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THE SECURITIZATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

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The Securitization of Environmental Issues in Southeast Asia

Apriwan, S.Sos, MA

Abstract

The paper examines how the environmental issues have been securitizing in Southeast Asia. It takes three main issues which quite urgent for resolving in the region, that are atmosphere pollution and deforestation, water resources, and energy resources. The issues could be potential conflict that will impact to the regional instability. For examining securitization of the issues, it uses constructivism approach and securitization concept. This approach and the concept explain about the response and the action of the states, individual or collective related to that issues. The states response has two possibilities, conflict or cooperation. The environmental issues has been emerging conflict among the states which got the impact. For the atmospher pollution and deforestation, Malaysia and Singapore got a tension with Indonesia as the source of problems. On the case of water crisis occured between Malaysia and Singapore in using water resource from Johor, the same cases also happened between the riparian states with China in using the Mekong River Basin. The complicated conflicts about using energy resources have been happening in South China Sea, Thailand's Gulf and the Ambalat. On the other hand, the state's response also could be cooperatif among them, which are billateral, multilateral and regional. Thus, securitization of the environmental issues can be seen on how the states give a perception to the issues within an interaction of social structure. More over, the states are seen as social actors which interacted within the context of sharing of knowledge, understanding of material resources and the practice of interaction among the states its self.

Key Words: *Southeast Asia, Security, Constructivism, Environment, and Region*

1. Introduction

In Southeast Asia, environmental problems have been threatening for the stability of regional security, whereas the threatening of environmental security will impact on declining the quality of life, increasing competition and tension among the states in the region.¹ The threat of environmental security is characterized by the scarcity of natural resources, bio and non-bio diversity, such as fish, timber, gas and oil, etc. Moreover, it also includes the declining capacity of environmental services, such as air and clean water.

Environmental problems in the region are not only about the scarcity itself but also because the states in this region share in using the resources, such as the rivers, the coastal line, basin, clean waters resources, and the forest. Even they also compete for getting the foreign investment.² Elliot has been mapping the environmental problems in Southeast Asia into five agenda, that are environmental degradation which affects terrestrial environment; atmospheric pollution and degradation; water resources; the maritime environment; and energy resources³.

Terrestrial environment covers the issues such as deforestation, desertification, land degradation and the crisis of land farming which are becoming the important problems in that region. Around 1.2 percent Southeast Asia loosed its forest land. It also contributes about 25 percent from the total world trading of the tropical forest, Indonesia and Malaysia are the main contributor, followed by riparian

¹ Sean M. Lynn-Jones & Steven Miller, 1995, "Global Dangers: Changing Dimensions of International Security", MIT Press. p 87

² Evelyn Goh, The Hydro-Politics of the Mekong River Basin: Regional Cooperation and Environmental Security, in Andrew T.H and J.D Kenneth Boutin, (eds.), 2001, Non-Traditional Security Issues in Southeast Asia, Singapore: Select Books, P.471, as quoted by Kog Yue-Choong, 2006, Environmental Management and Conflict in Southeast Asia – Land Reclamation and its Political Impact, *Working Paper, IDSS* Nanyang Technology University, Singapore, p. 1.

³ Lorraine Elliot, Regional Environmental Security: Pursuing a Non-Traditional Approach, in Andrew T.H. Tan and J.D. Kenneth Boutin, 2001 Op Cit. p. 439

states, such as Vietnam, Cambodia, Lao which loosed their forest land along the Mekong River.⁴

In term of atmosphere pollution, Southeast Asia region is characterized with hazes pollution that impact most of states in that area. Hazes pollution is kind of threatening for human and the others species sustainability. It also rises the tension among the states, Malaysia and Singapore have a tension with the Indonesia regarding to the problem. Almost every year, it is faced by the states.⁵

Regards to the water resources, this region also lead to the water crisis condition. Based on the prediction, the water demand in Thailand has increased from 16.7 % become 22.5 % within one last decade.⁶ The same thing was also occurred in Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia. The increasing of water demand has been accompanied by the growth of population and industrialization in the region. While, the water supply also decreases associated with the drought season, limited of land forest, and climate changes.⁷

The conditions above could be a potential conflict among the states in the region, and also could contribute for violence conflict among the actors which involved to the problems. In addition, environmental changes could create conflict in term of war, terrorism, diplomacy and trading dispute.⁸

The thesis wants to describe how the environmental issues got securitization and became a potential conflict that will influence the regional stability in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, it wants to explain how the response and reaction of the states

