

**TITLE** Factors Determining the Economic and Political Relationships of China with Greater Mekong Sub-region Countries

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### **ABSTRACT**

China has a close economic, political, geographical, and historical relationships with the Greater Mekong Sub-region countries. Being experienced in economic growth and increasing international political role, China has increasingly complex economic and political relationships with the Greater Mekong Sub-region countries. The objective of this research is to study the factors determining economic and political relationships of China with the Greater Mekong Sub-region countries. The methods used are documentary analysis and interview.

The research shows that there are both internal and external factors that determine economic and political relationships of China with the Greater Mekong Sub-region countries.

Internal factors are economic, energy, natural resources, and internal political stability factors respectively. In the economic factor, rapid economic growth of China results in increasing economic relationship of China with many countries in the Greater Mekong Sub-region in order to encourage economic development such as the construction of roads. In the energy and natural resources factors, China has to create and maintain energy and natural resources security in order to feed its economic sector. As a result, China wants to seek the sources of energy and natural resources in many countries of the sub-region. In the political stability factor, the problems of income inequality and poverty threaten its political stability. So, China has to accelerate the development of the poor areas near the border between China and other countries in the sub-region.

External factors are international political system and the attitudes of the United States and India. In international political system, China wants to increase its role in the sub-region in order to gain comparative advantage in its strategies. In the attitudes of United States and India, these two countries fear that China may have an overly increasing economic and political roles towards other countries in the sub-region.

In conclusion, the study indicates that the above mentioned factors resulted in economic and political role of China in the Mekong sub-region increased, especially in economic dimension. For example, in 2010 China is the main investor in Laos, Cambodia, Burma, Vietnam, and Thailand. Political dimension, China is the main contributor to support military help to Laos, Cambodia, and Burma. This research will be useful to policy makers to collaborate between China and Greater Mekong sub-region countries.