



Madden-Julian Oscillation: Recent Evolution, Current Status and Predictions

**Update prepared by
Climate Prediction Center / NCEP
May 19, 2014**



Outline

- **Overview**
- **Recent Evolution and Current Conditions**
- **MJO Index Information**
- **MJO Index Forecasts**
- **MJO Composites**



Overview

- **The MJO weakened over the past several days as both higher- and lower-frequency variability than typical MJO activity began to dominate the global pattern of tropical convection. There is some evidence of a weak MJO enhanced phase moving towards the Maritime Continent.**
- **Dynamical and statistical models show little in the way of coherent MJO activity as the large-scale pattern is forecast to be dominated by the low-frequency state and developing El Niño conditions.**
- **Based on recent observations, the MJO is forecast to remain fairly weak, with any residual enhanced phase propagating into the Pacific during the next two weeks.**
- **The MJO is not expected to have a substantial impact across the global tropics during the next one to two weeks.**

Additional potential impacts across the global tropics and a discussion for the U.S. are available at:
<http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/precip/CWlink/ghazards/index.php>

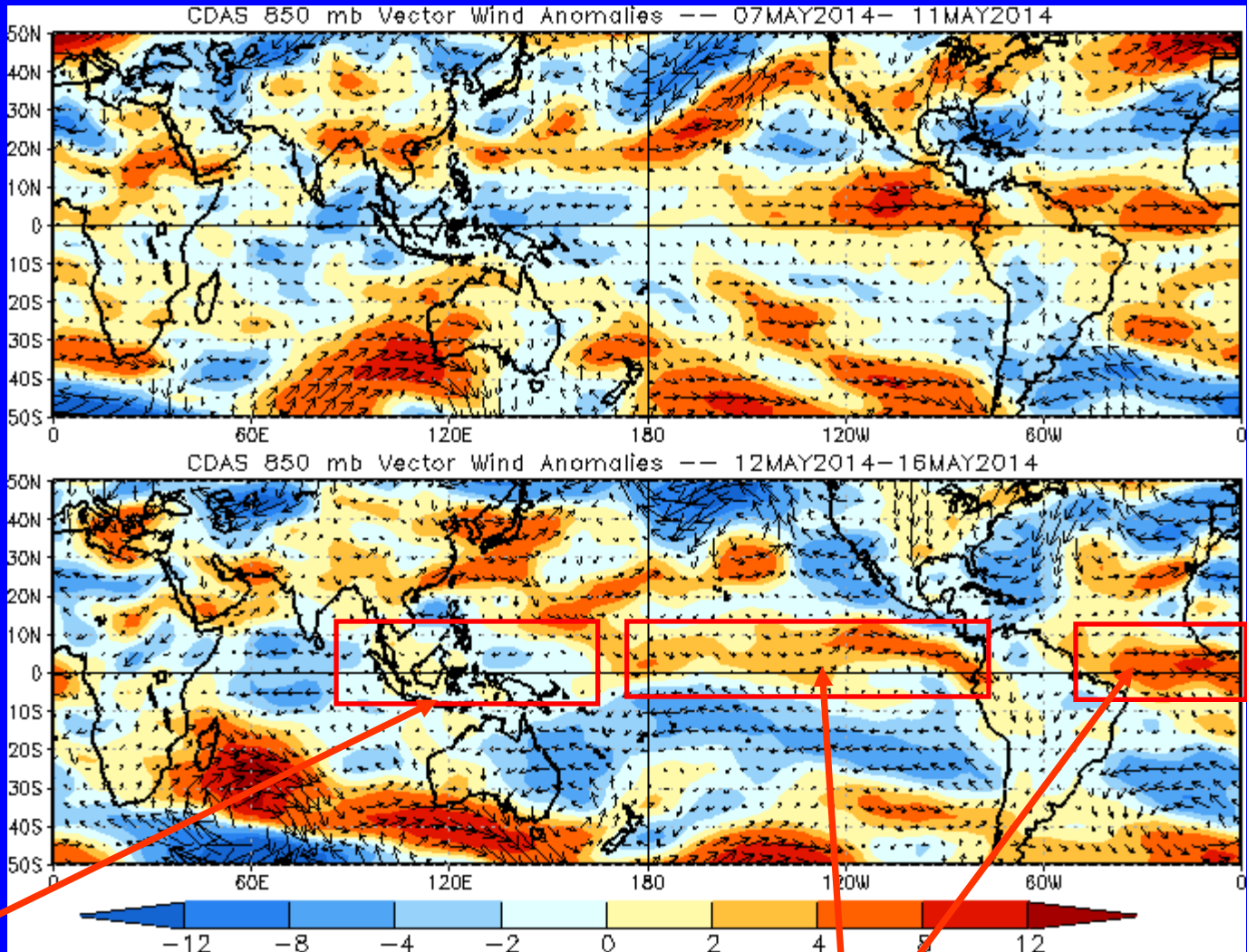


850-hPa Vector Wind Anomalies (m s^{-1})

Note that shading denotes the zonal wind anomaly

Blue shades: Easterly anomalies

Red shades: Westerly anomalies



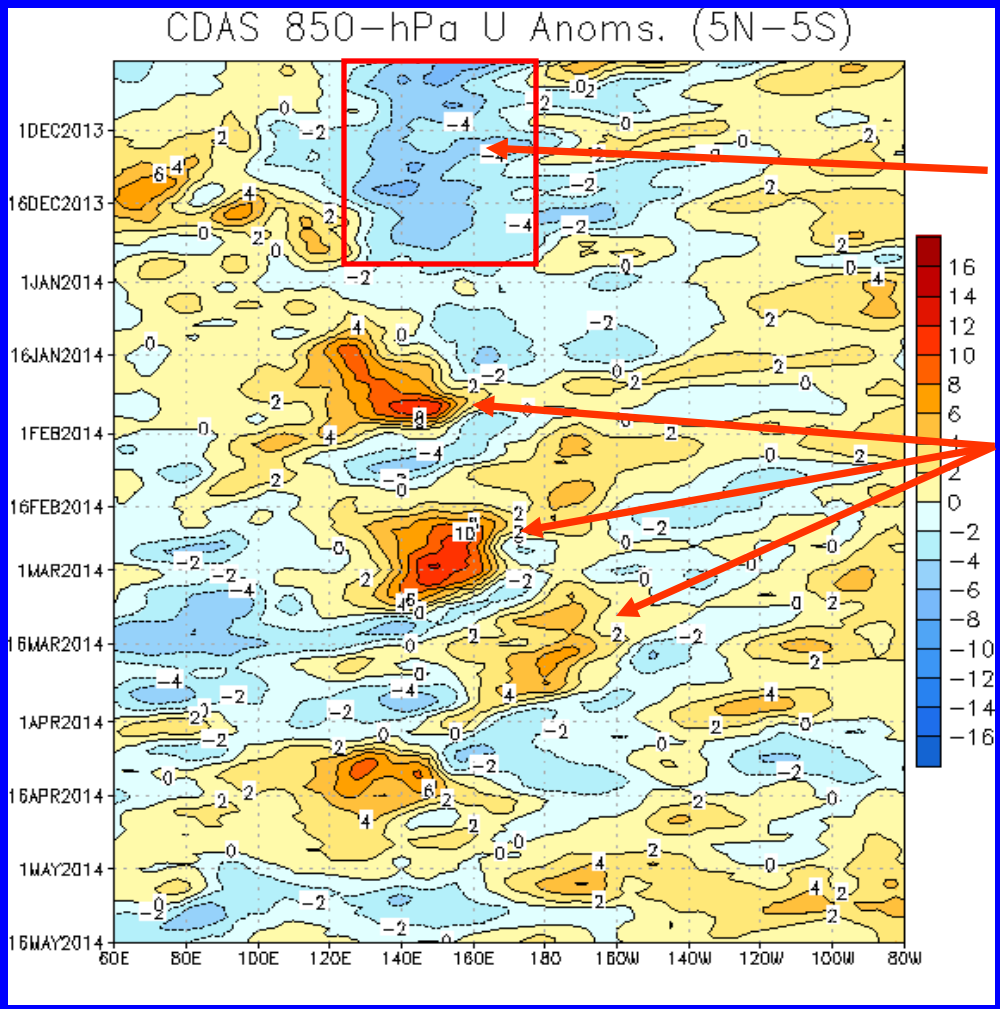
Easterly anomalies all but disappeared over much of the Maritime Continent and far western Pacific.

Westerly anomalies persisted over the eastern Pacific and Atlantic.



850-hPa Zonal Wind Anomalies ($m s^{-1}$)

Westerly anomalies (orange/red shading) represent anomalous west-to-east flow
Easterly anomalies (blue shading) represent anomalous east-to-west flow



Time
↓

Longitude

Easterly anomalies dominated from 120E to near the Date Line during November and December 2013 as MJO activity was weak.

Multiple westerly wind bursts were observed across the western Pacific between January and mid-March. Each westerly wind burst shifted slightly further east.