⁴ Ibid. 440

⁵ *RI-Malaysia Kerjasama Masalah Polusi Asap*, <http://menkokesra.go.id/content/view/1562/39/> and http://www.indonesia.go.id/id/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2444&Itemid=716 also see <http://www.gatra.com/2002-08-26/artikel.php?id=20032> accessed on June 26, 2009

⁶ Andrew T.H Tan and J.D. Kenneth Boutin, 2001 *Op Cit.*, hal. 443

⁷ See Voravit Cheevaporn and Piamsak Menasveta, 2003, *Water pollution and habitat degradation in the Gulf of Thailand*, *Marine Pollution Bulletin* 47, accessed from www.aseanenvironment.info/Abstract/43003535.pdf

⁸ Ibid, hal. 44

individually and collectively. In describing and explaining that matter, the author will use the constructivism approach and securitization concept.

2. Constructivism and Securitization of Environmental Issues

Constructivism approaches in international relations much more overview the state as social actor which is not always as rational actor. As social actor, the states work in the context of their social structure based on the rules, norms, identities and institutions.⁹

Alexander Wendt divided social structure into three elements, namely the sharing of knowledge, material resources, and practices. Social structures are defined as shared understandings, expectations, and knowledge. These constitute the actors in a situation and the nature of their relationships, whether cooperative or conflictual. Secondly, social structures included material resources such as gold and oil, constructivist argued that material resources only acquire meaning for human action through the structure of shared knowledge in which they are embedded. Thirdly, the existing of social structure is not in actor's head, nor in material capabilities, but in practices. Social structure exists only in process¹⁰.

The securitization of environmental issues in Southeast Asia could be seen through the states actor behavior and interaction among them within a social structure in the region. How do they give perception as a state and regional entities regarding to the environmental issues through sharing of knowledge, material resources and practices.

⁹ Mely Caballero-Anthony, 2005, *Regional Security in Southeast Asia: Beyond The Asian Way*, ISEAS, Singapore, p. 32

¹⁰ See Alexander Wendt, 1995, *Constructing International Politics*, *International Security* 20, no.1, p. 73

In international political terms, security refers to the capacity of the states or the societies for keeping their freedom identity and integrity function.¹¹ A state could be said secure when it can defend saving condition and the basic norms if it tries to avoid the war, if it involves the war it has to keep their winning.¹²

Something can be designed as an international security issue (securitization) when the issue has the important reason compared the other issues and it needs a priority to resolve. Furthermore, securitization of one issue should have three main components, firstly, the issue has threaten the existential of one state, needs emergency action, and affects on the units relations through the absence of the rules among of them.¹³

According to Buzan, at least there are three main units to analyze how an issue securitized and has existential threat;¹⁴

- a. *Referent Object*: things that are seen to be existentially threatened and that have a legitimate claim to survival.
- b. *Securitizing actors* : actors who securitize issues by declaring something—a referent object—existentially threatened.
- c. *Functional actors*: actors who affect dynamics of a sector. Without being the referent object or the actor calling for security on behalf of the referent object, this is an actor who significantly influences decisions in the field of security.

The developments of environmental issues in international level have two different agendas, as scientific agenda and as political agenda. Scientific agenda tends to develop in debating of sciences and the activities of nongovernmental

¹¹ Barry Buzan, 1991, “*People, State and Fear*”, Lynne Rienner Publisher. p. 18-19

¹² Walter Lippmann in Baylis & Steve Smith, 1999, “*The Globalization of World Politics*”, Oxford University Press. p. 195

¹³ Ibid, p. 26

¹⁴ Buzan, Barry, Ole Waver, and Jaap de Wilde, 1998, *Security: a New Framework of Analysis*”, Lynne Rienner Publisher.. p.35-36

organizations. While, the political agenda essentially moves on the level of government, and inter-governments. It regards to the policy and decision making policy which related to the environmental issues. The political agenda reflects all the level in tackling environmental issues.¹⁵

Environmental security reflects the ability of a state or society to survive in the conditions of scarcity of environmental asset, the condition on the risks of environmental changes, and the conditions on conflict or tension regarding to environmental issues.¹⁶ Ted Homer-Dixxon stated that environmental conflict is a source for acute social conflict and also can be expanded or developed into conflicts among the states. The scarcity of resources and environmental degradation are the causal of its conflict.¹⁷

The exposure above shows that the primary referent objects of environmental security is the risk of the losing the achievement level of civilization, the threat of the return barbarism condition, although it seems could be prevented is such away.

