

The Issues of Non-traditional Security in East Asia and Possibilities for Cooperation

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Abstract: At present, the East Asia region, including Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia, has been emerging as an important region of the most concern in the world today in terms of geo-strategy, geo-politics and security. Security stability in this region is a decisive factor to political and economic development as well as in other aspects of the life of the people in the region. At the same time, this stability will contribute to strengthening global security and ensuring the interests of the countries related. This paper addresses the issues of non-traditional security and possibilities for cooperation within the framework of general security cooperation in the region, based on the researches on non-traditional security, analysis of the actual problems, and proposes some possibilities and solutions for the problems**.

Key words: East Asia, security, non-traditional security, politics.

Peaceful development, stability, prosperity and mutual interests are the mainstreams of the globalized world today, including the East Asia which consists of Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia sub-regions. The former ideological confrontations, especially in the Cold War time, are now of less significance and, thus, the military conflicts and army escalations have been decreasing considerably. However, the fast, big and unpredictable geo-political changes in the world and in the region have been creating many multi-dimensional impacts on the political life [3]. Many new problems, including security ones, have emerged. For security stability in the world and in the East Asian region, there need methods, new solutions and measures for the problems. To deeper understand these “new” things will be a

concrete contribution to security preservation in the world in general and in East Asia in particular.

1. The issues of non - traditional security in East Asia

The issues of non-traditional security in East Asia, which should not only be classified into groups of non-traditional security issues under certain criteria, as indicated in certain researches, but also need to be identified in different

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geopolitical, geographical and human terms as the original sources of the non-traditional security issues¹. Methodologically, that non-traditional security issues are divided into groups, as above-said, has caused certain difficulties in cooperation for settlement due to inconsistencies in the methodologies or approaches to the problems and solutions. In practice, in order to work out specific directions for cooperation for settlement in the near future, it is a must to consider the following as the issues of non-traditional security in the years to come, including:

1.1. Differences in financial - economic development

In the first two decades of the 21st Century, East Asia is the region of most dynamic development in the world. Within the East Asian region, the developments are of uneven different levels: there are the sub-regions and countries of higher and more dynamic development than other sub-regions and countries. Such sub-regions as

¹ In a research, for example, on “Cooperation in response to non-traditional security problems”, the author has grouped the issues of non-traditional security under 5 themes: (i) the security issues related to sustainable development, including environment protection, development of natural and ecological resources, and disease/ epidemics prevention; (ii) the threats to regional stability due to disorder and out-of-control issues, including economic security, social security, human rights and refugees; (iii) transnational organized crimes, including drugs and human trafficking; (iv) the challenges from non-state organizations to the current international order, typically terrorism; (v) other security issues related to technological development and globalization, including network security, information security and security of genetic applications; Vietnam Review of Northeast Asian Studies, No.10, 2007.

Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia are of more dynamic development than the Siberia and Far East of Russia. Among the countries, China, Japan and Korea are of higher development and growth. Within ASEAN, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia, etc. are of higher development than Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, etc.. Therefore, it is a must to understand the East Asian characteristics in order to have a logical and scientific approach to solve the problems of financial and economic security.

1.2. Distinctive natural and geographical conditions of the region

Geographically, the East Asia region consists of the countries in the Asia-Pacific and on the Pacific volcanic belt. This is the major cause to many and endless natural calamities. China, Japan and Indonesia, etc. always face with earthquakes while Vietnam, Japan, Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia and other coastal countries have to suffer bad typhoons and floods, even tsunami at any time. In addition to typhoons and floods, droughts and hot weather are also the causes to desertification and crop losses for countries like China, Mongolia and Vietnam, etc..

Natural calamities are the big challenge to East Asia, which must be fully understood by East Asian countries in order to work out appropriate collaborative directions for settlement as one of the groups of non-traditional security threats.

