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

Update prepared by
Climate Prediction Center / NCEP
June 8, 2009

Outline

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

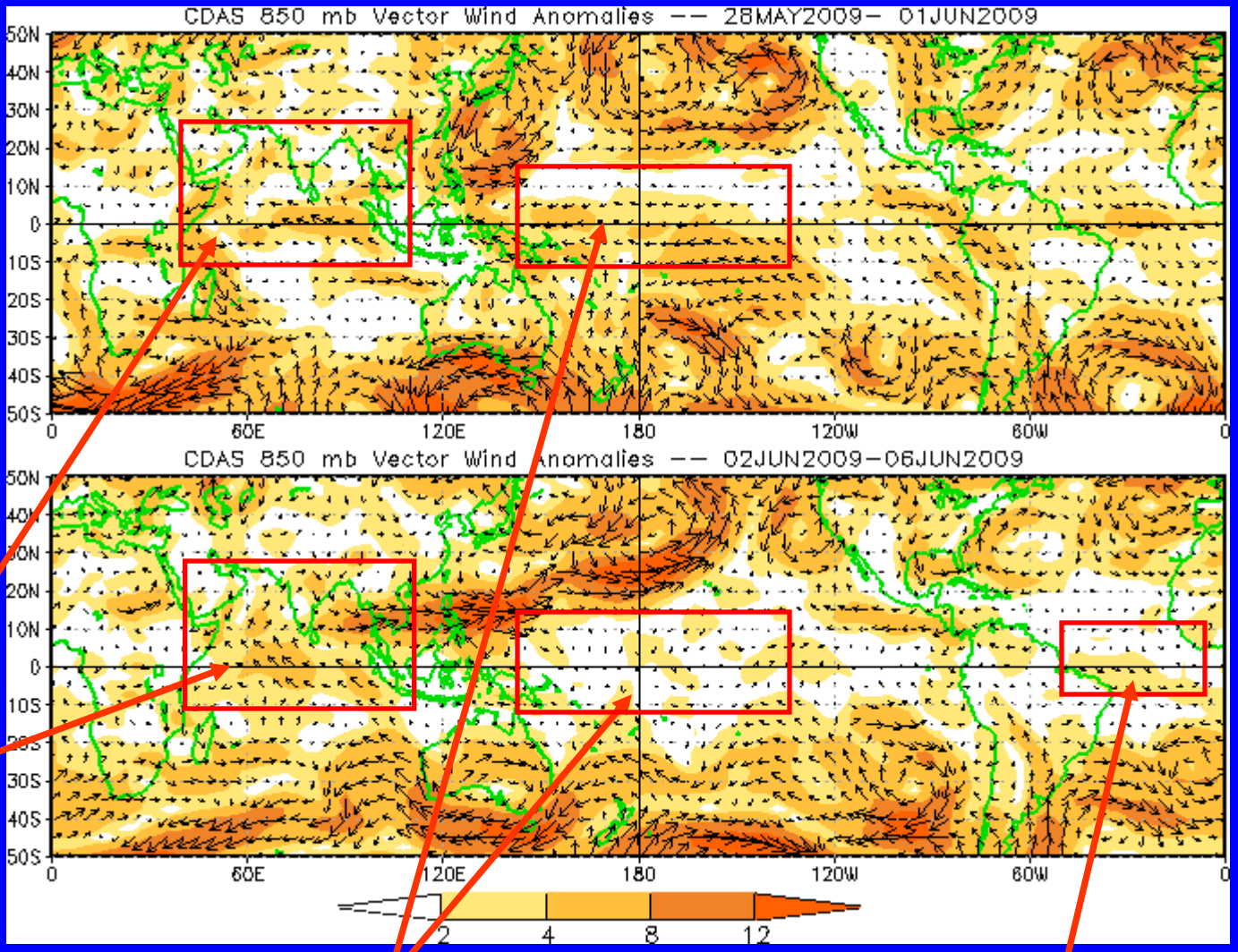
Overview

- The MJO index amplitude has increased but it is most likely related to a combination of other subseasonal variability and not a strengthening, coherent MJO.
- The MJO remains weak.
- Based on the latest observations and model forecasts, weak MJO activity is expected during the next 1-2 week period.
- The MJO is not anticipated to contribute significantly to areas of tropical rainfall or tropical cyclone development during the period.

Additional potential impacts across the global tropics are available at:
http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/precip/CWlink/ghazards/ghaz.shtml

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

Note that shading denotes the magnitude of anomalous wind vectors



The anomalous cross-equatorial flow has increased during the last five days over the Indian Ocean.

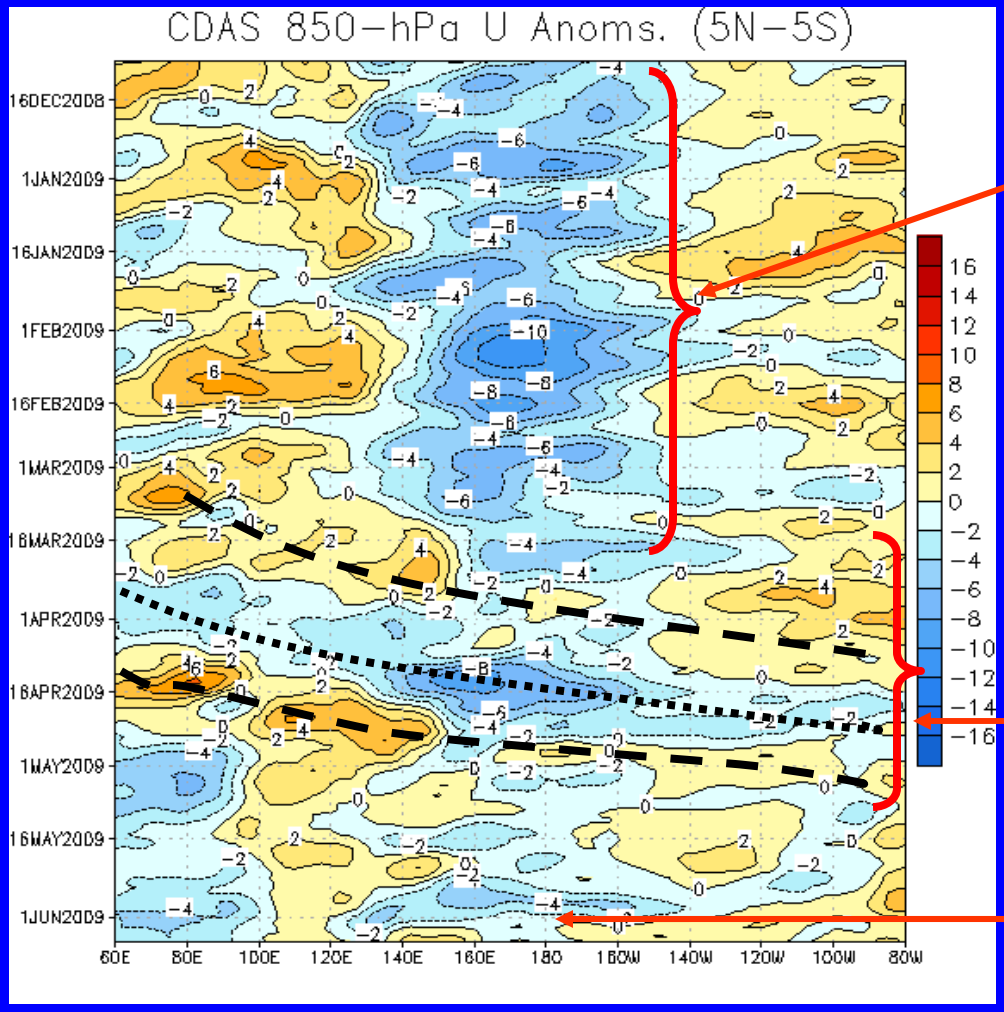
Easterly anomalies have decreased over the Western Pacific.