3. Environmental Security Threat in Southeast Asia

a. Atmosphere Pollution and Deforestation

Basically, atmosphere pollution is classical issue in this region. One primary cause is forest firing as the impact of deforestation and land desertification at some areas in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. The great atmosphere pollution covered the region was occurred in 1997-1998. It was caused by El Nino that impact to the

¹⁵ Bary Buzan dkk, *Op Cit.*, p. 72

¹⁶ Elizabeth L. Chaleki, Environmental Security: A Case Study of Climate Change, accessed from www.pacinst.org accessed on October 20, 2010

¹⁷ Thomas F. Homer-Dixon, 1994, Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence from Cases, *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 1, Peace and Conflict Studies Program, University of Toronto, p. 5-40

Also see Peter Haye, 2001, Environmental Security in a World of Perpetual War, a paper which presented at Environmental Grantmakers Association Brainerd Minnesota October 8, 2001, accessed from <http://oldsite.nautilus.org/archives/papers/security/EnvironmentalSecurity-War.pdf>

forest firing in Indonesia. The hazes of forest fire disseminated to Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Amount of loss reaches US \$9 billion in tourism, transportations, and agricultural sector.¹⁸ Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore got the significant loss. Indonesia losses about US \$1.7, 2.7 and \$0.4 million belonged to Singapore and Malaysia. It also included global costs from green gas house emission about 400 million ton of carbon.¹⁹

Sufficient haze pollution was also happened in 2002, 2005 2006 and the most recently in 2010. So far, the burning of land farming is assumed contributing about 60% - 90% from total of emission. It was also as the main source of carbon emission in Southeast Asia.²⁰ Based on the data above, air pollution and deforestation could be as referent object in the context of environmental issues for the states were affected, such as Singapore and Malaysia.

b. Water Crisis

Water can lead to the conflict in some respects. The water can lead to conflict between states; it can be occurred when one country uses the threat of cutting water supplies to other states (Malaysia-Singapore water crisis case). Conflict can also occur when a small state face the larger one which has water supplies (Bangladesh face India). Conflict also happen when some states reject for cooperating and participating

¹⁸ Singapura, Malaysia Keluhkan Kabut Asap Indonesia
Accessed from <http://www.antaraneews.com/berita/1287734342/singapura-malaysia-keluhkan-kabut-asap-indonesia>, on October 26, 2010

¹⁹Under the European Emissions Trading Scheme, emissions offset credits from projects in developing countries under the Kyoto Protocol are being traded at prices in the order of 40 \$/tC (late 2006), and longer-term technological options for greenhouse gas reductions in energy systems (such as carbon capture and storage are likely to be even more expensive) Luca Tacconi, et al., *Op Cit*, p.12

²⁰ Luca Tacconi, Frank Jotzo and R. Quentin Grafton, 2006, Local causes, regional co-operation and global financing for environmental problems:the case of Southeast Asian Haze pollution, *Economics and Environment Network Working Paper*, 20 December, hal. 9

within regional/organization mechanism which designed for arranging water security for all parties²¹.

In Southeast Asia, water crisis can be domestic and regional problems. Thailand for example, receives almost 40% of its water sources from the other states. Cambodia is also dependent on water supply from the outside reaching 82% of their total needs. Meanwhile in Vietnam about 90% of the population relies on water sources that are inadequate for human health.²²

Table. 2.3 Source and dependency of water ratio

Country	Total Internal Renewable Water Resources (km3)	Total External Renewable Water Resources (km3)	Dependency Ratio (%)
Cambodia	121	356	75
Indonesia	2.838	0	0
Laos	190	143	43
Malaysia	580	0	0
Myanmar	881	165	16
Filipina	479	0	0
Thailand	210	200	49
Vietnam	366	525	59
Singapore	1	139	94.5

Source: Asia's Next Challenge: Securing the Regions Water Future, A report by the Leadership Group on Water Security in Asia, April 2009, pp. 44²³

The problems of across border water resources have been arisen on Indo China states regarding to use Mekong river basin²⁴. It relates to the changing in the Mekong River due to the construction of hydropower plant. It threatens the agriculture, food security and livelihoods of poor farmer around the region. China was judged as the

²¹ Paul J. Smith and Lt. Col. Charles H. Gross, 1999, Water and Conflict in Asia, *a seminar report entitled "Water and Conflict in Asia?" the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS) September 17*, accessed from http://www.apcss.org/Publications/Report_Water&Conflict_99.html November 10, 2010