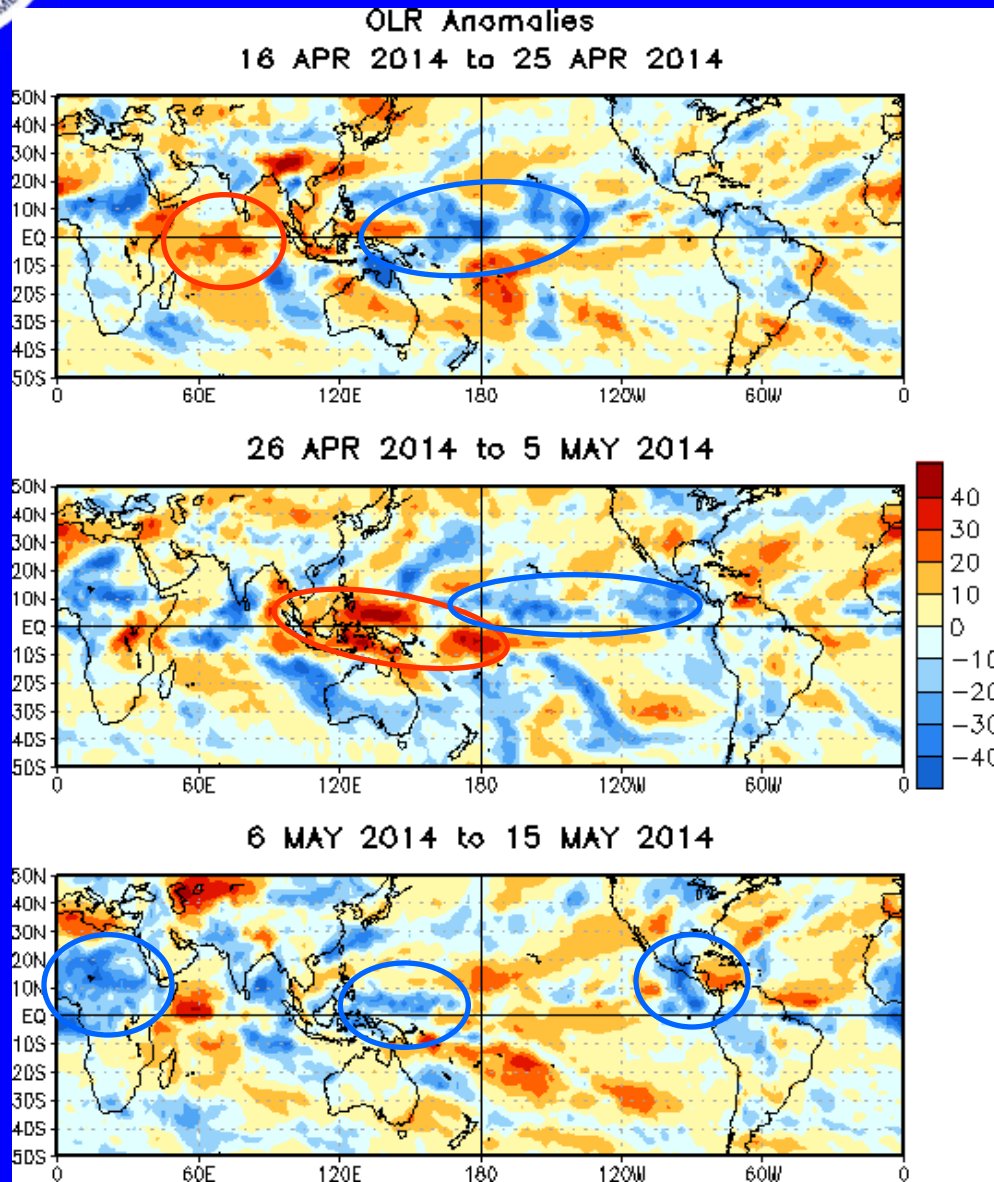
During April, winds near the Date Line have been close to average while westerly anomalies have been generally persistent across the Maritime continent and far western Pacific.

During early May, westerly (easterly) anomalies were observed over the eastern Pacific and Atlantic (Maritime Continent and far western Pacific).



OLR Anomalies – Past 30 days

Drier-than-normal conditions, positive OLR anomalies (yellow/red shading)
Wetter-than-normal conditions, negative OLR anomalies (blue shading)



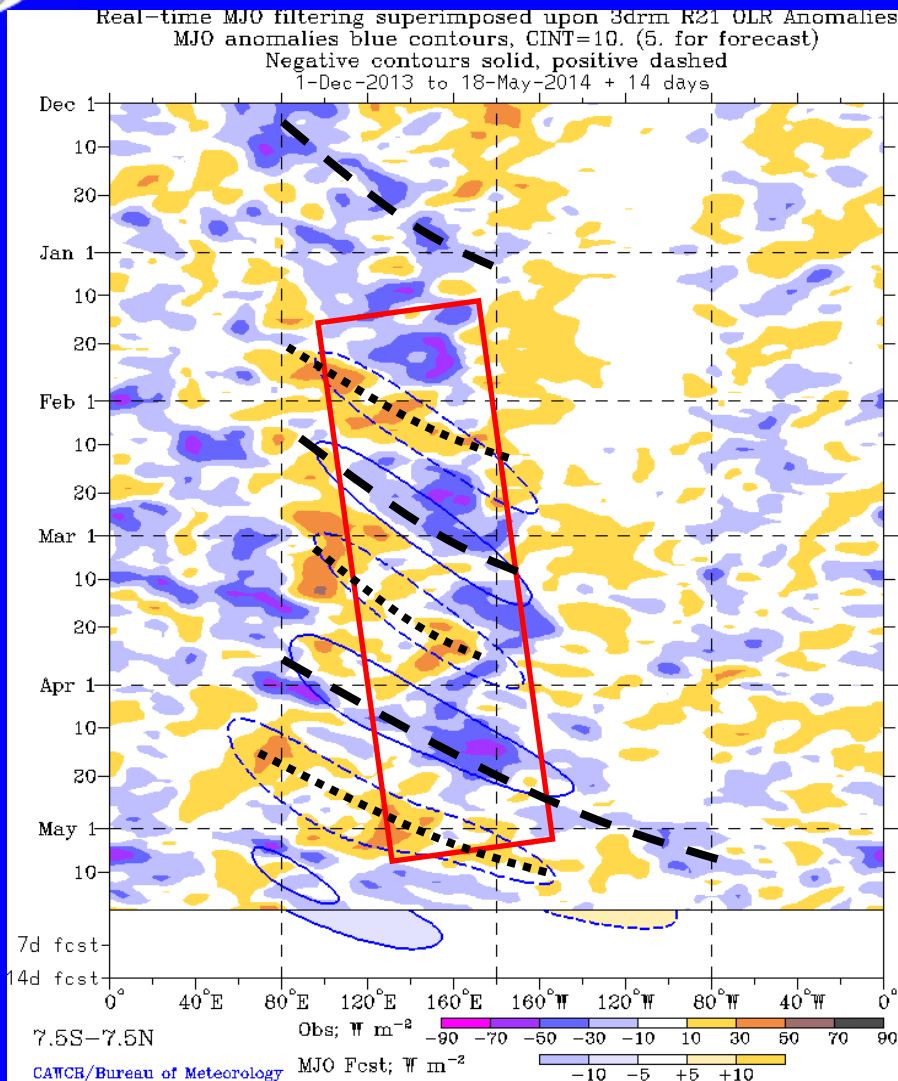
Enhanced convection was observed over the west-central Pacific during mid to late April, with suppressed convection over the central Indian Ocean.

During late April and early May, enhanced convection persisted over the east-central Pacific north of the equator, while suppressed convection shifted eastward across the Maritime Continent into the West Pacific.

Enhanced convection continued over parts of Africa and the far eastern Pacific during early to mid-May, while a Kelvin wave contributed to enhanced convection reemerging in the West Pacific.



Outgoing Longwave Radiation (OLR) Anomalies (7.5°N-7.5°S)



Drier-than-normal conditions, positive OLR anomalies (yellow/red shading)

Wetter-than-normal conditions, negative OLR anomalies (blue shading)

(Courtesy of CAWCR Australia Bureau of Meteorology)

MJO activity was observed during December 2013, although the signal broke down with no clear suppressed phase evident.

From January through April, enhanced convection propagated slowly eastward from the Maritime Continent to the western Pacific (red box), interrupted by positive OLR anomalies during late January and early February and again in March associated with the MJO.

The MJO became more coherent during April, with strongly enhanced convection over the west-central Pacific associated with constructive interference with the low frequency state.