Westerly wind anomalies have diminished over the equatorial 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

A persistent pattern of westerly (easterly) anomalies over the Indian Ocean (central Pacific Ocean) were in place from mid-December to mid-March.

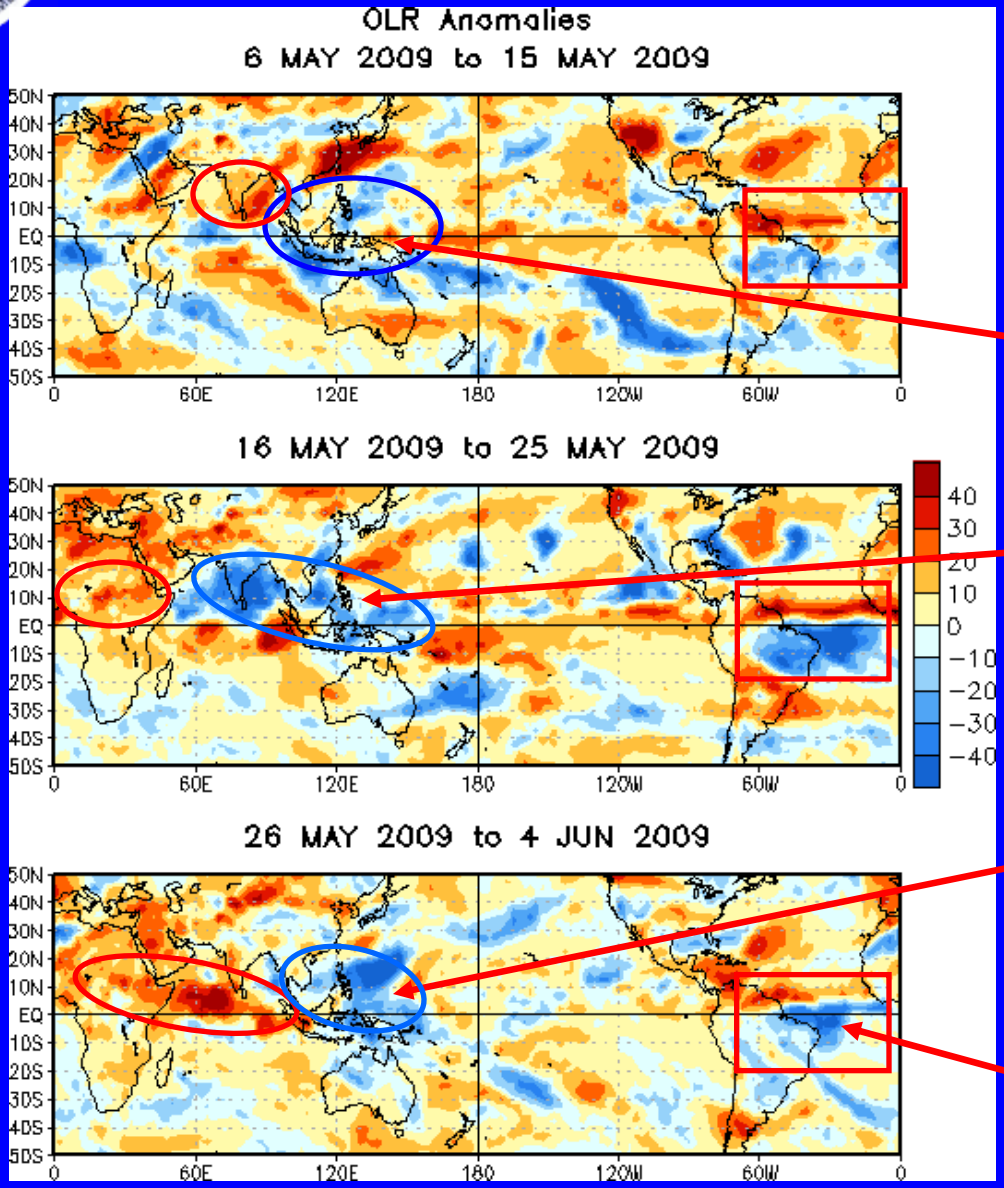
From mid-March to early May, a pattern of alternating low-level westerly, easterly and again westerly anomalies shifted eastward from the Indian Ocean through the equatorial Pacific associated with the MJO.

Easterly anomalies increased near and just west of the Date Line in late May but near average winds are evident in the most recent data.

OLR Anomalies: Last 30 days

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

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



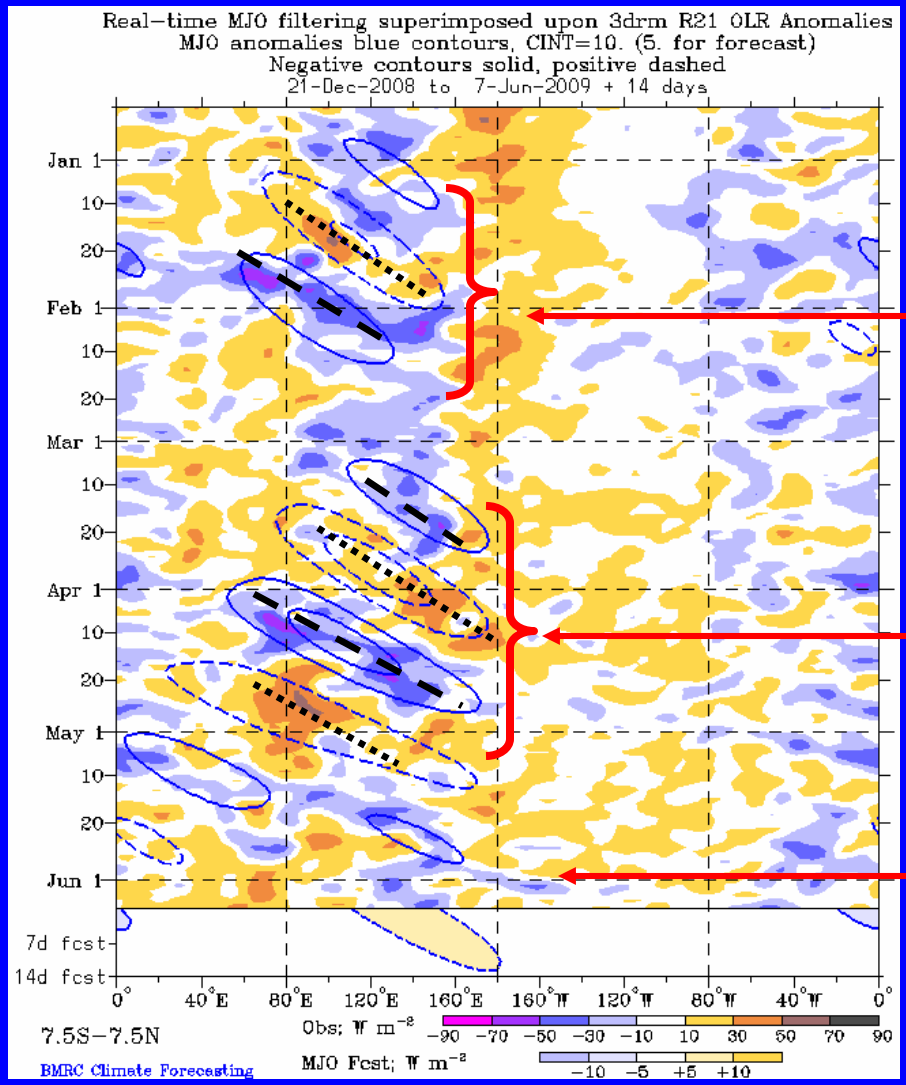
In early May, convection near the Philippines and much of the Maritime continent was closer to average as compared to recent weeks. Suppressed convection remained over the Indian subcontinent.

