

Preface to the Diplomatic Bluebook 2018

It is no exaggeration to say that the security environment surrounding Japan is most severe since the end of World War II, including the increasingly tense North Korean issues. In addition, the international order based on fundamental values, such as freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, that have underpinned global stability and prosperity is now being challenged by the rise of terrorism and violent extremism. Under these circumstances, in order to maintain the existing international order and address the issues facing the international community, Japan must take on an even greater responsibility and role while collaborating with other countries.

Based on this recognition, ever since I was appointed Foreign Minister in August 2017, I have visited countries around the world to proactively convey Japan's position, and have sought to further enhance Japan's cooperation with other countries.

In this endeavor, I have been strengthening our efforts especially in the following six priority areas. First is to strengthen the Japan-U.S. Alliance and to promote the networking of allies and friendly nations. Second is to enhance cooperative relationships with neighboring countries, including China, the Republic of Korea (ROK), and Russia. Third is for Japan to play a more proactive role as a standard-bearer of free trade. Fourth is to make active contributions to the resolution of global issues, including disarmament, climate change, development, promotion of women's empowerment, and advancement of health. Fifth is to enhance Japan's contributions to peace and stability in the Middle East. Sixth is to promote the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy."

In this period of change in the international order, Japan must not be a "follower." Together with the U.S. and other allies, as well as friendly nations, Japan is determined to become a "beacon" to bring peace and prosperity to the world. I will further strengthen my relationships of trust and networks with Foreign Ministers and others, and at the same time, address diplomatic issues one at a time with my sights firmly set on the happiness of the Japanese people and the future of Japan.

The Diplomatic Bluebook 2018 presents an overview of the international situation in 2017 and the diplomatic activities Japan has been engaged in, including the efforts mentioned above. Specifically, Chapter 1 takes a brief look at the international situation surrounding Japan and Japan's diplomacy, 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 and to assist Japanese people overseas, and the enhancement of the diplomacy implementation structure to strengthen the foundation of diplomatic activities. 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.

We hope that the publication of this Diplomatic Bluebook will help deepen the people's understanding of Japan's foreign policy, and that it will provide an opportunity to disseminate the image of Japan contributing proactively to global peace and prosperity, to a broad domestic and overseas readership.

Minister for Foreign Affairs
Taro Kono



In principle, this Diplomatic Bluebook 2018 describes an overview of the international situations and Japan's diplomatic activities between January 1 and December 31 of 2017; however, some important events that occurred through mid-April 2018 are also included.

In this book we have tried to provide plain and easy-to-understand explanations that anyone would find easy to read. Some articles in columns were contributed by prominent persons who are internationally successful and others concerning activities which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) particularly put a strong effort in 2017.

Key speeches, communique, and statistics which were listed in the Diplomatic Bluebook until 2002 are available on the MOFA website at <http://www.mofa.go.jp/index.html>. You will find an electronic version of this book and back numbers of Diplomatic Bluebook at <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/index.html>.

For more details with respect to Chapter 3, Section 1, "4. Disarmament, Non-proliferation, and the Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy," and Chapter 3, Section 2, "Japan's International Cooperation," please refer to the MOFA's publications, "Japan's Efforts on Disarmament and Non-proliferation," and "White Paper on Development Cooperation/Japan's ODA White Paper." These documents are also available on the MOFA website at <http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/report.html>.

Please note that the titles of persons and names of countries appearing in this book are those as of 2017.