The 10th South China Sea International Conference: Cooperation for Regional Security and Development

The 10th 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 in Da Nang on 8-9 November, 2018.

On 8-9 November 2018, in Da Nang City, the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV), the Foundation for East Sea Studies (FESS) and the Vietnam Lawyers' Association (VLA) co-organized the 10th International Conference on the South China Sea themed "Cooperation for Regional Security and Development". This year's conference attended by more than 200 participants, 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 video for each session and links to panelists' presentations:

**PROGRAMME**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPENING SESSION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 1: South China Sea: Heart of Indo-Asia-Pacific Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moderator:</strong> Assoc. Prof. Nguyen Vu Tung, President of the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The last decade witnessed the rise and confluence of the Pacific and Indian Oceans, which have a potential of transforming the 21st century's Asian and international politics. Lying as a link between the two oceans and the transiting point between the Eurasian landmass and the Indo-Pacific maritime theatre, the South China Sea has seemingly been a fault line of tectonic changes across the broader region.

- **Opening Remarks** by Assoc. Prof. Vu Tung, President of the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam
- **Welcome Remarks** by Mr. Ho Ky Minh, Member of the Standing Board of Da Nang Municipal Communist Party Committee, Vice Chairman of Da Nang People's Committee
- **Keynote Address** by Lordship Kriangsak Kittichairasee, Judge, International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS)
this backdrop, this session looks into the geopolitical arena of the Indo-Asia-Pacific region to trace down how significant the South China Sea is in competing geopolitical strategies. It also explores how South China Sea developments have interplayed with those in the East China Sea, Indian and Pacific Oceans and transformed regional geopolitical seascape.

**Speakers:**

- **Capt. (Dr) Gurpreet S Khurana**, Executive Director, National Maritime Foundation, India *(Click for presentation)*
  
  "**South China Sea: Geopolitical Connectedness to the Indian Ocean**"

- **Ms. Cleo Paskal**, Associate Fellow, Energy, Environment and Resources Department and Asia-Pacific Programme, Chatham House *(Click for Presentation)*
  
  "**Island Chain Defense and South China Sea**" *(Click for Presentation)*

- **Mr. Michael Shoebridge**, Director of Defence & Strategy Program, and **Dr. Huong Le Thu**, Senior Analyst, Australian Strategic...
SESSION 2: South China Sea in Spotlight: 10-Year Recap

Moderator: Ms. Cleo Paskal, Associate Fellow, Energy, Environment and Resources Department and Asia-Pacific Programme, Chatham House

This session compares the state of affairs in the South China Sea today with those ten years ago. It is designed to draw up endurances and changes on the ground, in the assessments of different governments, and in relations among claimants and powers concerned over related issues. It also examines different historiographies and narratives to chart out similarities and gaps in mentalities, perceptions, and interpretations, which then distorted realities and complicated the cycle of actions and reactions. Following ups and downs in the tension level, the...
panelists are required to identify major drivers behind those factual and mental changes.

**Speakers:**

- **Dr. Feng Zhang**, Fellow, Department of International Relations, Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific Affairs, ANU College of Asia and the Pacific, Australia National University
  “*China’s Long March at Sea: Explaining Beijing’s South China Sea Strategy from 2009 to 2016*” (Click for Presentation)

- **Mr. Conor Cronin**, Research Associate, Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, USA
  “*Obama, Trump, and the South Sea: Navigating the Differences across Ten Years*” (Click for Presentation)

- **Dr. Stein Tønnesson**, Research Professor, Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), Norway
  “*The Ten-Year Crisis in the South Sea and How to End It*” (Click for Presentation)

- **Dr. Nguyen Hung Son**, Head, Bien Dong
Institute for Maritime Studies, Diplomatic Academy of Viet Nam, Viet Nam

“ASEAN and the South China Sea over the Last 10 years: Perception and Changes”

SESSION 3: Evolving Claims and Positions over the South China Sea: Continuities and Changes

Moderator: Prof. Robert Beckman, Head of Ocean Law and Policy Programme, Centre for International Law, the National University of Singapore, Singapore

The session provides an updated assessment of developments with regard to concerned claimants' positions and claims over the period in study. The panelists are required to dig in their respective countries' official statements and legislatures to map out continuities and changes in their application and interpretation of the law of the sea. As usual, factors figuring significantly behind firmness or flexibility are central to understand countries' outlook and approach to the oceanic legal order. The claimant's response on how rewarding legal actions would have e...
states' behavior.