During mid May, convection increased across the Maritime continent and South Asia while dry conditions were evident across Africa.

During late May, enhanced convection became more focused across the Philippines and western Pacific while suppressed convection developed over Africa and the Indian Ocean.

A couplet of suppressed (enhanced) convection was evident during the entire period across northeast South America in part related to anomalous Atlantic SSTs.

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



Time

Longitude

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

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

(Courtesy of the Bureau of Meteorology - Australia)

From mid-January to mid-February, eastward movement of suppressed (enhanced) convection is observed from the Indian Ocean to the western Pacific.

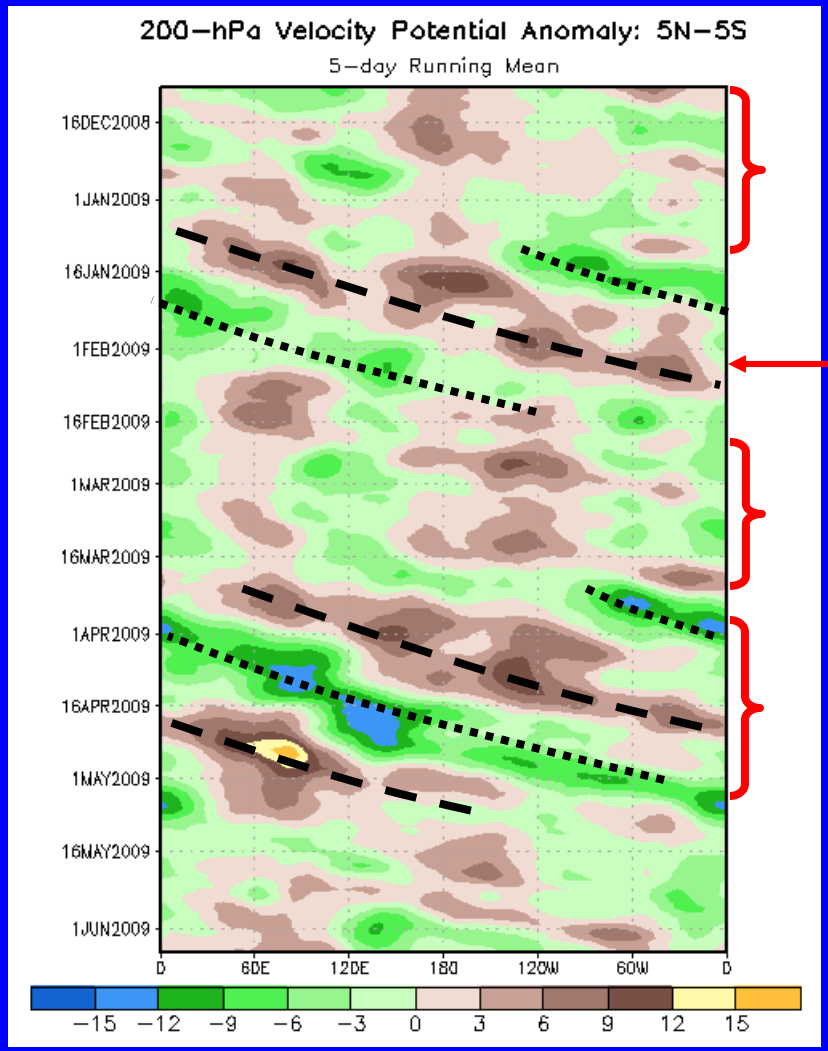
From mid-March into early May, areas of suppressed and enhanced convection shifted eastward in association with the MJO.

Since mid-May, convection has generally been close to average across much of the equatorial Tropics with no clear MJO signal.

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



Time

Longitude

From December to mid-January, the subseasonal activity organized on a faster time scale and the MJO was weak or incoherent.

Velocity potential anomalies increased as the MJO strengthened and shifted eastward during January to mid-February.

No coherent pattern was exhibited in the weak velocity potential anomalies from mid-February through early March.

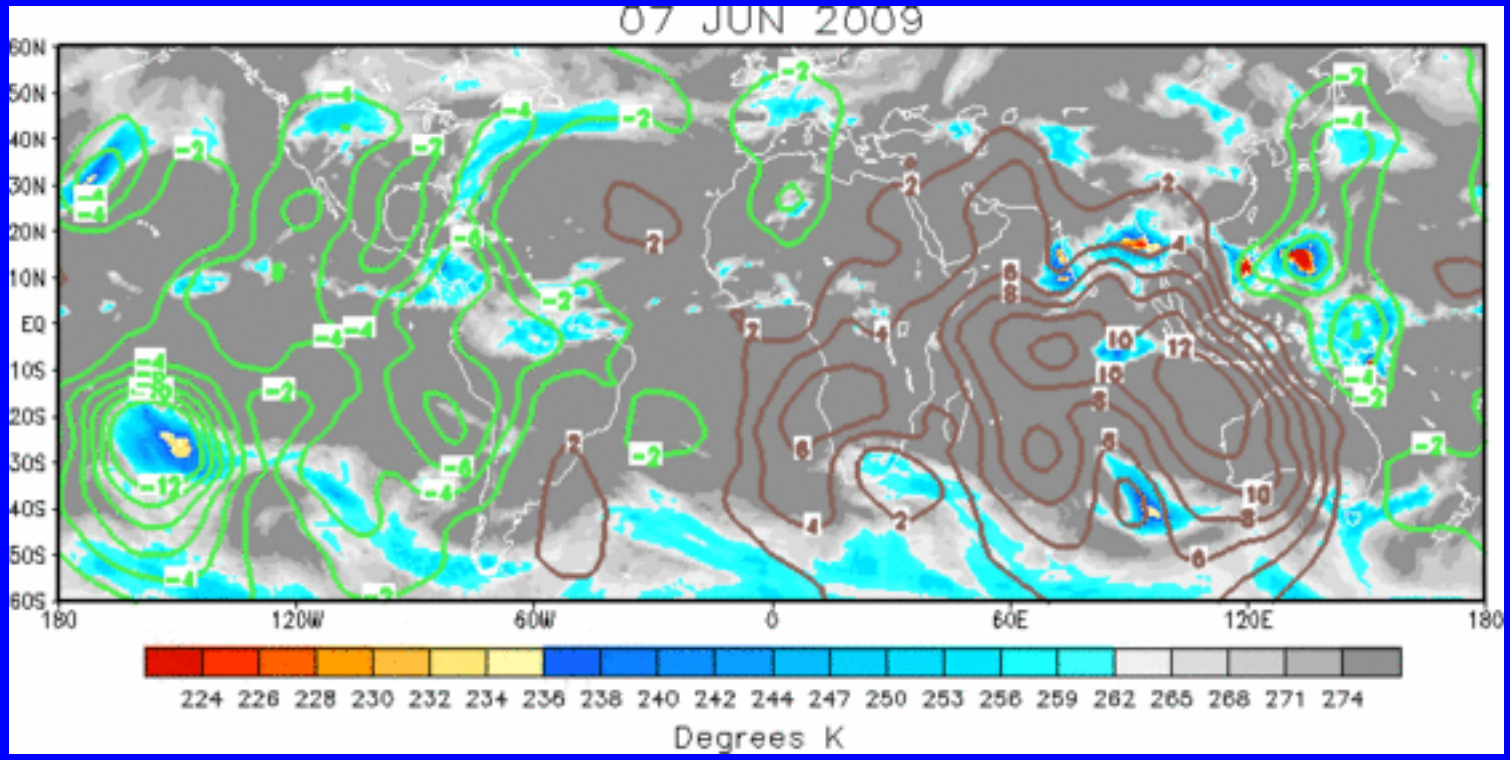
From mid-March to early May, eastward propagating velocity potential anomalies indicated moderate-to-strong MJO activity.