²² *Advocacy and Water: a practical guide* Tearfund, Middlessex, May 2001 p.13

²³ Also see Steve Morris, **Singapore's Quest for Water Self-Reliance** accessed from <http://www1.american.edu/ted/ice/singapore.htm> on November 4, 2010, and A.Y Hoekstra and P.Q Hung, 2002, Virtual Water; a Quantification of Virtual Water Flows between Nations in Relation to International Crop Trade, *Value of Water Research Report Series No.11*, September, p.58

²⁴ Thailand and Laos has the highest percentage owner of Mekong river Basin, about 23% and 25%, *Asia's Next Challenge: Securing the Regions Water Future, Op Cit. 16*

cause of the declination water debit in Mekong River. Construction of the dam up stream has lead to increase a political tension among riparian states and affect the regional stability.²⁵ The tension in using trans-boundary water resources also arise among Malaysia and Singapore. The water could be a national security issue for Singapore. It is not just for the daily life of Singaporean society, but also as a buffer sustainability of industry and other economic sectors²⁶. It has sufficient water resources (see table 2.1), as the result, Singapore is very dependent from Malaysia water supply. It buys the water form Johor Malaysia that was located next to Singapore.

c. Energy Crisis

In Southeast Asia, the need for energy supplies is increasing in line with the rate of population, economy and industrialization growth. The economy of Southeast Asia grows significantly post Asian Crisis in 1997, economic growth also accompanied by increasing urban population very year. Estimated about 1/3 population will increase in the next ten years.²⁷

Moreover, for Southeast Asian states, the scarcity of energy sources in line with the increasing of world oil pricing, between 2004 and 2006 for example, gasoline and diesel prices raised up throughout region very sharply, within two years period, the increasing of gasoline prices per liter more than 100% was occurred in Indonesia, 77% in Thailand, 72% in Vietnam, 70% in Malaysia and 68% in the Philippines.²⁸

²⁵ Ibid

Also see Marwaan Macan-Markar, Mekong River's development may flow into conflict, Asia Time March 26, 2002, **accessed from** i <http://www.atimes.com/se-asia/DC26Ae03.html> on November 02, 2010

²⁶ Segal, D., 2004, Singapore's Water Trade with Malaysia and Alternatives. Harvard University, p. 7

²⁷ State of the Environment in Asia and the Pacific 2005, p. 29

²⁸ Security Through Cooperation, 2008, *CSCAP Regional Security Outlook 2008*, Booksmith, Singapore, p. 25

The efforts to gain access to energy sources could lead to completion and rivalry among the states. The security analysts believe that competition is a normative condition. Thus efforts to improve energy security be an zero sum game – that a country's efforts in fulfilling the needs of a barrel of oil is a reducing for the other parties.²⁹. Thus, what happened in Southeast Asia in the context of utilization of energy sources is clear evidence that these conditions occurred and became part of a dynamic of environmental security in Southeast Asia.

Seizing the utilization of the Mekong river basin is not just glued to the water problem itself. It was also used as a supply of energy sources for the riparian states. They want to build hydro power as an alternative energy by building the dams in the territory. The consequences of this power plant impact on water conditions and environment in the Mekong river basin.

The same thing also happened between Malaysia and Indonesia regarding to Sipadan-Ligitan and Ambalat disputes. It seems as conflict upon the energy resources than as territorial conflict. The boundaries area is rich enough of energy resources, such as oil and gas. Take a look at the Ambalat dispute, the rich of energy potential which has the area have become long dispute among Indonesia and Malaysia. Currently, there is not the best solution for resolving the dispute.

The territorial problems regard to use energy resource also happen in South China Sea. It involves most of Southeast Asian states, Brunei Darussalam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, China and Taiwan. Likewise, the tension among Cambodia and Thailand also happen regarding to Thailand Gulf resource.³⁰

²⁹ Dr Clive Schofield and Dr Ian Storey, 2005, *Loc. Cit*

³⁰ *Christopher C. Joyner*, The Spratly Islands Dispute in the South China Sea: Problems, Policies, and Prospects for Diplomatic Accommodation, p.56 accessed from www.southchinasea.org/.../Joyner,%20Spratly%20Islands%20Dispute.pdf on November 11, 2010 For more detail about South China Sea look at <http://www.southchinasea.org/pub.html>

4. The Actors of Environmental Security

The securitization of environmental issues could be seen from the response of the actors which involved within the issues. For constructivist, the response could be understood in the context of social structure. Here, social structure has three components, sharing of knowledge, material resources and social practices.

