**Thesis Defense**

***Title:  U.S. - ASEAN Organized Crime Cooperation as a Part of Washington's Re-balancing Policy toward the Asia-Pacific***.

**Tuan Luc**

Abstract:

 This research addresses the reasons why the United States of America (U.S.) has been involving in the effort of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to combat transnational organized crime. The author argues that Washington has been doing so because it: *first,* wants to prevent and suppress negative influences of Southeast Asian organized crime and protect national interests; *second*, wants to increase regional capabilities, sometimes at the Association's request, and narrow differences so as to effectively deal with transnational organized crime; and *third*, wants to justify its presence in the region and pave the way for the partial concretization of its rebalancing toward the Asia-Pacific.

The research finds that Washington's level of support to ASEAN's effort to combat transnational organized crime has steadily increased despite the ebbs and flows of the U.S.-Washington relationship. Given the fact that organized crime in the region gets worse, ASEAN lacks of capabilities to deal with problems incur, and the region is an important part of its rebalancing policy toward the Asia-Pacific, Washington's level of support to the region is expected to be on the rise. In other words, U.S. - ASEAN organized crime cooperation will be will be more dynamic in the future.

**Thesis Chair: Dr. Regina Karp**

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