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YUKIO HATOYAMA'S VISION OF AN EAST ASIAN COMMUNITY AND HIS GOVERNMENT'S POLICY

(Summary)

Japan's foreign policy is clearly faced with the challenges of regional cooperation and conflict. Regionalism in East Asia has largely been centered on ASEAN. At the dawn of the 21st century, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations became the focal point of various regional forums of the 'ASEAN Plus' type. ASEAN's neighbours to the North, however, never ceased to be influential players in the process of regional cooperation. Japan's new government under the leadership of Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama (September 2009 – June 2010) made its mark with the proposal for the creation of an East Asian Community which aroused interest in the region and beyond. The idea was not new to Japanese diplomacy. PM Hatoyama's proposal, however, was different because it envisaged an open-ended community with strong philosophic foundations. It was partly inspired by the ideas of Coudenhove-Kalergi's Pan-Europeanism, by criticism of what the Prime Minister perceived as imperfections of the global order, by regional economic trends and by shifting power balances. PM Hatoyama's insistence on building an East Asian Community stemmed from his desire to see the idea of yu-ai (友愛、or 'fraternity') take root in the region. In the long term, such a community could solve some of Japan's foreign policy conundrums in East Asia. This article explores the origins and the development of Prime Minister Hatoyama's East Asian Community concept. It attempts to shed light on Japan's regional diplomacy and analyses the issues underpinning the East Asian Community

initiative. It further explores the impact this idea has had on Japan's relations with its major partners in the region (China, South Korea, the US, Southeast Asian nations), as well as the reasons for its ultimate failure.