

The Ocean at the Center of Geopolitics: Between an Overflowing Land and an Under-Exploited Sea

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Abstract : We are living a remarkable period, responsible for the thriving of the human population to unprecedented levels. Still, it is empirically obvious that sustaining such a huge population puts a tremendous pressure on our planet. Once Land resources grow scarcer, there is a mounting pressure to find alternatives to support basic human needs elsewhere. Occupying most of our planet, it's therefore natural that, in not a so distant future, humankind look for such basic subsistence means at the Ocean. Thus, once the Ocean becomes essential to Human subsistence, it is predictable it's moving to the foreground of Geopolitics. Both future technologies and uses of the Ocean, as bidding for the exploration of its resources away from the natural territory of influence of a Country, are susceptible of raising the risk of conflict between traditional political adversaries and/or the dilemma of having to balance economic interests, with various security and defense concerns. Those empirical observations suggest the need to further research on this perspective shift of the main Geopolitical axis to the Ocean, the new sources of conflict that can result thereon, and how to address them. The author suggests a systematic analysis of this problematic, to attain a political and legal international consensus, namely on what concerns updating of the 'United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea' of 10 December 1982, and/or its annexes. To proceed with the present research, the primary analysis was based on a quantitative observation, but reasoning thereon relied essentially on a qualitative process of prospective scenarios assessment.

Keywords : marine resources, ocean geopolitics, security and defense, sustainable development

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