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| **International conference discusses co-operation in East Sea in time of turbulence**  Hanoi – One of the bright spots in the East Sea tension this year is that many countries have clarified their legal stance in the sea through diplomatic notes exchanged at the United Nations, said Dung, acting director of the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam on Monday.  Addressing the 12th East Sea International Conference themed “Maintaining peace and cooperation through times of **turbulence**,” Dr Lan said ASEAN continued to demonstrate its centrality and cohesiveness in the region against challenges, in relevance to ASEAN 2020’s theme “Cohesive and Responsive”.  “The East Sea continues to attract the attention of the international community. Many countries have affirmed the importance of peace, rule of law, freedom of navigation and aviation in the sea,” she said.  Vietnamese Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Bui Thanh Son said the East Sea situation faced a number of unpredictable challenges that affect regional peace, stability and cooperation, including issues such as **unilateral** **interpretation** of international law which is inconsistent with standards and common interests of the international community. **Geopolitical** competition among powers and the militarisation in the East Sea have made the situation more complicated and **hindered** efforts to promote dialogue and cooperation. In addition, non-traditional maritime security issues are getting more complex, affecting the peaceful lives of millions of people.  “The parties need to uphold dialogue, strengthen cooperation for development and seek peaceful solutions to address differences and disputes in the East Sea on the basis of respecting international law with the aim to turn the East Sea into an area of connection and collaboration instead of competion and **confrontation**,” he said.  He called for peaceful **settlement** of overlapping claims in the sea in accorance with international laws, especially the 1982 UNCLOS.  The Deputy Minister also urged parties to deepen cooperation in natural resource protection and strengthen marine scientific research and sustainable development in the East Sea.  ASEAN member states must reach a **consensus** on a shared strategic approach for regional marine security and create favourable conditions for ASEAN and China to soon complete the negotiation of the COC in the East Sea, he said.  International experts at the conference shared a common view that the COVID-19 pandemic does not impact China’s behaviour in the East Sea. They predicted that 2021 would see a higher level of tension in the sea.  Dr Euan Graham said: “In the short term, COVID-19 has **preoccupied** regional governments, taking attention away from China’s **encroachments** in the East Sea. But in the longer term, I think the pandemic could have weighty consequences for how Southeast Asian countries approach national security and weigh their relations with Beijing, especially if China succeeds in quickly rolling out a viable vaccine.”  The 12th East Sea International Conference would continue on Tuesday with a special session held for the first time where young leaders from the region and extra-regional countries will share their thoughts and outlook on the East Sea. | **Turbulence:** bất ổn, dậy sóng.  **Unilateral:** relating to, or involving one side only.  **Interpretation:** an explanation.  **Geopolitical:** địa chính trị.  **Hindered:** interruption, or difficulty in, to prevent from doing.  **Confrontation:** đối đầu.  **Settlement:** giải quyết.  **Consensus:** general or widespread agreement / sự đồng thuận, sự nhất trí.  **Preoccupied:** bận tâm.  **Encroachments:** lấn chiếm, xâm lấn. |