the safety of navigation in its waters and to promote the blue economy.

The Italian-Lebanese project, launched in 2014, immediately represented a courageous initiative of the Italian Navy to support international cooperation through structured interventions with objectives that promote the progress and development of Lebanon. The Hydrographic Institute of the Italian Navy, which is the only cartographic institution of the country that represents the maritime environment on official papers and publications, has been serving the maritime community for 150 years. Now, the Hydrographic Service of the Lebanese Navy is ready to become one of the key players in the country's blue economy. The joint Italian-Lebanese action in favour of the creation and development of the Lebanese Hydrographic Service is today a model for the entire international hydrographic community.

**Source:** [hydro-international.com](https://hydro-international.com); 10 January 2022

## UNDERWATER DRONES HERALD SEA CHANGE IN PACIFIC WARFARE

- Gabriel Honrada

The drones that have changed the complexion of war from the sky are being replicated at sea, as great powers develop and deploy unmanned underwater vessels (UUVs) to gain a strategic edge in the Pacific and beyond. The United States, United Kingdom, China and Russia are all developing and deploying the vessels, indicating the “dronification” of future maritime warfare.

The UK, which is expanding its military presence in the Pacific, is set to operate its first extra-large underwater drone to complement its Astute-class submarines. The Royal Navy's efforts to design, build, and test such a drone have been designated Project CETUS, and aim to produce a 27-tonne, 12-meter Autonomous Underwater Vehicle (AUV) demonstrator. The contract for Project CETUS is projected to be finalized in financial year 2021-2022, with a projected cost of 21.5 million pounds (US\$29.3 million.) The Royal Navy is also working on the Manta underwater drone, an unmanned version of the existing S201 manned submersible made by MSubs, a British manufacturer. The US is working on the similar Orca Extra Large Unmanned

Undersea Vehicle (XLUUV), as the US Navy awarded Boeing contracts worth a total of \$274.4 million to produce five Orca XLUUVs in 2019. The Orca can be used for mine countermeasures, anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, electronic warfare and strike missions without risking the lives of its operators. China is also known to be using underwater drones, with Indonesia seizing three Chinese drones labeled “Shenyang Institute of Automation Chinese Academy of Sciences” near South Sulawesi’s Selayar Island in December 2020. The same year, China allegedly deployed 12 Sea Glider underwater drones in the Indian Ocean to gather oceanographic data to support submarine operations. Moreover, China operates the HSU-001 underwater drone, which is roughly analogous to the Project CETUS, Manta, and Orca drones. The HSU-001 was reportedly tested off Fujian or the Taiwan Strait, simulating anti-submarine operations.

The proliferation of underwater drones in the Pacific region is changing the complexion of underwater warfare, as the region’s maritime environment poses unique operational challenges to underwater operations. The contested South China Sea is a semi-enclosed body of water with numerous unmapped underwater features and shallows, which makes navigation hazardous for both crewed surface and underwater combatants. At the same time, the South China Sea provides an ideal operating environment for shallow-water conventional submarines, as the area’s underwater features and high shipping traffic enables such vessels to stay undetected for prolonged periods by using environmental factors to mask their signatures. By extension, the South China Sea is an ideal proving ground for underwater drones, as they can perform underwater tasks that may be too dull, demanding, dangerous or even dirty for humans. Underwater drones can be used for bathymetric mapping, alongside recording the thermal, magnetic, and acoustic properties of specific underwater passages to find blind spots where submarines can travel undetected safely. As such, this capability is particularly suited for use in the South China Sea, which is among the most challenging bodies of water for submarine navigation due to its shallow waters, numerous underwater peaks and sandbars.

The recent collision of the USS Connecticut submarine with an unmapped seamount in the South China Sea illustrates the danger. In addition, these drones can also find submarine hiding spots to serve as staging areas for underwater operations, or sanctuaries to avoid enemy anti-submarine warfare operations. They can also potentially be used for mine-hunting and minelaying operations. Underwater drones can scout underwater minefields and possibly disarm naval mines. They may reduce, but not eliminate, the need for specialized diver teams to reconnoiter, identify, and demine potential landing beaches for amphibious warfare operations. The drones can also perform anti-submarine operations by actively searching and tracking enemy submarines, without endangering manned surface vessels or submarines. The 1971 sinking of the Indian frigate INS Kukri by the Pakistani submarine PNS Hangor illustrates the possibility of anti-submarine warships becoming easy prey for enemy submarines.

The use of underwater drones for anti-submarine purposes will thus minimize the need to commit manned warships for such operations. More significantly, underwater drones can become strategic weapons when loaded with nuclear weapons. Such nuclear-armed underwater drones can bypass enemy missile defenses by traveling

underwater, slipping near or into major coastal cities, ports and naval bases for attack purposes. One such weapon is Russia’s Poseidon drone, which gives Russia a credible second-strike capability in the event of a nuclear attack.

**Source:** [Asia Times](#); 12 January 2022

## **DUTERTE ORDERS RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF MARITIME INTER-AGENCY COMMITTEE**

- Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson

President Rodrigo R. Duterte has issued an Executive Order (EO) re-establishing a maritime inter-agency committee, which will improve policy on shipping safety, marine environment protection, and the training of seafarers. Signed on Dec. 28, EO No. 159 reconstitutes the Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee on the Ratification and Implementation of Maritime Conventions (ICCRIMC) and renames it the Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee to Facilitate the Ratification and Accession to and Implementation of Maritime Conventions (ICCFRAIMC). EO 159 also prescribes an integrated approach in ratifying and acceding to international maritime conventions and instruments. According to the EO, “the country strives to become a major maritime nation that (puts a) premium (on) the protection of life and the marine environment, enhancement of the level of safety of shipping, and the advancement of the standards of training, certification and watchkeeping for seafarers.”

In 2015, the Department of Transportation founded the ICCRIMC to monitor developments and consider Philippine participation in new international maritime conventions. The ICCFRAIMC will be tasked to “consider new international maritime conventions for possible ratification or accession, conduct a national interest analysis for the purpose, and study measures needed to satisfy convention requirements, as well as the implications on the established maritime operations in the country.” The committee will be chaired by a representative from the Department of Transportation, while the vice chair will be designated by the Department of Foreign Affairs, according to the EO. The committee will also have representatives from the Department of Science and Technology (DoST), the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA), the Cebu Port Authority, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

**Source:** [Business World](#); 14 January 2022

## **THE CONSTELLATION OF SATELLITES OF THE MARITIME DOMAIN KNOWLEDGE SATELLITE CONSTELLATION IS PLANNED FOR LAUNCH**

The full MDASat constellation will be an operational constellation of nine cube satellites that will detect, identify and monitor vessels in near real-time. CPUT said the MDASat constellation has two main priorities: namely ocean economy and healthcare and has been mandated by the Department of Science and Innovation to enhance South Africa's ocean's sovereignty. MDASat is CPUT's third satellite mission and follows on from ZACube-1 (TshepisoSat) and ZACube-2's successful development, launch and operation. The Department of Science and Innovation recently announced an additional investment of about R19 million in the development of two nanosatellites (M2MSat-1) for increased maritime domain awareness in South Africa. The M2MSat-1 will build on the technology of MDASat-1 and will be developed by CPUT and local company Stone Three Communications. The MDASat constellation will be used by the Department of Science and Innovation and the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries as part of government's Operation Phakisa.

