

Workshop builds on growing U.S.-Vietnam ties

Continuing a steady trend of increasing U.S.-Vietnam cooperation, Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics and Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies teamed up for a joint workshop promoting international partnership building. The March 16 to 20 event marked the 20th anniversary of the restoration of formal U.S.-Vietnam ties.

Titled “Vietnam and Regional Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific” the workshop paired 30 Vietnam leaders with APCSS faculty for topical discussions and strategy development. The intent, said APCSS course manager Dr. Alexander Vuving, was to enhance the group’s understanding of evolving international dynamics as their nation emerges onto the world stage.

“Vietnam’s integration is taking place at a time when the world and the Asia-Pacific are undergoing profound changes,” explained Vuving. “Understanding the interconnected region and learning how to cooperate with global and regional actors has become a key imperative for Vietnam’s leaders.”

The Communist Party of Vietnam determined in 2011 to accelerate its nation’s global integration. This includes

“The workshop was useful because it touched the real and important challenges the Vietnamese people are trying to address.”

Nguyen Si Dung
Vice Chair, Vietnam’s Office of the National Assembly

joining the United States in a comprehensive partnership formed in 2013 and framed in efforts to improve cooperation in, among other things, trade, education, defense and security.

According to Vuving, the March course represented a “ground-breaking” engagement jointly sponsored by the CPV and U.S. government.

The event addressed five critical areas:

- Demographic, development and geopolitical trends driving regional dynamics;
- Critical issues for cooperation (to include climate change and the water-food-energy nexus);
- Architecture and mechanisms of international cooperation (particularly

within the ASEAN context);

- Roles and perspectives of key actors in the region; and
- Vietnam’s role in the Pacific.

Following daily plenary sessions, participants used working group sessions to analyze and respond to “framing questions,” enabling the group to internalize and eventually apply lessons learned.

The week culminated in construction of a potential strategic vision for their nation by addressing three core questions: Where is Vietnam’s place in the region and world today?; What are the central objectives of Vietnam’s integration within the region?; and What are the options that Vietnam can pursue in order to meet these objectives amidst the changing situation in the region?

Woven into their proposed vision were elements of good governance, environmental sustainability and development of human capital.

One of three group leaders, Nguyen Si Dung, praised the workshop process that led to a strategic “take-home” product. “The workshop was useful because it touched the real and important challenges the Vietnamese people are trying to address. And, it was participant-centered, so we were very active in working out our own answers; the organizers simply created favorable conditions for us.”

Vietnam’s regional emergence runs concurrently with the U.S. rebalance to the Asia-Pacific. David Shear, assistant secretary of defense for Asian and Pacific security affairs, discussed America’s regional emphasis with workshop participants during a March 20 video teleconference.

The VTC enabled the Vietnamese



Thirty Vietnam leaders gathered at APCSS March 16 to 20 to explore the dynamics of international cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region.



(Top) Vietnam Fellow Tran Phuoc Anh discusses formation of a strategic vision for his nation with APCSS professor U.S. Navy Capt. Benjamin Clancy and intern Cody Fultz. (Bottom left to right) Hoang Thi Ha, assistant director, political cooperation, ASEAN Secretariat, presents the lecture “ASEAN and Vietnam in a Changing Region.” Nguyen Si Dung, Vietnam’s vice chair of the Office of the National Assembly, served as one of three group leaders; here, he articulates his team’s perspective on a strategic vision for Vietnam.

group and the secretary to exchange perceptions related to the region as a whole and Vietnam specifically. It also allowed Shear, a former U.S. ambassador to Vietnam, to re-connect with former professional acquaintances.

The exchange was well received, reflecting the positive trend in the two

nations’ ties. Si Dung, Vietnam’s vice chair of the Office of the National Assembly, related, “I think the U.S.-Vietnam relationship is very good and becoming better and better every day.”

The U.S. and Vietnam assumed normalized relations in 1995, two decades after the closure of the U.S. embassy in Saigon in 1975.



U.S.-Vietnam relations timeline

1950: U.S. established diplomatic relations with Vietnam.

1975 – Relations severed and U.S. Embassy in Saigon closed.

1991 – George H.W. Bush Administration presents Hanoi with a “roadmap” plan for phased normalization of ties.

1994 - United States and Vietnam sign consular agreement.

1995 - President William Clinton announces “normalization of relations” with Vietnam. Embassies opened in both nations.