After mid-May, velocity potential anomalies are not consistent with MJO activity.

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

Positive anomalies (brown contours) indicate unfavorable conditions for precipitation

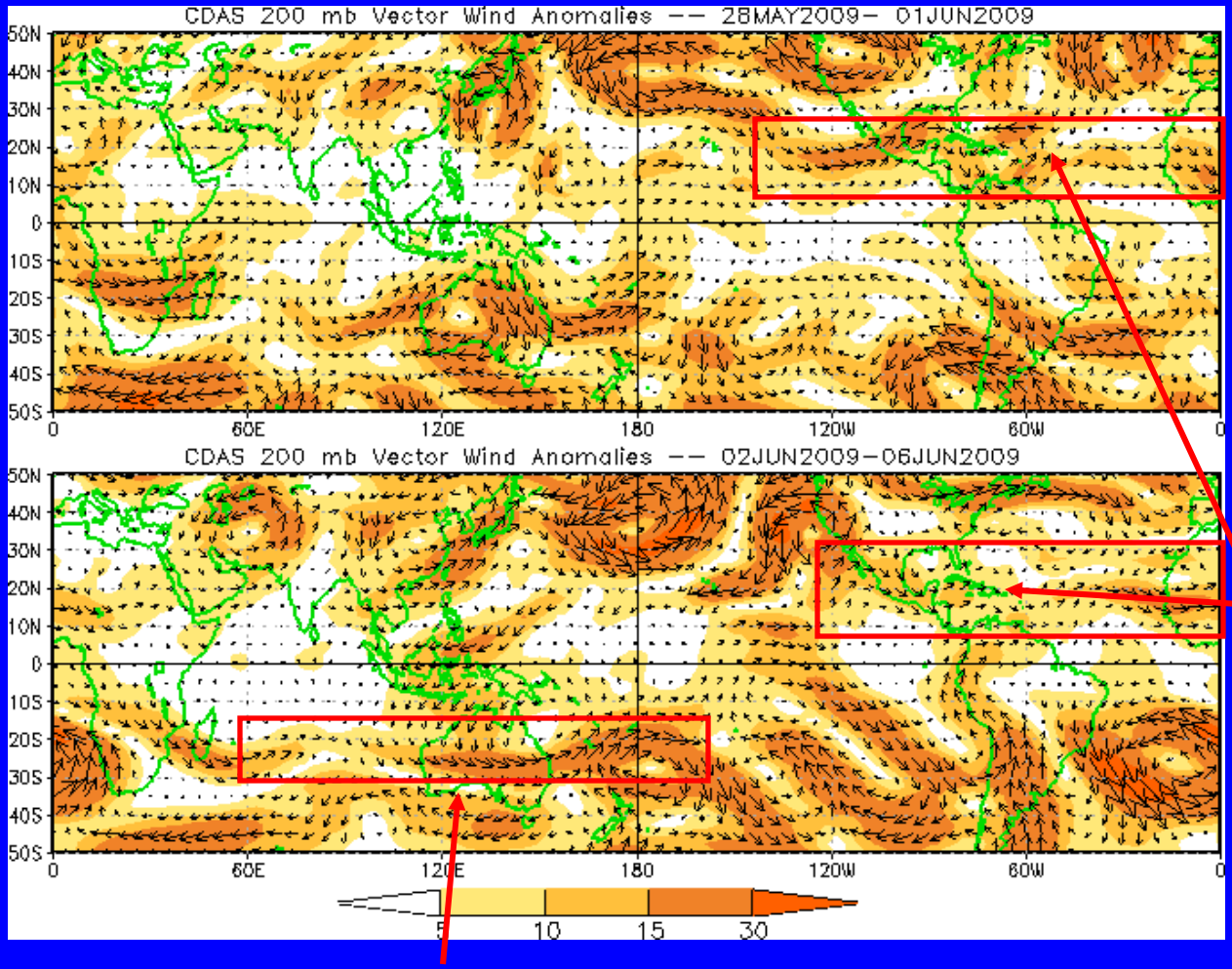
Negative anomalies (green contours) indicate favorable conditions for precipitation



The latest velocity potential pattern indicates upper-level divergence across much of the Americas while upper-level convergence is strongly indicated over Africa and the Indian Ocean.

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

Note that shading denotes the magnitude of anomalous wind vectors



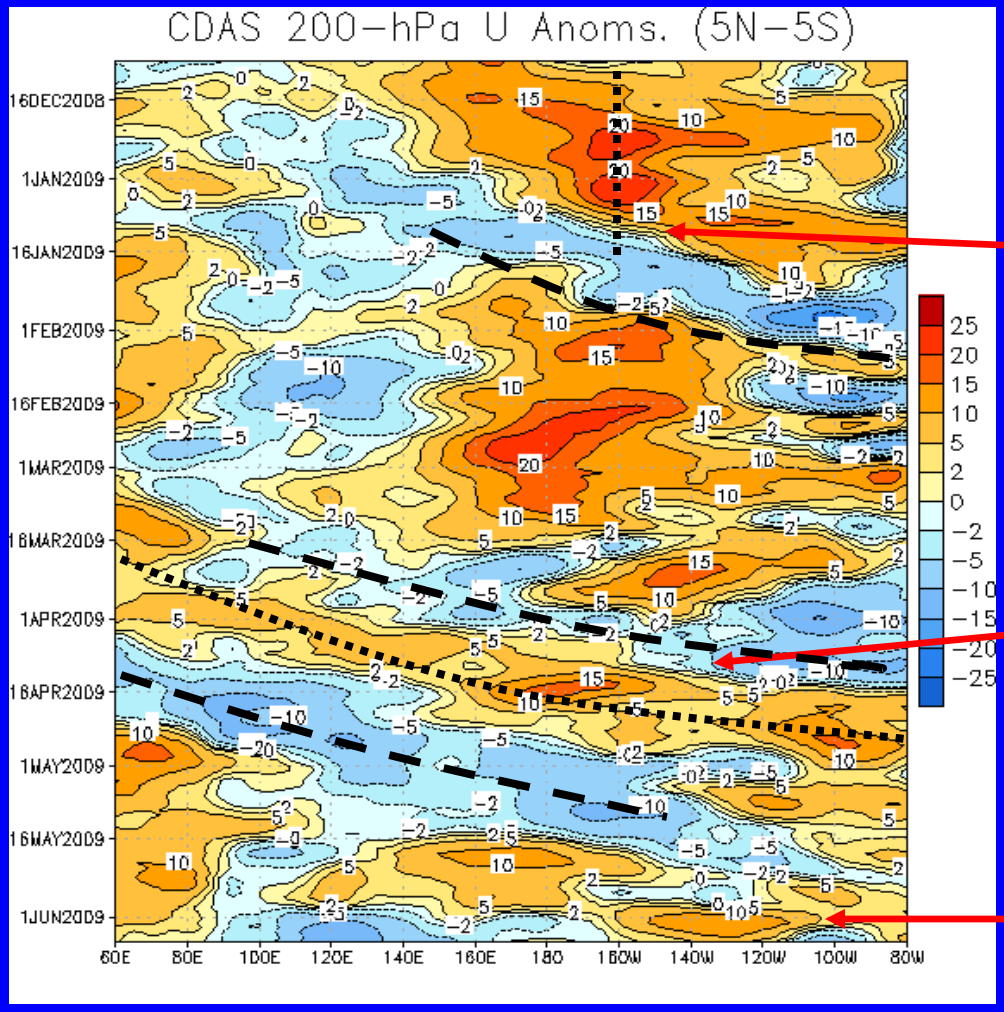
An active sub-tropical jet continued during the last five days.