The first three satellites of the MDA constellation will carry an upgraded AIS receiver payload from ZACube-2, which was launched from Russia in December 2018 aboard a Soyuz rocket. ZACube-2 demonstrated ship tracking and medium resolution payload technologies. The satellite is managed by the Department of Science and Innovation and Sansa, in co-operation with the University of Montpellier, the French embassy and the Paris Chamber of Commerce. "This mission would mark the first constellation of satellites developed and designed in Africa," said CPUT's Acting Chief Engineer on the project Nyameko Royi. The more we get people involved in space- the better, the more data we extract from space- the better for the world. This is a significant milestone for CPUT and South Africa."

**Source:** [bollyinside.com](http://bollyinside.com); 15 January 2022

# SHIPPING, PORTS AND OCEAN ECONOMY

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## BRAZIL'S BOLSONARO SIGNS CABOTAGE BILL INTO LAW

Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro signed into a law a bill to boost cabotage as part of an effort to reduce the country's high dependency on freight transportation by road and to support the port sector. The government aims to expand the share of cabotage in the country's cargo transportation matrix to 30% from 11%, according to the infrastructure ministry. Currently two-thirds of Brazil's cargo is transported by truck. "One of the great advances will be the possibility of increasing the offer and the quality of cabotage transport, stimulating competition, encouraging competitiveness and increasing the availability of the fleet dedicated to cabotage in the national territory," the ministry said in a statement. "With more competition in the provision of the service, the costs of transporting cargo between the country's ports will tend to fall. Actions aimed at training and qualifying workers in the sector are also planned," it added.

Known as BR do Mar (the sea highway), the bill allows companies to charter vessels for coastal shipping and permits the use of foreign-owned ships that were built outside Brazil. The government expects the number of containers transported by cabotage to increase to 2mn TEUs this year from 1.2mn in 2019 thanks to the new law, and to boost the capacity of the maritime fleet dedicated to cabotage by 40% in the next three years.

**Source:** [bnamericas.com](https://www.bnamericas.com); 11 January 2022

## DNV: GREEN AMMONIA A 'KEY INGREDIENT' TO DECARBONISE MARITIME INDUSTRY

*The following article was published by Cristina Saenz de Santa Maria, Regional Manager South East Asia, Pacific & India, DNV Maritime through the social media platform LinkedIn on Monday (10 January):*

The recent COP26 summit in Glasgow made it crystal clear that shipping is heading for carbon zero, but the route there is far from it. The grand challenge of our time

remains: how to fuel the maritime industry's transition to a carbon neutral future? This is a question Singapore has prioritized as part of its green transition.

Why?

It is the world's largest bunkering hub. It imports all the gas it needs to power households and the economy. And the strategically located island state has always been looking into the future to keep a leading edge. In my view, Singapore is in a very good position to play a key role in the decarbonization of the global maritime industry. An important step was the establishment of the Global Centre for Maritime Decarbonisation (GCMD), in which DNV readily agreed to become a founding partner. The Centre and its partners have now started to explore a portfolio of alternative fuels and strategies that will hopefully enable shipping globally to significantly reduce its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. New fuels on the horizon include sustainable biofuels, biodiesel, bio-LNG, methanol, hydrogen, and ammonia, amongst others.

However, they "must be greener than the incumbent fuels, have a lower carbon life cycle, otherwise it would be a waste of resources to venture into such investments, as it will not reduce the overall carbon/GHG burden on the environment," rightly notes GCMD Chief Technology Officer Dr Sanjay Kuttan. GCMD picked ammonia as the first fuel to take a closer look into and commissioned a technical evaluation to define the safety and operational envelopes for ammonia bunkering in Singapore.

So, we must ask ourselves, how viable is ammonia and is it safe enough for widespread use as a marine fuel in Singapore, or anywhere, for that matter? From our own studies and from pilot programmes conducted in Europe in particular, ammonia comes clean as an ideal marine fuel, as it provides better energy performance than hydrogen and it's on a par with LNG. Not only does ammonia burn CO<sub>2</sub>-free, like hydrogen, but it has a higher energy density and is easier to store and transport than hydrogen, as it doesn't require cryogenic – or ultra-cool – storage. But what about green ammonia? How is it produced and where does it come from? We know that it is currently going through marine fuel trials in Europe and Japan, and we see that one of the best Asia Pacific sources for green ammonia (and/or green hydrogen) could be Australia, as it is already a major supplier of LNG.

Green ammonia can be produced from green hydrogen, a well-established renewable energy source. Australia already has plans for major green hydrogen plants. In addition, ammonia is widely used there in agriculture, most commonly as a fertiliser. We're encouraged to see that the International Energy Agency (IEA) rates green ammonia highly as a shipping fuel for the future. In its Net Zero Emissions Scenario, IEA shows that green ammonia could meet around 45% of global shipping fuel demand by 2050. It also sees it as the lowest cost option as an alternative fuel for the future. Another advantage for liquid fuels like hydrogen or ammonia is that they can safely be used alongside LNG during the transition phase. We also know that ship engines are being designed in Europe to accommodate ammonia, as an onboard fuel, alongside LNG. Trials in Norway, for example, have shown that ammonia can be safely deployed even in passenger vessels and the researchers clearly could not identify any "incomprehensible technical or safety barriers".

The decarbonization process for the global maritime industry is not going to be easy. I know there are challenges, but I see considerable opportunities. With the right level of

commitment and concentrated effort, ammonia could replace LNG as the predominant alternative shipping fuel in the future, with significant scaling after 2030. But, of course, we must continue to consider – and put to the test – a whole range of alternatives fuels and strategies. As our Maritime Forecast to 2050 says, it's equally important to keep in mind a number of essential measures towards maritime industry decarbonization, including greater energy efficiency, fuel flexibility and weighing up all Fuel Ready solutions. When all is said and done, in the words of our DNV Maritime CEO Knut Ørbeck-Nilssen, “the true fuel of the future is collaboration”.

**Source:** [manifoldtimes.com](https://manifoldtimes.com); 11 January 2022

## PORT CONGESTION COST SHIPPERS MILLIONS IN ADDED INTEREST EXPENSES

While there has been extensive attention on how increased shipping times, congestion at the ports, and backlogs along the supply chain were leading to short supplies that consumers were experiencing, the delays were also further adding to retailers' total cost of goods. A new analysis from project44, the platform for shippers and logistics service providers, estimates that in addition to the increased cost of shipping, retailers also incurred approximately \$321 million in added interest expense on inventory in 2021 due to port congestion. While the environment became a vicious circle, retailers were able to also use the environment to build inventory levels in part by warehousing at sea and are better prepared going forward.