In term of sharing of knowledge, the actors which part of securitization of the environmental issues will construct their knowledge and understanding about the pretension of them. Additionally, their interaction will be constituted within a situation, what's that conflictual or cooperative. Besides, material resources become the starting point for creating an environmental issue as security agenda, because of sharing of knowledge showed environmental issues relating to material resources. It will influence the actor's behavior each others. Lastly, securitization of the issues could be understood on interaction practices among the actors in the region, not to mention their capacity and capability, but on how the actors make interaction regarding to environmental issues in the region.

There are different views of various actors in the securitization of environmental issues. Some of them would reject securitizing move that's being proposed by one actor, and they tend to ignore the effort to prioritize an environmental threat. While, the other actors try to be active for sounding and supporting that environmental security issues have an impact on social sedimentation, and this will be vulnerable if there are a rejection about the issue. Much more detail, the actors of environmental security issues can be divided into three components, e.g.³¹

- a. Lead actors; are the actors which has a strong commitment within sounding specific of environmental issues in international level. The actors in this category could be nation states, environmental epistemic community and NGOs

³¹ Ibid hal.77

- b. *Veto actors*; beside the nation states, it could be NGOs, Industrial and agriculture sector whereas in their lobby attempts to debilitate of the issues.
- c. And *Veto Coalitions*; are the group of state actors which constructed the agreement over the important issues and has the power for counter a formulating a regime if it's needed.³²

Table 3.1 The State Actors in Environmental Security Issues in Southeast Asia

No	Environmental Security Issues (referent objects)	Lead Actors	Veto Actors	Veto Coalitions
1	Atmosphere Pollution and deforestation	Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand	Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand	ASEAN
2	Water <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Johor water resource b. Water resources in Mekong 	Singapore <i>Riparian States</i>	Malaysia China and Thailand	- Mekong River Commission
3	Energy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Energy resources Mekong River Basin b. Ambalat block c. South China Sea d. Thailand Gulf 	<i>Riparian States</i> Indonesia, Malaysia Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines, Brunei Darussalam Kamboja	China and Thailand - China Thailand	Mekong River Commission - ASEAN, ARF UNCLOS, and (US?) -

Sources: Compiled from some sources.

5. Response Over Environmental Issues in Southeast Asia

a. Response over Hazes Pollution and Deforestation

In the case of trans-boundary hazes pollution and deforestation in Southeast Asia, Malaysia and Singapore are in the position as lead actors. The two countries got the

³² David Potter, 1996, NGOs and environmental policies: Asia and Africa, London, Frank Cass & Co. Ltd p. 92

impact of haze pollution that produced by Indonesia. They have complained about the haze from Indonesia since 1997.³³ The haze problem has been triggering for the other problem, such as health respiration and loosing in billion US \$ regarding to tourism and transportation sectors³⁴.

Indonesia could be in position as veto actor, because of haze pollution and deforestation is prevalent in that country. Although for some cases, Malaysia and Thailand also have become the source of this problem, but not as much as Indonesia. In addition, negotiation over the resolution of this matter also depends on Indonesia. It has not ratified the agreement on haze pollution in the ASEAN level.³⁵

Response over the crisis in Mekong River Basin

In the Mekong River Basin, the water and energy crisis go hand in hand, these problems arose and threaten the area along the river. Its range from China as the country's upstream to the riparian states (indo-china) as the downstream part. In this context, China has control over the flow of the Mekong River before it reaches the downstream. This action caused the government in the riparian states which led by Thailand protest against China, appealed for international helping in the effort to address such problems³⁶.

³³ Smoky Singapore urges Indonesia to act on haze, Reuters October 22, 2010, from <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/SGE69K0FK.htm> ; Indonesia Faces Heat for Slow Action Over Haze, Jakarta Globe, October 22, 2010 from <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/home/indonesian-haze-increases-singapore-health-problems/402743> November 22, 2010

³⁴ Lagi, Indonesia "Ekspor" Kabut Asap ke Malaysia, Harian Kompas, Rabu, Agustus 5, 2009, from <http://regional.kompas.com/read/2009/08/05/1532065/Lagi..Indonesia..quot.Ekspor.quot..Kabut.Asap.ke.Malaysia> October 10, 2010

also see <http://www.antaraneews.com/berita/1287734342/singapura-malaysia-keluhkan-kabut-asap-indonesia> accessed on October 10, 2010

³⁵ Govt renews efforts to ratify ASEAN haze agreement, *The Jakarta Post*, Jakarta, Friday, July 30, 2010

³⁶ John Guerrerio, The stage for conflict over water is under construction in Southeast Asia, accessed from <http://www.examiner.com/energy-in-national/the-stage-for-conflict-over-water-is-under-construction-se-asia>, on November 15, 2010

Hence, the riparian states on the banks of the river are positioned as the lead actors, because China has built a hydropower to stem the flow of river in the upper Province of Yunnan in Southern part of China. As the result, water in the flow downstream is degraded. Even it affects to the economics of the states.