Westerly anomalies are evident across the subtropics from the southern Indian Ocean to the south Pacific.

200-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

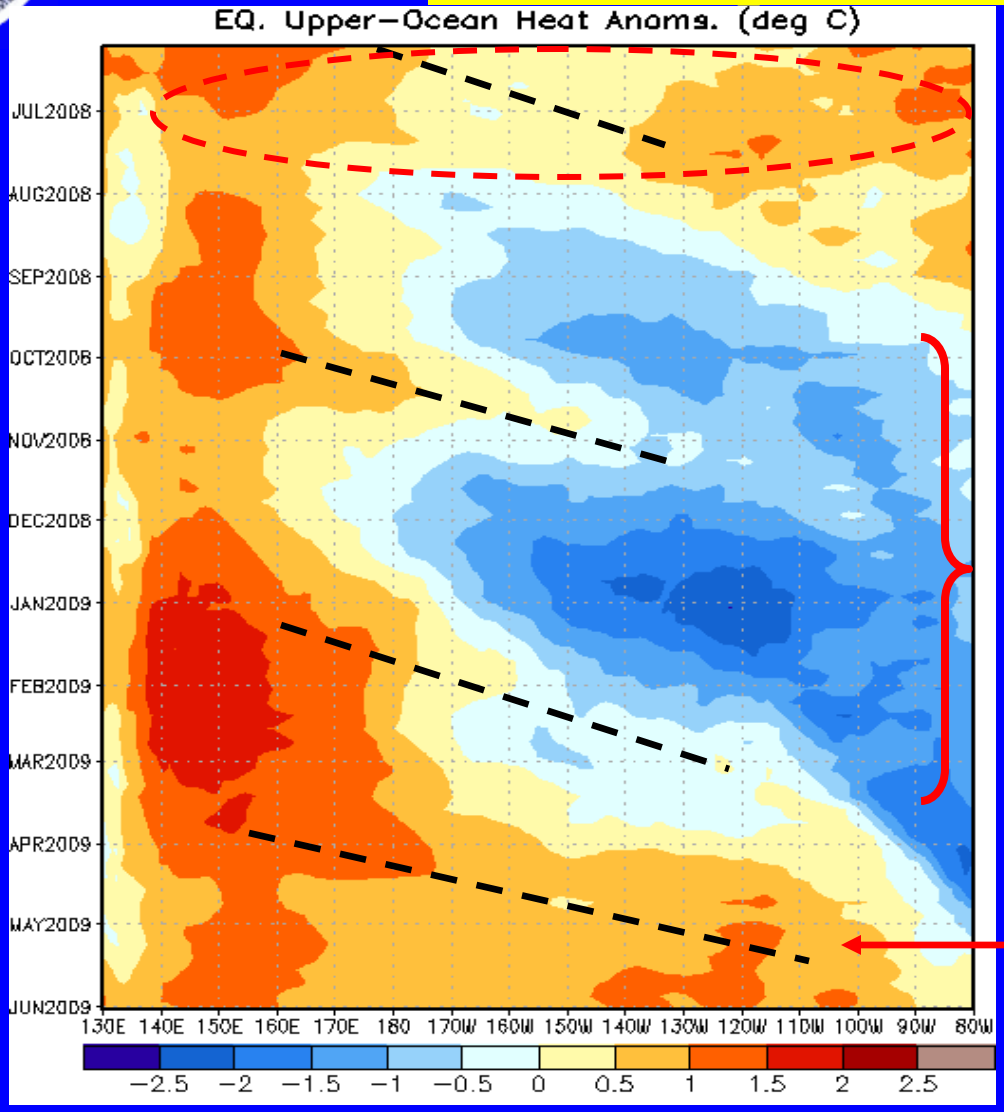
Longitude

Westerly anomalies strengthened markedly in late-November near the Date Line and persisted through December. These anomalies are consistent with La Nina conditions.

Easterly and westerly anomalies shifted eastward from mid-March to the beginning of May associated with the MJO.

Most recently, westerly anomalies have shifted eastward to the Western Hemisphere.

Weekly Heat Content Evolution in the Equatorial Pacific



Time

Longitude

During June and July 2008, positive heat content anomalies encompassed much of the Pacific basin.

During August 2008, negative anomalies started to develop east of the Date Line and increased/expanded eastward through early 2009. There was a pause in this increase during October as a Kelvin wave shifted eastward.

An eastward propagating Kelvin wave during April and May resulted in increased heat content in the eastern half of the Pacific. Positive anomalies have remained across much of the Pacific into June 2009.

MJO Index -- Information

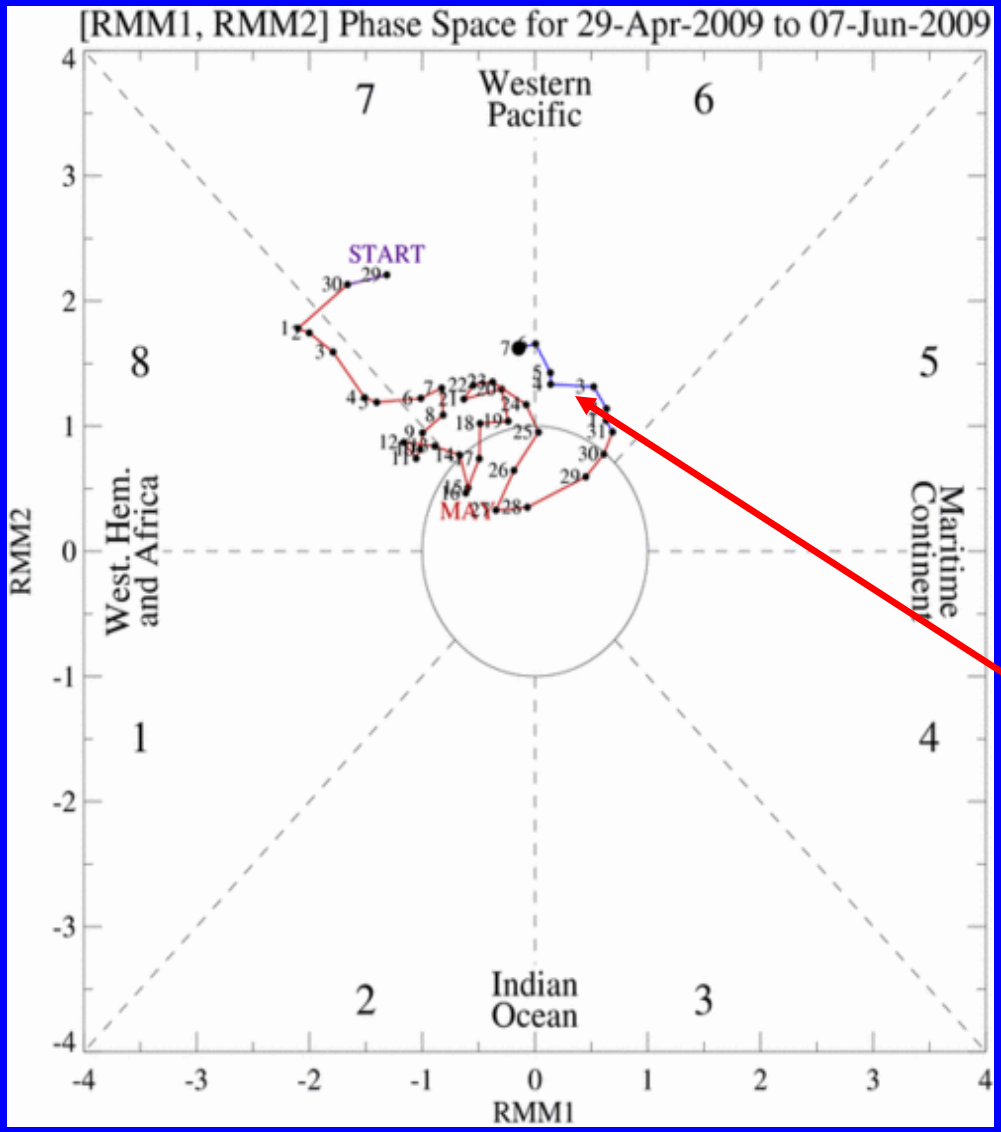
- **The MJO index illustrated on the next several slides is the CPC version of the Wheeler and Hendon index (2004, hereafter WH2004).**

