



Konrad  
Adenauer  
Stiftung

May 11

**CHATHAM  
HOUSE**

The Royal Institute of  
International Affairs

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## Resources, Sovereignty and Geopolitics

Hong Kong, 26-27 May 2016

### **The Harbour Grand Kowloon Hotel**

20 Tak Fung Street, Whampoa Garden, Hunghom, Kowloon

Competition for natural resources is frequently pointed to as a factor in intensifying or multiplying geopolitical conflict. This is particularly so in the context of rapidly developing economies, where economic growth has led to considerable increases in demand for resources. In Asia these pressures are exacerbated by numerous disputes over sovereignty, leading to conflicting or unclear expectations from states over territories and their resources. While increasing cross-border resource development reduces the likelihood of conflict by raising the cost for both sides, public concern in producer countries around large-scale foreign involvement in resource sectors may also undermine bilateral relations.

The interaction between resources and geopolitics is complex, however, and is mediated through a range of political, economic and institutional contexts. While the need for resources may drive countries to pursue territorial claims, resource extraction may equally well be a means to further territorial ambitions through staking a claim in a disputed area. In other situations, nationalist rhetoric surrounding territorial disputes may primarily reflect wider domestic political debates.

Understanding the intersections of natural resources with sovereignty issues is important not only to avoid competition for resources leading to conflict between states but also to prevent destructive narratives about resources from creating unnecessary flashpoints in the context of existing tensions. The aim of this workshop is to bring together experts from across Asia to discuss the challenges around natural resources that cause them to become drivers of conflict. The workshop is jointly organised by Chatham House and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Regional Project on Energy Security and Climate Change in the Asia-Pacific (RECAP).

In order to facilitate a frank and open discussion among participants, this meeting will take place under the Chatham House Rule. The Rule reads as follows:

*“When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.”*

# Workshop Agenda

**Thursday, 26 May**

**14.00-14.30: Welcome and Introductions**

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**Introductory remarks**

Peter Hefele, Director KAS RECAP, Hong Kong

**Welcome**

Karsten Tietz, Acting Consul General, German Consulate General Hong Kong

**Tour de table**

*Workshop participants introduce themselves*

**Session 1: 14.30-15.30: Natural Resources – Regional integration and geopolitical shifts**

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**Chair:** *M. Mayilvaganan, Assistant Professor, School of Conflict and Strategic Studies, National Institute of Advanced Studies*

*This session will provide background for the discussion by setting out the overall picture of resource production, trade and consumption in Asia, and raising key issues about the intersection of natural resources and politics in the region.*

**The evolving geopolitical context in Asia**

Tim Summers, Senior Consulting Fellow, Chatham House

**Key patterns and trends for resource security**

Sian Bradley, Research Associate, Chatham House

**Open discussion**

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Break