

The 4th Policy Plenary Meeting on “The Strategy of China, South Korea and ASEAN”

October 19, 2004

The Fourth Policy Plenary Meeting was held under the theme of “The Concept of East Asian Community and the National Strategies of China, South Korea, and ASEAN” in the South Main Conference Room of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on October 19, 2004. At the meeting, keynote speeches were made by the two Council Members, Prof. KOJIMA Tomoyuki of Keio University and Prof. OKONOGI Masao of Keio University, as well as Deputy Director-General NISHIMIYA Shinichi of Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Prof. KOJIMA stated that "China gives great importance to its diplomacy to promote cooperative relations with neighboring countries as part of China's omnidirectional cooperative diplomacy that supports its Reform and Opening-up policy. China's diplomacy towards ASEAN+3 is a good example and China is working very actively on it in recent years. In particular, China has been highly motivated to FTA and the East Asian Summit. Thus, we need to focus attention on China's two sides of diplomacy, i.e. great power diplomacy and cooperative diplomacy with neighboring countries."

Prof. OKONOGI analyzed that "South Korea does not give so much strategic consideration to 'East Asia' as China does. However, from its strategic judgment that 'the Northeast Asian Era has come, and South Korea is at the very center,' South Korea is now hammering out a vision and strategy towards 'Northeast Asia' by establishing 'Presidential Committee on Northeast Asian Cooperation Initiative' which is under the direct supervision of President."

Deputy Director-General NISHIMIYA expressed his view that "It is not necessarily clear whether ASEAN has a strategy or not, but it is obvious that ASEAN has a sensitive instinct. We can easily understand it when we look particularly at ASEAN's relationship with China. Perhaps ASEAN is wishing Japan to assume a role of a good balancer in the

region."

The Council Members had lively discussions and one participant made a comment: "if the ASEAN+3 framework did not exist, Japan, China and South Korea might have not come to act together."