According to project44's analysis, they estimate that between January and November 2021 that \$238 billion worth of cargo experienced significant delays outside the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. They further estimate that during 2021, an average of 540,255 TEUs per month were waiting outside the port, with an average of 377 container ships per month at anchorage waiting for a berth. With data from HSBC, they set the average cargo value of \$40,000 per TEU, and with a 3.2 percent cost of financing, project44 estimates that shippers found themselves paying around \$106 per TEU per month. Further, adding to the costs for the shippers were the increased transit times for cargo to reach the port and then for clearance and shipment to its destination. Pre-pandemic transit time from Chinese ports to Los Angeles was approximately 16 days plus an additional six days until clearance. Shifl, a digital freight forwarding platform, reports that transit time went up to around 60 days based on Los Angeles' current average of 17.6 days awaiting berth. Given an average transit time between major Chinese ports and Los Angeles of 60 days, shippers incurred an average of two months of interest payments on goods traveling by sea. Project44 estimates that this translated into a total of almost \$321 million in additional interest between January and November 2021, which, while a small fraction of the total cost of goods, was nonetheless significant notes the analysis. "With interest rates at historic lows, the cost of holding more inventory is lower than you'd expect," said Josh Brazil, VP of Supply Chain Insights at project44. With inventory levels low going into 2021, he notes that bringing in more inventory and bringing it in earlier seemed like a good idea to retailers which was supported by the low trade financing environment that was helpful for shippers. Brazil notes thought, "This only exacerbates the congestion issues."

With interest rates at historic lows, companies could also finance a surplus amount of inventory and essentially store it at sea for two months, says project44. While it might not have been entirely deliberate, the congestion helped companies circumvent storage costs on the excess inventories. Though shippers paid interest-related penalties on freight stranded at sea, the costs were diminutive compared to storing that inventory on land where warehousing prices were high and availability was scarce.

“This phenomenon has underscored how multidimensional the supply chain crisis is,” Brazil said. “While more inventory might seem like a good short-term solution, the industry also desperately needs more visibility, better cargo management, and infrastructure and process improvements.” According to project44 intelligence, shippers faced a domino effect of disruptions that exceeded their forecasted shipping delays. However, they compensated by understanding the benefits of low-interest rates and sent in orders by as early as June and July to bolster inventories in time for the holiday shopping season and overall satisfying consumer demand. The analysis concludes that businesses took advantage of the environment over-ordering merchandise, with some still at sea and that it will be used to replenish depleted inventories or be marketed at a discount in the months ahead. The National Retail Federation in its estimates concurs that U.S. retailers ordered early and were successful in rebuilding inventories leading to expectations that import growth will return to more normal levels in 2022 helping to reduce pressures and added expense such as the carrying cost of goods that were driven up by port congestion and backlogs.

**Source:** [The Maritime Executive](#); 10 January 2022

## DANISH SHIPPING LAYS OUT NEW GREEN TRANSITION STRATEGY

- Adis Ajdin

Denmark has set out to accelerate the global green transition of shipping as part of the new strategy launched by the country’s shipowners’ organisation, Danish Shipping. The new strategy, called “Towards Zero,” will replace the strategy “Ahead of the Curve,” which the organisation of over 90 shipowners and offshore companies pursued from 2018. The aim is to work even harder to overcome the regulatory, financial and political barriers that stand in the way of climate-neutral shipping, Danish Shipping explained.

The organisation said it would use the new strategy for the next three years to push and create the basis for the reduction requirements and ensure that the ensuing global climate regulations from the International Maritime Organization (IMO) become more ambitious. In addition, the ambition is to strengthen shipping companies’ climate reporting, create a tangible impression on the European climate package, “Fit for 55”, and finally exploit Danish shipping companies’ potential in offshore wind and carbon capture and storage (CCS). The strategy has set the ambition of Danish shipping to be climate neutral by 2050 without the use of compensation and to have at least 5% of the Danish-operated fleet capable of running on well-to-wake net zero-

emission fuels such as green hydrogen, green ammonia, green methanol, and advanced biofuels by 2030. All newbuildings ordered by Danish shipowners from 2030 are to be made ready for net zero emission fuels or other zero-emission means of propulsion. “Denmark is a huge maritime nation and we therefore have an obligation to use our size to play a positive and ambitious role in the green transition of global shipping. The new strategy ‘Towards Zero’ therefore aims to accelerate the transition of shipping to becoming emission-free. Together with the government, we can show the way – not only in Denmark but globally,” said Jacob Meldgaard, CEO of Torm and chairman of Danish Shipping.

In addition, the organisation said it would ensure that shipping companies in the future have people with the skills needed in the industry. As a result, shipping companies will in the future guarantee 400 training places per year, compared to 350 previously. “It’s a hard battle for talent. And in the short sea shipping segment and on offshore vessels especially, we are short of people with the right skills. So I am very pleased that we are now raising the bar and in future will guarantee 400 young people a training place every single year,” added Meldgaard.

**Source:** [splash247.com](https://splash247.com); 11 January 2022

## **MAERSK ACCELERATES OCEAN SHIPPING CLIMATE AMBITIONS BY DECADE AIMS TO HALVE CLIMATE EMISSIONS BY 2030 AND ACHIEVE NET ZERO EMISSIONS BY 2040**

Major shipping corporation Maersk has announced plans to achieve net zero climate emissions in its business by 2040, a decade earlier than the company’s initial climate commitment made just four years ago. As part of this plan, Maersk has announced a commitment to 50% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions per transported container by 2030, which would lead to 25-50% absolute emissions reductions this decade from a 2020 baseline. Because of global pressure to move faster to zero emissions ocean shipping, Maersk has shifted its targets saying that the move “...marks our commitment to society and to the many customers who call for net zero supply chains.” Ship It Zero coalition members Stand.earth and Pacific Environment called Maersk’s announcement “an industry-leading commitment and a necessary step toward a zero-emissions cargo shipping sector” but remains concerned Maersk’s 2030 goals rely on offsets. The coalition said the more aggressive target proves that major cargo customers like Amazon, Target, Walmart, and IKEA can also aim higher to both set and meet clean shipping goals this decade.

In October, Amazon and IKEA, who both do business with Maersk, committed to move their products off fossil fuel ships by 2040, joining companies including Unilever and Patagonia. Ship It Zero called this commitment “historic but too weak,” as the coalition is demanding movement on zero-emissions cargo shipping by the end of the 2020s, our decade of climate emergency. “Maersk increasing its climate target by a decade

just four years after the company began its decarbonization journey shows that a dramatically faster zero-emission timeline for the global shipping industry is possible,” said Dawny’all Heydari, Campaign Lead for Ship It Zero, Pacific Environment. “Maersk continues to lead the cargo shipping sector by setting industry-leading commitments and taking the necessary steps toward actualizing a zero-emissions future. Maersk’s commitment sends a signal to major cargo shipping customers like Amazon, Target, Walmart, and IKEA that they must aim higher to both set and meet clean shipping goals this decade. As our climate emergency worsens, we need consumer goods companies to take action this decade to clean up their ocean shipping footprint, not punt the problem to 2040, which is what Amazon and IKEA are currently doing,” said Kendra Ulrich, Shipping Campaigns Director at Stand.earth.