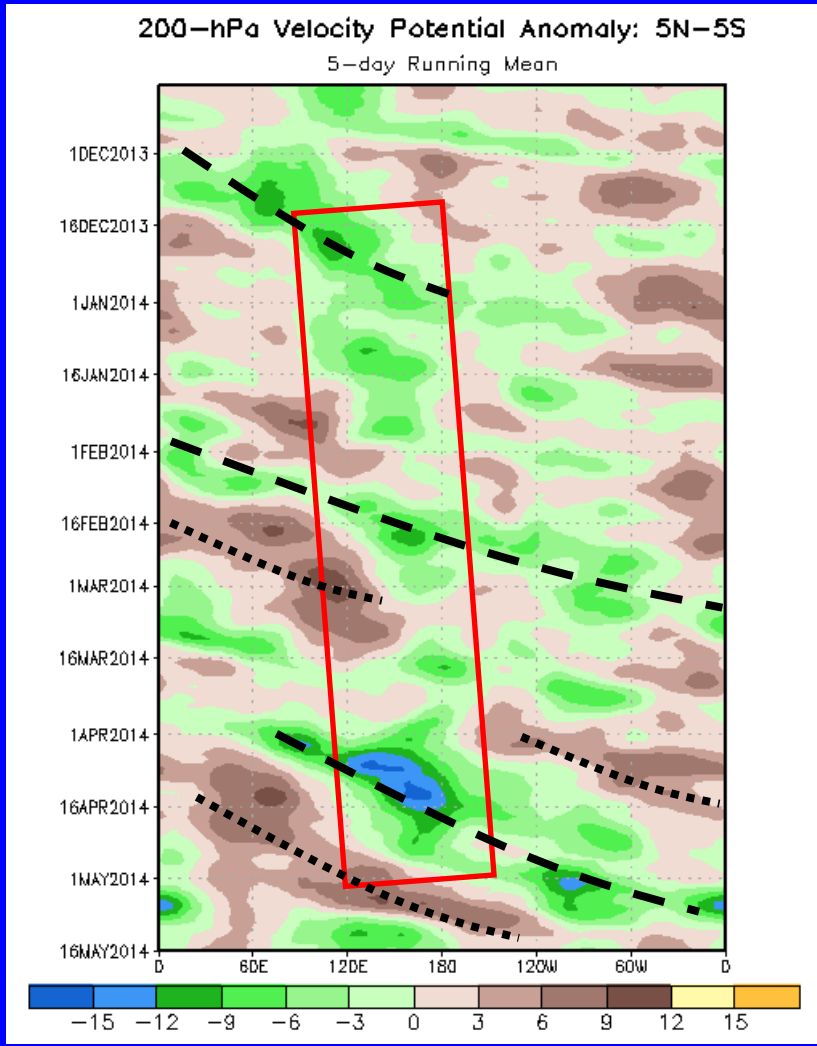
During late April and early May, the suppressed phase of the MJO propagated over the western Pacific, destructively interfering with the low frequency state.



200-hPa Velocity Potential Anomalies (5°S-5°N)

Positive anomalies (brown shading) indicate unfavorable conditions for precipitation

Negative anomalies (green shading) indicate favorable conditions for precipitation



The enhanced phase of the MJO was evident during December (dashed black line) as negative anomalies propagated from the Indian Ocean to near the Date Line. No clear suppressed was evident thereafter.

At this time, a slow eastward progression of negative anomalies was observed from late December to the present across the Indo-Pacific warm pool region (red box).

During February into early March, anomalies propagated eastward with time associated with the MJO before weakening.

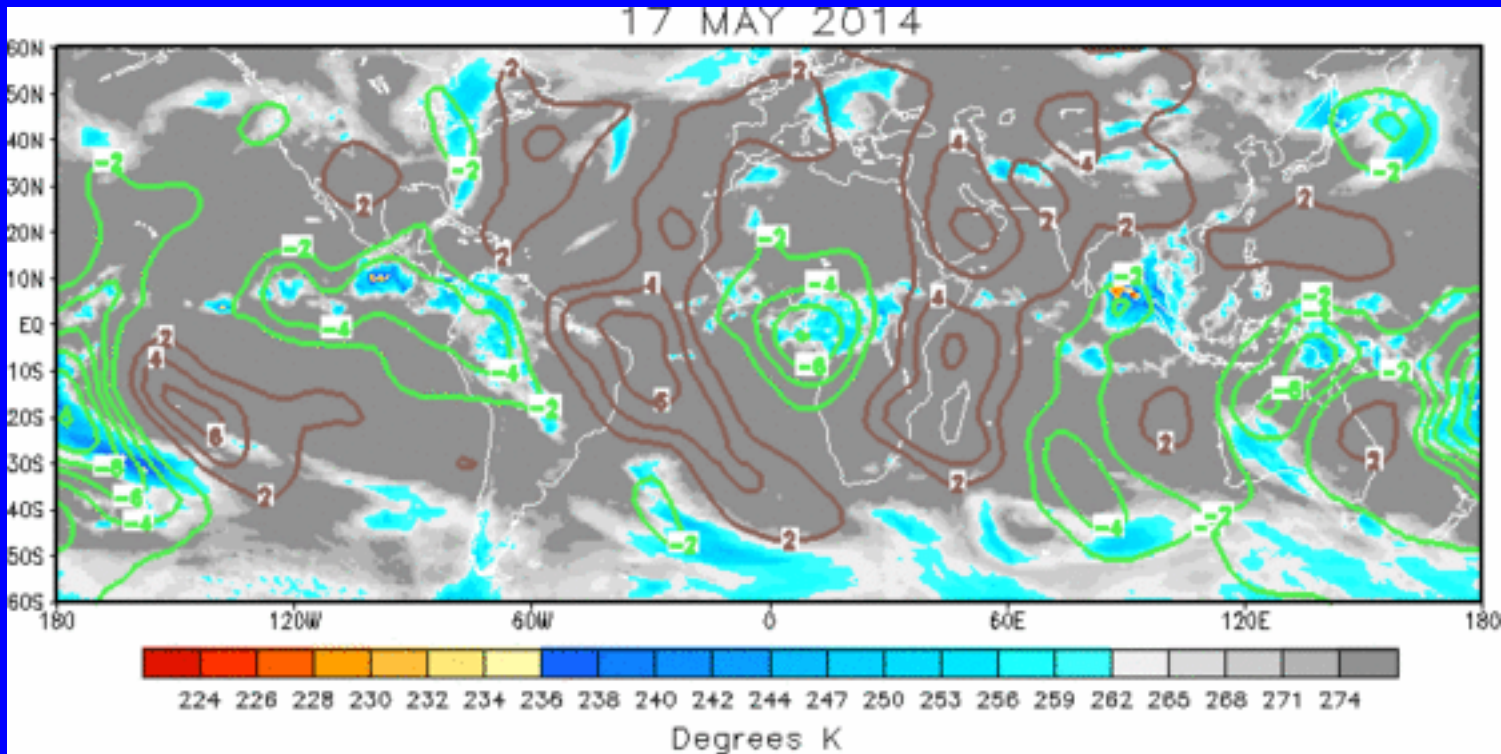
The MJO strengthened once again during April as eastward propagation of both positive and negative anomalies are indicated. This signal has begun to break down more recently in favor of higher frequency Kelvin waves.



IR Temperatures (K) / 200-hPa Velocity Potential Anomalies

Positive anomalies (brown contours) indicate unfavorable conditions for precipitation

Negative anomalies (green contours) indicate favorable conditions for precipitation



The spatial upper-level velocity potential pattern has become largely incoherent with negative anomalies associated with enhanced convection over parts of Africa, the south-central Pacific, and the eastern Pacific.

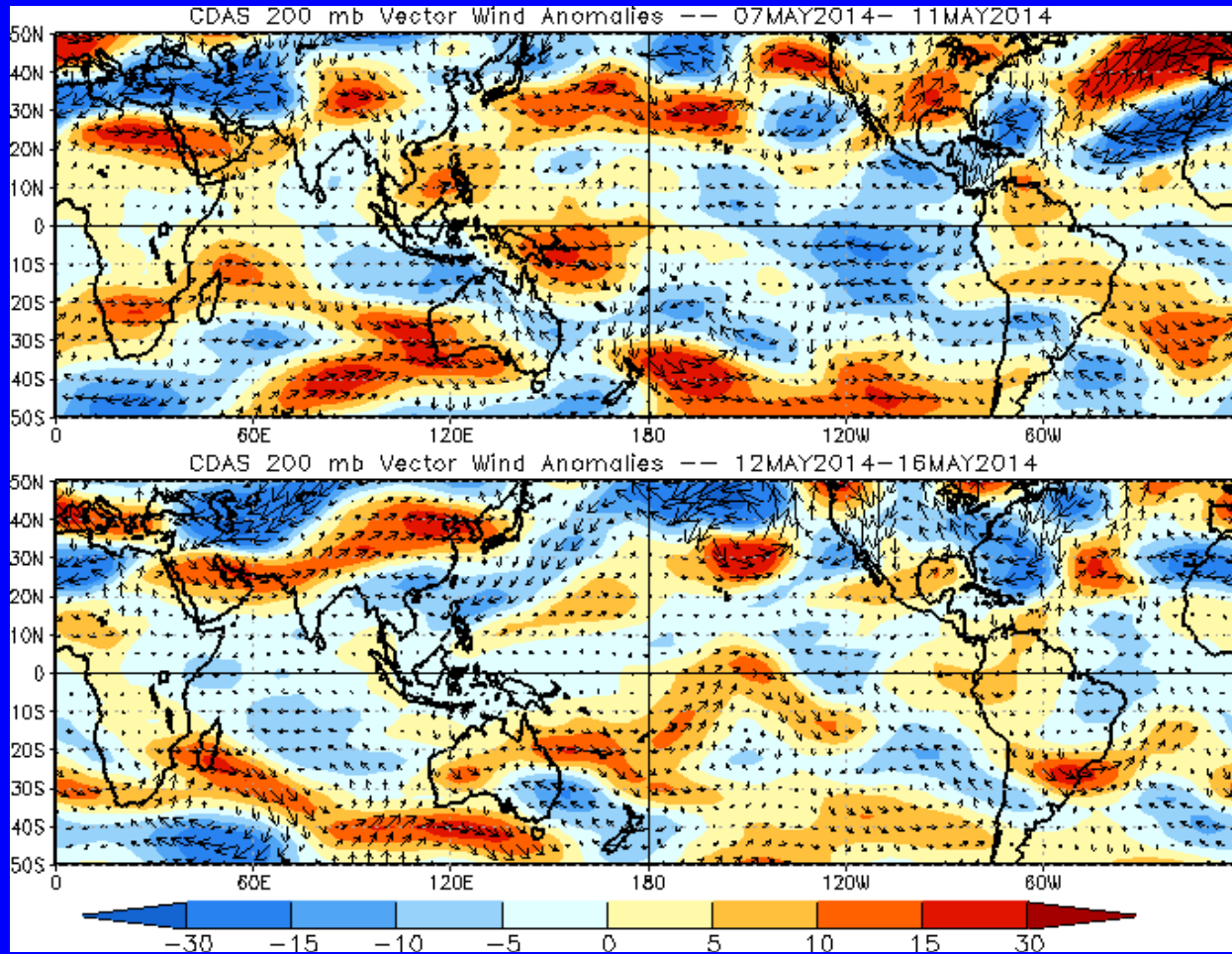


200-hPa Vector Wind Anomalies (m s^{-1})