China and Thailand tend to stand as veto actors, as well as the factor upstream region, the status of China as the great power also has influence enough in the region both political security and economics. On the other hand, Thailand became a pioneer for the Indochina states in fighting their interest in using the Mekong River Basin.

Thailand has been pursuing to create the Mekong River Commission (MRC) in 1995, a commission to address issues surrounding the using of the Mekong River Basin. Both linked in the utilization of water and energy resources along the river. Furthermore, Thailand is quite vocal about China policy, through MRC, Thailand asked the other states to give a diplomatic pressure on China, so it will be more open and willing to cooperate³⁷.

b. Response over the Energy Crisis in South China Sea

Problems in the South China Sea is quite complicated and complex. The actors which involved here are not only the states in Southeast Asia and East Asia, but the United State also feels that they have interest in the area. In addition, the growing issues in the region are not only territorial disputes but also about the energy and marine sources, and sea transportation routes.

Southeast Asian states like Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines and Brunei Darussalam can be categorized as the lead actors, as well as the capacity and capability of these countries are still far below China. China as a middle power in

³⁷ **When the Mekong runs dry, Asia Times, March 13, 2010 accessed from http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/LC13Ae01.html** on November 22, 2010
Also see Philip Hirsch, 2010 The Changing Political Dynamics of Dam Building on the Mekong, *Water Alternatives - Volume 3, Issue 2*, hal. 312-323

world political order can be positioned as the veto actor. Capacity and capability China's diplomacy became one of the consideration, so that this states can be positioned at that level.

So far, the dispute in the South China Sea has not yet found the resolution among the warring parties, The United Nations Convention on The Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) also has not been able to resolve the dispute of ownership in the area. Although, the convention in 1982 has created a number of guidelines regarding to the status of the island, the continental shelf, exclusive economic zone (EEZ), enclosed seas, and territorial boundaries, but each party in this dispute is still persist on their claim³⁸.

China which claimed sovereignty over most of the South China Sea has contribution enough within the dispute in the region. Attached with the ambition and capability of China in exploring the area, much more showing how its claim stronger over the area. Meanwhile, the other states feel the same rights as well, they don't accept China's claim³⁹. Even though, China, Philippines and Vietnam have experienced armed conflict regarding to claim over the region. The Philippines is the states that quite pro-actively criticized China's claim, especially regarding the ownership of the Spratly islands. Even there was rounds of negotiation, the Philippines consider China as a betrayed which tend to leave the agreement⁴⁰.

The disputes in these regions also invited the U.S. intervention during the last few years. The U.S under the pretext of global marine transportation interests was concerned over the sea transportation routes in the South China Sea, as conveyed by Hillary Clinton, U.S. foreign minister, at

³⁸ http://www.eia.doe.gov/cabs/South_China_Sea/Full.html

³⁹ *Lieutenant Michael Studeman, Loc. Cit.*

⁴⁰ Ralph A. Coss, 1998, Mischief Reef: A Double Betrayal, *PacNet*, December 22,2010 from <http://csis.org/pacfor/pac1698.html>

the ASEAN forum in Vietnam in July 2010, That the United States rejected China's territorial claims over the South China Sea, which tends to harm others globally. In this case, dispute in the South China Sea entered a new phase, the U.S. intervention openly showed external actors seeking to play in this area. U.S. interests in the region, allegedly to support U.S. corporate interests in exploring the resources, Exxon Mobil is working with Vietnam in offshore oil exploration in the region.⁴¹.

c. Response over Energy Crisis in Thailand Gulf

As a newly developing country, for Cambodia gains from offshore oil exploration will provide a significant economic impact. In addition, natural gas supply will also help reducing their dependence on oil as their energy generation. Soaring world oil price also makes high inflation in Cambodia which reached 18.7% in last January. While the Thailand Gulf or Overlapping Claims Area (OCA) offers an opportunities. Because, this region is believed having rich of energy resources which relatively abundant⁴².