1.3. Demographic conditions

East Asia is a region of high population density, which is around 230 persons/km²,

that is five times higher than the world average (not including the population density of the Siberian and Far East regions of Russia). This population density is, however, varied from country to country between the sub-regions and countries: For example, it is very high in Vietnam (254 persons/km²) - nearly two times higher than in China (136 persons/km²). In the meantime, the population density in Siberian and Far East regions of Russia is very low and even decreasing: just 1 person/km² (in 2002)². These data reflect that East Asia is facing many non-traditional security issues or threats in terms of human and demography. They are, among them, the issue of food security: how to ensure food security for this populous region and improve the living standards; the issue of prevention and urgent response to disasters caused by human, such as environment pollution, natural resource exhaustion (which is more important water resource exhaustion), sea pirates or hijackers, illegal migration, human trafficking, etc. and even the issue of “population weapon” used by certain countries to threaten the others; the issue of how to ensure better living conditions for the people in the region, such as healthcare service and education, etc. And last but not least, it is the aging problem some East Asian countries are facing. These are all the important and urgent issues of non-traditional security in East Asia.

² For example, there were 22 volcanic eruptions and dormant volcanoes with increasing levels. In 2011, the Shinmoedake volcano in Japan erupted very violently. On 18 November 2013, the Sinabung volcano on the island of West Sumatra erupted, with 8,000 meters high columns of ashes. In June 2015, the Sinabung volcano continued to erupt with huge columns of ashes, forcing 2,700 people to evacuate, etc.

It can be said that demography is an important factor to cooperation for settlement of a series of non-traditional security problems and threats in the East Asia region in the years to come.

1.4. Strong and fast development of information technology

East Asia is one of the regions of high development of information technology and application. Japan, Korea, China and some other countries are of high information technology. Some “network wars” were said to come from East Asian countries. Therefore, network security is not only related to national security of some countries in the region but security of the world.

1.5. Other problems

Non-traditional security also consists of many other problems, depending on each region, aspect and human recognition. Within this paper, the author goes deeper into the first 4 problems.

In short, there are distinctive characteristics of non-traditional security issues in the East Asia, which requires appropriate approach for settlement.

2. Cooperation in non – traditional security in East Asia

2.1. The need for cooperation to solve the problems of non-traditional security in East Asia

Due to distinctive characteristics of non-traditional security in East Asia, as above said, while analyzing to work out effective solutions, we need to start with basic principles: (1) For settlement of non-traditional security problems of global origin and corollaries, there needs global mechanisms and solutions, and the time for

implementation, long or short, will depend on specific problem; (2) For settlement of non-traditional security problems coming from the region with regional corollaries, it is necessary to have regional mechanism and solution.

In the current context of international integration, including the increasing globalization and regionalization, any problems in the political, economic, societal and security areas, including non-traditional security are of global and regional contents with distinctive characteristics. The countries become more and more dependent with one another; an individual event of a country may affect the interests of many other countries and vice versa. Non-traditional security is not an exception, which must go and abide these principles.

The need for cooperation and joint actions from the world community and the region for settlement of non-traditional security problems in the world in general and in the East Asian region in particular derive from the following factors:

** At the global level*

a. The international laws and conventions are the criteria, effective tools for solving the problems. As a big region in the world, the East Asian region has faced a number of problems, among them the non-traditional security ones created by many factors with global consequences. For example, on financial economic security: The 2008-2009 financial and economic crisis has created many negative impacts on economic development of many countries in the region. For overcoming the crisis

aftermaths, it required not only strong efforts from not only the region and individual country in the region but also joint mechanisms, coordination and cooperation from the world community with international institutions and organizations, such as the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Bank, etc. In financial, economic and trade development, the international institutions and standards enable to help the countries in the region develop stably. The World Trade Organization (WTO) is a supporting institution and, at the same time, the “international arbitration”, creating favorable conditions for faster and more stable trade and economic development of the countries in the region, and creating bases for trade dispute settlement if necessary. On health: the SARS outbreak in 2003 and the MERS disease in Korea in 2015 could not be solved unilaterally by countries own efforts in the region but required international institutions such as the WHO and other countries. On freedom of navigation: the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in 1982 is the international legal basis to ensure freedom of navigation and the interests of many countries in the region and outside the region having relevant interests in the East China Sea and the East Sea.

