

Title: The Philippines and the Future of *Unarmed* Conflict in the South China Sea

Speaker: Jay Batongbacal, Ph.D.

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POC: Ms. Claudia Cooper

SYNOPSIS:

After the Philippines initiated UNCLOS Annex VII Arbitration proceedings in 2013, China embarked on an accelerated campaign to enforce its excessive territorial and maritime claims. Diverse activities of military, para-military, and civilian character but all falling just short of the overt use of force in international law were brought to bear against the Philippines and other Southeast Asian claimants. This presentation reviews the range and diversity of activities experienced and observed thus far, and tries to anticipate the directions they will take in the near future. It will consider how these “grey zone activities” are carrying out China’s so-called “cabbage strategy”, and discuss how the Philippine-US security alliance needs to prepare for and deter “unarmed conflict” in the South China Sea.

BIO:

Jay L. Batongbacal is a Professor of the University of the Philippines College of Law, and presently a Fulbright Advanced Research Scholar affiliated with the Stockton Center for International Law. He has worked extensively on maritime affairs since 1997 and has acted as Legal Advisor to the Philippines before the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf and the International Maritime Organization. In addition to regular law courses, he also teaches specialized courses on the Law of the Sea and maritime security law to graduate students and members of the Philippine armed forces, coast guard, and maritime police. He is a long-time researcher and observer of the South China Sea disputes and has contributed numerous commentaries thereon to local and international news media, as well as to think-tanks such as the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, and ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute.