

Summary of the Seminar on Energy Diplomacy

On August 14, 2008, the Saranrom Institute of Foreign Affairs organized the Seminar on Energy Diplomacy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The purpose of the seminar is, as H.E. Mr. Virasakdi Futrakul has argued, “for all parties concerned to propose best practices for energy security to the Thai Government.” The participants included former Minister of Energy, energy specialists, policy makers from public and private agencies, government officials, and scholars. Three following main topics are discussed in the seminar: 1) Thailand’s energy capacity; 2) international cooperation and future problems; and 3) proposals of foreign policies and strategies.

The participants felt that Thailand relies for the most part on the import of foreign oil, natural gas, coal, and electricity. It should adopt new strategies for energy security. First of all, in terms of domestic development, Thailand must own its national production to secure foreign capital flows, in compensation for foreign imports, and should establish a Sovereign Wealth Fund to manage national assets. Thailand should develop new technical expertise, combining energy with other fields of sciences.

Secondly, in terms of international cooperation, Thailand will diversify its source of energy and will create a network of alliances for trade, investment, and technological cooperation with all countries. Among others, Thailand supports the strengthening of ASEAN energy projects, including the Trans-ASEAN Gas Pipeline under ASEAN Council on Petroleum. This is part of ASEAN energy cooperation, which focuses on the development of ASEAN energy market and joint investment in energy infrastructure, production, and reserve. The seminar would forward its outcomes to the Thai Government and concerned agencies for the purpose of forming national energy policies and strategies.

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