Speakers:

• **Dr. Nong Hong**, Executive Director & Senior Fellow, Institute for China - America Studies (ICAS), China  
  “China’s Claims and Positions over South China Sea: Continuities and Adaptions” (Click for Presentation)

• **Prof. Jay Batongbacal**, Director, Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea, University of the Philippines, Philippines  
  “A Forked Road: Change and Continuity Philippine Law And Policy On The South Sea” (Click for Presentation)

• **Ms. Jalila bt. Abdul Jalil**, Senior Researcher, Centre for the Straits of Malacca, Maritime Institute of Malaysia, Malaysia  
  “Malaysia’s Claims and Positions over Maritime Features in the South China Sea” (Click for Presentation)
SESSION 4: Major Powers: Engagements or Disengagements?

Moderator: Dr. Nong Hong, Executive Director & Senior Fellow, Institute for China-America Studies (ICAS), China

The South China Sea is a body of waters of global importance as it straddles important Sea Lines of Communication. There exists an argument that major powers' naval presence and activeness created insecurity and prompted regional militarization. The other genre of reasoning is that their involvements in regional affairs are attributed to anxieties about...
potential impediments to freedom of navigation, overflight as well as the existential challenge to the current legal. This session takes stock of major powers' positions over and policies toward South China Sea and explores the dynamics and rationality behind these changes.

**Speakers:**

- **Dr. Patrick Cronin**, Centre for a New American Security, USA
  “Averting a Major-Power Cold War in the South China Sea”

- **Dr. Christopher Roberts**, Institute for Governance and Policy Analysis, University of Canberra, Australia
  “Australia’s South China Sea Dilemma: From Multifaceted Interests To Rapidly Evolving Policy Approaches” ([Click for Presentation](#))

- **Mr. Bonji Ohara**, Senior Fellow, International Peace and Security Department, Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan
  “Major Powers: Engagements or Disengagements?” ([Click for Presentation](#))
DAY 2
Thursday - November 8, 2018

SESSION 5: Force Build-up in the South China Sea
Moderator: Prof. Carlyle Thayer, University of New South Wales at the Australian Defense Force Academy, Australia

This session is devoted to discuss shifts in the balance of power and measure the risks for armed clashes in the South China Sea. After a decade from Impeccable Incident in 2009, the sea is more congested by the deployment of greater number of naval assets, law enforcement ships, militia flotilla, and different types of autonomous mediums. The Spratlys and Paracels have been turned into fortresses with logistic centers, radar facilities and combatting
platforms. The panelists are tasked with examining different maritime capability components to identify competitive edges among different rivals, their strategic thoughts and strategies, and the potential of confrontations and conflicts.

Speakers:

- **Mr. Derek Grossman**, Senior Defense Analyst, RAND Corporation, USA
  “Overview of Military Force Build the South China Sea”

- **Prof. You Ji**, Head of Department of Government and Public Administration, University of Macau, China
  “Cooling Down the Spratly Disputes: Force Building Down and Confidence Building Up”  (Click for Presentation)

- **Dr. Ha Anh Tuan**, Assistant Director General, Diplomatic Academy of Viet Nam, Viet Nam
  “Force Build-up in the South China Will Grey-Zone Strategy Paint a Bright Future?”  (Click for Presentation)
SESSION 6: Confidence Building, Preventive Diplomacy, and Dispute Resolution
Moderator: Mr. Robert Harris, Assistant Legal Adviser for East Asia and Pacific Affairs, United States Department of State