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 nearly identical to that described in WH2004 but small deviations from the BMRC figure are possible at times due to differences in input data and methodology. These typically occur during weak MJO periods.**

- **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).**

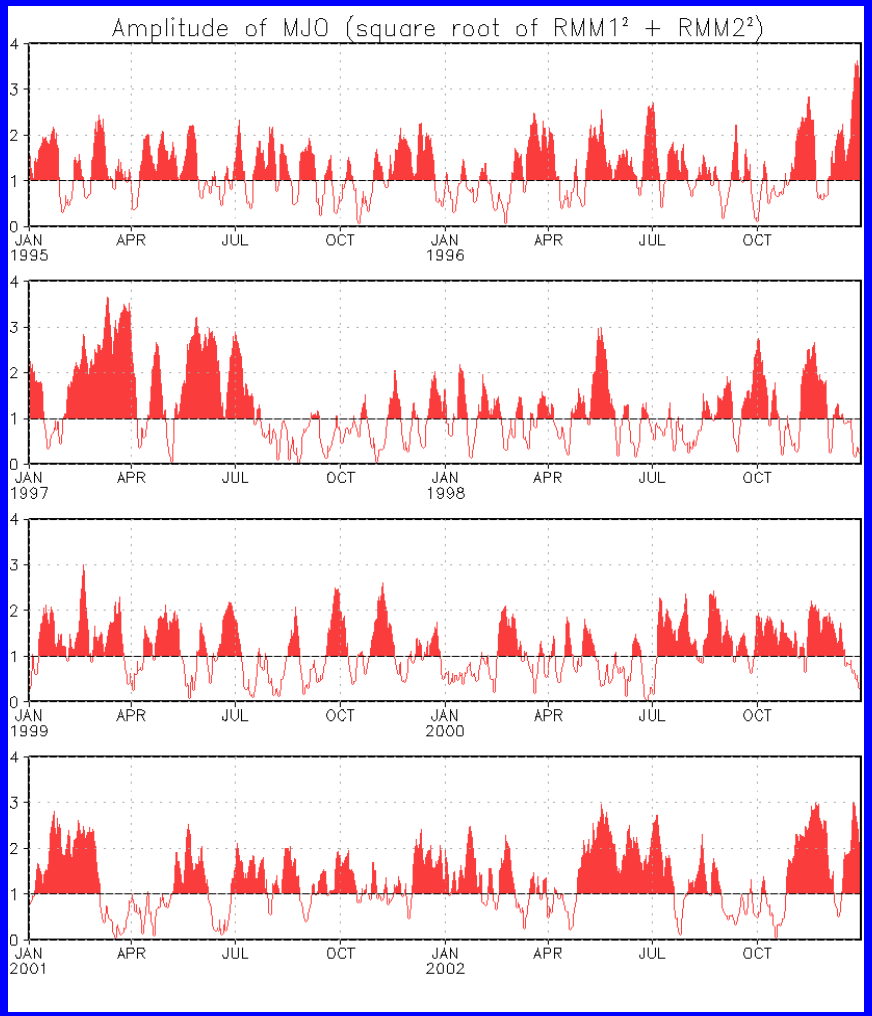
MJO Index -- Recent Evolution

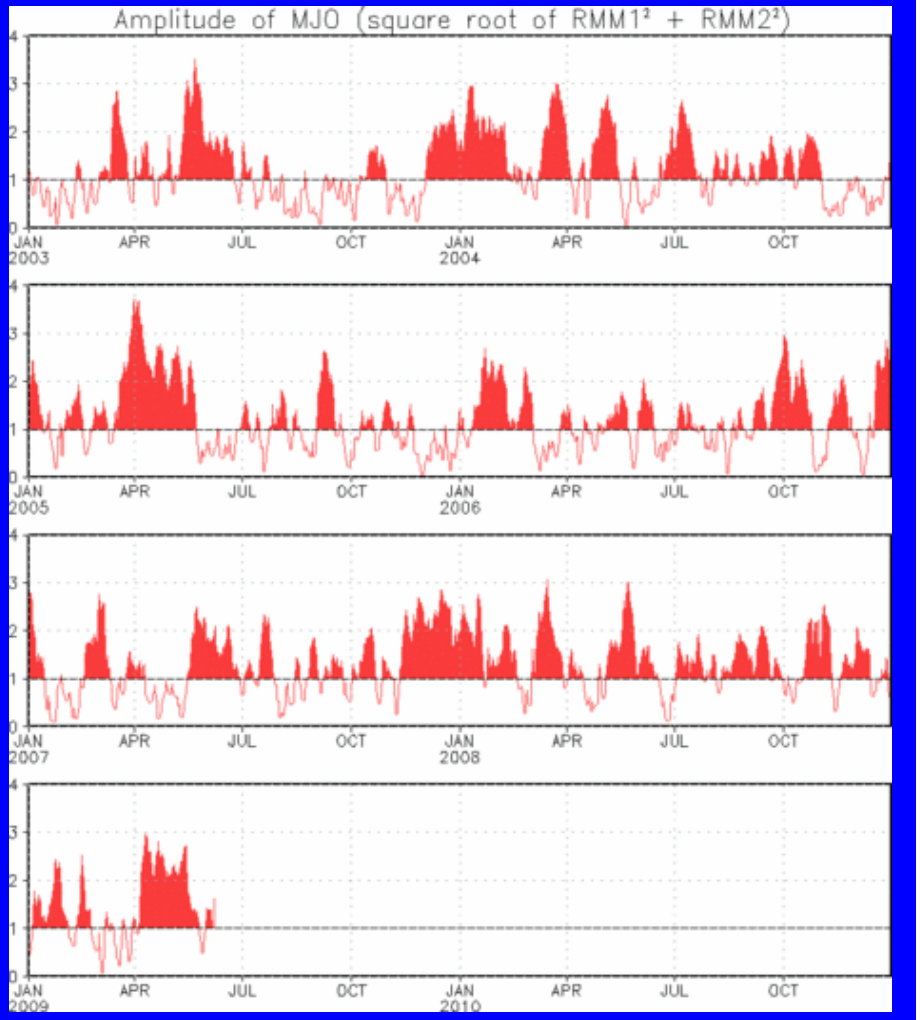


- **The axes (RMM1 and RMM2) represent daily values of the principal components from the two leading modes**
- **The triangular areas indicate the location of the enhanced phase of the MJO**
- **Counter-clockwise motion is indicative of eastward propagation. Large dot most recent observation.**
- **Distance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

The MJO index amplitude increased during the past week across the Western Pacific.