6. Environmental Security Cooperation in Southeast Asia

At the ASEAN level, member states have taken a serious step for improving environmental cooperation both internal and external since early 1977. It can be seen from the series of ASEAN meeting of the Sub-regional Environmental Programmes (ASEP I, II and III) which is then followed by the Strategic Plan of Action on the

⁴¹ Ibid. also see Containing China's Ambitions in The South China Sea, *Current Intelligent*, from <http://www.currentintelligence.net/features/2010/8/5/containing-chinas-ambitions-in-the-south-china-sea.html> , November 22, 2010

⁴² Andrew Symon, Temple spat may delay oil riches, *Asia Times*, July 30, 2008, from <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast Asia/JG30Ae01.html> , November 22, 2010

Environment (SPAEC). ASEAN vision 2020 which was formulated in 1997. The Vientiane Action Programme 2004-2010 (VAP) within the development strategy and a broader range of the programs, and the most recently the establishment of ten priority areas which contained in the Blueprint of ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) 2009-2015⁴³.

a. Cooperation in Mitigating Atmosphere Pollution and Deforestation

Cooperation in the response to haze pollution has been made since the devastating forest fire in 1997 and 1998, both in bilateral and regional level. Bilaterally, such as, Malaysia and Singapore have provided directly assistance for Indonesia in tackling and preventing forest fire.

In 2006 forest fire, Singapore has provided nearly 100 billion for Jambi Province in manufacturing of master plan to land and forest fire and haze prevention in the area. While, Malaysia from 2005 has declared themselves to provide immediate assistance⁴⁴.

Related to the problem of haze pollution and deforestation, ASEAN has taken several measures to establish cooperation. Such as, the Regional Haze Action Plan (RHAP), the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution, the ASEAN Peatland Management Initiative, the Zero-Burning and controlled burning Guidelines. The latest is to enable a panel of experts at the level

⁴³ 10 priorities area above ; (1)Addressing global environmental issues; (2) Managing and preventing transboundary environmental pollution (Transboundary haze pollution and Transboundary movement of hazardous wastes); (3) Promoting sustainable development through environmental education and public participation; (4)Promoting environmentally sound technology (EST); (5) Promoting quality living standards in ASEAN cities/ urban areas; (6) Harmonising environmental policies and databases; (7) Promoting the sustainable use of coastal and marine environment; (8)Promoting sustainable management of natural resources and biodiversity; (9) Promoting the sustainability of freshwater resources; (10) Responding to climate change and addressing its impacts, from <http://environment.asean.org/index.php?page=overview> , November 25, 2010

⁴⁴ Atasi Asap, Malaysia Tawarkan Bantuan Hujan Buatan, *Detik News*, October 11, 2005, <http://www.detiknews.com/index.php/detik.read/tahun/2005/bulan/08/tgl/11/time/191751/idnews/420647/idkanal/10>

of ASEAN (the Panel of ASEAN Experts in Fire and Haze Assessment and Coordination).⁴⁵

Despite a series of cooperation at the regional level is quite a lot, but some parties are still pessimistic and asking the ability of these programs in handling issues such as forest fires and transboundary haze pollution. Because so far, the problem of forest fires and transboundary haze pollution is still continue occurred in this region, so the protest also continues emerging, both from state actors as well as from civil society groups from countries affected by such pollution.

b. The Cooperation on Water Resources Management.

Cooperation on water resource management has been made bilaterally and multilaterally. In 1995 the Mekong River Commission (MRC) was established that contained the riparian states (Indo-China). MRC is the intergovernmental cooperation which has responsibility to manage the sustainability of Mekong River Basin. The member consists of Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam. This institution try to resolve all the issues related to utilize Mekong River Basin, such as sustainability fishing industry, identifying agriculture aspect, managing navigation, floods management and conservation of the ecosystem along the river, Also mitigating the impact of climate changes. MRC facilitate some dialogues among the states, private sectors, and civil society regarding to the utilizing of the Mekong River⁴⁶.

Meanwhile, at level ASEAN cooperation, water issue is also a part of its cooperation. But it has not a specific cooperation which has been implemented. Water

⁴⁵ ASEAN claims to address haze, The Jakarta Post, September 16, 2006.

⁴⁶ ASEAN, MRC to Boost Cooperation on Mekong Issues, from http://www.mrcmekong.org/mrc_news/press10/ASEAN-MRC-to-Boost-Cooperation4-Apr-10.htm November 25, 2010

issue is only part of the grand agenda on ministerial meeting of ASEAN. On the meeting of Consultative Working Group on ASEAN Water Conservation in Manila 1999, it recommended to establish an ASEAN Network of Water Resource Agency (ANWRA) which promoting cooperation among the states member of ASEAN in pursuing conservation and sustainability water resources, and transferring knowledge and technology systematically⁴⁷.

c. Energy Cooperation

In South China Sea, ASEAN also involves for resolving dispute through cooperation which involved the Indo-China States and China. They have agreed a Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) which addressed dispute settlement in peaceful coexistence. They approved six projects cooperation regarding to confidence building measures for supporting DOC implementation⁴⁸.

