

Preface to the Diplomatic Bluebook 2019

The world is currently going through a significant period of change. Economic globalization, while creating further opportunities for growth worldwide, has also led to widening social and economic disparities and issues of migration, and allowed protectionism and inward-looking trends to loom large even in countries that have enjoyed the benefits of a free economy. Furthermore, the international order based on fundamental values, such as freedom, democracy, human rights, the rule of law and respect for international law, which has underpinned the peace and prosperity of Japan and the world, is being challenged by unilateral attempts at changing the status quo by force and the spread of terrorism and violent extremism. In order to protect and bolster the rules-based international order, Japan must play an even more proactive role.

With this in mind, the following six priority areas continue to be at the center of Japan's foreign policy: (1) strengthening the Japan-U.S. Alliance and enhancing the networks of allies and partners; (2) enhancing relationships with neighboring countries in light of the security environment around Japan; (3) promoting free trade; (4) contributing to address global issues; (5) advancing diplomatic efforts toward the Middle East; and (6) promoting efforts for achieving a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific."

Beyond these areas, Japan also needs to tackle a wide array of issues, including cyber diplomacy, debate on weapons with cutting-edge technologies such as Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), and innovative financing mechanisms such as international solidarity tax for addressing global issues. Japan will never conduct diplomacy backed by military power. With the amount of official development assistance (ODA), a major pillar of Japan's diplomacy, declining to half of what it used to be at its peak, Japan's sheer diplomatic capabilities based on wisdom and ideas are being tested.

The Diplomatic Bluebook 2019 presents an overview of the state of affairs in the international community and Japan's diplomatic activities throughout 2018. Chapter 1 provides a brief overview of international relations surrounding Japan and Japan's diplomacy; Chapter 2 and 3 examine major events in 2018, focusing on Japan's foreign policy with a panoramic perspective of the world map and on promoting national and global interests; and Chapter 4, entitled "Japan's Diplomacy Open to the Public," discusses the efforts by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to support the Japanese society and people in deepening ties with the world and to assist Japanese people overseas, as well as on-going efforts by the Ministry to enhance the foundation of diplomatic activities. New special feature articles with many photos have also been added in the opening pages, to allow the readers to become more familiar with diplomacy.

I hope that this Diplomatic Bluebook will help you understand Japan's foreign policy deeply, and that it will send out broadly to domestic and overseas readers an image of Japan contributing proactively to global peace and prosperity.

Minister for Foreign Affairs
KONO Taro



In principle, this Diplomatic Bluebook 2019 describes an overview of the international affairs and Japan's diplomatic activities between January 1 and December 31 of 2018; however, some important events that occurred until March 2019 are also included.

In this book we tried to provide plain and concise explanations that anyone would find easy to read. Some articles in columns were contributed by distinguished persons who are internationally successful and others concerning activities which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) particularly put an emphasis on in 2018.

Key speeches, communique, and statistics which were listed in the Diplomatic Bluebook until 2002 are available on the MOFA website at <https://www.mofa.go.jp/index.html>. You will find an electronic version of this book and back numbers of the Diplomatic Bluebook at <https://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 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 <https://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 2018.