Launched in July 2021, the “Ship It Zero” campaign is calling on the largest container shipping importers to the U.S. and most well-known corporations to move their products off fossil fueled vessels and transition to 100 percent zero-emissions shipping by 2030, with an initial focus on Amazon, Walmart, Target and IKEA. Heydari continued, “Eighteen years is still too long to wait. With cancer-causing, life-shortening particulate matter emissions up near the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach by an equivalent of 100,000 class B diesel trucks per day, the time for zero-emissions ocean shipping is now. Port-adjacent communities cannot be treated as the collateral damage of our economy any longer. Our global community must transition to 100% zero-emissions by 2030 if we are intent on averting climate catastrophe. We call on Maersk to demonstrate the bold leadership our world needs by committing to 100% zero-emissions ocean shipping this decade.” In November, Amazon joined the First Movers Coalition, a public-private partnership launched by U.S. President Joe Biden and the World Economic Forum to commercialize emerging technologies essential to decarbonizing heavy industries, including ocean shipping. Ship It Zero said Amazon’s move sends an important market signal for clean ocean shipping, but warns the coalition is short on details.

Walmart and Target have not responded to Ship it Zero campaign demands, but Maersk is gaining market share with both retail giants. According to the Ship It Zero campaign’s most recent report, *Shady Routes: How Big Retail and their Carriers Pollute along Key Ocean Shipping Corridors*, Maersk increased its proportion of Walmart’s business in 2020, with its responsibility for Walmart’s overall ocean shipping emissions rising from 3% to 11%. Maersk is also one of the few carriers for Target whose share of trade and emissions increased from 2018-2020, rising 10%. The shipping industry emits an estimated 1 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide each year. If it were a country, the shipping industry would be the sixth largest emitter, ahead of Germany. On its current trajectory, maritime trade is projected to grow by as much as 130% by 2050 over today’s trade volume. Put simply: the world cannot stop the climate crisis without urgent action to decarbonize international shipping this decade.

**Source:** [American Journal of Transportation](#); 12 January 2022

# MARINE ENVIRONMENT

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## CLIMATE-FUELLED PERMAFROST THAW THREATENS UP TO HALF OF ARCTIC INFRASTRUCTURE: REPORT

NEW YORK (REUTERS) - Thawing permafrost could put as much as 50 per cent of Arctic infrastructure at high risk of damage by 2050, requiring tens of billions of dollars in maintenance and repairs, scientists warned on Tuesday. The world's permafrost - land that remains frozen year-round - has been warming at between 0.3 and 1 deg C per decade since the 1980s, with some areas of the high Arctic having increased by more than 3 deg C over four decades, according to a scientific review of research from the past two decades published in the journal *Nature Reviews Earth & Environment*.

That is enough to thaw much of the long-frozen ground. Already, some roads are buckling and building foundations are cracking in northern Russia, Alaska and Canada. "Infrastructure is in trouble," said report co-author Dmitry Streletskiy, a geographer at George Washington University. "But it is not like an earthquake. It is a relatively slow process, which gives us enough time" to prevent some damage. Scientists say this trend will continue as climate change escalates. From satellite imagery, they estimate that at least 120,000 buildings, 40,000km of roads and 9,500km of pipelines could be at risk, highlighting threats to some Canadian highways, the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System, and the Russian cities of Vorkuta, Yakutsk and Norilsk. But people are still building in the Arctic. Satellite images show that coastal infrastructure has increased by 15 per cent, or 180 sq km, since 2000, according to another study published last year in the journal *Environmental Research Letters*. About 70 per cent of that growth is linked to the oil and gas industry, especially on Russia's Yamal Peninsula and near the Yamburg gas field, according to that study's lead author, polar researcher Annett Bartsch, who is with the Austrian-based b.geos research and consultancy group. "There are a lot of new roads and rail tracks," she said.

Engineers use several costly strategies when building on permafrost. For example, they place heat-diverting pipes along roads and building foundations to help keep the frozen ground stable. Maintenance costs for major infrastructure could increase by US\$15.5 billion (S\$20.9 billion) by mid-century but would still be unable to prevent some US\$21.6 billion in damages, according to the review paper's most conservative estimates. For decades, researchers have focused on monitoring the carbon long locked in permafrost, worrying that the release of climate-warming carbon dioxide and methane could push the world towards runaway global warming. But "the impact on infrastructure is already happening today", said Dr Vladimir Romanovsky, a geophysicist at the University of Alaska Fairbanks whose research was among the

more than 160 studies assessed in the review. "It is much more urgent for people who live and work on permafrost."

**Source:** [The Straits Times](#); 12 January 2022

## **RIISING TEMPERATURES ARE TRANSFORMING ARCTIC COASTS**

- Zach Fitzner

A special issue of the journal *Nature Reviews Earth & Environment* is shedding light on rapidly changing Arctic coasts. Scientists at the Alfred Wegener Institute (AWI) describe the potential consequences of shifting Arctic shorelines for humans, animals, and the environment. "The pace of changes in the Arctic is increasing, leading to accelerated coastal retreat," said Dr. Anna Irrgang of the AWI Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research. "This affects both the natural and human environment, for example, by releasing carbon from the soil into the sea and atmosphere, or losing the land that supports communities and infrastructure."

Arctic coastal regions are not uniform. For example, shorelines in Alaska, Canada and Siberia are made of heavy permafrost bluffs that are resistant to wave action under cold temperatures, but vulnerable as they warm up. Other shorelines, such as those found in Svalbard, are rocky and less fragile. With temperatures rising, however, scientists expect that all of these coastal systems will change to some degree. "Predictions about this are often subject to large uncertainties because reliable oceanographic and environmental data for remote coastal zones are limited," said Dr. Irrgang. "Our current understanding of Arctic coastal dynamics is fragmented, with too few data with high spatial and temporal resolution on environmental factors and shoreline changes." "While such datasets already exist for some regions such as northern Alaska, most of the Arctic coast is poorly mapped." The report highlights the urgent need for more observations and research on fragile Arctic coastal systems. This sort of work could greatly improve the accuracy of predictions and help scientists and policy makers prepare for the future. The state of Arctic coasts have far-reaching impacts on water availability, erosion, plant and animal life as well as human well-being. "For this, we need to develop adaptation methods that enable good and sustainable living conditions in Arctic coastal settlements. Close cooperation with local people is central to this," said Dr. Irrgang.

**Source:** [earth.com](#); 11 January 2022

## **LARGEST ARTIFICIAL ISLAND DEVELOPMENT IN CHINA IS ORDERED DEMOLISHED**

Before its shares resumed trading on Jan. 4, China Evergrande Group said that the Danzhou City authorities had ordered it to get rid of all the 39 residential buildings it

built on artificial Haihua Island—the world’s largest flower-shaped artificial tourist island, according to *The Epoch Times*. Evergrande was ordered to repair and halt construction because of damage it caused to the maritime ecological environment. However, Evergrande proceeded with the construction, with the Danzhou government condoning it. The Danzhou City Administrative Law Enforcement Bureau ruled that Evergrande’s 39 buildings with a total construction area of 4.68 million sq. ft. on the island have had their planning permits revoked because they violated Article 40 of the Law on Urban and Rural Planning. However, the fate of these 39 buildings was decided in 2020 when China’s Ministry of Ecology and Environment issued a notice calling for the construction projects within the sea area of Haihua Island to be suspended and resumed after environmental corrections are completed.

Evergrande Haihua Company has never fulfilled the relevant requirements. Before the notice, in July 2019, the company erected four bridges and culverts in violation of regulations. The illegal encroachment area is about 4000 square feet. The department claimed that “Although Danzhou City imposed penalties for illegal activities such as construction without approval from August 2017 to June 2018, they allowed the company to continue the construction.” Before Haihua Island, Evergrande had used the land to build tourism infrastructure. Hainan province had asked Danzhou city to adjust and optimize the construction planning. But by the time of inspection, the planning adjustment had not yet been approved by the city. As a result, the company continued to build 39 residential buildings on Haihua Island in 2018, while the Danzhou City Department of Environment and Ecology completed its EIA procedures.

Danzhou city waited until Oct. 30, 2020, to issue the “Master Plan for the Repair of Sewer Bridges on Haihua Island,” which stated that four sewer bridges be demolished. On Dec. 3, 2020, Zhang Qi, a former member of the Standing Committee of the Hainan Provincial Party Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and former Secretary of the Haikou Municipal Party Committee, was sentenced to life in prison over corruption charges, with all personal property confiscated at the Guangzhou Intermediate Court. It was discovered that Zhang Qi had illegally helped relevant individuals and entities during his time in office. For example, he assisted in land development matters, contracting, and project promotion while accepting bribes totaling more than \$17 million. The Ministry of Ecology and Environment announced another correction notice to the Hainan provincial authority on Nov. 23, 2021. As a result, the 3rd and 4th culvert bridges of the Henghai Huadao project have been dismantled, and other demolition work is in progress.

### **Haihua Island approved despite violation of regulations**

Haihua Island is the passionate work of Xu Jiayin, the founder of Evergrande. The company’s advertising materials said that Xu created the prototype of the artificial island. Xu once visited Danzhou city by private plane and told its officials that he was aspiring to stay in Danzhou for the rest of his life. According to the official website of Haihua Island, the island is described as a “cultural tourism destination that people all over the world desire.” Evergrande took 12 years to build and spent hundreds of billions of dollars installing many entertainment facilities.

The island complex has been recognized as the world’s largest artificial island, composed of three independent islands, namely Islands 1, 2, and 3. Island 1 is mainly

for the public, with commercial buildings such as hotels, resorts, entertainment, and commercial streets, while Islands 2 and 3 are primarily residential. Oriental Outlook weekly reported in August 2013 that Haihua Island is the No. 1 project of the Hainan Provincial Government to develop tourism in West Hainan during the “12th Five-Year Plan” period. The person in charge of supervising the project was Lin Dong, the then-mayor of Danzhou city. The report cited Dai Wenda, director of Danzhou City’s Department of Oceans and Fisheries, as saying, “As a critical project in Hainan province, the procedures for using the marine area (Haihua island) were approved at the national level, and there were no problems with the systems.” However, the Danzhou City Government and the maritime authority had to separate the approvals due to regulatory violations. As a result, the renovation project was divided into 36 sub-projects with less than 67 acres and approved 18 sub-projects on Jan. 21, 2013. Another 18 sub-projects were approved on May 4, 2013.

### **From illegal activity to the demolition of 39 buildings**

Since Evergrande made a famous appearance on CCTV with more than 30 press and Internet media in November 2015, Chinese media had become accustomed to news about Evergrande’s illegal island-building—how it turned the crisis into peace—and continued to have projects built on the islands. The illegal activity of Haihua Island began in its reclamation stages. China’s “Caixin Weekly” in 2017 revealed that the Evergrande Group had begun reclamation work even before it was allowed to use the sea area. China’s State Oceanic Administration granted several certificates for sea area usage on March 25, 2013, and Aug. 30, 2013. Still, many locals said the rocking and reclamation of the Haihua Island project already began in early 2012. This coincides with the construction start time announced in Tianjin CCCC Waterway Administration Co., the first company to enter Haihua Island.

In the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016–2020) of the Communist Party of China, Haihua Island remains a crucial project promoted by the Hainan provincial government. However, the reclaimed 1,935-acre island has damaged the marine ecological environment, leading to the destruction of a large area of coral reefs and white butterfly shells. In 2017, the Central Environmental Protection Monitoring Group of the CCP Central Committee described Evergrande’s Haihua Island as “a pocket of money that inflates and destroys the ecosystem.” At the same time, it asked Hainan province for ecological rehabilitation and restoration for the damage caused, but Evergrande proceeded with its construction. The fine amounted to about \$34.4 million. Explaining why Evergrande has now switched its attitude to complying with the demolition guidelines, Li Yuanhua—a former associate professor at the School of Educational Sciences at Capital Normal University, said on Jan. 6 that Haihua Island is a prime example of the corruptive coordination between government and business owners. The project’s initial approval shows that some administrative agencies turned a blind eye. Evergrande’s violations are only addressed now that the CCP is going through the power struggle, which has lost Evergrande its political backers. Li believes that Evergrande was not part of President Xi Jinping’s side when founded. Nonetheless, Li referred to the latest demolition order that the real estate giant received as rude. He derided the CCP’s ruthless officials for persecuting Evergrande now because the company can no longer offer them any benefits.

**Source:** [thebl.com](http://thebl.com); 12 January 2022

# **GEOPOLITICS**

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## **US REPORT OUTLINES LEGAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST CHINA’S MARITIME CLAIMS; BEIJING DISMISSES US ASSERTIONS**

- Nirmal Ghosh and Danson Cheong

A report by the US State Department detailing the case against Beijing’s extensive territorial claims in the South China Sea has rejected them as being “plainly inconsistent with international law”. “These claims, especially considering their expansive geographic and substantive scope, gravely undermine the rule of law in the oceans and numerous universally recognised provisions of international law reflected in the convention,” the 47-page report concluded.

That convention is the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (Unclos). The report released on Wednesday (Jan 12) by the State Department’s Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs was seen as the most detailed yet by Washington on the issue. Not surprisingly, it drew an immediate riposte from China, with a foreign ministry spokesman saying the report “distorts international law, misleads the public, sows discord and disrupts the regional situation”. The spokesman, Mr Wang Wenbin, said the US “considers itself a judge of the convention” even though it – unlike China – has not ratified Unclos. Beijing would work with Asean countries towards “peace and stability in the South China Sea and promote regional prosperity and development”, he said. China’s expansive claims in the South China Sea are disputed by several countries in South-east Asia, including Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam, all of which, analysts said, would likely welcome the report.

Maritime security expert Collin Koh from the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore, said: “Asean countries will look at this report with great interest. “The materials enshrined in the report will be very useful in helping to further strengthen the position of Asean parties in a negotiation with China.” The State Department report is the latest move in a gradual shift from the former Trump administration’s often military-focused approach to confronting China in the South China Sea, to a more “political and legal” approach, he said. International relations expert Shi Yinhong of Renmin University in Beijing, also said the study would likely encourage South-east Asian countries that dispute Beijing’s claims to stand up to China. “With the US holding such a tough position, countries like Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia will feel a sense of reassurance,” said Professor Shi. Indonesia is not a claimant state in the South China Sea, but is in an ongoing dispute with China over control of waters around the Natuna Islands. In Washington, Dr Patrick Cronin, Asia-Pacific Security Chair at the Hudson Institute, told The Straits Times the report explained clearly major ways in which China had “overreached on its maritime claims

in the South China Sea in a manner Asean members should be able to agree". "Perhaps the most important thing is the State Department's use of international law to buttress diplomacy," Dr Cronin said. "This study may be the important legal foundation for some muscular diplomacy." The report noted that since 2014, China has continued to assert claims to a wide swathe of the South China Sea as well as to what it has termed "internal waters" and "outlying archipelagos" - all of which are "inconsistent with international law" as reflected in Unclos.

