

The 2nd Policy Plenary Meeting on “Is an East Asian Community Really Necessary and Possible?”

July 26, 2004

The Second Policy Plenary Meeting was held in the Main Conference Room of the National Institute for Research Advancement (NIRA) on July 26, 2004. The discussion was held with six sub-themes on the basis of the fundamental awareness of the issue "Is an East Asian Community Really Necessary and Possible?" Specifically, the sub-themes were 1) Will we be able to incorporate China into this concept, or will we be incorporated therein by China? (opening statement by Council Member YAMAZAWA Ippei), 2) What is "East Asia" and what is its geographical scope? (Council Member HATAKEYAMA Noboru), 3) How will Japan position therein the importance of the Japan-US relationship? (Council Member SOEYA Yoshihide), 4) Can the Japan-China and Japan-Korea relationships overcome differences in perceptions of history? (Council Member OE Hiroshi), 5) Ultimately, will an East Asian Community serve Japan's national interests? (Council Member KAKIZAWA Koji), and 6) Any other things which should be discussed on this occasion.

The Council Members had lively discussions and the following comments were made: "Politically and economically, China already has an indivisible and intimate relationship with East Asia; therefore, transcending the question of incorporating China or being incorporated by China, the concept of how to get along well with China is important to us." "After having set the community's goals such as peace and prosperity, we must deductively define the geographical scope of 'East Asia'." "The geographical scope of 'East Asia' should be formed evolutionarily through a wide range of accumulated cooperation." "An East Asian Community' must be compatible with the Japan-US alliance, and in the event that is not the case, we must have the courage to reject such a community." "There is nothing beyond some kind of package deal that will resolve the history issues." "In the course of promoting the concept of an East Asian Community, the work of redefining Japan's national interests will become necessary."