The Human Rights Watch (HRW), the Organization of Red Cross and Red Crescent International, the Organization for Food and Agriculture of the United Nations (FAO), etc. with their working mechanisms and institutions are also the effective tools

to help solve a number of problems of non-traditional security, such as human trafficking, migration and refugees at sea, etc.

b. The harness of nature

The Pacific ring of fire and the specific climate of the Pacific Ocean annually cause natural disasters for the East Asian region, including tsunami, earthquakes, volcanoes, floods, and droughts³, etc. which go beyond the limits and possibilities of one nation, calling for joint efforts from the international community and the region to deal with the consequences.

c. The lack of human responsibility

In human activities, including political, economic ones, etc., due to narrow political vision, selfishness, self-interest, narrow national interests, corporate interests or group interests, etc., the human factor in East Asia has been creating many non-

traditional security challenges and threats at the global and regional levels. These include the over-use of energy resources, non-abundance with scientific and technical standards, contributing to global climate warming, disrupting market supply and consumption of energy, altering the land map of the world's energy, and exhausting the natural resources, etc.⁴ In addition, there is also the fact that some countries have used their own "playing rules" on the territories and areas, especially in the island waters they assume their sovereignty, which as a consequence, has created new non-traditional security threats, such as unilateral fishing ban, accretion of underwater rocks into "artificial islands" in the region.

Another example with a more modest level is the disappearance without a trace of the Malaysian plane MH370 on the 8th of March 2014. It may be due to a political motive, but may also be a technical failure or a natural accident that led to this disaster. But in search of the traces and finding the causes of the incidents with the hope to avoid similar disasters, 26 countries were involved and huge costs were spent.

** At the regional level*

The weak capacity of the region and individual country in dealing with large-scale, complicated and serious problems.

There are security problems at the global and regional levels at the same time. Some above-said examples prove that, at the regional level, despite of the regional mechanisms and organizations with the highest levels, the problems could not be

³ The 2008 Sichuan earthquake was the most severe and catastrophic earthquake in China since after the 1976 Tangshan earthquake, leaving 250,000 people dead. For example, there were 22 volcanic eruptions and dormant volcanoes with increasing levels. In 2011, the Shinmoedake volcano in Japan erupted very violently. On 18 November 2013, the Sinabung volcano on the island of West Sumatra erupted, with 8,000 meters high columns of ashes. In June 2015, the Sinabung volcano continued to erupt with huge columns of ashes, forcing 2,700 people to evacuate, etc. For example in 2011, the flash floods caused by the Washi tropical storm in southern Philippines killed 650 people. In the historical floods in central Vietnam in 2013, about 20,000 households with more than 78,000 people from coastal, low-land and other risky areas from Quang Nam to Phu Yen provinces had to evacuate. In Quang Ngai province alone, 16,000 households with nearly 67,000 people had to move to other places. Desertification in China, about 27% of total Chinese area, that is, about 2.6 million square kilometers were considered to be desertified; and about 18% of total other land area were eroded by sand.

⁴ Four principles of "New Security in Asia", including "general security", "comprehensive security", "collaborative security" and "sustainable security".

solved. Transnational crime, terrorist threats and challenges, trans-national human trafficking, and attacks by hackers require not only the efforts to resolve from the regional institutions and forces.

** At the national/country level*

The lack of synchronization in state management. Sometimes, the lack of synchronization or weaknesses in state management is the cause to certain non-traditional security problems which are not to be resolved within a country. A typical example was the earthquake in Sichuan, China in 2008, when Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao could not be able to promptly mobilize all the available forces in the country to rescue. There were certain comments that the Korean government delays in dealing with MERS disease in 2015 were due to weak coordination among Korean ministries and lines, etc. For the same reason, the consequences of some floods in the Philippines or in Vietnam over the past years were not solved timely and appropriately.

Obviously, many of the non-traditional security problems, whether they are at the global, regional or country levels, whether they are the threats, the challenges or the risks, etc., all require collaboration and coordination among the institutions and organizations from the world, from the region and from individual country for settlement. The quick and timely collaboration in solving the problems will contribute to rapidly and effectively bringing normal life back to the people in the region, contributing to general security worldwide.