1999 - Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Ambassador Pete Peterson dedicate the Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City, which officially opens for business.

2000 - Secretary of Defense William Cohen becomes the first U.S. defense secretary to visit Vietnam since the end of the War.

2003 - Navy missile frigate USS Vandegrift docks in Ho Chi Minh City, becoming the first U.S. Navy ship to dock in Vietnam since the end of the War.

2010 - U.S. Coordinator for International Energy Affairs David Goldwyn visits Hanoi to explore ways to share U.S. expertise and help Vietnam secure its energy resources for the future, through the Energy Governance and Capacity Initiative (EGCI).

2011 - The U.S. Department of Defense and the Vietnamese Ministry of National Defense signed a landmark Memorandum of Understanding during the Defense Policy Dialogue to further advance bilateral defense cooperation.

2013 - Presidents Obama and Sang launched the U.S.-Vietnam Comprehensive Partnership, an overarching framework for advancing the bilateral relationship to bolster U.S.-Vietnam relations.

- Courtesy of U.S. State Department

Fiji: Exploring a new security strategy

To help strengthen Fiji's comprehensive security capabilities, its government, in partnership with the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, conducted a Security Sector Development Workshop in Suva Feb. 24 to 27. The workshop was conducted at the invitation of the Government of Fiji, and in coordination with the U.S. Embassy in Suva.

Fiji is in a period of political transformation and is engaged in building a new national security system based on its emerging democracy and evolving regional security environment. Part of this effort is a thorough review and reformation of its current security strategy and functions.

In his opening remarks to workshop participants, Esala Nayasi, Fiji's acting permanent secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said the effort is underway "to ensure that we have mechanisms in place for civilian oversight and democratic control over our defense, law enforcement and security organizations...for our new democracy."

The end result, Nayasi trusts, will be a national security system that is "robust, relevant and cost-efficient," but provides for the current and future safety, peace and prosperity of Fiji's people."

The February workshop brought together 40 mid-

Nation partners with APCSS to refashion security sector



Fiji is one of four Pacific Island nations with a formal military. Its forces have contributed to U.N. peacekeeping operations since 1978 and has worked alongside U.S. soldiers on the Sinai Peninsula, ensuring compliance with the 1979 Egypt-Israel peace treaty. The nation's maritime capacity includes coastal patrol boats and government shipping vessels, such as the MLC Vunilagi. Its government is seeking closer ties with Asia-Pacific nations, such as the U.S. and Australia, as it emerges from a decade of relative isolation following a 2006 military coup.

senior-grade officials from 20 Fiji government entities. These included members of the National Security Council, defense and interior agencies, and other security-related agencies in economic, environmental,



Fiji government photo

and health arenas. Parliamentarians and politicians representing both the government and opposition, and other informed security analysts also took part.

Workshop participants aided by APCSS facilitators

assessed four vital security components:

- Key current and anticipated security concerns confronting Fiji, and the composition and functions within the current national security sector;
- Evolving and expected roles and responsibilities of Fiji's security institutions;
- Next steps required towards the development of a national security strategy; and
- Further enhancement of the efficiency and effectiveness of Fiji's security sector.

The workshop included a series of topical plenary presentations by primarily Fijian and APCSS subject matter experts. These were followed by break-out group discussions facilitated by APCSS faculty members.

Group discussions enabled participants to articulate improved understanding of Fiji's security sector. They also addressed issues involved in drafting and implementing a national security strategy, and enhancing the capacity and efficiency of Fiji's security-sector practices.

In the workshop survey, one senior Fiji participant stated the event was well-focused. "The workshop was timely and oriented precisely to the points that will greatly assist the National Security Strategy."

At workshop's end, two working groups consoli-



Working to build a new national security system, 40 members of various Fiji government entities joined APCSS faculty members, such as Dr. Rouben Azizian (*left*) for a security sector development workshop in February. Participants included (*middle to right*) Jonisio Mara, Fiji's deputy secretary, Ministry of Defence; Timoci Nakaruru, of the Fiji National Fire Authority; and Joeli Pickering, a member of the U.S. Embassy staff in Fiji. The workshop was held in Fiji's capital, Suva, Feb. 24 to 27.

dated their findings and provided them to a panel of five senior Fiji officials. The briefing identified six key Fiji national interests and inventoried challenges and threats to them, as well as opportunities and strengths. This provided a basis for recommendations to fully secure Fiji's interests.

