The 9th South China Sea Conference: Cooperation for Regional Security and Development

The 9th International Conference on the South China Sea hosted by the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV), the Foundation for East Sea Studies (FESS) and the Vietnam Lawyers' Association (VLA) took place at Ho Chi Minh City on 27-28 November, 2017.

On 27-28 November 2017, in Ho Chi Minh City, the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV), the Foundation for East Sea Studies (FESS) and the Vietnam Lawyers' Association (VLA) co-organized The 9th International Conference on the South China Sea themed "Cooperation for Regional Security and Development". This year's conference attracted nearly 200 participants, including over 90 international experts, 70 Vietnamese scholars and officials, 20 representatives from 17 foreign missions in Vietnam and 60 correspondents from 35 domestic and foreign news agencies. The conference is regarded as a prestigious annual forum on South China Sea issue, bringing together many of the world's leading experts in the field.

Marking the 10th anniversary of the inauguration of the Initiative, this year's conference moved beyond an annual review to take stock of transformations in the South China Sea across many sectors over the last decade.

Below is the detailed programme of the Conference with videos for each session and links to panelists' presentation:
DAY 1
Thursday - November 8, 2018

OPENING SESSION

- Opening Remarks
  Vu Tung, President
  Academy of Vietnam

- Welcome Remarks
  Minh, Member of the
  Nang Municipal Com
  Vice Chairman of Da

- Keynote Address by
  Vladimirovich Gol
  International Tribunal

SESSION 1: Current State of Affairs in The South China Sea

Moderator: Assoc. Prof. Nguyen Vu Tung, President of the
Vietnam

This session updates recent developments in the South China Sea and explores different perspectives within the region in a search for causes of such development and identify alterations.
approaches. Speakers are required to review the past, explore the major policy shifts and assess how they have shaped the current state of affairs in the South China Sea.

**Speakers:**

- **Prof. Brahma Chellaney,** Professor of Strategic Studies, Centre for Policy Research, India
  
  "South China Sea’s centrality to the Indo-Pacific region"

- **Prof. You Ji,** Head of Department of Government and Public Administration, University of Macau, China
  
  "South China Sea’s centrality to the Indo-Pacific region"

- **Dr. Euan Graham,** Director, International Security Program, the Lowy Institute, Australia
  
  "The South China Sea Conundrum"

- **Dr. Aries A. Arugay,** Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, University of the Philippines in Diliman, Philippines
  
  "The South China Sea and the Philippines in Diliman"
SESSION 2: Powers’ Interactions and Rule-based Order in the South China Sea

Moderator: Prof. Brahma Chellaney, Professor of Strategic Studies, Centre for Policy Research, India

As tensions are simmering, the South China Sea has become a theatre for rivalry among major and great powers, which prefer different rules and games. There has been no consensus on how the South China Sea issue should be managed and arising issues handled. This session explores major powers’ visions for the South China Sea order and interactions among them. It is an urgent task for major users of the Sea.
strategic waterway to understand each other's interests and preferences and discuss with coastal states rules and norms for the South China Sea in support of peace and security.

Speakers:

- Ms. Colin Willett, Former Deputy Assistant Secretary, State Department, United States
  “US’ perspective on the South China Sea Order: Strategy Under the Trump Administration”

- Prof. Shi Yinhong, Director of the Center on American Studies, Renmin University, China
  “An Effect of Trump and More: The Emerging Retrenchment of China’s Strategic Posture”

- Mr. Hideshi Tokuchi, Senior Fellow, National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, Japan
  “A Japanese Perspective of the South China Sea Order”

- Ms. Theresa Fallon, Member of the Council
  “An Effect of Trump and More: The Emerging Retrenchment of China’s Strategic Posture”
Over the last decade, the South China Sea has become more packed with a larger number of ships and aircraft. The greater concentration of force would increase the likelihood of encounters and clashes.

This session takes stock of the build-up, deployment, and other activities involving military and paramilitary forces in the South China Sea region. The panelists are required to address the balance of naval and paramilitary forces, assess threats and risks to maritime navigation, security, and stability of the entire South China Sea. They are also encouraged to work out proposed measures aimed at reducing “grey zones” and prompting de-militarization.

**Speakers:**
• Dr. Fu-Kuo Liu, Senior Fellow, Institute of International Relations, Taiwan Chengchi University
  “Naval build-up and deployment in the South China Sea”

• Prof. Carlyle A. Thayer, University of New South Wales at the Australian Defense Force Academy, Australia
  “Law Enforcement in the South China Sea: The Role of Regional Coast Guards” (Click for Presentation)

• Mr. Lyle J. Morris, Senior Policy Analyst, RAND Corporation, United States
  “Grey zones between Navy, Law Enforcement and Maritime Militia” (Click for Presentation)

• Dr. Do Thanh Hai, Director, Center for Information and Analysis, Bien Dong Institute for Maritime Studies, Diplomatic Academy of Viet Nam
  “An Assessment of Strategic Threats and Risks in the South China Sea”
SESSION 4: Activities at Sea: Sources of Conflict or Areas for Cooperation

Moderator Prof. Carlyle A. Thayer, University of New South Wales at the Australian Defense Force Academy, Australia

This session reviews a range of undertakings pursued by parties in the South China Sea. Speakers are requested to address key controversies over exploration and exploitation of natural resources, fishing activities, maritime navigation, anti-piracy and anti-terrorism training and operations. By exploring the stakeholders, perspectives, and motivations, the discussion is aimed to assess the likelihood of conflicts and escalations, and at the same time to map out the areas for potential cooperation.