MJO Index – Historical Daily Time Series





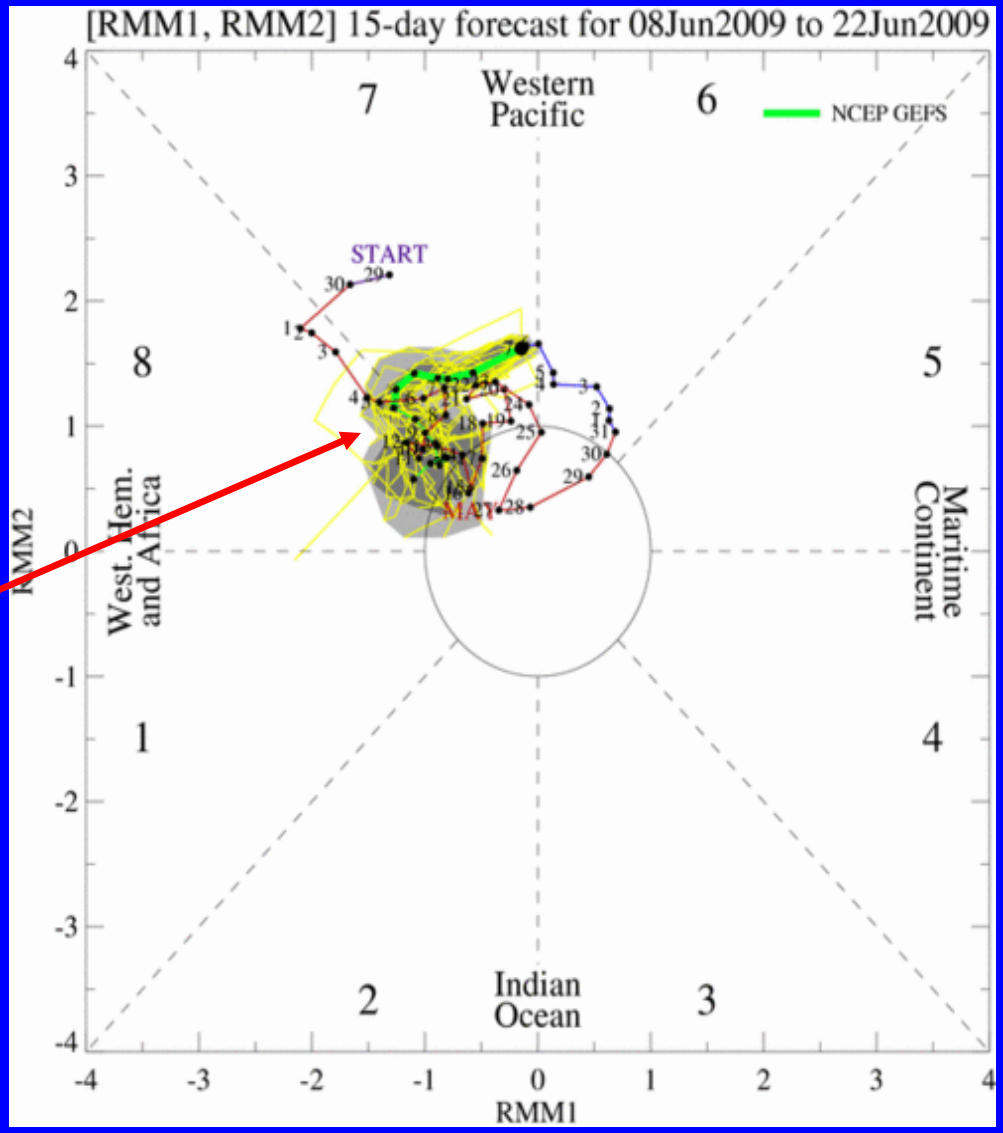
Time series of daily MJO index amplitude from 1995 to present.
Plots put current MJO activity in historical context.

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



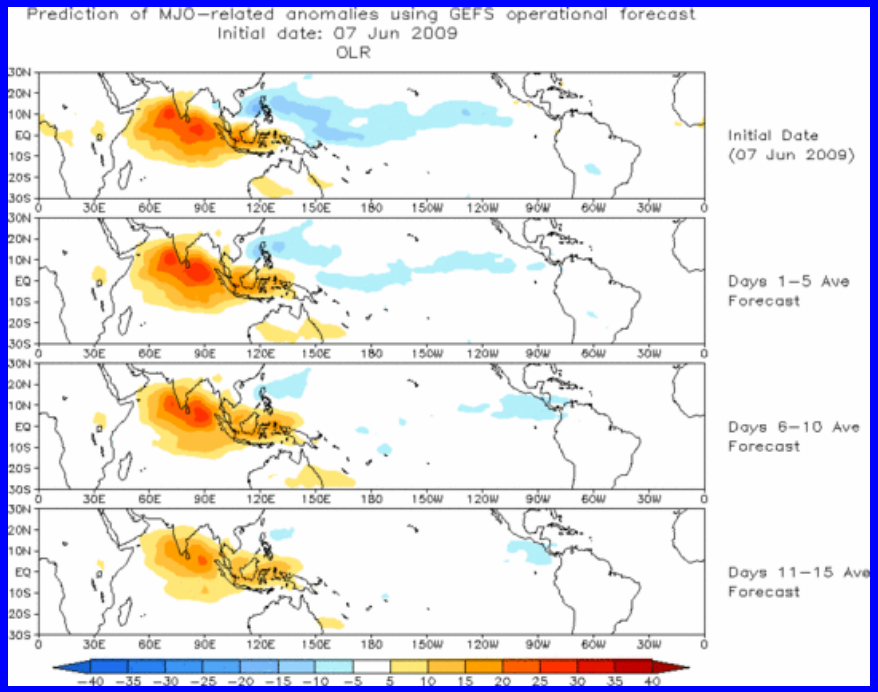
The GEFS forecasts indicate some eastward propagation of a MJO signal during Week-1 but then a decreasing signal in Week-2.

The evolution is most likely a result of a combination of subseasonal coherent tropical variability as opposed to a developing MJO.

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)

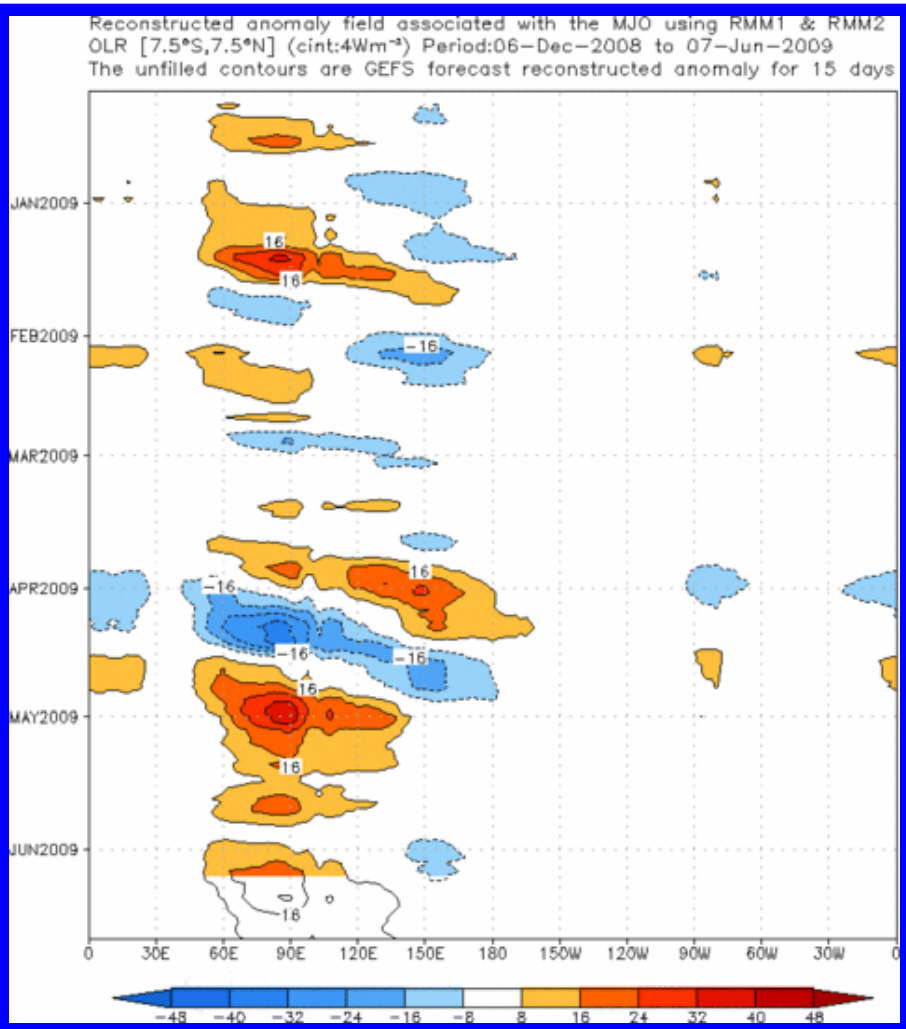
Spatial map of OLR anomalies for the next 15 days



Suppressed convection is forecast across the Indian Ocean, south Asia and the Maritime continent over the period with slight eastward propagation.