2.2. The possibility of cooperation in non-traditional security in East Asia

** Advantages*

On bilateral cooperation: These are the organizations, mechanisms and forums between pairs of partners. For example, in 2000, China and Vietnam signed the Agreement on Tonkin Gulf Demarcation and the Agreement on Fishery Cooperation in the Tonkin Gulf. Since then, Vietnam and China have made 10 joint sea patrols with the aim of maintaining peace and stability; strengthening the solidarity of neighboring countries of common interests in the East Sea; disseminating, providing fishermen with provisions of the Agreement on Fishery Cooperation in the Tonkin Gulf signed by the two countries on December 25th of 2000 in order to act in accordance with law, to co-protect the aquatic resources and to avoid devastation of the marine environment. For the same purpose, joint sea patrols have been made between Vietnam and Thailand, etc.

The US - Japan alliance (set by the US previously) continued to develop and hold a leading role in the regional security mechanisms, including non-traditional security. It is argued that this core coalition continued to be strengthened by the two countries in response to such issues as the North Korean nuclear issue, and to deter and contain the “rise” of China.

The Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), such as the Vietnam – Japan Free Trade Agreement (VJFTA), the Vietnam – Chile Free Trade Agreement (VCFTA), the

Vietnam – Laos Free Trade Agreement (VLFTA), the Vietnam – Korea Free Trade Agreement (VKFTA), etc. or the other FTAs that are both bilateral and multilateral, namely, the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (AFTA), the ASEAN – India Free Trade Agreement (AIFTA), the ASEAN – Australia/New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (AANZFTA), the ASEAN – Korea Free Trade Agreement (AKFTA), the ASEAN – Japan Free Trade Agreement (AJFTA), the ASEAN – China Free Trade Agreement (ACFTA), and the Vietnam – Eurasian Economic Union FTA (VN- EAEUFTA), etc. are the effective mechanisms contributing to address many issues of financial and economic security for the East Asian countries.

On multilateral cooperation: These are the institutions, mechanisms and forums of many partners. In the Asia - Pacific in general and East Asia in particular, there are two forms of multi-lateral institutions: 1) the mechanisms in which ASEAN plays a coordinating role, such as ASEAN with China (ASEAN+1); ASEAN with China, Japan and Korea (ASEAN+3); the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF); the East Asian Summit (EAS) and the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting (ADMM) and the open ADMM (ADMM+); 2). Other multi-lateral institutions, such as the Forum of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Asia - Europe Meeting (ASEM), and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), etc. In addition, there is a strategic partnership which is, by nature, a kind of unofficial alliance between Japan and Australia established in 2014; the Japan -

Philippines - Australia Triangle with the aim of supporting the United States to implement their policy of “Rebalancing” in Asia - Pacific and to serve their own considerations; the India-Japan-Australia trilateral security cooperation (not including the United States and China) was born to protect their country interests and to deal with the risk of compromise between two major countries. These institutions have taken many specific actions to solve a lot of security problems, including the non-traditional security ones. For example, in October 2000, Thailand and the UNDCP co-hosted an international congress on the topic of making ASEAN a drug-free ASEAN by 2015 with the participation of all ASEAN members, the United States, Canada, Japan, Korea, China, India, New Zealand, Australia and the European Union. The results of the Congress were the Bangkok Political Declaration in Pursuit of a Drug-Free ASEAN 2015 and the Plan of Action on ASEAN and China Cooperative Operations in Response to Dangerous Drugs (ACCORD). On July 2nd, in the capital city Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei hosted the 20th Regional Forum of the ASEAN Ministers of Foreign Affairs (ARF-20) and the 3rd Summit of East Asian Foreign Ministers (EAS-3). The Ministers welcomed the effective implementation of the Hanoi Action Plan to Implement the ARF Vision Statement 2020, which has many practical co-operation, confidence-building and cooperation actions to cope with natural disasters, prevention of transnational crime and terrorism, security, maritime safety,

network security, etc.. At the meetings, the Ministers welcomed the efforts made by ASEAN and China in implementing fully and effectively the DOC and looking forward to a Code of Conduct in the East Sea (South China Sea) (COC); welcomed that the ASEAN and China would conduct formal consultations for achieving COC early; stressed the need to continue promoting active and effective cooperation actions in the priority areas, including finance, energy, education, disease control, disaster management and ASEAN connectivity promotion; and at the same time, stressed the need to strengthen regional economic integration through speeding up the completion of negotiations for Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) in 2015.