"This includes any claim to sovereignty over entirely submerged features like James Shoal, Vanguard Bank, and Macclesfield Bank," it said. James Shoal is about 45 nautical miles off Sarawak. Vanguard Bank, also entirely submerged, is within Vietnam's exclusive economic zone and occupied by Hanoi. Macclesfield Bank is also claimed by Vietnam. The report also rejected China's claims to sovereignty over features exposed at low tide elevations, such as Mischief Reef and Second Thomas Shoal, which fall "entirely beyond a lawful territorial sea entitlement and which are not subject to appropriation under international law". China's "baselines enclosing Xisha Qundao (Paracel Islands) and its asserted intention to establish baselines around other 'island groups' in the South China Sea are also inconsistent with international law" it said. "None of the four islands or island groups that the PRC (People's Republic of China) considers to comprise 'Nanhai Zhudao' meet the geographic criteria for straight baselines reflected in Article 7 of the convention." The report also rejected China's argument about a separate body of customary international law, outside of the convention, that justified its straight baseline claims in the South China Sea.

**Source:** [The Straits Times](#); 13 January 2022

## WHY THE ANGLOSPHERE IS UNITED IN AN ANTI-CHINA FRONT

- John Price

The CBC, this country's national broadcaster, reported in the fall of 2021 that Canada sent the Canadian patrol frigate HMCS Winnipeg as its contribution to a massive, US-led naval exercise, "Pacific Crown," off Okinawa, Japan to send a stark warning to China. It followed up this report with another, recounting how the Canadian commander endeared himself to his counterpart aboard the British aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth, who had paid a courtesy visit to the Canadian ship during the exercise. After sipping Earl Grey tea and munching on English scones with cream and jam, the British commander bemoaned that his officers' deck had run out of Earl Grey. Provided with "probably a thousand tea bags" by the commander of HMCS Winnipeg, he returned to his aircraft carrier a hero, lavishing praise on the Canadian cousins.

Replete with echoes of Anglo kinship, such banal reporting masks how Canada, through its Pacific squadron, is directly engaged in gunboat diplomacy that, for many people in China, smacks of the same intimidation that preceded the Opium Wars. This

recent sabre-rattling, however, arises out of an embedded military network known as the “San Francisco” system. Constructed in the aftermath of the Second World War, the network of bilateral alliance was designed to thwart decolonization and assure the Pacific would become an “American Lake.” To this day, the US maintains hundreds of military installations and tens of thousands of troops in the region, mainly aimed at China.

### **The San Francisco system**

In 2009, Edward Snowden was stationed at the Yokota Air Base near Tokyo, spying on China when he began to suspect the worst about the US spy network and the Five Eyes. His presence in Japan was not by accident, nor was it a result of a freely agreed upon alliance between the US and Japanese governments. The end of the Pacific War in 1945 saw the United States, with the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and others abuse their positions as victors in the war to support conservative forces in Japan, and elsewhere, to resist radical decolonization that was occurring in China, India, Vietnam, Malaysia, Burma, the Philippines and elsewhere.

To resurrect capitalism regionally, and assure Anglo-American hegemony, the US reinforced its military presence, provoking wars, coups, and regime changes in a host of countries. Japanese American historian Akira Iriye and others described this military-economic system that arose the “San Francisco system,” named after the city where the peace treaty with Japan was signed in 1951. Except it wasn’t a peace treaty, but a wholesale system of US military intervention in the Asia Pacific that continues to this day. The US is much more than an “informal” empire. The system included, according to Iriye, “[t]he rearmament of Japan, continued presence of American forces in Japan, their military alliance, and the retention by the United States of Okinawa and the Bonin Islands. In return the United States would remove all restrictions on Japan’s economic affairs and renounce the right to demand reparations and war indemnities. Here was a program for turning Japan from a conquered and occupied country into a military ally, frankly aimed at responding to the rising power of the Soviet Union and China in the Asia-Pacific region.” And there was more.

“In the end the San Francisco agreement was only peripherally a peace treaty—it was a series of bi- and multi-lateral military pacts that ensured the Pacific would become an American lake, an ambition that dates from the early 20th century. The US would retain over 200,000 troops in Japan alone, not to mention thousands more in Okinawa, South Korea, the Philippines, Taiwan and, as the decade continued, in Vietnam as well.” This was my conclusion in a paper published twenty years ago as part of the Japan Policy Research Institute Working Paper Series, sponsored by senior American scholar Chalmers Johnson who was as surprised as I was by the findings. The US had used its power to manipulate the peace treaty process to reinforce its economic and military hegemony, marginalizing the people and countries that suffered the most from Japan’s imperial war: Both mainland and Taiwanese China were not even invited to the peace conference. Neither were the Koreas, north and south. India refused to participate in what it regarded as a rigged affair; so did Burma. Three signatories from Asia (Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos) were actually representatives of the French colonial regime and must be excluded from any bona fide count of Asian countries endorsing the treaty. That leaves only four—the Philippines, Indonesia, Ceylon, and Pakistan. Of these four, Indonesia signed the

treaty but never ratified it and signed a separate peace treaty with Japan in 1958. The Philippines, although closely allied with the US, reserved its signature, and did not ratify the treaty until after it had gone into effect. In other words, the only Asian countries that supported the SFPT were Pakistan and Ceylon, both recent colonies of Britain and neither of which had signed the Allied Declaration of 1942.

Of note was why the Indian government, with Jawaharlal Nehru as prime minister, refused to participate in the San Francisco meetings, and the response this elicited from Harry Truman, the US president at the time. India considered that (1) the provisions giving the US control of Okinawa and the adjacent Bonin Islands (also known as the Ogasawaras) were not justifiable; (2) the military provisions of the treaty (and the security treaty to be signed with it should only be concluded after Japan became fully independent; (3) Formosa (Taiwan) should be returned to China at once; and (4) objected to the fact that the deliberations to be held in San Francisco would not allow for the negotiation of the peace treaty. India's position provoked Truman to scribble in the margins of the Indian note: "Evidently the 'Govt' of India has consulted Uncle Joe and Mousie Dung of China!" Disparaging India's government by putting it in quotation marks and referring to Mao Zedong as 'mouse dung' while Joseph Stalin was 'Uncle Joe' revealed Truman's deeply embedded prejudices towards people of colour. The peace treaty—a project steeped in racist exclusions—reflected the continuing assertion of white supremacy in the region.

