

The 7th Policy Plenary Meeting on “The Present State of East Asian Community Building, Background, and Japan's National Strategy”

January 24, 2005

The Seventh Plenary Meeting was held under the year-long theme of "The Present State of East Asian Community Building, Background, and Japan's National Strategy", at the Japan Forum on International Relations on January 24. The meeting was convened with the aim of taking stock of the entire discussions that took place in the course of the previous six plenary meetings.

TANAKA Akihiko, the policy task force leader and Professor at the University of Tokyo, after the introductory remarks, made an explanation of the main points of the "Mid-Term Policy Report" drafted by the task force. Concerning "Japan's Fundamental Strategy" for the East Asian Community, the safety and prosperity of the Japanese people, along with preserving of their values, were highlighted. In particular, the following three points were stressed: 1) the preservation of the Japan-US alliance, 2) the achievement of a regional free trade area, and 3) the realization of freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

The Council Members, thereafter, had lively discussions, with the following comments being made: "The advancement of the energy and environmental cooperation as foundations of the East Asian Community is important. Within a framework that includes China, the resolution of these problems will lead to a win-win relationship." "The United States might be concerned that the East Asian Community could lead to excluding the US influence and power from the region. It will be necessary for Japan to duly take such concerns into consideration." "It is important to persuade people of the necessity of building an East Asian Community not only from the viewpoint of Japan's national interests, but also from the viewpoint of the regional interests of all of East Asia."

The final draft of the "Policy Report" will be prepared for the Eighth Plenary Meeting, and, after further discussions, will be determined for signature by the council members.