The brief also recommended the purpose, scope, structure and next steps forward in developing the National Security Strategy.

APCSS' senior repre-

sentative, Deputy Director Brig. Gen. (Ret) James Hirai, praised Fiji's focus on inclusion and integration.

The end result, Nayasi trusts, is a national security system that is "robust, relevant and cost-efficient," but provides for the current and future safety, peace and prosperity of Fiji's people.

"Among our observations of Fiji's security sector development process was the successful meeting of international best practices in including 'whole-of-government' perspectives in this workshop and plans for "whole-of-society" inclusion in future sessions." Hirai also highlighted women's participation as a deliberate feature of participant recruitment.

"We believe their (women's) participation enhanced discussions and resulted in

more comprehensive products."

In a letter to Hirai, Fiji's Prime Minister Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, who was unable to attend the workshop due to his travel schedule, stated, "It gives me much pleasure to write to you on the occasion of your presence in Fiji for a very important project for my government...I am thankful to APCSS for the learning opportunity they provided and for being a benefactor of that opportunity."

Cooperating for stability on Asia-Pacific waters

All nations depend in one way or another on the world's oceans and seas for everything from basic survival to conducting billions of dollars in trade. Maintaining the stability of and accessibility to these waters is the work of naval and maritime professionals across the globe.

One hundred ninety of these professionals from 22 nations gathered in Victoria, Canada, for the Maritime Security Challenges 2014 Seapower Conference Oct. 6 to 9. Co-hosted by the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, the Royal Canadian Navy, and Navy League of Canada, the event "brought in the right people at senior levels for frank discussion on complex issues impacting Asia-Pacific waters," said APCSS event co-coordinator, Dr. Justin Nankivell.

Waters in the region are marked

Maritime Security Challenges 2014 Seapower Conference

by heightened multinational interest in offshore resources and the growing importance of seaborne trade. This has increased risk of conflict in maritime boundary disputes. Territorial disputes in the East and South China Seas were a key topic of discussion among conference participants.

Other focus areas included the U.S. naval component of America's "rebalance" strategy in the region; the impacts of technological changes on future seapower; and economic and commercial activities at sea.

Among workshop participants were Adm. Harry Harris Jr, U.S. Pacific Fleet commander; Vice Adm. Mark Norman, Royal Canadian Navy commander; Rear Adm. Caesar Taccad,

vice commander of the Philippine Navy; Dr. Hasjim Djalal, Indonesia Navy chief of staff; and Rear Adm. Xu Weibing, director of the Chinese People's Liberation Army-Navy Logistics Department.

"We brought the group together to collaborate on naval approaches to regional maritime governance," Nankivell said, adding, "This included discussions on applicable international laws and codes of conduct as well as examining current debates of significance to maritime practitioners in the Asia-Pacific."

The conference objective, Nankivell related, was to reinforce nations' common perspectives and mutual interests in the region; an effort that should, in the long run, help interested parties manage tensions and work toward long-term stability.



(Clockwise) APCSS Director Lt. Gen. (Ret) Dan Leaf talks maritime security with Adm. Harry Harris Jr., then U.S. Pacific Fleet commander. APCSS' Dr. Justin Nankivell moderates a discussion on maritime disputes. Conference participants took part in a number of seminars focused on maritime issues. Attendees (pictured at left) toured this Canadian Navy vessel during the October workshop.



(Counter clockwise) Seventy-one people took part in the May ASEAN maritime workshop at APCSS. U.S. Navy Adm. Samuel Locklear, then commander of U.S. Pacific Command, provided introductory remarks. Participants like Monirith Kao, with Cambodia's Marine Fisheries Administration, shared best practices in areas such as combating illegal fishing. U.S. Ambassador to ASEAN Nina Hachigian offered attendees the U.S. perspective on regional maritime shared awareness.

Building maritime shared awareness in SE Asia

The vast ASEAN maritime domain is home to major fish and hydrocarbon resources, and provides shipping lanes that carry billions of dollars in international goods every year. Despite this, most ASEAN member states don't have a comprehensive operating picture of their maritime neighborhood. Challenged by jurisdictional disputes, political tensions and capacity deficits, basic maritime domain awareness in the region remains out of reach.