At the mid-term ASEAN Regional Forum on maritime security in Bali, Indonesia in 2014, with the attendance of nearly 100 delegates from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and other related maritime security organizations of 27 countries, the delegates focused on discussing the situations of maritime security in the region and in the world, the issues of coordination, consultation and cooperative mechanisms related to regional maritime in Southeast Asia; the reported results of implementation of ASEAN maritime security work plan; the results and experiences in maritime security cooperation; maritime search and rescue activities; the cooperation in preventing and combating illegal fishing activities; transnational crimes with a focus on piracy, armed robbery at sea, smuggling of weapons, drugs and human trafficking by

sea, etc. Emphases were given to the importance of maritime security in preserving peace and stability in the region, and in particular, the impacts of transnational crimes, especially sea hijackers and armed pirates at sea, considering them one of the serious challenges to peace and stability of the region and other complicated problems in the East Sea in the recent years. With the paper entitled “Maritime security cooperation within framework of the Senior Meeting of ASEAN Officials on Transnational Crime - SOMTC”, the Vietnam Delegation recommended that: the ASEAN members and other countries within ARF framework need to continue strengthening operations in response to the threats to peace, stability as well as maritime security and safety in the region on the basis of the 1982 United Nation Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the Declaration of Conduct (DOC) and the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery in Asia (ReCAAP); Focusing on unifying the focal points for cooperation; enhancing information sharing related to maritime security; improving the efficiency of coordinated arrests and dealing with maritime security threats and problems; jointly organizing conferences, training seminars and exchanging of personals, etc. on anti-transnational crime, and solving disputed issues related to maritime security, maintaining order and safety at sea and protection of the legitimate sovereignty of each country.

At the Meeting, most of the delegates shared deep concerns about the recent

developments in the East Sea, especially the Chinese accretion and expansion of the seven reefs in Spratly under the sovereignty of Vietnam, with a view to turning them into "military bases" and maritime logistics bases. The delegates recommended stakeholders to dialogue and solve the problems by peaceful means; ASEAN members were proposed to participate actively in the process of multi-lateral dialogues for dispute settlement on the basis of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the principles of conduct in the region and the Joint Declaration of the ASEAN Meeting as well.

In practice, the above-said bilateral and multilateral security institutions or mechanism are aimed not only to achieving general security (traditional security) but also effectively supporting the settlement of non-traditional security issues in the region.

** Disadvantages*

Firstly, it is the difference or inconsistency in the concept and definition of non-traditional security concept among the countries in the region. East Asia is a big region, consisting of many countries of different development levels in terms of politics, economics, science and education, etc. This is quite understandable yet due to such differences, the concerns and objectives are varied from country to country. One problem can be considered a non-traditional security problem by one country but not by another or vice versa and

thus, certain difficulties in cooperation for settlement may arise.

Secondly, it is the lack of political will, poor capacity of organization and insufficient legal foundations. The East Asian countries, despite of their strong efforts of bilateral and multilateral cooperation for prevention and remedy of the consequences of non-traditional security problems, the results are more formalistic than substantive. Most of the declarations, dialogues and forums are the "soft" mechanisms with no legal constraints and thus, the cooperation efforts made by countries in combating certain kinds of non-traditional security such as organized crime, human trafficking, etc. could not bring in expected results.

Thirdly, it is the increase in awareness of national sovereignty of countries in the region. Due to historical factors and current geopolitical changes in the world and in the region, national sovereignty has been placed top priority by most of the East Asian countries in their national interests and security agendas. This is one of the reasons that have limited collaborative efforts and joint actions to solve the problems of non-traditional security in the region.