This panel is designed to review the progress in confidence building, preventive diplomacy, and dispute resolution efforts in the South China Sea. Despite simmering tensions over the last decade, some positive developments took place. After agreeing on the framework, ASEAN and China started substantive negotiation on the code of conduct since early 2018. The two sides already put in place hotlines for emergency and discussed the extension of CUEs to the coast guard. Talks on joint development and maritime delimitation are also underway between different parties. Against this backdrop, panelists are tasked with taking...
the most significant processes, probing the and stumbling blocks, and discussing their prospects.

**Speakers:**

- **Prof. Carlyle Thayer**, University of New South Wales at the Australian Defense Academy, Australia
  
  “From Confidence Building, Preventive Diplomacy and Dispute Resolution to the ASEAN-China South China Sea Code of Conduct”  ([Click for Presentation](#))

- **Lieutenant General Nguyen Quang Dam**, Former Commander of the Viet Nam Coast Guard, Viet Nam
  
  “Crisis Management at Sea”

- **Dr. Jacqueline Joyce F. Espenilla**, Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea, University of the Philippines, Philippines
  
  “The Next Step for the Philippines China: Understanding the Hard Realities and Promising Possibilities of Joint Resource Development”  ([Click for](#))
SESSION 7: Emerging Disrupters to Maritime Order in the South China Sea
Moderator: Dr. Stein Tønnesson, Research Professor, Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), Norway

The session deals with newly arising problems that have the potential of disrupting the order in the South China Sea. Technological and scientific advancements have not only opened up new frontiers for competition, such as cyber space or deep-sea mining, but also blurred the boundary between civility and military and between man and nature. Climate change and marine environmental degradation caused by destructive human activities are at the magnitude, which would pose significant disruptions to marine ecology with severe consequences to coastal communities and their economic activities. Denial and non-compliance may also...
reciprocal outlawed responses, which systematically crack legal order at sea.

**Speakers:**

- **Dr. Shafiah Muhibat**, Head of Department of International Relations, Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Indonesia
  "Competition over Fishing Resources"

- **Prof. Raul "Pete" Pedrozo**, non-resident fellow, the Stockton Centre for the Study of International Law, US Naval War College
  "Employment of Marine Unmanned Vehicles in the South China Sea"  
  [Presentation](#)

- **Prof. Robert Beckman**, Head of Ocean Law and Policy Programme, Centre for International Law, the National University of Singapore, Singapore
  "Force and Coercion in the South China Sea: Why does it matter in International Law?"  
  [Presentation](#)
### SESSION 8: Order and Disorder in the SCS: Recap and Forward

**Moderator:** H.E. Ambassador Le Cong Phung, Vice Chairman, The Foundation for East Sea Studies (FESS)

The rule-based order in the South China Sea is under serious challenge. It can be replaced by an order based on power hierarchy, or a kind of hybrid between right and might, or even disarray. Which type of order would bring greater security, prosperity, and sustainability for the region? The session lays the ground for discussion on the nature of transformations in the last decade and on the prospect for peace and stability in the South China Sea in the decade to come. It is also tasked to draw lessons for improving management and regulation of the South China Sea for the sake of regional security and prosperity.

- **Prof. Carlyle Thayer,** University of New South Wales at the Australian Defense
• **Dr. Feng Zhang**, Fellow, Department of International Relations, Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific Affairs, College of Asia and Pacific, Australia National University
• **Prof. Jay Batongbacal**, Director, Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea, University of the Philippines, Philippines
• **Prof. Robert Beckman**, Head of Ocean Law and Policy Programme, Centre for International Law, the National University of Singapore, Singapore
• **Dr. Do Thanh Hai**, Assistant Director General, Diplomatic Academy of Viet Nam

• **Closing Remarks by Assoc. Prof. Nguyen Vu Tung**, President of the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam