Territorial disputes and the maritime strategies of great powers in East Asia

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Thursday 28 October 2010
1.30pm
Lecture Theatre 2
Hedley Bull Centre
(Building #130), ANU

Territorial and maritime jurisdiction disputes continue to challenge peace and stability in both the South China Sea and the East China Sea. The most prominent and worrisome of these disputes involve China because of its rising influence, naval power aspirations, and assertiveness on sovereignty issues. While confidence-building activities, boundary negotiations and dialogue on cooperative arrangements have taken place both bilaterally and multilaterally among China and various rival claimants, there has been little real progress toward dispute settlement. In the meantime, there seems to be growing competition between the great powers (China and Japan, China and the United States) if not for control of the seas, then for influence over key factors that could decide this in the future. From the perspective of managing the territorial and maritime jurisdiction issues, this may add yet another overlay and even more potential triggers of conflict to already complex situations.

Dr. Aileen San Pablo-Baviera is Professor of Asian Studies at the Asian Centre, University of the Philippines, where she has been teaching since 1998. Her immediate past positions were as Dean of the Asian Center, head of the Center for International Relations and Strategic Studies of the Philippine Foreign Service Institute, and executive director of the non-profit Philippines-China Development Resource Center. Currently, she is Visiting Fellow of the ARC Centre for Policing and Security on joint appointment by the Australian National University in Canberra, and Griffith University in Queensland, Australia. She is also editor-in-chief of Asian Politics and Policy, published by Wiley-Blackwell.

Her research interests include contemporary China studies, international relations, Philippine foreign policy, Asia-Pacific security, and Asian civil society. She has edited and co-edited 11 books and monographs, and authored 5 books and monographs, 21 book chapters and 7 journal articles. Overseas, she has lectured or held visiting fellowships at various institutions in Japan, China, Taiwan, Malaysia and India. She also does volunteer work as a Trustee of a human rights organization in the Philippines called Economic, Social, Cultural Rights–Asia.