

## Regional Workshop

# ASEAN at the Crossroads: Fostering Collective Strengths for Addressing Regional Issues

June 10-11, 2021 (ICT)

### Background

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is in a double crisis triggered by traditional and non-traditional security issues. While the traditional security issues exemplified by disputes among its member states and China over the South China Sea and the Mekong River remain unsettled, Southeast Asia is increasingly shaken by non-traditional security issues, notably migration, environmental challenges, and aggravated by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and Myanmar crisis. The so-called “ASEAN Way”, based on consultation and consensus and characterized by conflict avoidance and the non-interference principle, appears threatened in the face of these new security challenges.

Although there already exists the scheme of ASEAN Political Security Community (APSC), there has yet to be a framework that would effectively and comprehensively capture and address both the traditional and non-traditional security issues in Southeast Asia, covering national, human and environmental security. The upcoming workshop will endeavor to create a conversation towards a new framework, focusing on the traditional and non-traditional security concerns over the South China Sea and the Greater Mekong Subregion. Among the key concepts underlying the workshop are good governance, mediation regime, social learning, involvement of external powers, and shock-absorbing capacity.

### Objectives

The workshop will bring together experts and diplomats, representatives from think tanks, and local practitioners to discuss the recent developments in the Mekong region and in the South China Sea.

The main aims are as follows:

- Regionalize the Mekong issues in ASEAN regional talks. While the geopolitics of the Mekong water is increasingly attaining international interests, the Mekong issues remain excluded in ASEAN’s collective priority list. This appears to hamper ASEAN in dealing with China (the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation) and with the US (the Mekong-US Partnership). This workshop provides a timely

platform for expert participants to explore how to elevate ASEAN interest and political will to upgrade the Mekong issue as a priority issue.

- Examine existing response mechanisms at bilateral and multilateral platforms to unveil to what degree their response strategies make positive impacts at local, national and regional levels. By doing so, some enduring lessons may result in the following actions:
  - Reconsider and evaluate of the effectiveness of the ASEAN Way and examination of the necessary reforms in the times of a double crisis;
  - Produce an edited monograph that includes quality research papers by way of this workshop. It will highlight the impacts and introduce diverse approaches to effectively address the traditional and non-traditional security issues in the region that matter for regional peace and stability in the decades to come. The book should be of interest to diplomats, policymakers, think-tanks and researchers in diverse fields of study as well as professionals concerned with sustainable development and human security in Southeast Asia.

### Where?

This workshop will be held virtually over Zoom over the course of two half-days on the mornings of **June 10 & 11 Indochina Time from 8:30-11:40am.**

### Preliminary Agenda

<b>Day 1.</b> June 10 from 8:30-11:40am ICT   June 9 from 21:30pm-12:40am EDT	
8:00 – 8:30 ICT	Registration & Zoom log-in
8:30 – 9:00	<b>Opening Plenary</b> <b>Welcome remarks</b> James Borton, Co-founder of MEF <b>Keynote address</b> Jennifer Turner, Director of the Wilson Center’s China Environment Forum <b>Host:</b> Courtney Weatherby, Deputy Director of the Southeast Asia Program, Stimson Center
9:00 – 10:20	<b>Session 1. The Mekong Matters for ASEAN: Prioritizing Areas of Action at Regional Level</b> <b>Possible topics:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mekong infrastructure development and implications for Insular ASEAN countries</li> <li>▪ ASEAN between the U.S.-Mekong Partnership and China’s LMC</li> <li>▪ Prioritizing the Mekong issues in ASEAN foreign policy</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Brian Eyler, Southeast Asia Program Director, Stimson Center</li> <li>▪ Dr. Stephen Nagy, Senior Associate Professor at the International Christian University in Tokyo</li> <li>▪ Him Raksmeay, Research Fellow at CICP</li> </ul> <p><b>Instigator:</b> H.E. Ambassador Pou Sothirak (Executive Director, CICP)</p>
10:20 – 10:30	Break
10:30 – 11:30	<p><b>Session 2. Regional Approach to Non-traditional Security Issues</b></p> <p><b>Possible topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Regional cooperation strategies for health crisis management</li> <li>▪ Migration in the Greater Mekong Sub-region</li> <li>▪ Food, water, energy and environmental challenges</li> <li>▪ Citizen science as a ground-up approach for regional resilience</li> </ul> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tamotsu Sugunami, Secretary General, Takagi Fund for Citizen Science</li> <li>▪ Dr. Ming Li Yong, the School for Field Studies</li> <li>▪ Assist. Prof. Dr. Tanapon Phenrat, Naresuan University</li> <li>▪ James Borton and Nguyen Minh Quang, Co-founder of MEF</li> </ul> <p><b>Facilitator:</b> Brian Eyler</p>
11:30 – 11:40	<p><b>Summary Statements</b></p> <p>Dr. Ly Quang Duc, CPG Bangkok</p>
<p><b>Day 2.</b> June 11 from 8:30-11:40am ICT   June 10 from 21:30pm-12:40am EDT</p>	
8:00 – 8:30 ICT	Registration & Zoom log-in
8:30 – 9:00	<p><b>Opening Plenary</b></p> <p><b>Welcome remarks with key takeaways from Day 1</b></p> <p>Brian Eyler</p> <p><b>Keynote address</b></p> <p>Sourabh Gupta, Senior Fellow at the Institute for China-America Studies in Washington</p> <p><b>Host:</b> Dr. Ly Quang Duc</p>
9:00 – 10:20	<p><b>Session 3. Strategic Developments in the South China Sea Theater in the Times of Health Crisis</b></p> <p><b>Possible topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ China’s evolving “gray zone” tactics in the South China Sea</li> <li>▪ The impacts of global health crisis on response strategies of claimants and external powers</li> <li>▪ COC negotiations: progress and challenges</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Emeritus Professor Carl Thayer, the University of New South Wales, Australian Defence Force Academy</li> <li>▪ Bill Hayton, Associate Fellow with the Asia-Pacific Program, Chatham House</li> <li>▪ Professor Jean-Pierre Cabestan, Department of Government and International Relations, Hong Kong Baptist University</li> <li>▪ Dr. Stephen Nagy</li> </ul> <p><b>Instigator:</b> Sourabh Gupta</p>
<p>10:20 - 10:30</p>	<p>Break</p>
<p>10:30 - 11:30</p>	<p><b>Session 4. Building Cooperative Solutions for a Peaceful South China Sea</b></p> <p><b>Possible topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The need of rules-based solutions</li> <li>▪ Reconsidering the Asean Way in the face of new security challenges</li> <li>▪ Science diplomacy in the South China Sea</li> </ul> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Professor Jay Batongbacal, Director of the UP Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea</li> <li>▪ Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mikio Oishi, MEF advisor</li> <li>▪ James Borton</li> <li>▪ Dr. Vo Xuan Vinh, Deputy Director of ISEAS Hanoi</li> </ul> <p><b>Facilitator:</b> Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mikio Oishi</p>
<p>11:30 - 11:40</p>	<p><b>Summary Statements and Closing Remarks</b></p> <p>Henning Glaser, Director of CPG Dr. Ly Quang Duc</p>

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