

Message from the Minister for Foreign Affairs

The year 2015, which falls on a milestone marking the passing of 70 post-war years, turned out to be a year to renew determination to further contribute to the peace and prosperity of the international community, while looking back on the path of Japan as a peace-loving nation during the post-war period. In April, Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress visited the Republic of Palau to mourn and pay tribute to those who died in World War II and pray for peace, and in August, the Prime Minister's statement was issued on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the end of the war.

With regard to Japan-United States (U.S.) relations, concrete results accumulated toward further strengthening of Japan-U.S. Alliance, including the new Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation (the New Guidelines) announced in April, the speech given by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in a joint meeting of the U.S. Congress, and the signing of the Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Environmental Stewardship Supplementary to the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement. In addition, we believe the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement reached in principle in October, in which Japan and the U.S. played a leading role, was an important move to drive the growth of the Japanese economy.

In relations with neighboring countries, there was significant progress in 2015, such as the holdings of Japan - China - Republic of Korea (ROK) Trilateral Summit and Foreign Ministers' Meeting and the historic agreement reached between the Foreign Ministers of Japan and the ROK regarding the issue of comfort women.

In 2015, the legislation for peace and security was enacted. We will continue to explain carefully that the legislation is to protect the lives and peaceful livelihoods of the Japanese people as an emergency preparedness in an increasingly severe security environment, as well as to further contribute to the peace, stability and prosperity of the region.

Chapter 1 of the Diplomatic Bluebook 2016 takes a brief look at the international situation and Japan's diplomacy in 2015, Chapter 2 examines Japan's foreign policy that takes a Panoramic Perspective of the World Map, and Chapter 3 focuses on Japan's foreign policy to promote national and worldwide interests. Chapter 4, entitled "Japan's Diplomacy Open to the Public," explains the efforts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to support Japanese society and people in deepening ties with the world, the strengthening of the diplomacy implementation structure and efforts for ensuring the safety of Japanese people overseas. Commentaries have been utilized together with charts and maps to aid readers' understanding, and themed "special features" and "columns" conveying voices from the diplomatic front lines are provided to make readers feel familiar with diplomacy.

To pursue a vigorous diplomacy, your understanding and cooperation is absolutely necessary. We sincerely hope that the Diplomatic Bluebook will help every one of you deepen your understanding of Japan's latest foreign policy and international affairs, and that it will provide an opportunity to widely disseminate the "right image" of a Japan proactively contributing to the peace and prosperity of the world.

Minister for Foreign Affairs
Fumio Kishida