Note that shading denotes the zonal wind anomaly

Blue shades: Easterly anomalies

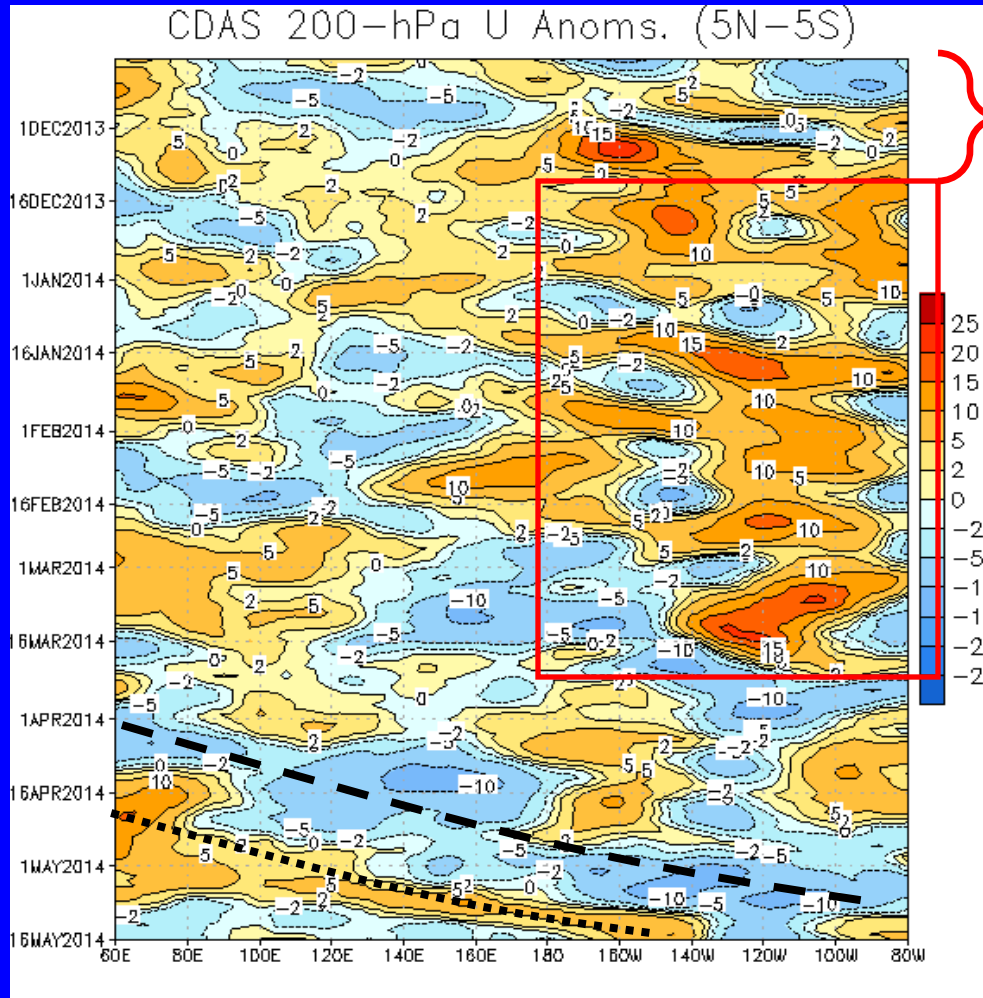
Red shades: Westerly anomalies



The upper-level zonal wind field is largely incoherent across the global tropics, though there has been a notable decrease in easterly anomalies over the eastern Pacific.



200-hPa Zonal Wind Anomalies (m s^{-1})



Time



Longitude

Westerly anomalies (orange/red shading) represent anomalous west-to-east flow

Easterly anomalies (blue shading) represent anomalous east-to-west flow

Anomalies of alternating sign were evident over the eastern Pacific, due in part to extratropical Rossby waves breaking into the Tropics (red bracket).

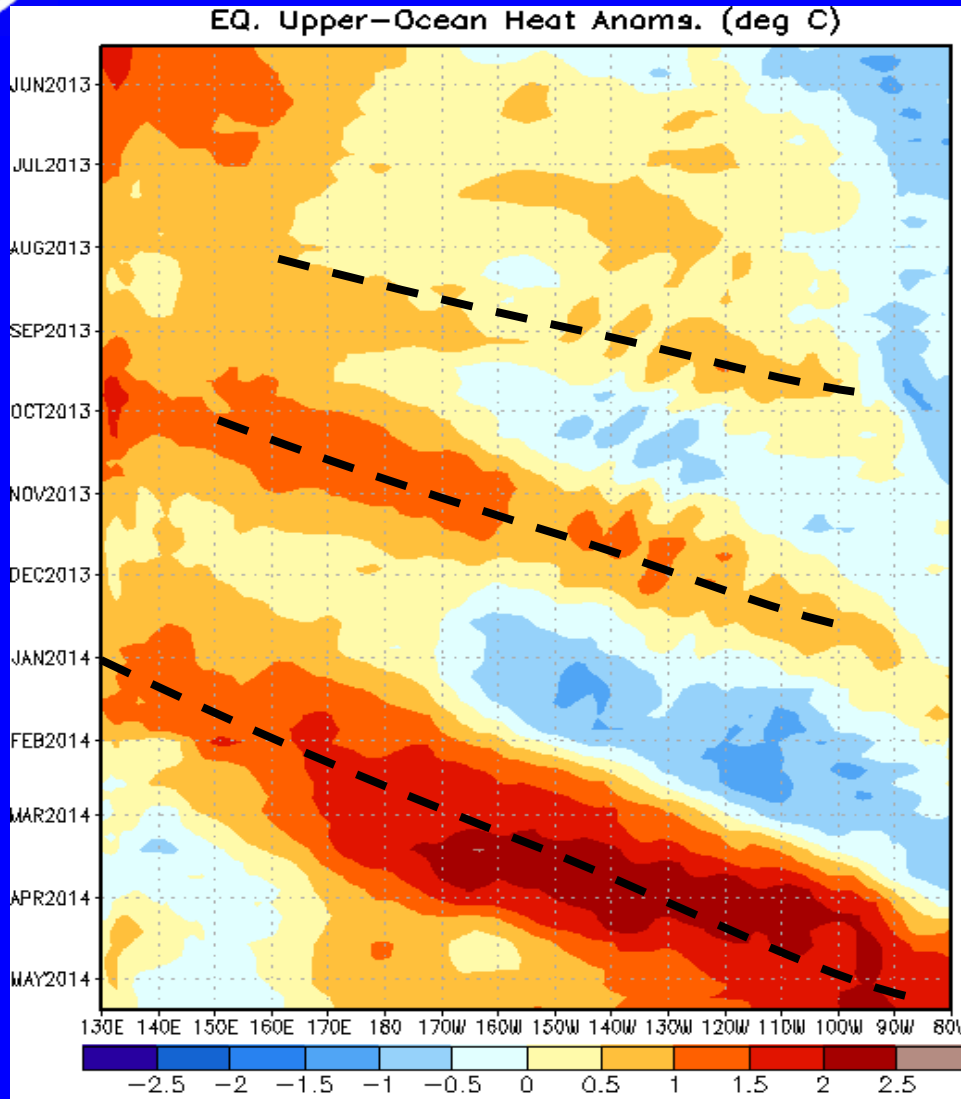
From December into March, westerly anomalies were most prevalent across the western Hemisphere (red box).

During mid-April, the slowly evolving background state has contributed to easterly anomalies expanding to the Date Line.

Recent MJO activity is evident in the eastward propagation of both easterly and westerly anomalies during April and early May. This signal has weakened in recent days.



Weekly Heat Content Evolution in the Equatorial Pacific



The influence of a downwelling oceanic Kelvin wave can be seen through late March 2013 as anomalies became positive in the east-central Pacific.

Oceanic downwelling Kelvin wave activity is evident in late August and once again during October through early December.

A considerably stronger downwelling event began in January and propagated across the Pacific.

Warm anomalies persisted over much of the Pacific during April and May.



MJO Index -- Information

- The MJO index illustrated on the next several slides is the CPC version of the Wheeler and Hendon index (2004, hereafter WH2004).

Wheeler M. and H. Hendon, 2004: An All-Season Real-Time Multivariate MJO Index: Development of an Index for Monitoring and Prediction, *Monthly Weather Review*, 132, 1917-1932.

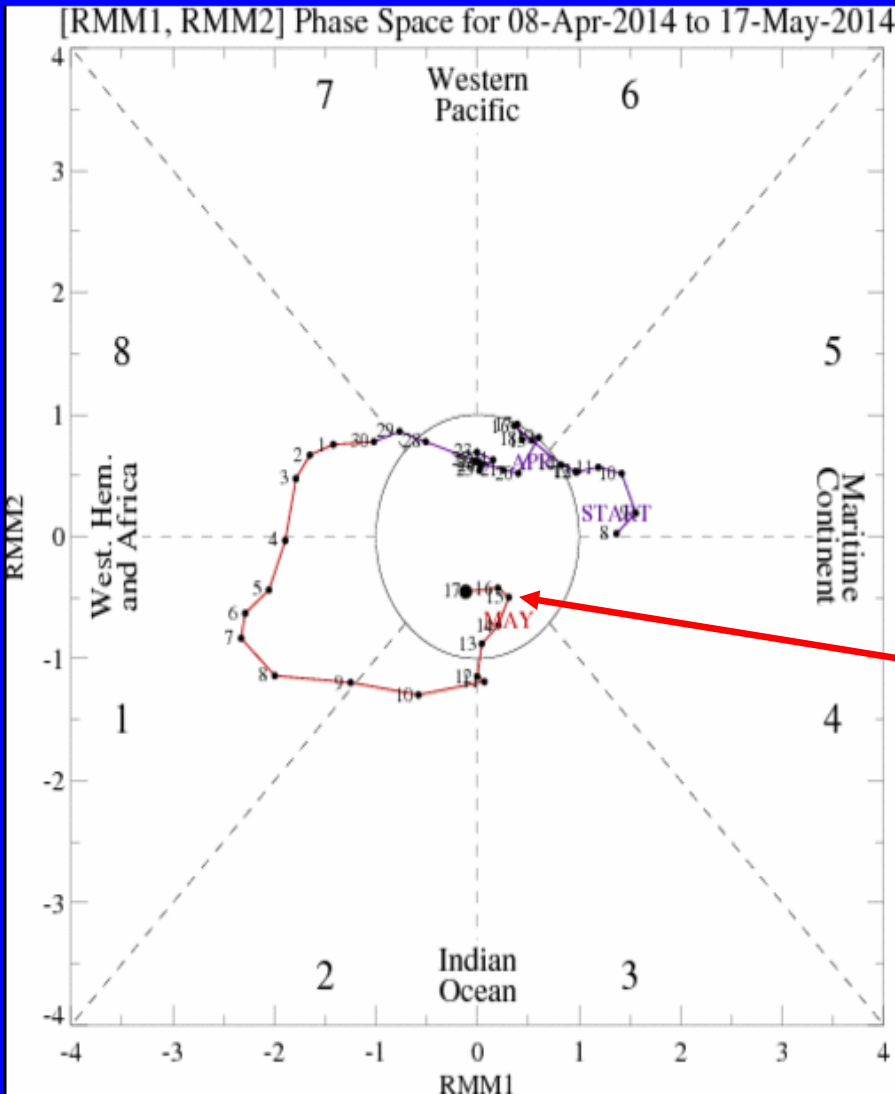
- The methodology is very similar to that described in WH2004 but does not include the linear removal of ENSO variability associated with a sea surface temperature index. The methodology is consistent with that outlined by the U.S. CLIVAR MJO Working Group.

Gottschalck et al. 2010: A Framework for Assessing Operational Madden-Julian Oscillation Forecasts: A CLIVAR MJO Working Group Project, *Bull. Amer. Met. Soc.*, 91, 1247-1258.

- The index is based on a combined Empirical Orthogonal Function (EOF) analysis using fields of near-equatorially-averaged 850-hPa and 200-hPa zonal wind and outgoing longwave radiation (OLR).



MJO Index -- Recent Evolution

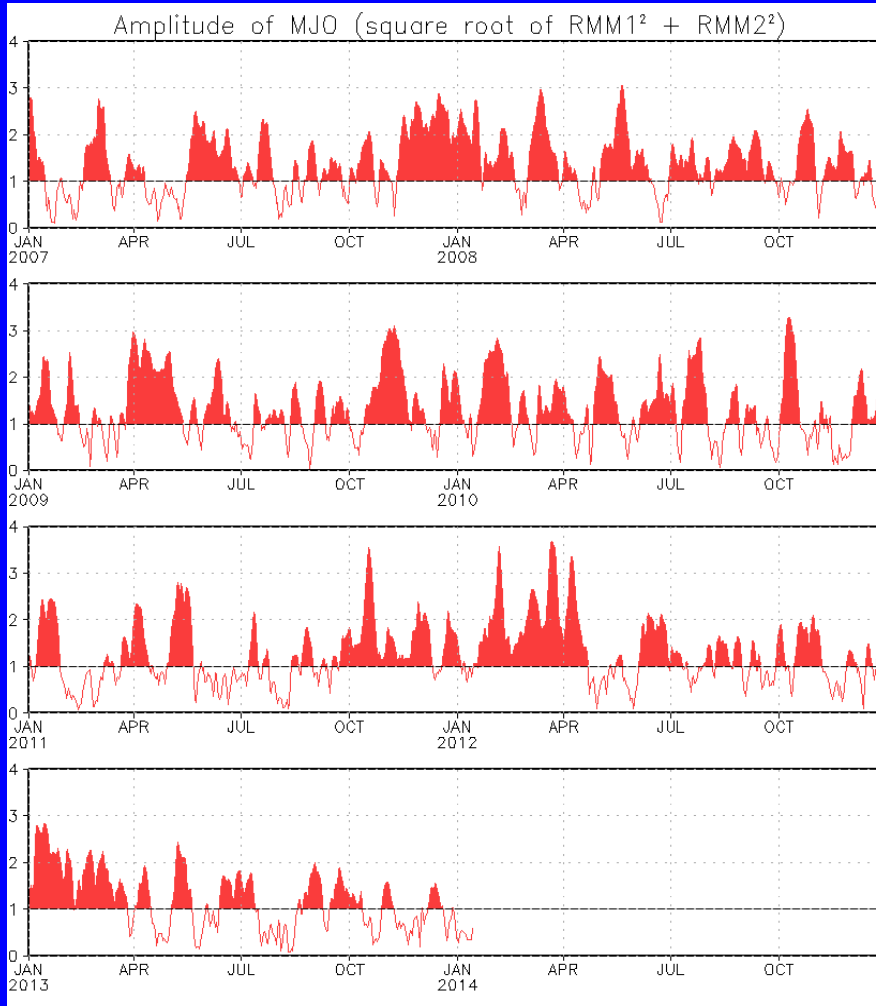


- The axes (RMM1 and RMM2) represent daily values of the principal components from the two leading modes
- The triangular areas indicate the location of the enhanced phase of the MJO
- Counter-clockwise motion is indicative of eastward propagation. Large dot most recent observation.
- Distance from the origin is proportional to MJO strength
- Line colors distinguish different months

The MJO index collapsed into the low-amplitude circle during the past week.



MJO Index – Historical Daily Time Series



Time series of daily MJO index amplitude from 2007 to present.

Plot puts current MJO activity in recent historical context.