Despite admonitions from staff regarding the problematic treaty, the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lester Pearson, threw his full support behind the US strategy in Asia as it played out in San Francisco. This support was essential in 1951. With most Asian countries boycotting or abstaining from the talks, the allied "middle powers" of the UK, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia were instrumental in providing a veneer of legitimacy to what happened. What I later came to realize was that referring to Canada as one of the "middle powers" that abetted the US in passing the San Francisco peace treaty was a mistake. At work in San Francisco were not "middle powers" but the Anglo alliance of settler colonial states. The San Francisco system left much of the Pacific under the domination of the US and its allies, into which it also integrated a beholden Japan. Nevertheless, decolonization movements continued, with US intervention resulting in major wars in Korea and Indochina, with the loss of millions of lives. US covert operations prompted coups in Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia, with terrible consequences. The scale of carnage makes a mockery of the term "Cold War" in Asia. US officials perceived the Pacific as an "American Lake," an economic as well as a strategic sphere of influence that came to include South Korea and Taiwan. The system allowed Japan to rise again economically, while its knock-on effects led to the integration of South Korea and Southeast Asian nations into a dynamic region of liberal capital development. The region, however, arose on the foundation of the San Francisco system, an interlocking network of military treaties and agreements that provides the US empire with hundreds of military bases or facilities in the Asia Pacific to this day. This system has caused severe human and ecological degradation in the Pacific, including the sexual exploitation and abuse associated with US military bases ("man-camps").

Recent developments in China-US relations must be understood in the context of this San Francisco system. China's rapid economic has been based on that country's

ongoing support of the World Trade Organization and open sea lanes. In that regard, the US “Pivot to Asia” and its recent meddling in territorial disputes have evoked incredulity on the part of the PRC, and a determination to push back under Xi Jinping. One might disagree with China’s construction of the sea-bases on the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, or its military maneuvers near Taiwan, but they contain a logic directly responding to increasing Anglo alliance intervention in the region.

Those who demonize China portray it as a global military threat, but this too must be taken with a grain of salt. An appraisal provided by Pulitzer-prize winning historian John Dower a decade ago still holds: Given the enormous domestic challenges China will face for many decades to come, the goal of its military transformation is not to achieve strategic parity with the United States. That is not feasible. Rather, the primary objective is to create armed forces capable of blunting or deterring America’s projection of power into China’s offshore waters—to develop, that is, a military strong enough to dispel what Henry Kissinger has called China’s “nightmare of military encirclement...the area of particular strategic concern lies within what Chinese (and others) refer to as the ‘first island chain’ or ‘inner island chain’ which includes the Yellow Sea, East China Sea, and South China Sea. Central to this area-denial strategy is developing “asymmetric capabilities” that will enable Chinese forces to offset America’s ability to intervene militarily should, for example, a conflict over Taiwan arise. This is a nightmare scenario that could easily escalate, with devastating effects on peoples in the region. Current anti-China campaigns, and the associated notion that we are seeing a “new Cold War,” are sowing the illusion that the confrontations might end as they did in Europe, with the collapse of US enemies. Whatever criticism it merits, China is not the Soviet Union. Emerging as part of the global decolonization process after the Pacific War is a point of pride for many people in the PRC. This and its recent economic successes have resulted in the Chinese Communist Party retaining substantial support from the population at large. Continual US-led intervention in the area inflames Chinese nationalism, increases the danger of war, and makes social change difficult. Just recently, Australia and Japan signed a new military agreement, the Reciprocal Access Agreement, reinforcing relations between the two countries’ military forces. Add this to AUKUS and the Quad and we are witnessing growing belligerence on the part of the Anglo alliance in Asia that began, not with China’s expansion, but with the US “Pivot to Asia” in 2010. We seem to have arrived at an important juncture in Canada: build on the growing recognition of our settler colonial past, step back from the Anglo alliance machinations in Asia or become further enmeshed in US-led aggression in the region. Such a stark choice demands a reassessment of Canadian foreign policy in light of the long history of racism and settler colonialism in this country.

The Canadian government can avoid stepping off the precipice by distancing itself from the American agenda in the Asia Pacific, and by reining in CSIS. To do otherwise is to reinforce a US empire that was, and is, based on genocide, slavery, white supremacy, and imperialism. Such a project does not entail succumbing to the pressures of the PRC; indeed, it demands that we apply a critical lens to China and elsewhere, without the shackles of racism and liberal presumptions at the core of the Anglo alliance.

**Source:** [canadiandimension.com](http://canadiandimension.com); 09 January 2022

## **INDONESIA DARES CHINA IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA-WILL THE REST OF ASEAN FOLLOW SUIT?**

- Baladas Ghoshal

China has formally opened another front in its bellicosity in the South China Sea, and practically forcing Jakarta to accept a dispute in the Natunas, where there is none, as the area concerned is within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Indonesia as per the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Beijing claims that its "nine-dash" line, an artificial boundary invented by the CCP (Communist Party of China) that covers most of the South China Sea, giving it ownership of this entire maritime area extending to the EEZ of Indonesia in the Natuna Islands. The EEZ is an area extending up to 200 nautical miles from the baseline of a country. While other countries have a right of innocent passage in such territory, a country has special rights regarding exploration and use of maritime resources in its EEZ, to the exclusion of other powers. Jakarta has always stood up to China bullying her in the EEZ without declaring it loudly.

China has repeatedly told Indonesia to halt an oil and natural gas development project in the South China Sea, claiming infringement on its territorial waters. But in early December last year, it officially communicated to the Indonesian government to stop appraisal drilling at Harbour Energy's (LON:HBR) Tuna Block offshore Indonesia in maritime territory that both nations view as their own during a months-long standoff in the South China Sea, reported Reuters. The unprecedented demand raised tensions over natural resources between China and Indonesia in a volatile area of global strategic and economic importance. China not only objected to the drilling operations, but had also sent coast guard vessels into the area to mount pressure on Indonesia. Jakarta has not openly disclosed about China's protests, as that would amount to an admission of a dispute in the area. Even while it does not acknowledge the existence of a dispute, Indonesia in May 2020 sent the United Nations a letter rejecting Beijing's historical claims in the sea indicated by its nine-dash like maps.. China, in turn, sent a counter reply to the UN, maintaining its claims in the South China Sea while seeking a solution through negotiations, which Jakarta flatly rejected.

While not inclined to make the spat with China public, Indonesian President Joko Widodo has pursued Jakarta's traditional diplomatic approach of being equidistant from both the United States and China. Like most other ASEAN countries, Indonesia doesn't want to take sides between the two rival powers despite all the Chinese bullying. And he adopted a clever strategy of roping in Britain and Russia to deal with the Chinese pressure. Jakarta sought the support of a consortium of Britain's Harbour Energy and Russian state oil company Zarubezhneft to lay a pipeline across the North Natuna Sea to connect with Vietnam's offshore network. The two companies have already announced that they have found a modest gross gas resource of 600 billion cubic feet after drilling of two appraisal wells in the Tuna block, about 10 km from Indonesia's EEZ. Despite Beijing's objections, the drilling continued for six months

and was completed last November with Indonesia's Bakamla (Badan Keamanan Laut Republik Indonesia- Indonesian Maritime Security Agency)- claiming success in their ventures, which some analysts called it "a grand 'victory' over the Chinese."