Furthermore, ASEAN cooperation regards to energy issues much more comprehensive and various area. It included in term of increasing of resources availability, accessibility and finding the new sites. The cooperation has been started from 1986, then empowering through ratifying a Plan of Action on Energy Cooperation (PAEC) in 1995, and currently also included in ASEAN Vision 2020⁴⁹.

The cooperation also spilled over with the extra ASEAN states, such as China, South Korea, Japan and New Zealand. The cooperation covered in some areas e.g.

⁴⁷ <http://www.aseansec.org/10080.htm> , November 25, 2010, also see ASEAN Strategic Plan of Action on Water Resources Management, Jakarta, ASEAN Secretariat, October 2005, p. 5-6 and a State of Water Resources Management in ASEAN, Jakarta, ASEAN Secretariat, October 2005, p. 20-26

⁴⁸ Asean Selayang Pandang, 2007, Direktorat Jenderal Kerjasama ASEAN, Departemen Luar Negeri Republik Indonesia, p.32.

⁴⁹ Françoise Nicolas, 2009, ASEAN Energy Cooperation; An Increasingly Daunting Challenge, *Note de l'Ifri September* , p. 17

energy security, natural gases, conservation and renewable energy, and soon.⁵⁰ The energy cooperation with the external actor also related to the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol Scheme. It regards to reduce the production of green house gas (GHG), the scheme of cooperation stated within Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) project.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Asia seeks to step up regional energy cooperation, <http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/business/07/23/10/asia-seeks-step-regional-energy-cooperation> November 25, 2010 also see Southeast Asian nations reach energy agreement. <http://www.scidev.net/en/news/southeast-asian-nations-reach-energy-agreement.html>, November 25, 2010

⁵¹ Development of Biomass Energy Use in Southeast Asia, http://www.asiabiomass.jp/english/topics/090216_03.html November 25, 2010

7. Conclusion

Environmental issues have been broadening issues for all the parties in Southeast Asia region. It has been social construction which spreading of all over the region. The ideas about the threatening of environmental issue have been getting social reconstruction. Whereas the actors in the region have built and believed what is going on and will happen related to environmental threatening.

Based on the explanation above, the environmental issues (energy, water and atmosphere pollution) have been a part of political issues. Even though, it has been securitizing. At least there are three reasons that can be explained, firstly these issues have been threaten the existential of the states in the region, each of them felt getting a threat from the other states regarding to the environmental issues. Even, in some circumstances, some of them have been use the military an armaments for securing their interest.

Secondly, these conditions are needed emergency response, because it's not only related to the national sovereignty itself but also related to human security issues. So that, it needs quick response as soon as possible to resolve the dispute, and the crisis which faced by the region can be tackled as well.

Thirdly, these conditions affect the relations among the states actors in the region. Haze pollution, energy and water crisis have been a dispute which not only create a tension but also influence the regional stability. The tension emerged as the result of the absence of rules which arrange the problems. The situation led the states acted based on their interest only without concerning of the others.

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The paper examines how the environmental issues have been securitizing in Southeast Asia. It takes three main issues which quite urgent for resolving in the region, that are atmosphereer pollution and deforestation, water resources, and energy resources. The issues could be potential conflict that will impact to the regional instability. For examining securitization of the issues, it uses constructivism approach and securitization concept. This approach and the concept explain about the response and the action of the states, individual or collective related to that issues. The states response has two possibilities, conflict or cooperation. The environmental issues has been emerging conflict among the states which got the impact. For the atmospher pollution and deforestation, Malaysia and Singapore got a tension with Indonesia as the source of problems. On the case of water crisis occured between Malaysia and Singapore in using water resource from Johor, the same cases also happened between the riparian states with China in using the Mekong River Basin. The complicated conflicts about using energy resources have been happening in South China Sea, Thailand's Gulf and the Ambalat. On the other hand, the state's response also could be cooperatif among them, which are billateral, multillateral and regional. Thus, securitization of the environmental issues can be seen on how the states give a perception to the issues within an interaction of social structure. More over, the states are seen as social actors which interacted within the context of sharing of knowledge, understanding of material resources and the practice of interaction among the states its self.

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