Faced with this dilemma, ASEAN maritime policy makers gathered for the "Building Maritime Shared Awareness in Southeast Asia" workshop hosted by APCSS with support from U.S. Pacific Command. Seventy-one people from

10 ASEAN nations and the United States attended the workshop at the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies May 10 to 14 to explore feasible ways ahead to enhance the region's domain awareness.

"The event was an ideal platform to share best practices and lessons learned from recent regional maritime activities," said APCSS Associate Professor Kerry Lynn Nankivell, workshop lead. "It was driven by a recognized need for a comprehensive look at maritime information sharing, which underpins all maritime operations and informs good maritime policy."

Subject matter experts shared best practices in multi-national information sharing leading to coordinated operations in a number of transnational missions, including search and rescue, oil spill

response, and countering illegal fishing, counter-piracy, and counter-trafficking. Following lectures, multi-national breakout groups worked to identify lessons learned and how to apply them.

By workshop's end, the majority of participants agreed on recommended actions to deepen regional maritime shared awareness, including: institutionalizing a single ASEAN forum for comprehensive discussion of maritime issues; establishing a single point of contact within each ASEAN member state to facilitate regional information sharing; and deepening and expanding U.S.-ASEAN and intra-ASEAN training, exercises and exchanges.

Participants refined these recommendations and other country-level ones through

days of discussion. Nankivell said recommendations are now "well-positioned for referral to ASEAN's official mechanisms for consideration, as well as to USPA-COM, U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Coast Guard."

APCSS Director Lt. Gen. (Ret) Dan Leaf added, "Shared awareness is complex and requires comprehensive solutions. It's not easy, but it's not as difficult as dealing with the consequences of not advancing maritime information sharing. This [workshop] has been a very important step in making progress."

ASEAN participants were from Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Nations partnering in fight against biosecurity threats

Reducing Southeast Asia's biothreat vulnerability was the focus of an international workshop held in Manila, Philippines, Nov. 3 to 7. The Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies co-hosted the event, titled "Biosecurity in Southeast Asia," along with the Philippines Department of Health and National Defense College of the Philippines.

The workshop brought together 43 health and security professionals from eight nations and 10 organizations. The group analyzed threats posed by regional

pandemics, emerging infectious diseases and bioterrorism activities – all of which present potentially catastrophic effects on nations' populations, economies and overall security.

"Biosecurity is a key part of comprehensive security, as the current Ebola outbreak in West Africa clearly demonstrates," related Brian Goldbeck, U.S. deputy chief of mission in Manila. He added that such transnational threats "impact us all and better policy alignment across the region will make all less vulnerable to these threats." (This

workshop offered a unique opportunity for participants from Southeast Asian nations to collaborate on enhancing regional security."

"Biosecurity is a key part of comprehensive security, as the current Ebola outbreak in West Africa clearly demonstrates."

Brian Goldbeck
U.S. deputy chief of mission in Manila

Participants developed a list of 21 recommendations for the World Health Organization, according to Dr. Jim Campbell, APCSS workshop academic lead. These proposals would assist Southeast Asia organizations in aligning with international biosecurity norms, and strengthen preparedness and response processes. Recommendations included: improving capacity to mobilize resources; strengthening information sharing; identifying development of a regional collaboration center; and assisting in developing multisectoral

Workshop recommendations to the World Health Organization



Establish a Biosecurity Code of Conduct

Building on current efforts at the international level to standardize laboratory biosafety and biosecurity, and the ongoing negotiations with the Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention, participants agreed to collaborate regionally to establish a Biosecurity Code of Conduct for the ASEAN region.



Control zoonotic diseases

Zoonotic diseases are those transmittable from animals to man. Workshop participants determined that the best approach to ensure regional biosecurity is an integrated zoonoses control strategy at national, provincial and local levels, based on the One Health concept, in which infectious disease surveillance combines human, veterinary and environmental health areas.



Proactively resource biosecurity

ASEAN should take a more proactive role in resourcing biosecurity preparedness in the region by encouraging establishment of a regional emergency fund for outbreak investigation and response similar to World Health Organization proposals to create a global pandemic emergency fund, and by the World Bank for a Pandemic Emergency Facility.



Increase participation of women

Participants agreed that general educational levels and literacy of women need to be elevated throughout the Southeast Asian region, as a sine qua non for empowering women to serve in policy and decision making roles in biosecurity nationally and regionally.



pandemic preparedness plans.