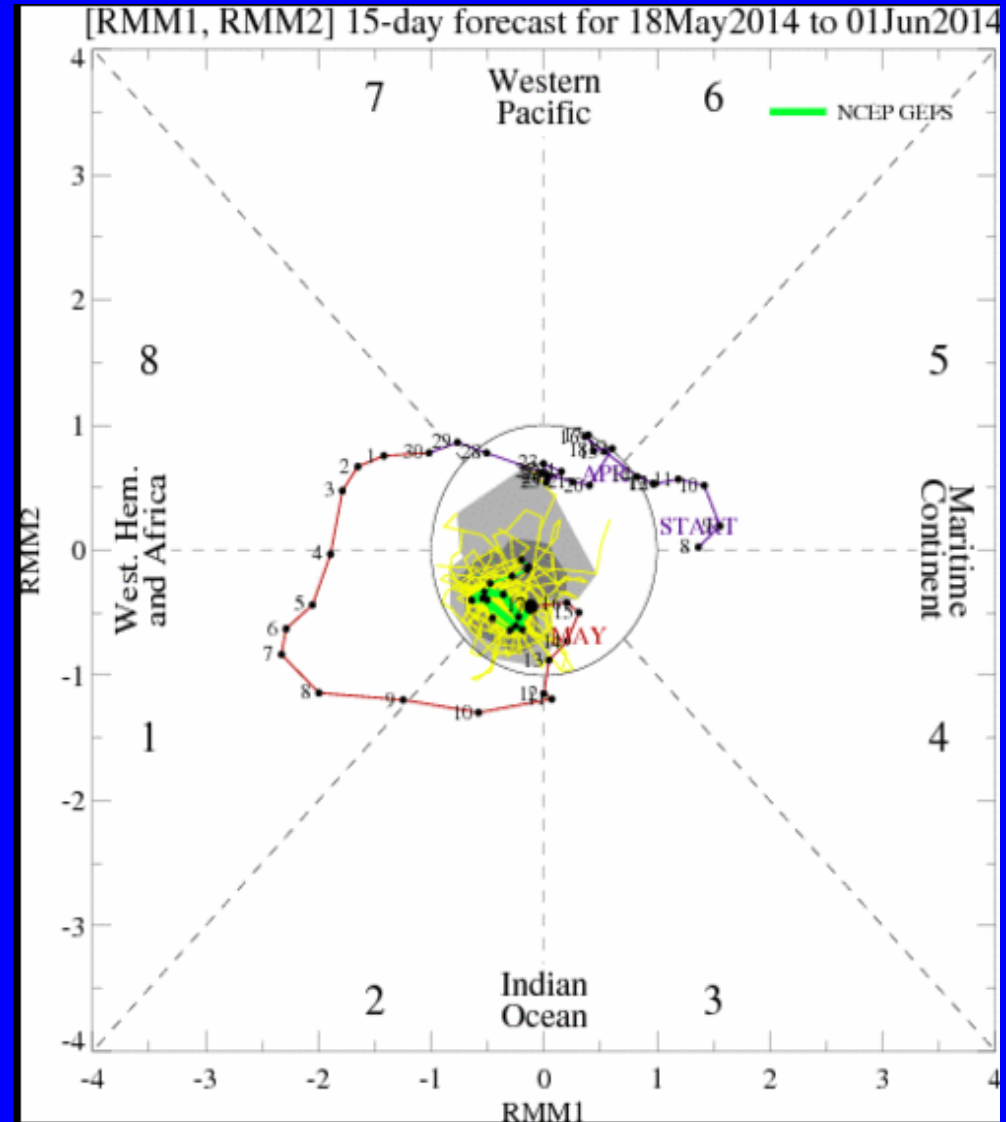
Ensemble GFS (GEFS) MJO Forecast

Yellow Lines – 20 Individual Members
Green Line – Ensemble Mean

RMM1 and RMM2 values for the most recent 40 days and forecasts from the ensemble Global Forecast System (GEFS) for the next 15 days

light gray shading: 90% of forecasts
dark gray shading: 50% of forecasts

The ensemble GFS forecast indicates little in the way of a coherent MJO signal during the upcoming two weeks.

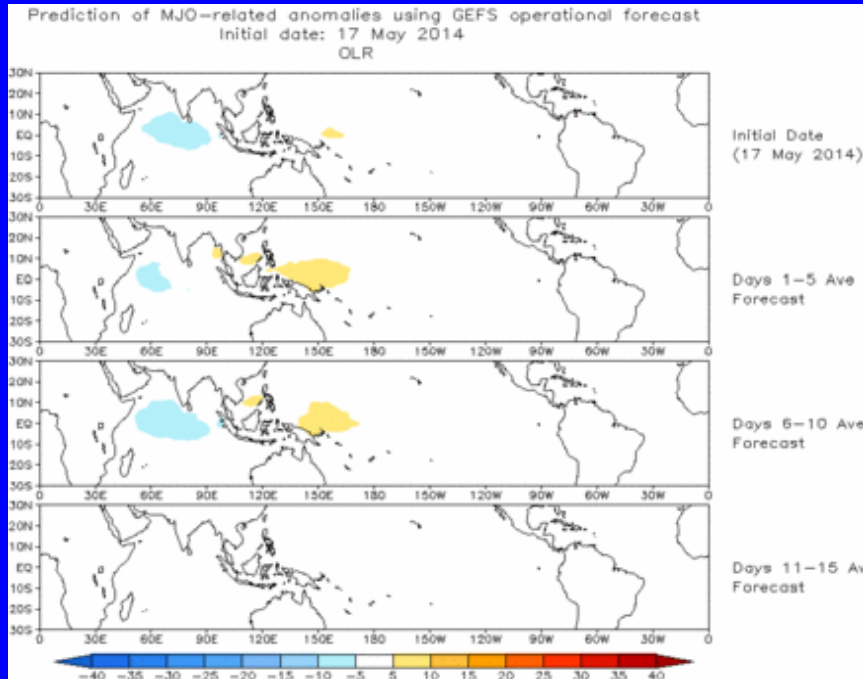




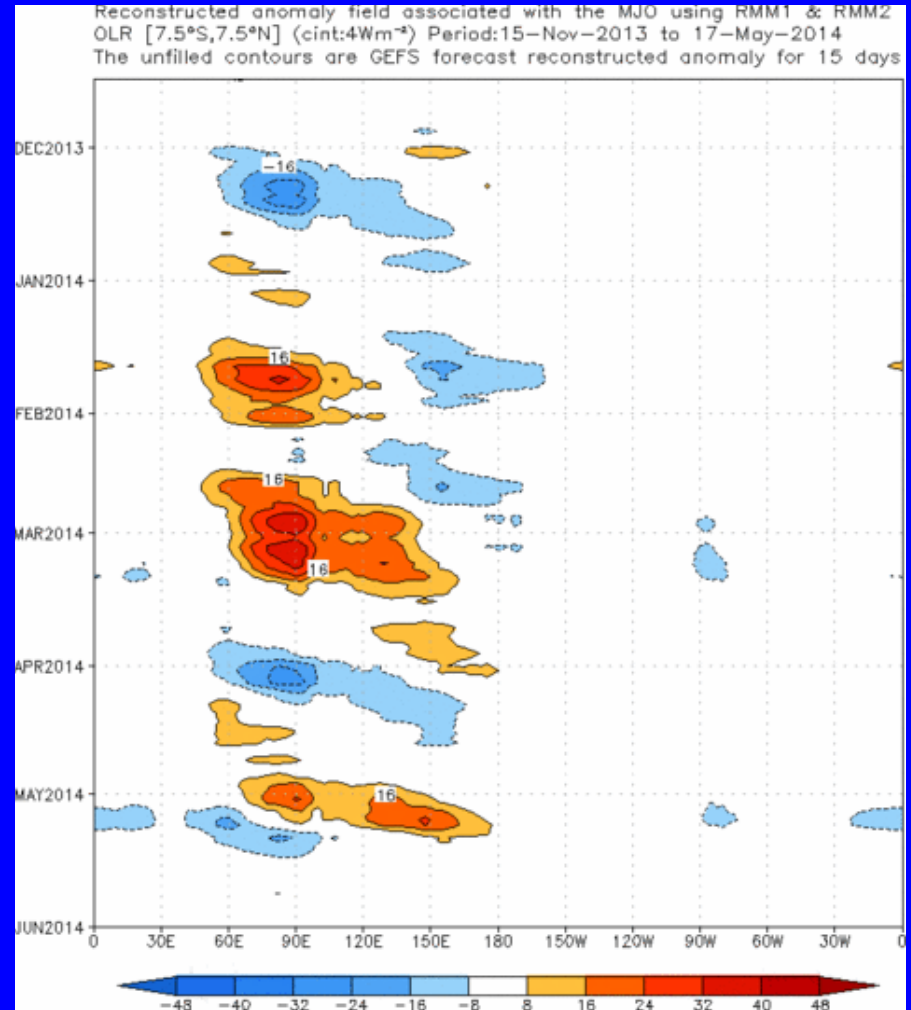
Ensemble Mean GFS MJO Forecast

Figures below show MJO associated OLR anomalies only (reconstructed from RMM1 and RMM2) and do not include contributions from other modes (*i.e.*, ENSO, monsoons, etc.)

Spatial map of OLR anomalies for the next 15 days



Time-longitude section of (7.5°S-7.5°N) OLR anomalies for the last 180 days and for the next 15 days



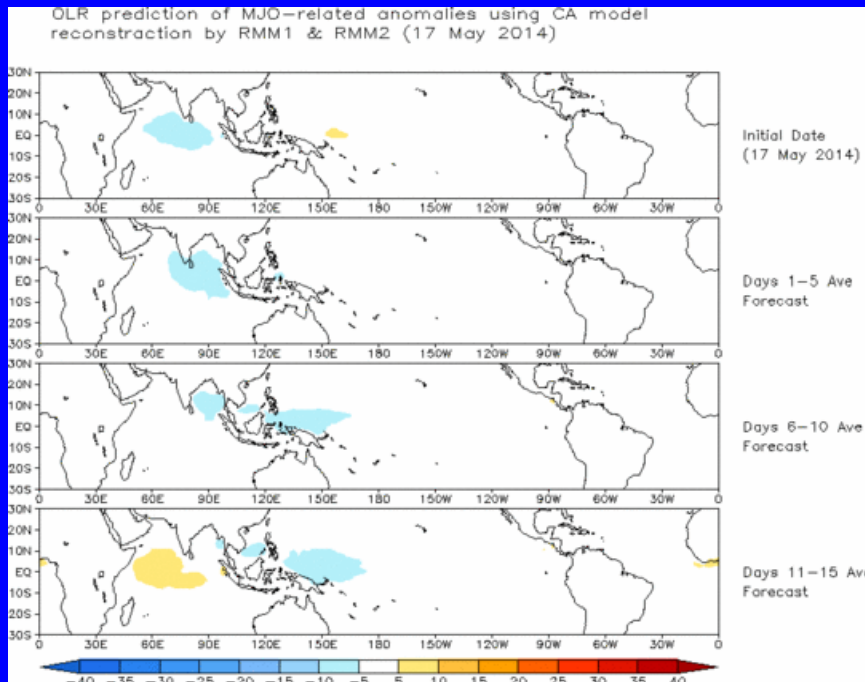
The ensemble mean GFS forecasts generally weak OLR anomalies during the next two weeks.