Speakers:

• Prof. Renping Zhang, Director, Center for International Maritime Convention Studies, Dalian Maritime University, China

"Maritime Cooperation for Regional Security in the South China Sea"

Presentation)
SESSION 5: Legal Dimensions in The South China Sea

Moderator: Prof. Robert Beckman, Head of Ocean Law, Centre for International Law (CIL), the National University of Singapore

The session examines legal dimensions in the South China Sea and newly arisen legal issues, which are critical to the international order in the South China Sea. Speakers are addressing some of the most pressing legal challenges in the region.

- Ms. Shafiah F. Muhibat, Senior Fellow, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Indonesia; Maritime Security Programme, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore
  “Law Enforcement and Illegal Fishing: Incidents in the Indonesian Waters”

- Captain Martin A. Sebastian RMN (R), Senior Fellow/Centre Head, Centre for Maritime Security and Diplomacy, Maritime Institute of Malaysia (MIMA), Malaysia
  “Fighting Piracy and Terrorism: The Need to Reform Approaches to Maritime Security”

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critical aspects of legal dimension of the South China Sea issues, which including, but not limited to, marine environment protection, prevention of incidents at sea, the use of force or threat to use force, as well as revisiting the South China Sea arbitral award.

Speakers:

- **Prof. Geneviève Bastid Burdeau**, Professor of International Law, Sorbonne Law School (Univ. of Paris I); Member of the Institute of International Law, France
  “The Use of Force and Threat to Use Force in International Law and Practices in the South China Sea” ([Click for Presentation](#))

- **Assoc. Prof. Nguyen Thi Lan Anh**, Deputy Director and Senior Fellow, Bien Dong Institute for Maritime Studies, Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV)
  “International Law and Prevention of Incidents at Sea” ([Click for Presentation](#))

- **Dr. Kim Wonhee**, Senior Researcher, Korea
SESSION 6: Sustainable Development and Cooperation

Moderator: Prof. Geneviève Bastid Burdeau, Professor of International Law, Sorbonne Law School (Univ. of Paris I); Member of the Institute of International Law, France

This session focuses on the political economy of the South China Sea problem. As disputes and tensions drag on, the state of commercial development, economic cooperation, and their effects on the management and resolution of existing disputes are among the key concerns. Also, the issue of sustainable development both at the national and regional levels is of great interest to the public. Therefore, panelists are proposed to discuss key economic initiatives and activities, which have
potential of exerting substantial impacts on the state of affairs in the South China Sea region and beyond.

Speakers:

- **Ms. Chen Chenchen**, Deputy Director of the Macro Research Department at Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies, Renmin University of China
  
  “China’s new South China Sea approach following Belt and Road Initiative”

- **Ms. Joanna Mossop**, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Law, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand
  
  “The Future of Sustainable fisheries in the South China Sea”

- **Prof. David M. Ong**, Research Professor of International & Environmental Law, Nottingham Law School, Nottingham Trent University, UK
  
  “Prospects for Joint Development in the South China Sea: Implications of Recent...”
SESSION 7: Code of Conduct (COC): Substance and Process

Moderator: Prof. Leszek Buszynski, Visiting Fellow, Strategic & Defence Studies Centre, Australia

This special session is dedicated to the discussion on progress and obstacles to the formation of a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea. As China and ASEAN finalized the framework for the COC, the next phase of substantive discussions on the set of rules and regulations as well as mechanisms for monitoring, investigation, and enforcement would be very important.

- Presentation, by Prof. Robert Beckman, Head of Ocean Law and Policy Programme, Centre for International Law (CIL), the National University of Singapore.
“Can the COC establish a Framework for a Cooperative Mechanism?”

Panelists:

- **Prof. Renping Zhang**, Director, Center for International Maritime Convention Studies, Dalian Maritime University, China
- **Prof. Jay Batongbacal**, Director, Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea, University of the Philippines
- **Captain Martin A. Sebastian RMN (R)**, Senior Fellow/Centre Head, Centre for Maritime Security and Diplomacy, Maritime Institute of Malaysia (MIMA), Malaysia
- **Ms. Shafiah F. Muhibat**, Senior Fellow, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Indonesia; Maritime Security Programme, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore
- **Dr. Tran Truong Thuy**, Senior Fellow, Foundation for East Sea Studies (FESS), Vietnam

CLOSING REMARKS