Strategy formation benefited from guided workshop discussions titled “Emerging Biosecurity Threat Environment;” “Preventing and Mitigating Biosecurity Threats;” “Regional and Global Coordination; and, “Communication, Interoperability, and Information Sharing.” The group also analyzed the case study “Ebola: Reconciling International Public Health Obligations with Domestic Health Policy.”

Another focus area was the role of women in biosecurity policy formulation and implementation. Fittingly, the November event included the highest percentage of women participants, 42 percent, to take part in an APCSS program.

Overall, participants represented an important diversity of expertise.

“Biosecurity is not an easy concept to handle... so you really need a wider group of people or experts sensitized to the issue,” said Dr. Mely Caballero-Anthony.

Caballero-Anthony is



(Top and middle) Health and security professionals from eight nations gathered in Manila, Philippines, in November to cooperate on reducing Southeast Asia’s biothreat vulnerability. Participants included (bottom left to right) Dr. Zalini Yunus, with Malaysia’s Science and Technology Research Institute, and Dr. James Campbell, who served as APCSS’ workshop academic lead.

head of the Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies at Singapore’s Rajaratnam School of International Studies. She briefed workshop participants on preventing and mitigating bios-

security threats and national coordination. She was also part of a panel titled, “The Role of Women in Biosecurity Policy Formulation and Implementation.”

Participants represented

Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Vietnam. They came from national health, foreign affairs and defense ministries, and national security councils. Subject matter experts came from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations; the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation; Asian Development Bank; the Western Pacific Regional Office of WHO; and the South East Asia One Health University Network.

“It was a humbling experience to spend five days with such remarkable professionals as they crafted a unique, whole-of-society strategy to defend their region against Public Health Emergencies of International Concern,” said Campbell.

Dr. Herawati Aru Sudoyo added, “The topic of biosecurity has been considered before, but the way in which it was presented and discussed at this workshop was entirely new, and brought a fresh perspective that was very helpful.” Sudoyo is deputy director at Eijkman Institute of Molecular Biology in Indonesia.

Partnering on education

APCSS, 18 colleges support effort to strengthen military education ties

In an effort to advance regional cooperation in professional military education, the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies conducted a three-day workshop Jan. 7 to 9. Titled “Command and Staff Colleges in the Asia-Pacific: Towards a Shared Vision for Cooperation,” the event brought together 28 participants from 10 nations representing 18 command and staff colleges in the region.

“This was an extraordinary group; in aggregate, responsible for the education of nearly 12,800 future military leaders annually,” said APCSS’ Dr. Al Oehlers, workshop academic lead. “Having them all together in one room, actively networking with each other and collaboratively developing shared projects for the future was a real privilege.”

Command and staff colleges are a critical component in professional military education. The schools provide mid-grade officers with advanced skills and knowledge in leadership, communication, and analytical skills needed to succeed in higher command and staff appointments. Some schools operate at the post-graduate level and award master’s degrees in a range of studies.

January’s workshop was consistent with Association of Southeast Asian



Twenty-eight participants from 10 nations took part in the January workshop focused on building partnerships in education programs targeting primarily mid-grade military officers.

Nations’ Defense Ministers Plus ambitions to develop stronger PME linkages throughout the region. The event laid a foundation for future collaboration on issues, such as curriculum exchanges, faculty development and visits, virtual and online learning, and a dedicated Web portal to support cooperative ventures among participating colleges.

To facilitate collaboration, workshop facilitators strived to achieve:

- Enhanced understanding among attendees of the education philosophies, methodologies, curricula and administrative practices used across the region;
- Identifying a range of potential engagements among colleges (bilateral and multilateral) to enhance interaction and collaboration;
- Specific projects and way-ahead next steps for the next 12 to 18 months to advance their objectives.

APCSS Dean of the College of Security Studies Carleton Cramer said a key workshop focus was candid discussion on schools’ international components. Most or all represented colleges integrate and exchange faculty and fellows from other nations. “We looked at how schools are implementing international perspectives within

their overall programs. I think we had a consensus that this perspective is important in developing the next generation of leaders,” said Cramer.

Workshop participants hailed from Brunei, Chile, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam and the United States. Australian representatives participated via VTC. Each briefed general college structure and operations; details on their international outreach programs; and initiatives they will implement.

One of three Vietnamese participants, Senior Col. Khac Dao Tran described the event as a “very good opportunity for senior officials to not only lay a foundation for personal contacts, but also (dialogue) between the armed forces.” Tran, who is chief of training and education for Vietnam’s Army Academy, added that cooperation among colleges is another venue for enhancing peace, stability and diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific region.

Cramer said the event established and matured institutional relationships previously non-existent. He hopes to further these relationships by enlarging the outreach to include faculty and students from each college’s international program in a week-long workshop within the next year.

Lao-PDR to assume ASEAN Chairmanship

APCSS helps nation prep for international leadership role

The Lao People's Democratic Republic will assume the Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2016. To assist in preparations for this regional leadership role, the ASEAN department in Lao PDR's Ministry of Foreign Affairs – supported by the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies – hosted a seminar April 7 to 8 in Vientiane.

“...by the end of day 2, we were a team ready to contribute to ASEAN and peace and security in the region.”

- Lao participant

The chairmanship will involve leadership of various ASEAN organizations and events to include nearly a thousand meetings and summits. Through these, Lao PDR will lead discussions on key regional security

issues impacting the organization's member nations and dialogue partners. According to APCSS Director and Team Lead Lt. Gen. (Ret) Dan Leaf, the role will require strong inter-agency cooperation within the Lao PDR government.

“Effective coordination among its ministries tied to ASEAN affairs will be crucial to success,” said Leaf, adding, “this ‘Seminar on National Coordination for ASEAN Chairmanship 2016’ aided these ministries in establishing networks among their key points of contacts.”

Four APCSS team members joined more than 50 Lao participants from 21 ministries and offices in discussions on improved coordination and organizational change. Together, they identified and documented required “next steps” to strengthen communication and coordination.

Their efforts marked the first of a series of dialogues



in support of Lao PDR preparations for the assumption of the ASEAN chairmanship. Future seminars will address issues and priorities identified by Lao PDR as significant to its future leadership efforts.

The seminar was an example of the strong and developing relationship between the United States and Lao PDR. While designed to enhance the capacity of Lao PDR officials, it also demonstrated a U.S. com-

mitment to strengthening ASEAN and ASEAN-led processes.

The seminar's unique value and contribution to national and regional capacities was summarized well by a participant. “On day 1, we arrived as participants at a seminar. On day 2, we arrived as co-workers with a unified national vision. But by the end of day 2, we were a team ready to contribute to ASEAN, and peace and security in the region.”



Four members of the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies joined 50 Laotian leaders to prepare the Lao People's Democratic Republic to assume the Chairmanship of ASEAN. (Right) A member of the Lao PDR contingent offers input during workshop proceedings.

Reducing Disaster Risks

South Asian nations explore partnerships to strengthen resiliency

Reducing risks inherent in natural disasters is a critical challenge for South Asia, a region prone to severe storms, floods and earthquakes. Professionals from five South Asian nations joined members of the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies in Colombo, Sri Lanka, March 3 to 5, to build cooperative strategies to partner and mitigate these disasters' damaging effects.

"With densely populated cities, challenging geography and vulnerable infrastructures, a large-scale natural disaster in South Asia has the potential to set back development and destabilize progress on a tremendous scale," said APCSS professor Jessica Ear.

Ear served as APCSS lead for the Colombo workshop titled, "Building Partnerships in South Asia Disaster Risk Reduction." The event brought together defense, government, civil society and private sector leaders to focus on three tasks:

- Identify and clarify DRR partnership challenges and opportunities;
- Integrate effective partnership strategies and



(Top) Subject matter experts from the Japan International Cooperation Agency and participants from South Asian nations exchanged perspectives on partnerships for disaster risk reduction March 3 to 5 in Sri Lanka. (Bottom left to right) APCSS Professor Jessica Ear was APCSS' workshop lead while Sri Lankan participant, Anoja Seneviratne, served as one of five breakout team facilitators.

best practices into current frameworks; and

- Advance DRR partnerships at national and regional levels.

The workshop aligned with the intent of the Hyogo Framework for Action, a 10-year plan endorsed by the U.N. General Assembly in 2005. The plan encour-

ages multi-stakeholder partnerships to reduce disaster risks. Such relationships, Ear stated, can facilitate vital DRR-related information-sharing, multinational training and planning efforts, and pooling of resources.

The Sri Lanka workshop featured 32 South Asian

participants. They hailed from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka, with each serving in a public or private field with a stake in their nation's DRR planning efforts.

They explored areas for partnering through 11 plenary topical discussions