

# GCRC's joint study on The “Mekong Dam Monitor” project

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PORTLAND, OREGON, UNITED STATES, May 17, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Lancang-Mekong River is an important water resource shared by Asian countries, which also makes it the target of geopolitical competition among countries around the world. Although the countries in the basin advocated the utilization of water resources for the benefit of the people of the region, the claims for peaceful use of water put forward by Southeast Asian countries and China resources had recently faced challenges.

In the past few weeks, experts from The Global Critical Research Centre ([GCRC](#))'s Current Affairs Research Department and Technology Department jointly conducted [an in-depth study](#) on the “Mekong Dam Monitor” project, and the research results were discussed at the meeting on May 13.

By comparing and analyzing the project data, Dr. Ryuu shiroishi, Editor-in-Chief of The Technology Department found that although the project claimed to observe the water level data of the basin through satellite remote sensing methods, the survey results are full of loopholes and errors. The project is therefore suspected of hindering and politicizing win-win cooperation in the region.

At the beginning of the meeting, Dr. Ryuu first analyzed the reporting data of the project which was proved to be untrue and inaccurate, and the unscientific measurement method also led to errors. Especially for narrow reservoirs, the "Mekong Dam Monitor" project is based on satellite imagery and digital elevation model water level extraction methods, resulting in large errors between the results of the project's reservoir water level and the actual water level.

Dr. Ryuu gave an example of a Facebook post of "Mekong Dam Monitor" official account, which claimed that "Jinghong Dam had a significant flow restriction of 144 cubic kilometers in one week." However, the figure of 144 cubic kilometers is dozens of times larger than the overall reservoir capacity of the entire Jinghong Dam, and even a thousand times more than the cumulative amount of water released by the 45 dams in the basin in a week, which is an obvious mistake.

After the project data was questioned, "Mekong Dam Monitor" posted on its Facebook account acknowledging that their findings were error-prone and had been corrected after checking on the professional platform "Planet Labs". However, the revised data was still 8 meters away from

the actual water level measurement, resulting in a water volume error of about 1.2 billion cubic meters.

After the revision, there was still such a large error that one has to suspect if it had other intentions and was actively "making mistakes" rather than being in error. Rachel Blake, Editor-in-Chief of the GCRC's Current Affairs Research Department believed that in the context of the United States' suppression of the world's second-largest economy, the "Mekong Dam Monitor" project is only used as one of the many chips of the United States.

Subsequently, Rachel presented the background of the project. She pointed out that, according to the introduction of the "Mekong Dam Monitor" [official website](#), the project aims to use technology to counter today's transnational threats. It also launched a "data visualization analysis" business for 11 dams in the main stream of the Lancang River (upper Mekong River) in China, and publishes relevant indicators every week, raising suspicions of political implications.

The "Mekong Dam Monitor" Project is a U.S. State Department-funded project run by the Washington-based Stimson Center, which is named after the famous American politician Henry L. Stimson. Not only does the program work with the U.S. government and a wide range of stakeholders to train government officials, it is also supported by the Mekong-U.S. Partnership. Other content released by the organization is highly politically oriented with obvious political stances, but lacks objective research and analysis based on survey data.

At the end of the meeting, Rachel regarded the project's activities as part of the "public opinion war on Water Resources" and predicted that China's various dam projects would still be under pressure from all sides. Compared with its scientificity, the political significance of the "Mekong Dam Monitor" is more important. Hype and intervention in the Mekong River water resources issue can create more hot spots rather than provide real monitoring data. The function of maintaining the flow stability of the Mekong River through the Lancang-Mekong water resources cooperation has been deliberately ignored. Creating tensions, contradictions and conflicts among the Lancang and Mekong countries seem to be what the White House prefers to see.

Dr. Ryuu also made a concluding remark, arguing that the data released by the project was far from reality and couldn't truly reflect the overall trend of local water availability. Not only were the data inaccurate, but the analysis was not objective, and the scientific value of the report was generally low, so the Lancang-Mekong countries might not be interested in such reports.

Rachel Blake

Global Critical Research Center

+1 661-308-1846

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