Fourthly, it is the strong emergence and extreme actions or behaviors of certain countries in the region. China is a typical example. This country officially surpassed Japan to become the 2nd largest economy in the world (2010). This most populous country in the world has continuously

strengthened national defense capacity and modernized army forces, and ignored the “playing rules” of the contemporary international system established and governed by the West. China has demanded drastic reforms of the international economic and financial organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and some other international treaties in favor of China’s interests. The Chinese are in pursue a closed framework of East Asian regional integration led by them and with no foreign intervention or foreign influence; they consider EAS the mechanism supportive to ASEAN+3 in the cause of East Asian Community building; actively promote the process of negotiations for the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) to create a basis for Asia-Pacific economic integration (not including the United States). Since late 2012, China has strengthened ASEAN+1 mechanism and launched a series of initiatives with the aim of enhancing the ties with ASEAN. The number of Chinese initiatives are many, most of the contents and goals yet to be determined, making ASEAN countries concerned and cautious. Chinese President Xi Jinping has announced the concept of "New Asian Security" in which, he set out four principles in order to build an Asia of peace, stability and development [3]. On the one hand, China started a series of "initiatives" such as establishing a Free Trade Area of Asia-Pacific (FTAAP), Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and “The 21st Century Maritime Silk Route” to improve China’s image and to reassure its

neighbors, but on the other hand, China has taken many actions of a big country, fierce competitions for the rich waters in the East Sea of abundant natural resources, infringements of sovereign rights and jurisdiction of Vietnam and the Philippines, speeding up accretion of seven reefs in the Spratly islands that are claimed to be under Vietnam’s sovereignty. These actions from China have not only impeded freedom of navigation for many countries in the region and outside the region with related interests but also caused deep concerns to many countries in the region. It is the rise of China and these actions that, among the factors, have caused many difficulties for regional collaboration in the settlement of the non-traditional security issues.

That Japan adopted the "right to collective self-defense" to strengthen the ties with Australia and India; boosted the relations with ASEAN; promoted multilateral mechanisms with the participation of the US and other countries outside the region, such as EAS, APEC, has proved that Japan wanted to hold an increasingly important role in regional security structure. This made China unhappy and caused certain difficulties for true regional collaboration in non-traditional security issues.

** Prospects*

First of all, the global strategic importance of the Asia-Pacific region (East Asia in particular) has been increasingly enhanced. Many countries outside the region such as the US, the EU, Russia, India, etc. with related interests have been actively deploying and implementing their

policies and strategies towards the Asia - Pacific. For example, the United States has been implementing the strategic policy of “rebalancing” and “pivoting to Asia” and the Trans-Pacific Partnerships (TPP) [4]; Russia has been pursuing the policy and strategy of a “Great Asia” launched by Russian President Putin [6]; while India has been implementing the “Act East” strategy initiated by Indian Premier Narendra Modi⁵. To ensure their interests, these powers will of course have certain solutions for security issues, including non-traditional security in the East Asia region, especially the current hot issues of the East China Sea and the East Sea. That the United States several times, officially on Channel I, requested China to cease build-up activities on seven reefs (which claimed by Vietnam to be under its sovereignty) in the East Sea [7] is a typical example. These are the objective and indirect but effective supports to the countries in the region in their actions to deal with non-traditional security threats for national sovereignty and sustainable development.

Secondly, the traditions of cooperation have been promoted. For over the last years, many important achievements have been gained in the cooperation for solving the non-traditional security problems in East Asia. China and Vietnam have implemented many joint sea patrols, carried

out rescue activities and saved many fishermen in accidents at sea. China and Australia carried out disaster rescue maneuvers in Sichuan Province in central China. Despite the maneuvers were small in scale, they were of great significance, politically and practically. That Thailand hosted the Special Meeting on Irregular Migration in the Indian Ocean on May 29th 2015 in Bangkok, with the attendance of 17 countries and international organization, aiming at seeking for solutions for migrant and human trafficking problems in Southeast Asia; the cooperation among 26 countries in search of the missing Malaysian plane MH370 in 2014; the cooperation between Vietnam and Malaysia to arrest 8 suspected hijackers of Malaysian oil tanker in June 2015 are the typical examples of the fine traditions of cooperation between and among East Asian countries. These traditions will be surely highly promoted in the years to come.