### **Beijing's bellicosity in the South China**

China equally doesn't let Vietnam drill oil and gas in its own EEZ, which forced Hanoi to seek Tokyo's support. Similarly, China doesn't let the Philippines drill oil in its own waters either, which ultimately forced Manila to start drilling in open defiance to China. Not only that, Beijing imposes annual summer fishing bans in the South China Sea in an attempt to deprive other legitimate countries from fishing in their own EEZ. Both Malaysia and the Philippines too, face an aggressive Beijing in their South China Sea possessions. China already controls the Scarborough Shoal - a disputed feature in the South China Sea, claimed by both Beijing and Manila. Presently, Chinese maritime militias are also eyeing Whitsun Reef, a geographical feature in Filipino waters, which is also being claimed by China. Malaysia, on the other hand, is itself a victim of Chinese bullying. Chinese coastguard ships harass Malaysian oil and gas vessels operating in their own waters. China claims Malaysian territory also and forbids it to drill there.

### **Signs of Unity among the Claimant States**

Brunei, a tiny Sultanate, where China has invested extensively, was naturally passive for a long time in its response towards Beijing denying the country to drill in its own EEZ. But last year, Brunei was appointed as the ASEAN chair and was no longer passive and it quietly showed the ability to mobilise claimant states of ASEAN as well as Indonesia, to express concern about China's aggressive behaviour over the South China Sea disputes. This happened despite China's attempts to woo Brunei through vaccine diplomacy sending a batch of Sinopharm Covid-19 vaccines in a donation to which its Second Minister of foreign affairs Haji Erywan thanked the former. In January, a Chinese state-owned company Guangxi Beibu Gulf International Port Group had also signed a deal to redevelop and manage a fisheries port in Brunei. But the tiny Kingdom decided to cooperate with other South China Sea disputants who wanted to tackle Beijing's assertiveness in the hotly contested region. While China is trying to pull Brunei to its side, the latter, it seems, has made up its mind to stick with fellow South China Sea disputants within the regional bloc.

Singapore, which is neither a claimant state on the South China Sea, nor has any disputes with any ASEAN members, is also increasingly becoming active on finding a way to manage the conflict. Recent agreements for cooperation in oil exploration and maritime security sectors suggest that some ASEAN members are ready to forgo their own petty differences and take on the main challenge, China. Plans for a maritime accord between Malaysia and Vietnam, for instance, indicate how the ASEAN neighbours are ready to come closer to each other in face of growing Chinese revisionism. However, minor the shift is, it is the beginning of a semblance of unity among some ASEAN members in the face of China's belligerence and their own existential crisis.

### **Indonesia dares China**

The most recent subtle initiative Indonesia has taken is to invite officials in charge of maritime security from five other countries in ASEAN to meet early next year to

discuss how to respond to China's assertiveness in the South China Sea. Head of Bakamla, Vice Adm. Aan Kurnia, was quoted in the Indonesian media as telling reporters that he had invited his counterparts from Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam to a meeting in February 2022 to "share experiences and foster brotherhood" among the countries facing similar challenges posed by China. Maritime agencies from the six countries took part in an ASEAN Coast Guard Forum last October, signalling willingness to cooperate. The Jakarta Post quoted Aan as saying that it is important "to present a coordinated approach" in matters related to the South China Sea, and "how to respond in the field when we face the same 'disturbance'." The vice admiral did not mention China by name.

A meeting similar to the ASEAN Coast Guard forum would be a "great opportunity for ASEAN coast guards and maritime law enforcement agencies to talk and cooperate with each other," Satya Pratama, a senior Indonesian government official and a former Bakamla captain was quoted to have said. "It is also a good idea for Indonesia [through Bakamla] to explain Indonesia's intention so that others can understand and follow suit," he said. "Coast guards in Southeast Asia have a bad history of cooperation - they see each other as their primary challenges, even worse than the navies, which have learned to cooperate amid competition," to quote Thomas Daniel, a senior fellow at Malaysia's Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS).. This is reflected in ASEAN's attempt to negotiate a Code of Conduct (COC) to regulate maritime activities there, with some nations like the current ASEAN chair Cambodia reluctant to criticize Beijing. This also finds expression in the comment by the Filipino foreign secretary Theodore Locsin Jr. who spoke of those difficulties earlier last month when he addressed a meeting between foreign ministers from ASEAN and Group of Seven (G7) developed countries. He said that as ASEAN countries and China struggle to agree on the South China Sea issues, "recent incidents and the heightened tension ... remain a serious concern." "These worrying developments underscore the urgency and importance of the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea ... But negotiations for the COC, even on our watch, went nowhere," Locsin said. Antonio Carpio, a former justice of the Philippine Supreme Court, had his own suggestion that five ASEAN coastal states - the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei, plus Indonesia - should form a coalition "to oppose China's hegemony and bullying"

### **Challenges to Unity remain**

Forging unity among the five ASEAN states is not going to be an easy task, as there are longstanding trust issue between them, as well as fear of retaliation by China. In the meantime, however, the Vietnam Coast Guard and the Indonesian Maritime Security Agency signed a memorandum of understanding last month on cooperation in strengthening maritime security and safety between the two forces. But overlapping maritime claims have been an irritant in Vietnam-Indonesia bilateral relations for decades. The two countries frequently clash over the issue of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. In 2019, for example, Indonesia seized and destroyed 38 Vietnamese vessels for illegal fishing. A similar situation is seen between Vietnam and the Philippines, as well as between Indonesia and Malaysia. Yet the very attempt by Indonesia to create some understanding between the coast guards of the five countries signals a resolve on their part to display their unity vis-à-vis the Chinese bully. Whether the attempt to forge unity succeeds or not, it surely heralds a shift in the

ASEAN way of doing things from consensus principle to pragmatic approach to deal with China challenge.

### **Indonesia bolstering its own defences**

Meanwhile, on its own, Indonesia is preparing herself for any eventuality and looks to bolster its defences in and around Natuna, suspecting that China is exploring opportunities to seize effective control of the islands. The Indonesian military is lengthening an air base runway so that additional planes can be deployed, together with the construction of a submarine base as well. Local fishing vessels act as eyes and ears, take part in an early warning system on the lookout for approaching Chinese ships. With the USA, Jakarta is building a joint training facility for coast guard personnel near Natuna. The two nations held their biggest joint military exercise to date this August, spanning three locations in Indonesia. The drills simulated island defences.

### **Indonesia could be the next buyer of BrahMos after the Philippines**

To build its defence capacities and capabilities Indonesia also has growing defence cooperation with Japan, Australia and India. New Delhi has already finalized a deal with the Filipinos for supply of Brah-Mos supersonic missile systems, jointly produced by India and Russia, amid China's aggressive territorial claims in the South China Sea region. BrahMos will upload substantial confirmed capacity to the Philippines' coastal defences, and it compares favourably with the anti-ship missiles in carrier with different navies. It is some distance quicker than the U.S. Army's Tomahawk or the Chinese language PLA Army's YJ-18. India is exploring the possibility of selling the BrahMos cruise missile to Indonesia, and a team from the Indo-Russian joint venture that makes the weapon system visited a state-run shipyard in Surabaya last year to assess the fitting of the missile on Indonesian warships, Besides the BrahMos, India has offered to supply coastal defence radars and marine grade steel to Indonesia and to service the Russian-made Su-30 combat jets flown by the Indonesian air force as part of efforts to deepen bilateral defence and military cooperation. With a commanding maritime strategic location and ample attributes of developing its national power, Indonesia could well become the spearhead within the ASEAN to checkmate China's expansionist drive in the South China Sea.

**Source:** [The Week](#); 19 December 2021

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