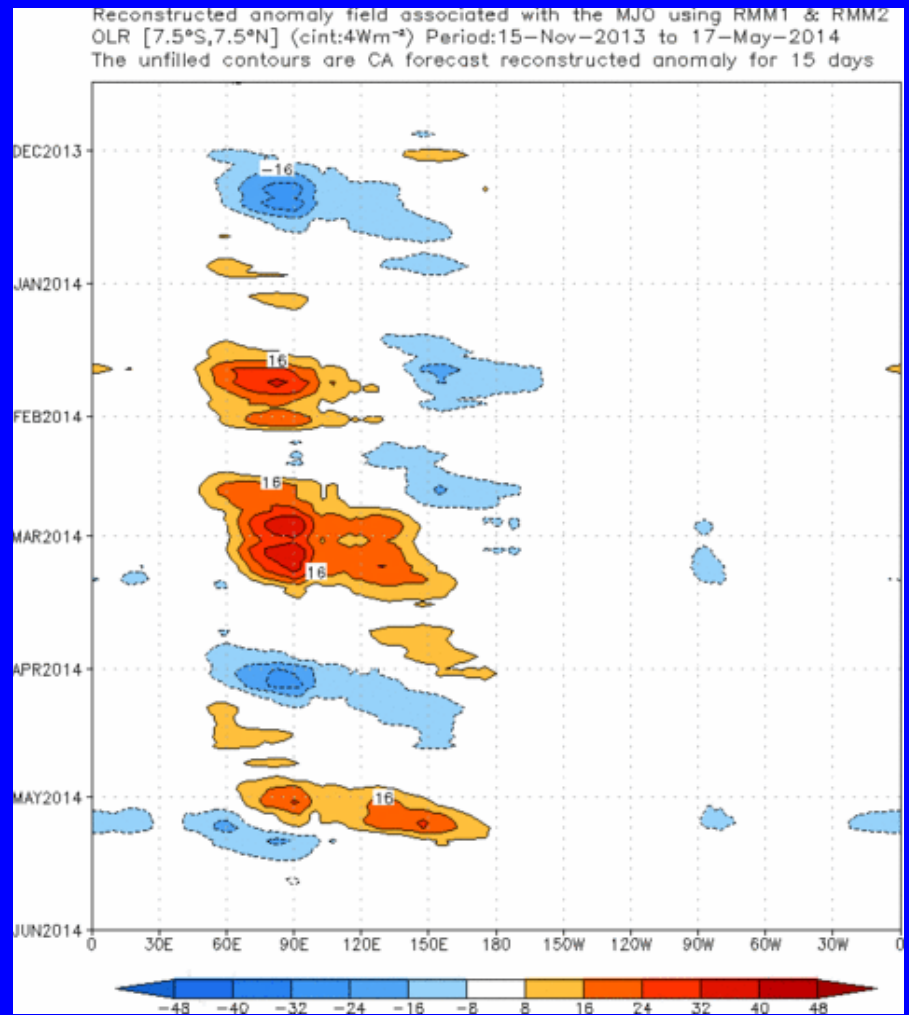
Constructed Analog (CA) MJO Forecast

Figure below shows MJO associated OLR anomalies only (reconstructed from RMM1 and RMM2) and do not include contributions from other modes (*i.e.*, ENSO, monsoons, etc.)

Spatial map of OLR anomalies for the next 15 days



Time-longitude section of (7.5°S-7.5°N) OLR anomalies for the last 180 days and for the next 15 days



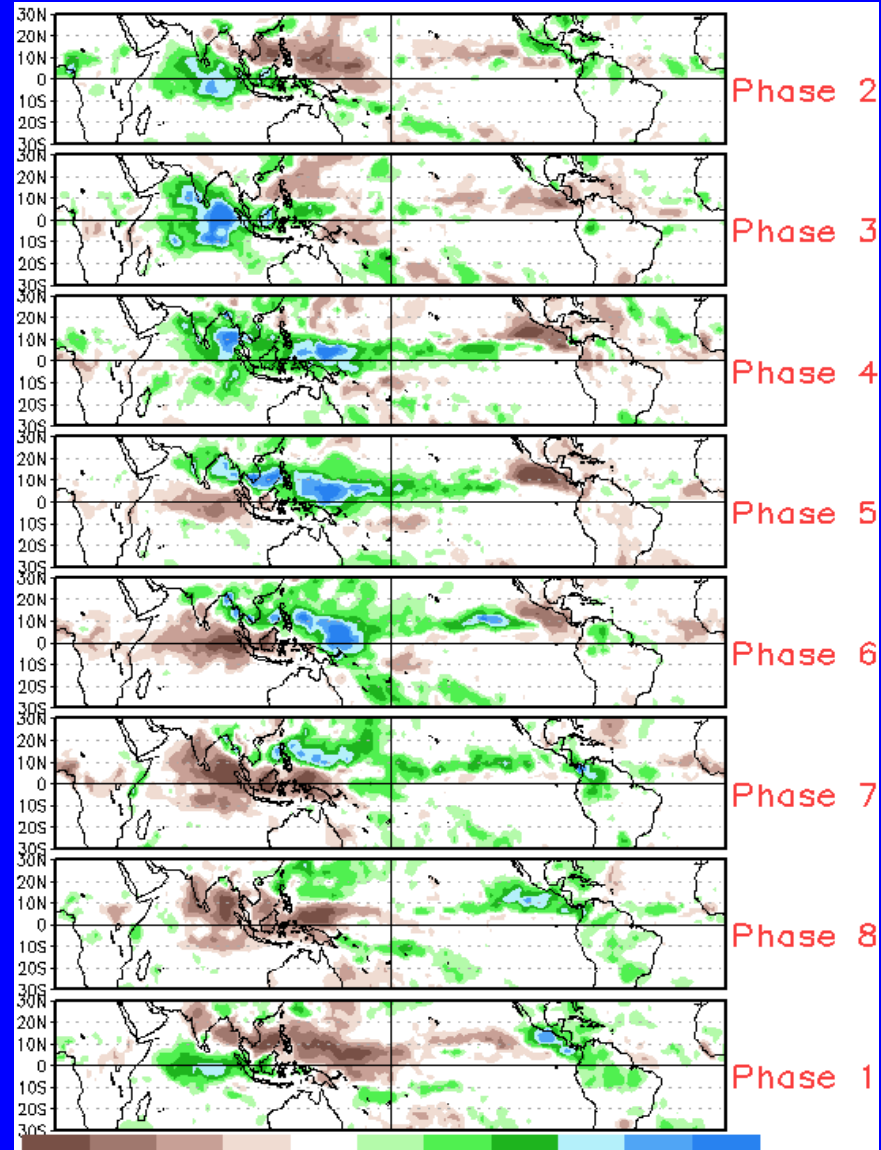
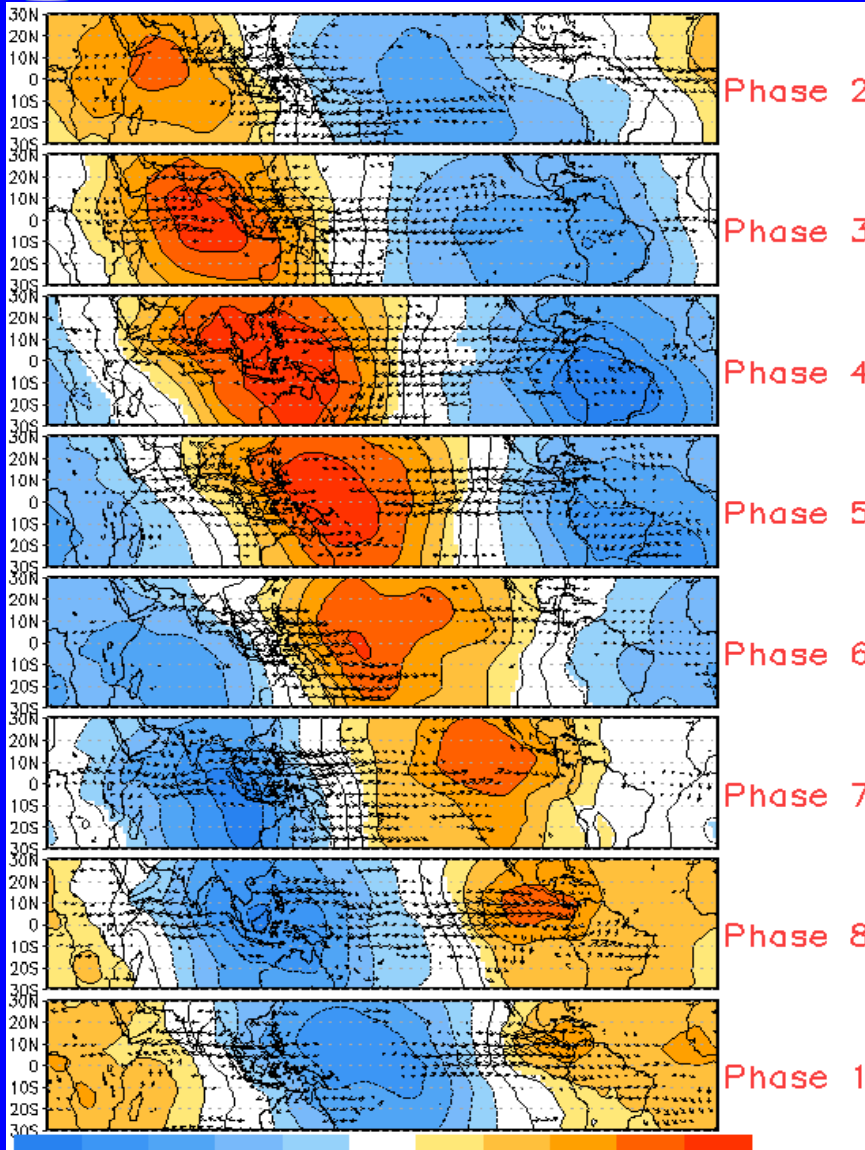
The constructed analog MJO forecast also shows little anomalous convection.