Thirdly, it is the foundation of the ASEAN Community in 2015. The ASEAN Community was founded on 31st of December 2015. When established, the leading role of ASEAN includes maintaining and promoting peaceful environment and security of the region, especially the construction, sharing and promoting the standards of conduct, promoting effectiveness of existing collaborative tools, such as the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (SEANFWZ), the Bali Declaration of the East Asian Summit on principles of mutually beneficial relations,

⁵ In June 15th, 2015, the US Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter continued to ask China to stop illegal buildups in the islands and militarization in East Sea. [http:// www.tienphong.vn/the-gioi/my-lai-yeu-cau-trung-quoc-ngung-xay-dao-o-bien-dong-871597.tpo](http://www.tienphong.vn/the-gioi/my-lai-yeu-cau-trung-quoc-ngung-xay-dao-o-bien-dong-871597.tpo)

the ASEAN's 6-point principles on the East Sea, the Declaration of Conduct (DOC), etc. Following these standards of conduct, ASEAN has created a platform for participating countries to play in accordance with ASEAN's playing rules, through the mechanisms advocated by ASEAN, such as ASEAN+1, ASEAN+3, EAS, ARF, ADMM+ and in accordance with the agendas set by ASEAN.

The ASEAN community will play an active role in response to non-traditional security issues and threats, such as maritime security, climate change, natural disasters, diseases, and water resource management, etc. with many effective collaborative mechanisms to have been created, from the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) as the first multi-lateral security mechanism in Asia – Pacific to ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting (ADMM), ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM+) as the defense cooperation mechanism at the highest level between ASEAN and the dialogue partners. ASEAN has implemented a series of initiatives and actions in this field, such as the ASEAN Climate Change Initiative and Action Plan on Climate Change and the Action Plan of Joint Responses to Climate Change up to 2015, the ASEAN Strategic Plan of Action on Water Resources Management, etc..

The above-said factors will make especially important contributions to promoting strongly and effectively the cooperation in dealing with the non-traditional security threats in the East Asian region.

Conclusion

Non-traditional security is an important component of common security in the East Asia region, which is quite broad with many issues. At present, there are still differences and/or inconsistencies in definition of the concept of non-traditional security in the region and in the world as well. Non-traditional security is also of global and inter-regional nature. In East Asia, the problems of non-traditional security can only be effectively solved by joint efforts from all related countries or stakeholders in the region.

In the recent years in the East Asian region, there have existed many bilateral and multilateral mechanisms of non-traditional security cooperation, laying as the foundation for important achievements to have been gained. In the future, especially with the foundation of the East Asian Community in late 2015, the cooperation in non-traditional security will be prospective. However, in context of constant geo-political changes and structural reforms of the East Asian security, the non-traditional security issues have become more and more complicated, with unpredictable consequences and difficulties in cooperation for settlement.

For higher effectiveness of this kind of cooperation, in the years to come, the East Asian countries themselves need to: 1) Achieve a high consensus on the concept of non-traditional security within the region. This will help regional countries identify specific non-traditional security issues, work out and carry out appropriate policies

and joint actions in their cooperation; 2) Propose and develop a mechanism for confidence building among the states, enhancing their “awareness of the region” as well as establishment of social foundations beneficial to regional cooperation in non-traditional security; 3) Maintain the existing dialogues, agreements and mechanisms and at the same time adopt temporary and small-scale measures to encourage the countries that are still concerned about the issue of sovereignty to more actively participate in the regional cooperation; 4) Build and develop regional comprehensive cooperation mechanisms, including economic cooperation combined with security cooperation as the fundamental and effective basis to deal with non-traditional security threats.

The international laws and standards, the political will and determination of the senior officials of the states and/or stakeholders, the awareness and efforts of the majority of people in the countries of the region are the decisive pre-conditions for the success of the cooperation relations in response to non-traditional security problems and threats in East Asia, contributing to preserving the security of the region and of the world.

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