Enhanced convection may impinge on Central America by Week-2.

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



Statistical MJO Forecast

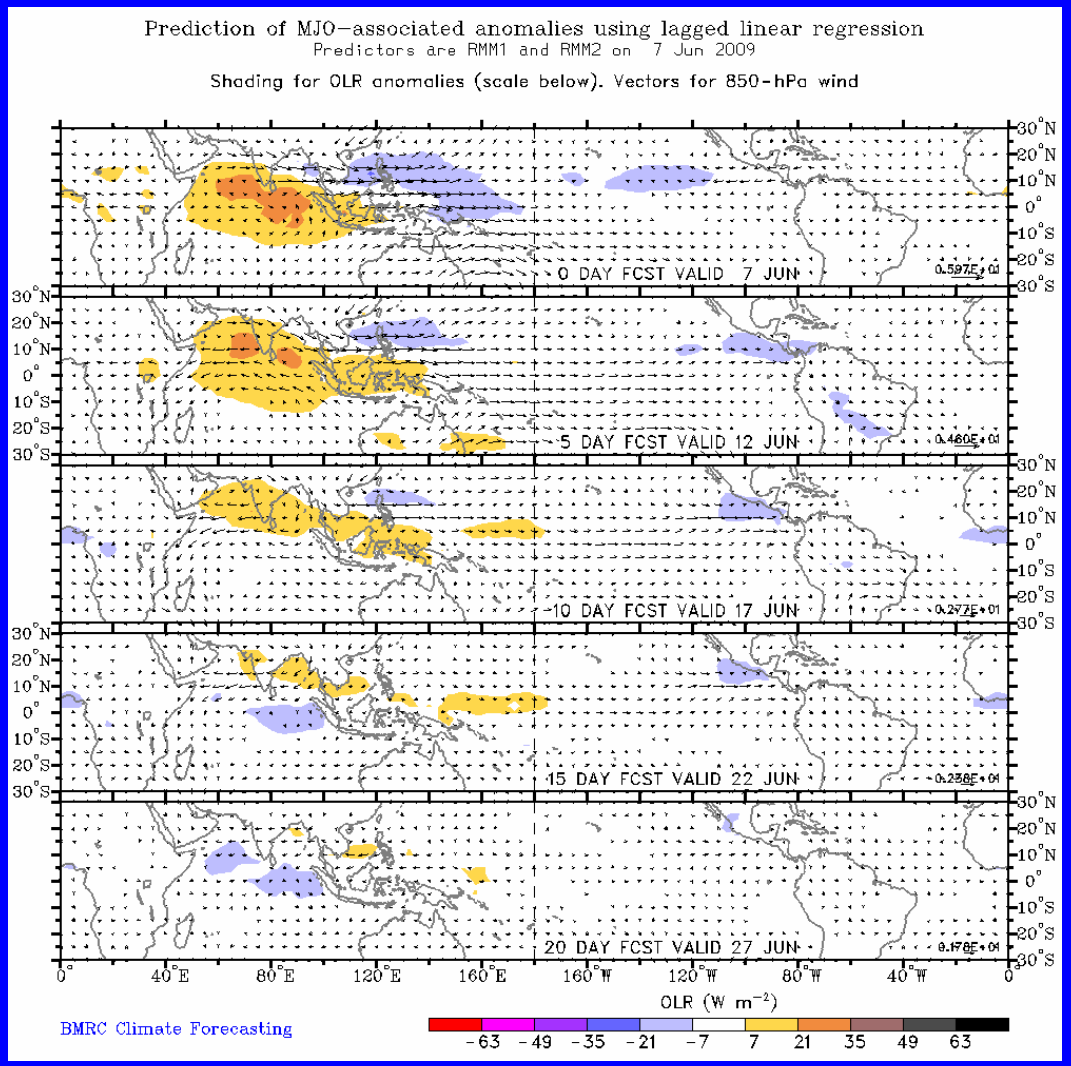
Figure below shows MJO associated OLR anomalies only (reconstructed from RMM1 and RMM2) and do not include contributions from other modes (*i.e.*, ENSO, monsoons)

Spatial map of OLR anomalies and 850-hPa vectors for the next 20 days

(Courtesy of the Bureau of Meteorology Research Centre - Australia)

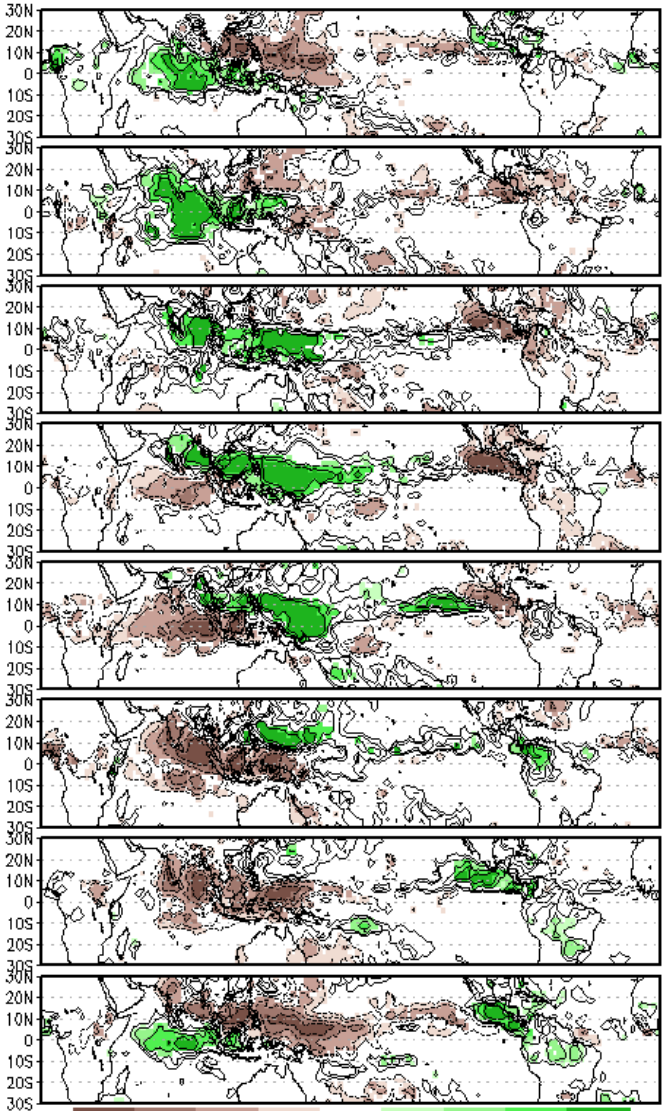
A statistical forecast indicates weak-to-moderate MJO activity during the next 1-2 weeks.

Suppressed convection is forecast across parts of South Asia and the Maritime continent while enhanced convection focuses across Central America.



MJO Composites – Global Tropics

Precipitation Anomalies (May-Sep)



850-hPa Wind Anomalies (May-Sep)