MJO Composites – Global Tropics

850-hPa Velocity Potential and
Wind Anomalies (May-Sep)

Precipitation Anomalies (May-Sep)

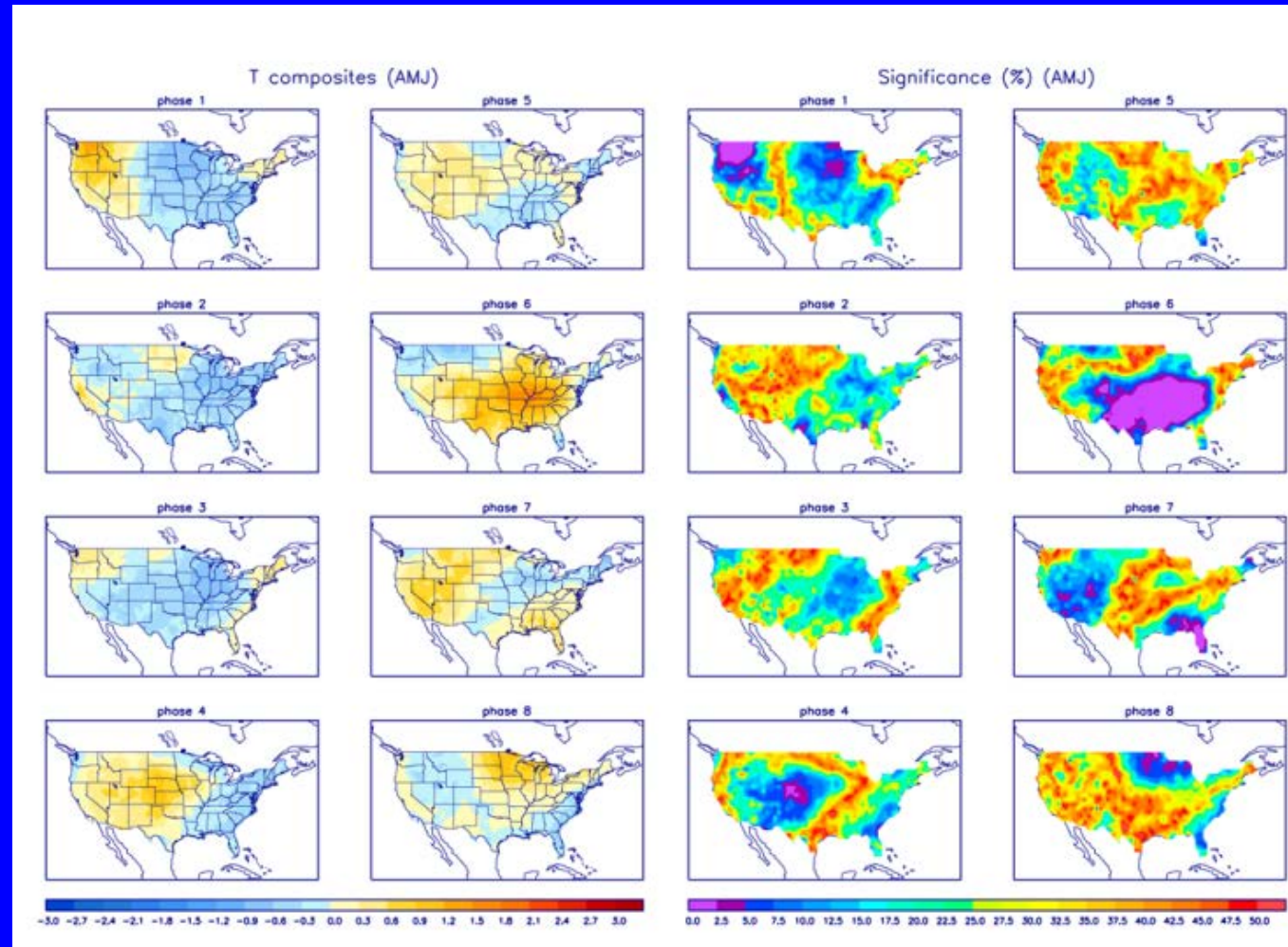




U.S. MJO Composites – Temperature

Left hand side plots show temperature anomalies by MJO phase for MJO events that have occurred over the three month period in the historical record. Blue (orange) shades show negative (positive) anomalies respectively.

Right hand side plots show a measure of significance for the left hand side anomalies. Purple shades indicate areas in which the anomalies are significant at the 95% or better confidence level.



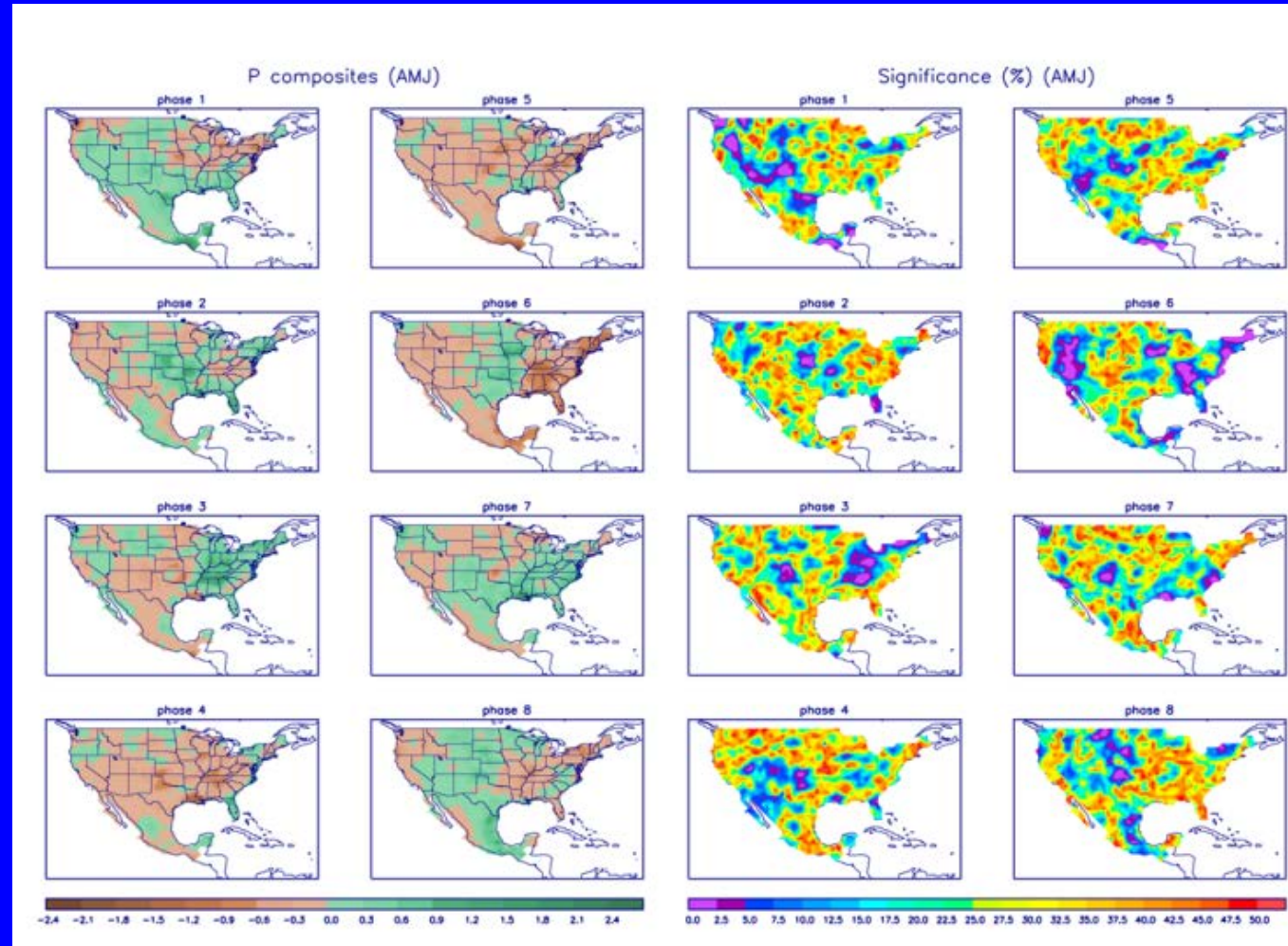
Zhou et al. (2011): A composite study of the MJO influence on the surface air temperature and precipitation over the Continental United States, *Climate Dynamics*, 1-13, doi: 10.1007/s00382-011-1001-9

<http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/precip/CWlink/MJO/mjo.shtml>



U.S. MJO Composites – Precipitation

- Left hand side plots show precipitation anomalies by MJO phase for MJO events that have occurred over the three month period in the historical record. Brown (green) shades show negative (positive) anomalies respectively.
- Right hand side plots show a measure of significance for the left hand side anomalies. Purple shades indicate areas in which the anomalies are significant at the 95% or better confidence level.



Zhou et al. (2011): A composite study of the MJO influence on the surface air temperature and precipitation over the Continental United States, *Climate Dynamics*, 1-13, doi: 10.1007/s00382-011-1001-9

<http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/precip/CWlink/MJO/mjo.shtml>